



## **Part 1: Therapy, Narcissistic Leaders, and Healthy Ego | An Interview with Tony Overbay**

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You're about to hear a conversation with Tony Overbay, a phenomenal marriage and family therapist out in California, and we actually had Tony Overbay come out to Utah a few months ago and do a three, four-hour presentation that was phenomenal. So if you listen to this episode and you like what you hear, you can go to [leading-saints.org/14](https://www.leading-saints.org/14), that'll give you access to our full core leader library for 14 days. That would give you plenty of time to go through the additional content that Tony Overbay has created in our leading saints live content and it is worth a listen and it's all video and whatnot. He always makes it fun. So if you want to hear more of Tony, go to [leading-saints.org/14](https://www.leading-saints.org/14) and you'll also get our full library of content. All of our virtual summits on helping individuals overcome pornography, helping individuals with faith crises, all of it. It's a phenomenal library that you must experience for at least 14 days. So go to [leading-saints.org/14](https://www.leading-saints.org/14). All right, let's go around the room, do some introductions. I'll start. So my name is Kurt Franken. I am the executive director of leading saints, which is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, and we are dedicated, you know, have a mission here to help Latter-day Saints be better prepared to lead. Now, me personally, I live in Stansbury Park, Utah, which is in Tooele County. I grew up in West Valley City, and I've been running leading saints really since 2010 when it started out as a hobby blog. 2014 is when the podcast started and now we are over 10 million downloads and man, we're glad that you are now one of those downloads. Let's jump in. Hey everyone, this is Kurt Franken with the leading saints podcast and well you might also be listening to this on the virtual couch podcast because this is a simulcast simulcast.

I will cast. That's right, so Tony over baked game to Salt Lake, we met up and I just said Tony, we could probably think of a phenomenal outline of what we could talk about, but let's definitely not do that because what typically happens when Tony and I get together is we have an outline and then we completely stray from that outline so we met up and I didn't even let him do the small talk. I sat him down and said here's your mic, let's go and away we went and there's so much to listen for in this conversation. We talk about what is it like for an individual to walk into a therapist office as opposed to walking into a bishop's office and what should we look for in those interactions of when we go to a leader or a therapist and getting help overcoming a problem and how does that differ and what can we learn from that? How do we defuse the shame of it and when sins involved and whatnot and phenomenal discussion then we jump into his experience talking about narcissism on the waking up the narcissist? Is that the name of the podcast Tony? I don't know, we'll link to it in the show notes, but this is a little bit different of an episode where, like I said, we didn't have necessarily a set outline, but we sit down together as friends and as people very passionate about therapy and leadership and helping people find joy and happiness and redemption in life and we start talking about it. So I'd love to hear your feedback. We sometimes stray a little bit or go down some wormholes that, but we always bring it back. So I'd love your feedback. If you like these, Kurt and Tony get together and geek out about therapy related topics. Let us know. We'd love to get your feedback or maybe you hate it. This is a long episode so we're probably gonna split it up in a couple parts maybe and if you don't like it like let us know we'd love the feedback or maybe every 6 months or so and Tony comes to town, we get together and we do this again because there's always something fascinating to talk about and learn from. So here is, well, my conversation with Tony overbay, the host of the virtual couch podcast, talking to me, Kurt Frankel, the host of the leading saints podcast. Let's go. We are in sandy Utah, Salt Lake City, and Tony, you're in town. We thought, well, let's just get in a room. Get some mics and start talking. And you literally walked in here three minutes ago? I just put a mic in front of me and said, oh, I see what you're doing. 'cause I don't know if you know gain a link on di. Oh, I do, yeah. She's fantastic. I was on her the middle. Oh, you were? Yeah, and I did an Instagram Live, and I need to get her, she's gonna come do an episode of mine. So I went to her house and to record shoot wrote a new book and we talked for 90, almost two hours before we hit record, and I was like, man, we've talked about just good stuff. So I'm not gonna follow that trap. I'm just gonna hit it. And we can, if you wanna talk about your mom for a bit, we can do that. And then edit it out. I'll do it later. The last time that I recorded with you, if you remember, we were at your house in your studio and we went for over an hour, hour and a half, about a topic that I thought we were going to talk about, and then we went a completely different direction. Do you remember that? That's why we learned, let's not even plan. Yeah. Exactly. So this is going to be a little bit different of an episode and we may publish it on virtual account.

