



Leading with Authority & Equality | An Interview with Brooke Rasmussen

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Obviously, you've come to the leading saints podcast 'cause you love podcasts and you love consuming content in this manner, listening to a pre recorded conversation or interview or presentation, and we get a lot of good stuff here. But nothing compares to an in person retreat experience. This is one thing I've learned in the last few years that we are infusing into our leading saints content is the need for in person experiences, also known as retreats. So leading saints has started putting on retreats both for men, women who are going to play around with couples retreats and I will try it all, but retreats are a transformational experience and I implore you to go check out leading saints dot org slash gathering where we list all of the upcoming retreats, some are open to register others you can get on a waiting list, but we would love to have you at the next in person retreat. Now, if you can't afford it, if there are maybe if you price out of these opportunities, don't worry, we have very generous donors willing to put up money for scholarships. So either go there, check it out, register, or apply for scholarship, and we'd love to have you the next gathering saints retreat. Put on by leading saints. So go to leading saints dot org slash gathering to check out the upcoming gathering saints retreats. Before we jump into the content of this episode, I kind of feel it's important that I introduce myself. Now, many of you have been around a long time, you're well familiar with my voice and with leading saints as an organization, but if you're not, well, my name is Kurt Franka, and I am the executive director of leading saints and the podcast host. Now leading saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated helping Latter day Saints be better prepared to lead, and we do that through will content creation like this podcast and many other resources at leading saints dot org and we don't act

like we have all the answers or know exactly what a leader should do or not do, but we like to explore the concepts of leadership, the science of leadership, what people are researching about leadership at COE can apply them to a latter day saint world. So here we go. All right, in this interview, I get the opportunity to talk with Brooke Rasmussen, Brooke, thanks for coming on the podcast. Maybe you can just give us a quick synopsis and a minute or less of your background and what brings you here today. Sure. Well, I'm here today because I spoke at the women's retreat that leading saints just put on. I had the honor and opportunity to speak there and share my ideas about how to bring to pass Zion through evaluating our relationships. Nice. And you're in the midst of studying for your master's degree, becoming a therapist, right? Yep, I've just got one more semester to have my master's degree in marriage and family therapy. Awesome. And where are you from? Spokane, Washington. So we spent a lot of years overseas with my husband's work for the government and have recently come back to my hometown. Spokane. That's right. You've lived in countries I've never even heard of, so. Yeah. They do exist. Now in this episode, we actually just recorded it and it is phenomenal. We talk about sort of relationship dynamics and leadership dynamics. So this is for those I'm just thinking about the maybe the women out there who felt maybe diminished in their role in their ward or in the state position or they feel like they never have to see the table. What are some of the high points we're going to hit in this discussion, Brooke? We're going to talk about how, as you develop yourself in one arena, it's going to grow you in another arena. So all of our work in our personal relationships is going to help us be better leaders and our professional and our community experiences and our wards. So we're going to kind of blur those lines and see how it all actually comes down to a pattern that if we can learn to see it, we can grow. Awesome. All right, here's my interview with Brooke Rasmussen. Welcome to the leading saints podcast. Well, thanks. I'm excited to be here. Yeah, you know, you are one of our speakers at our recent gathering saints women's retreat. This was our first retreat, our first go at it, and as we put an agenda together, had some speakers, you were one of them, and we really didn't know what to expect. And I think it turned out well, what was your experience like just being there? Oh gosh, I loved it. It was a really great weekend. I mean, the whole package deal from the amazing food that we can't all stop talking about. To just the company of being with other great women, to really, really great speakers. Yeah. It was a really participate. Just those nuances that really put it over the top of, you know, everybody's still talking about the food, but we probably could have just showed up and fed him and had nothing else bland and people would still rave about. But we had some phenomenal speakers. We had some personal reflection time. And then yeah, just the conversations late at night that I saw happening between women and it was awesome to be there.

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And you were one of our speakers there. And I had never heard you speak before or read anything you've written, but I knew I think people just loved your message, so I'm sitting there as you're wrapping up thinking, all right, we've got to turn this into a podcast episode. And here we

are. Are you ready? Yeah, let's do it. Cool. So I guess we had some general themes going into the retreat that we wanted to cover. But what was your process as far as coming up with this topic and how did you begin to prepare? I knew that there was some focus on a theme of building Zion. So I really just kind of let that simmer for a couple of weeks of like, what do I feel like is the message in my heart about what I wish we were doing more to create Zion with. And I just kept coming back to this idea of having everyone at the table that Zion looks like everyone has a place at the table. And then as I reflected more on, well, where did that come from? Why do I feel so strongly about that? I could trace it back to this idea of horizontal versus vertical relationships that that was the patterning, the relationship lens that helped me believe that I had a place at the table. I think for a long time, I've believed that everyone has a place at the table in general, but it wasn't until I saw this frame of vertical and horizontal relationships that I realized. I have a place at the table. Yeah. And this sometimes gets tricky when you're in a hierarchical structure, right? Where there's different levels of authority and presiding and especially in our Judeo-Christian tradition where we believe in a divine authority and divine keys. And so it's so easy. And I think it's just human nature to shift into a horizontal relationship, but it's so easy to shift their leadership role because hey, I'm the leader. I'm leading you. I'm above in here below. And we still love you. And I'm not trying to be a tyrannical, but that's just sort of the structure. And so that's the way we're going to do it. But there's maybe more outside that to consider. And what I'm going to make sure we insert here that you're speaking, I mean, obviously as someone who's well read and experienced in your own personal life. But you're on your path to becoming a therapist, right? Yeah, I'm just wrapping up my master's degree right now. Just have one more semester and seeing clients as I enter. Awesome. And you draw upon that a little bit in, I mean, typically when somebody's coming into your office and experience some level of anxiety, it really fits into this message a lot, right? Yeah, yeah, I use this from quite a bit with clients. Cool. All right, so maybe just lay the foundation for us. Where do we begin to understand the vertical horizontal relationships and how they apply to us in leadership? Yeah, let's do it. Okay, so essentially we have these two different types of relationships vertical or horizontal. And we'll talk about horizontal in a minute, I think. Let's just focus on vertical for now. Vertical relationships are really hard wired into us just because we're human. We are really I mean, we just do it. We walk into a room and we notice who has more power and who has less who matters a little more who matters a little less, we're just kind of wired up for it. There's nothing really essentially wrong with it. I don't want us to pathologize it, but it's definitely worth looking at closer because it can be a real source of anxiety if it is left unconscious. And if you kind of realize the lens you've got on can you can work with it. And I think our earliest memories are a