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I would like to do that. Okay. And it's definitely going on leading saints. So Mexico pressure. You start. Who are you for the people listening? They don't know you. It's a fair point. I am Tony over bay. I'm a licensed marriage and family therapist, actually grew up here in sandy Utah. And I moved away. I was just putting the pieces of that together in 1992. Wow. Or 93. And moved to California and so every time I come back, I still feel like it's the same place, but it's definitely much different. Yeah. Yeah, so I'm a marriage and family therapist and I spent ten years in a computer software career that I didn't realize how little I enjoyed it until I got out of it, which is a big part of even the therapy, the counseling I do, because I love helping people really find something that matters to them. Isn't that true? Yes. If there's anybody out there who's just thinks maybe they don't enjoy their job. It probably means you definitely need to. And then I know we've talked about this. I think I see look, I want to take credit of all of your growth as well, Curtis. But acceptance and commitment therapy, the model of therapy I use that concept of experiential avoidance, so we'll do anything other than the thing we need to do if we really don't like the thing we do. So I spent ten years in a career experientially avoiding everything. Did you just wake up one day that I'm just going to start the classes to be a therapist? Or what was the moment? I mean, I don't honestly, I realize now, and this will probably play into some of the things we'll talk about today around emotional maturity and emotional immaturity and I didn't know what I didn't know and taking ownership of things. Oh, and now I just felt that we're going to go with some fun places today, Kurt. We are. So the real reason is, yeah, I was pretty miserable in my computer software career. And so the biggest escape to me every day was to leave my office and go to lunch. And so I would go to lunch, and then I would get it, and I would go to this Denny's parking lot that was a couple of miles away from my office. And I would just eat lunch and listen to talk radio. And there was a Dr. Laura schlesinger. Dr. Laura. She's still on the radio. I don't think so. Yeah. Oh boy, I mean, is the radio still exist? No. And that's the thing. She probably has a podcast. There you go. Yeah, and so I would listen to Dr. Laura all the time. And I was just so fascinated by everyone's stories and just the things that she would say. And I had taken some psychology classes in college at the university of Utah. And these are the things that I think are so fascinating is I think I had thrown out there to someone. I don't remember who I thought, oh, I think I would like to major in psychology. And I don't even remember who it was, but they just said, oh, there's not, there's not a lot you can do with that. And I remember thinking, oh, okay, not a lot I can do with that. I guess I won't do that. And so then I get a degree of mass communications and then here we go fast forward ten years later and I'm sitting in a Denny's parking lot eating taco trees super nachos for about the 40th day in a row. Listen to Dr. Laura. That's a red flag. I think super nachos. I still eat those to this time for life change. I'd still eat those to this day. And I just remember thinking, man, I just really like people's stories. And I had also, I love biographies. I love biographies. I would there was a magazine at the time called biography, right? And when I would travel, I traveled a lot in the computer software industry, I covered the world. I went to Japan. I think 30 times in Russia and China and all over throughout Europe pedaling my goods. And so I would enjoy the trips just not the work itself. But I would get magazines at the time. And I remember I would read every biography magazine. And I was just fascinated by people in the way that they work and the way that they tick. And then I think that a lot of people that become therapists have the same story of where they say, and everybody would just open up to me. And so I don't know what that vibe is, but you felt that? I did, and I would go on these trade shows and I remember people that were

helping set up our trade show booth or other things would just all of a sudden I'm hearing about their troubles with their girlfriend or their and I remember very succinctly or specifically a lot of those different situations or spending time going out and having to go to dinner with some guy in Germany trying to pitch my software and before you know it, we're opening up about the struggles of being a father or a husband. And so then I just kept thinking, man, between Dr. Laura, the not enjoying my job, biographies, connecting with people. I just thought, I gotta do something around this. And a big part of that that I left out was I had been writing a humor column in my local newspaper for about 6, 7 years at that point, and I had had my first couple of kids. And so I was writing a ton of things around being a dad. And so then I also wanted to write a book about being a dad. And so now I realize the thing I use is an excuse to want to go back to grad school and get a master's and counseling. Was I told myself that I wanted to write a book, but nobody would listen to me unless I had letters behind my name. So I might as well just go back and get the letter. So that I can then write this dad book, which I never ended up doing anything with. Well, hey, I still have to. My youngest though is now graduated from high school. So you figured it out.

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You graduated from dead hood. That's right. That's a good point. So then it was, yeah, it was the slow go back to school, one class a week, a couple of years into it, then all of a sudden you have to start seeing clients, and then I would pretend and say, oh, I guess I'll just do this. I mean, I might as well finish this program out. And then once you graduate, then you have to get 3000 hours toward your license. So you might as well do that. Yeah, and so then I say, I work part time for the church. I'll throw him a bone, Kurt. You know? And so then that went for years and just loved every bit of the counseling, which actually then made going back to my day to today job and computers and that sort of thing. Even worse, it made it just miserable. And so then just ventured out and started working in private practice and now it's the greatest thing I've ever done and I just love everything about it and I just eat drink and sleep just mental health and you do. You're fun to geek out with. I appreciate that. And that's why I think that's why we're doing today exactly. And when you had mentioned that that was the goal because I kept, what are we going to talk about? What should I start preparing? And Curtis said, hey, yeah, that'll be fun. And I'm thinking, hey, Kurt's going a little senile, 'cause I'm literally asking him, can you give me something to press all of it? And then we start Marco Polo, like the kids do, which was a lot of fun. Yeah, we're hip now. Yeah, and then I thought, oh, well Kurt maybe just isn't listening to my entire rants or ramble about. So anyway, about the topic. And then you find out you just didn't listen to my reply. No, until ten minutes ago. So this is what I love. And by the way, people are listening via virtual couch. Oh, yeah, Kurt. Pretend that I wasn't just only thinking about myself and maybe we can edit in there. Leading to our narcissistic discussion. Leading saints is a nonprofit organization where we're dedicated to helping Latter day Saints be better prepared to lead. And that's why I love talking with you. Therapist type because I just love to hear and let's start here is like, oh, let me put a plug in. We had you come out like, oh, let's talk about this.

I know I've been dragging my feet to get it all edited and whatnot. It's out there. We're gonna put an awesome link in the show notes. So people can watch it for free. I think we went after editing everything out. We were there for four hours. So you would think it can be for four. And I actually ended up going about four and a half. Okay, so maybe it's closer to four. Yeah, but then I did see, I watched a little bit of, but I have a hard time watching myself, but I really did need to see if you made me sound at least somewhat, and you did. Yeah, we can't agree job. So I feel like I'm excited for people to see that. So if you like this episode of you should listen to other episodes of Tony and the virtual couch, but also we'll put a link to check out this. I call leading scenes live bringing a guest like you and we just say we're cutting the leash run with it, Tony. And you did that. And we were in this cool old church that was amazing. No bathroom and no air conditioning. And at one point the door was open on the side. You remember there were people that were walking by with their horses. Yes, yes. And I just thought, again, I thought Kurt staged this. I forget the name. Anyways. We'll put in the show notes, but so I just love meeting up with a therapist from time to time and just saying like, what problems are walking in your office? You talk to any bishop is like, oh man, the porn thing is just how to control or the faith crisis, the faith journey thing, right? So like in the last three months, if you were to like knelt down to a few topics, what are you seeing? It's interesting because I started out as, I guess, somewhat of what we call the a pornography expert and I have a book that was a bestseller in sexual health and recovery called he's a porn addict now what an expert in a former answer your questions. And I only mentioned that because it's interesting that I had done almost a decade's worth of working with guys that struggled with turning to porn as a coping mechanism for so long that then I felt like, okay, I got my reps, my 10,000 hours in, and then at that point though, I didn't necessarily want to be viewed as the porn expert. And so, and I give that real quickly to say that in the pornography world, which I feel so blessed to be able to help people, I've got an online program called the path back. And I've got this men's group that is just thriving. And one of the members on the men's group just released a book about his overcoming addiction and a lot of it is based off of just the interactions within our group and my program. And so I'm just, I mean, it's called conquering your addictions. This amazing guy named LT, but it's been it's just been so wonderful to see that, but again, the reason I'm using that is setting this up is in working with people that are struggling with porn, you start out when you don't know what you don't know and you're going down that same path of, hey, sing him, do some push ups. How about you just don't look at it? Those gyms. I did that as the bishop. Year one. Have you tried that? As a matter of fact, what I was so grateful for is that was I think the first episode that I ever did with you was taking shame out of the bishop's office and that was linked to it. I still feel like I was so grateful to be able to do that. And I got so much feedback about that.

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But when I was helping people turn away from pornography, as a coping mechanism identified that there were these 5 voids I felt like really so we would almost don't talk about the porn because they know that they don't want to look at porn anymore. That's the whole thing. And so

that's why I say telling them this isn't great, right? It's really bad. They totally did that. Sex trafficking industry is closely connected. You do know that. As if these heavy perspectives will be waking up, that's not what's happening. And that's what even drives the behavior more into the shadows, which is only makes it worse. So then these 5 boys, I really felt like if people didn't feel connected in their marriage or as a parent and their faith, their health or their career. So then I said, okay, I need to start looking at ways to help people in those areas. And then it's almost like, yeah, we'll get back to the porn. Don't worry. So let's pause right there. Because I think with the benefit of hindsight, like if I was to be a bishop again, somebody walked in with a porn issue, like I would literally not talk about porn at all. Their behaviors or like I wouldn't ask them the second third time fourth time back like how many slip ups? Like I wouldn't even go there. I would just say like, what's going on with your life? Tell me about your childhood. Tell me what your friends like, what are tough times like, you know, do you like your job? Totally. And from a spiritual, I don't want to step in the role of that therapist, obviously connecting to somebody there. But stepping in that role of like, I'm going to help this person uncover their peer identity, because that's where they tend to points really attached to. They do. Yeah, it's so good. And I love that you bring that up because I know so many people that just become a bishop or just get into a position of leadership in the church just eat up leading states podcasts. And so I know there are going to be people here that are going to hear this. And I can say from now 15 years of experience, I think 15, 1600 individuals working that I save with confidence shame has helped in zero of their recovery. Absolutely zero. People beating themselves up is that is the adversary that is the brain still wanting to come up with a creative way to still get it dopamine rush at some point. And so that's where I love what you're saying. It's we'll deal with the porn. We'll talk about that. But if we can start to find connection. And I really feel like the vibe of a therapist or a bishop or any leader is I would love for somebody to really look at that they have this opportunity to say, oh, I love you. I care about you even if you are turned into unhealthy coping mechanisms. And I understand that a spouse that feels betrayed can be really hard because they feel like that is okay, but I don't want this in the relationship and that's where I feel like a bishop, a therapist, somebody gets to say, oh, absolutely. And I don't want you to have that in the relationship either, but I really need to help this person do this for them. And so that then they realize that they are loved. They are lovable. So I want to come back to this connection point, but I'm just going back into that question of what are you seeing? Okay, let's say you have a new person show up on your you don't know who they are. It's just a name on your schedule. What's the chances of them walking in and it being a poor issue? Not a lot. Okay. Yeah, not a lot. It really isn't because I feel like that where I feel like I'm seeing more and more and doing a whole lot with couples. And I think a lot of that is because when I put out material and I talk about my four pillars of a connected conversation, which we can talk about, I really feel like that is gold. I feel like the four pillars are of God. I feel like having this way to communicate effectively with your spouse, that uncovers so many things in a relationship and including challenges with people's faith. And I feel like I can go so many different directions right now. So people coming in, I get a lot of people that are reaching out that are struggling with their faith, faith journey, and then being in California. What percentage of what's the chance of that new client being a latter extinct? Oh, so that's a great so I still probably see 60 to 70% of my clientele or LDS. They are. And it's interesting when I honestly, this is kind of fun to talk about, but when somebody comes into my office and they don't have any affiliation with the church

whatsoever and they don't know me as having any affiliation with the church and yet I still will end up talking about Fowler stages of faith or I'll end up talking about I feel like the time passed a while ago where people now pornography is not just viewed as oh you religious nut jobs are the only ones I think it's bad because we've got all the data now that okay, it does warp one sexuality or I feel like there's a missed opportunity for connection in a relationship. I know that we're going to go on tangents curve but I still remember so clearly it was shortly into the pandemic and I was asked to go on a national radio show and I do this too often where I just don't do enough research and I just say sure if I can edit my schedule. And then it's in three minutes. This was actually I had plenty of runway on this one but this is one where I didn't look at what the host was talking about and they just said they want me to talk about porn in the pandemic and as it gotten worse. And so I thought, oh yeah, I could do this with no problem. So I jump on there and the guy immediately has he's got a national following and he just says, well, there's no problem with porn.

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And my wife and I watch porn and that sort of thing. And I love that again, I feel confident in the things I know and the things I can talk about and I just said, hey, well then I would not be seeing you in my office. So what else do you want to talk about? And by the time we were done, I was saying, okay, well, I believe it's an unhealthy coping mechanism. But if you feel like that is an integral part of your relationship, then I said the only thing I would challenge is I would love to ask your wife if she feels like that's a connection point for her as well or just feel like that's something that she has to tolerate in order to feel a connection. And then I said, and then I lay out my four pillars and I just say, so I feel like, man, what would that look like if you actually instead of needing to have this shared experience around watching other people become intimate, felt like you could be open and vulnerable and intimate with your spouse and be as present as you could possibly be. And then I feel like you said, well, I do have a problem eating. I think you said brownies. And I said, okay, I can talk to you about that. And then by the end, you say in a friend of the show, Tony, right? I don't know about that. So I'm curious with, you know, we'll come back to connection, but what is like, when a new client comes in, do you have like a go to question that you ask everybody, as they plant themselves in that couch, or is there like a rapport building? And it's great question too. So man, here's where I'm going to get to this too. I'm going to stand in my healthy ego Kurt. This is going to sound man where I used to say we bring, I used to say this is my narcissistic trader tendency. That's why I say we're going to get to this. But in the health ego, I'm super blessed fortunate and can not believe I'm going to spot now where I probably get ten to 15 referrals a week. And so I pick and choose who I want to work with. And I've got a really, I mean, I've kind of got a long wait list, and I'm booked out for a long time. So I know when you kind of say, and tell me about these new clients. Okay. In my mind, I'm like, every now and again, I do get one Kurt. But at that point, it's somebody that I've kind of vetted. And I feel it's funny because a lot of them will say, hey, I've listened to a lot of your podcasts, or it's people that have taken my marriage course or my recovery course, or my

parenting course, or they've read my book, and that's where I'm saying, I'm going to say healthy ego. I'm not trying to say, so I know that they adore me, Kurt. But I feel like, okay, here's somebody that says, I really feel a connection with you. I like where you're going with things. So I speak kind of fluent you. And so I would love to kind of bounce some things off of you. I would love to talk more, learn more. And so those are the people I really like. And I do a lot of speaking, and I did a mixed faith marriage fireside not long ago. And so then I had a couple of people reach out and say, all right, man, you made it sound like this is something that can be done. So if you happen to have space availability, I would love to work with you. So somebody like that, oh my gosh, I will, for almost to a fault, I will make time. And that's why I know when we joke about it, and I'll tell you how many clients I'm seeing or what time I'm seeing. It's because when I get somebody in that spot, I just want to help so bad. I really do. So I'm not trying to Dodge your question, but that's helpful. Yeah, so I'm kind of picking and choosing. So I'm really working. So let me ask you from a single. When that person walks in, you vetted him to some degree, maybe you've talked him on a few phone calls. They've sent me a couple of emails, and then I have them fill out a questionnaire in the paperwork. And then I'll read the questionnaire. And then I'll have an idea of where they're coming from. Gotcha. So what does that person thinking is that they're in a tough marriage or they're struggling with pornography or faith journey and they're just like, I need to tell him, there's this problem with my faith. So what should I do? Where are they at when they first sit down on appointment one? Okay, I really do like this. And I feel like now I'm going to do the thing where you're going to think I'm just telling you every question is a great question. I can't wait till you ask it, Kurt. I'm going to say what I think every time somebody says that when I interview people, there is a, it's probably a good question. It's either a good question or a bad question, and they don't know how to answer it. So their brain needs to kill time. So their brain kicks out, oh, that's a really good question. That's true. I think that is obviously true, but this is where, again, I will stand on my healthy ego and say, now I am aware that that is something I have done in the past. So now I would either say, oh, let me take a minute, or I'm going to tell you it's a decent question. But I love seeing it. I can talk about this stuff all day. When I was teaching seminary, I remember doing the thing where I would say sometimes somebody would answer something, I would say, oh, okay. That's a good point. And then my class, I only taught seniors for 7 years or so. A few months in, they would say, oh, you mean I'm wrong? I was like, really, is it that obvious? Yeah, it's a cover. And here's our first 80 D moment. I can't remember what the question was. That person coming in and sitting on the couch. Where are they at? Because the thing is, I remember from just let me insert my bishop perspective here. When someone would come in, new appointment, I haven't met them like, okay, they've it's either they've got something really heavy to share or it's an ecclesiastical endorsement. And sometimes they come in. You see those coming? How can I help? And they're like, I'm just going to be a U Idaho next fall, and I'm like, oh, okay, yeah, let's get the paperwork going. But anyways, no, I like it. I would often ask, I wanted to get to the point because I know that there's just like, it's a miracle they're showing up at the bishop's office.

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And so I would just say, how can I help you? Okay, so this is really good. That's where I was. I was like, it actually is a decent question, Kurt. I'll give you that. I'll give you that. I know that. I'll give you that, right? So by the time that someone is sitting across to me, man, this sounds egotistical, but it is absolutely true. They've resonated with something. They've said, okay, I haven't heard someone talk about being able to navigate a faith journey and then stay connected with my spouse or to my faith community until I heard you speak at this fire site or I heard this episode of your podcast or a lot of the couples I see are coming in saying, okay, I hear you lay out this framework of a way to communicate. And I have never had that in my entire marriage. And I think that I don't know if I can stay in my marriage, but I want to make sure that I've done everything I can do. So I think this framework will be worth looking into. So right now, between faith and hearing people, I think, because I really like talking about faith journeys of the people's faith crisis, Fowler stages of faith, all those things. I love talking about that. So I feel like when I talk about it, I really believe what I'm preaching. And then I think I've seen 12, 1300 couples at this point as well. And I feel like I feel very confident that when we can settle into this framework of communication that we are going to learn, is this just a matter of two people that are in relationships that don't know what they don't know about communication or about taking ownership or accountability of things, or is it a lot of times someone finds out that, okay, I have lost my sense of self in this relationship. And now that there's this framework, my spouse can't even use a framework from this professional to try to even communicate. And so then I don't know if my relationship is viable. So I feel like I'm getting people coming in. And that is what leads into the concept of narcissism or emotional immaturity. And I think I was sharing with you that the podcast I released a few months ago waking up to narcissism. That thing in 30 something episodes is almost equal to the virtual couch as far as downloads. And I actually had to just an amazing assistant named Naomi, who was handling all the emails, 'cause I get maybe and I'm not using narcissistic math here, but 5 to ten emails a day that are book length of people saying, I've never felt so heard. I didn't know this was a thing. I feel like you were in my car and heard the argument we had, or I feel like you've been bugging my home, and it is just their heart wrenching. And so, and then I started a private women's Facebook group for women that are in relationships with narcissistic fill in the blank, spouses, parents, entities. I mean, I feel like a lot of people feel like they have a relationship within an emotionally immature congregation or church leader. Job, any of those kind of situations, and so people feel really heard. And now I just had my first men's group call just yesterday about this guys that are saying, hey, I actually feel like when I hear the way you talk about it, I think that might be me. And I'm telling you, Kurt, that just lights me up, and this meeting yesterday, I didn't know if I was going in as a lamb to the slaughter, or if I was going, I didn't know what it was going to be looking like. Because I'm a couple of people that have reached out to me, had literally sent emails saying, so here you diagnosed me as a narcissist and my wife thinks everything you say is the truth. I don't know who this person's wife is. I mean, they've been listening to a podcast and apparently now they're saying he says that you're a narcissist and he's like, well, let me go settle this guy's hash, you know? And I'm getting an email that says, and then so those I'll try to really get back to it with this one person. I said, hey, so first up, I don't know who you are. I don't know your wife is. And I can't diagnose somebody unless I'm working with them. Even then we could talk for days about, I don't know if that's even very helpful. But I hear you, and I talk about the big piece of that waking up the nurses and podcasts is that came about because of the more that I started

recognizing these patterns and relationships and my own narcissistic traits and tendencies and my own emotional immaturity and inability to sometimes even hear or stay present and understand where my wife is coming from in situations that then I started saying, man, I need to do more with this. And even the name of the podcast waking up to narcissism is waking up to the narcissistic relationship in a marriage or like I say in a parent child relationship or in relationship to a deployment or a faith experience or community or the bigger pieces waking up to my own narcissism. And so as I find more people that are reaching out and talking about how much that helps them so kind of going back to your question, the people coming in in front of me are saying that they feel heard and understood from something from a faith journey from a couple's situation or from an emotional maturity or narcissistic standpoint because that word's getting thrown around all over the place. And then we're going to talk about that for sure. So that's interesting because I'm trying to put it up against like if we were to just in a laboratory put up a therapist's office next to the bishop's office. Yeah. Obviously we know the bishop's office, not the therapist's office. They play different roles, whatever. But I'm just curious, how is it easier for people to walk into a therapist's office or easier for people to walk in a bishop office? And of course, the answer is, well, it depends on the therapist, the bishop, whatever, but I'm just also wondering like, how? 'cause you say you get ten, 15 referrals.

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You referrals a week. There's bishops out there thinking, um, I guess my words doing pretty good because nobody's coming to see more. They came once and I guess I fixed them or they don't need my help anymore. When in reality they don't like it. So how can we create that resonance and of course we can know my mind goes to the doctor of repentance and grace and if we can show love like make sure that we can hear and talk here, but how can we help people resonate so they walk in the bishop. So there is no video camera in here, which I can't believe you didn't get that. I read contract that I sent over ahead of time. My water seems to be 2°. But I just dramatically set up in my chair because this Curtis saying this, I feel appreciate this because when you said, I don't know, is it easier to go into therapist's office of bishop's office? I guess, and I guess the people that are coming into my office are there primarily because they don't feel safe enough or confident enough or they can go into their bishop's office or they feel like I have gone into my bishop's office and that didn't go very well. So I'm going to try this. Yeah, yeah, so I get a lot of that. And this is the stuff where I feel like the reason I set up dramatically is I sometimes think, okay, is this going to be controversial, but then I honestly realized that this is my opinion and I can't not think this. So let me take you back in time. Go ahead. Right, exactly, right? So my state president is amazing. He's one of my best Friends, and I've grown up with him forever. And so I love the fact that he and I can just talk so openly about things. In 2019, the church had hired me to do a training for all the LDS family services therapists on navigating a faith crisis in a faith journey. And you sent me the link. I acted in three hours. And I loved it, and I loved the opportunity. And then that then I think they just recommended me as someone that could participate in the it's called generations. It's the Utah

mental health conference that they hold every year. It's not a church thing. It's a mental health conference. I was going to be part of this panel that was, I love this part, because it sounds like I'm sitting up for a joke. But in the past, it's been a priest, a rabbi, and an LDS person. They do not walk into a bar. But then because I don't know, because of the pandemic, whatever it looked like, they had said, hey, we've got a guy that could speak to this. And the conference title was the topic of the conversation is faith crisis spiritual health and a mental health moving forward or something. But then the priest and the rabbi apparently either they backed out or they weren't invited. And so then I had the whole comfort. I had the whole hour hour and a half to present this. And so I went big on all the stuff I enjoy, acceptance and commitment therapy, external validation, but then I went big into Fowler stages of faith. And I talked about that a lot. And so then I took that and the training and then I shared that with my stake president and I just said, president, I just feel kind of almost this calling or passionate. If there's any way that I can help with any one going through this and I love that he talked to me about that yeah, of course he's seeing a lot of that in the stake. But it's one of those things where faith crisis. Yeah, but it's hard to just go talk from the pulpit and say, hey, let me talk about faith crisis because there's a lot of people that are like, wait, what? I didn't know should I be having one? 'cause I'm not. I mean, tell me more. And so then he suggested I go and so I trained all the bishops in our stake with my four pillars of connected conversation and then the Fowler stages of faith. And the reason I'm giving you this whole big rundown is he had sent out the links to those trainings and I know everybody's got a lot of time. They really do. So I know he said it would be great if he could watch these things and be familiar with this before we talk. I knew that people weren't going to. And so then we got in there and it was really interesting because some of the bishops were saying, okay, it's this really helped and it helps me understand that everybody has their own perspective and here's this way to communicate more effectively. And then there were others that were just saying, okay, well, what if you're wrong? And how do you just tell people that they're wrong? And I just felt like that in itself was you've got some bishops that somebody's going to go into and they're going to just naturally say, hey, thank you for coming in. Tell me more, because I am more familiar now. Here's where it looks like I'm just saying, thankfully, I listened to Tony, and now I know everything. But these four pillars so they are saying, okay, I have a framework to communicate that is going to allow the person coming in to feel heard and understood before I share my experience. And then the stages of faith as a way to kind of communicate this, oh, and we may be in different places with our faith. So I feel like the people, the bishops, and bishops are so overworked and overwhelmed that I know that that isn't they can't just go watch and read and listen to everything. But then I felt like in that training, there were some that were asking questions of, okay, man, that makes sense. And so how can I be more supportive or what are some good questions I can ask to start out with? And there was one bishop, bless his heart, who then said, okay, I hear you, but he said, it sounds like what you're saying to me is that I need to listen to somebody for an hour. And I worry that's going to condone their bad behavior. And so I took that and I realized, and I think I was probably a little bit dramatic or emotionally immature.

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Still salty? Yeah, because I think I did a big, like a big sigh or whatever. But I said, man, thank you, bishop, but I said there's so many things there that I think are a challenge as I said, so the obviously listening to them for an hour is going to condone their bad behavior. I said, man, I want to look at this. I'm not saying that I'm looking at it like the savior, but I said, as a therapist, it's just behavior. So and this is where my first pillar is assuming good intentions or there's a reason why people do or say or show up the way they do, that nobody wakes up in the morning and says, I'm going to go ruin my life. Nobody does. I know they don't. So if they are doing something that is contrary to what they would like to be doing or even what you feel like would be best for them and your role and your role as the steward or leader, that then the first place to go with that is to assume good intentions or there's a reason why. And so I said, so I have a hard time seeing bad behavior, I just see it is behavior. So if we're already saying, okay, fine, I'll listen, but then I feel like I just condoned their bad behavior. We're already off to a bad start. Because that person is going to feel that vibe, that energy, that spirit in the room. And that's where I feel like now, and in that particular thing, I said, I said, this is why I feel like I never would have known any of this, had I not changed careers, had I not become a therapist, because now sitting with so many people that have dealt with emotional abuse, physical abuse, they've been molested, sexual abuse. They've been, they've been beaten and childhood. They've had people die. They've seen horrific things in their jobs or whatever. And now we're going to let them know that this is how you're supposed to think feel or act or behave. I mean, that person is trying to just get through life. And so I feel like when you say, is it easier to go to the therapist or the bishop? That's my long way of saying, I kind of think it might be if it's the bishop that say and thank you so much for being here, period. Tell me more. I mean, I don't feel like there's enough of that experience so then someone going in already feels like I know I have done wrong and I'm worried I'm going to say the wrong thing and I know I need to basically hear what I'm supposed to do and so when I hear all of somebody presenting in my office that feeling, no wonder that they start to feel like what's wrong with me and if the bishop seems pretty upset and if I have tried those things before and I already know what he's going to say so if he's a representative of God, then I know God's got to be mad at me too and so look at all that stuff that's leading up to having something like a domino effect. Ripples out, right? Please join us for part two of this podcast. That concludes this episode of the leading saints podcast. We'd love to hear from you about your questions or thoughts or comments. You can either leave a comment on the post related to this episode. [LeadingSaints.org](http://LeadingSaints.org) or go to [LeadingSaints.org/contact](http://LeadingSaints.org/contact) and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear on the leading saints podcast, go to [LeadingSaints.org/contact](http://LeadingSaints.org/contact) and share with us the information there. And we would love for you to share this with any individual you think this would apply to, especially maybe individuals in your word counsel or other leaders that you may know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed. It came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us. By the God of heaven, who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and when the declaration was made, concerning the all and only true and living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we can not shrink nor run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability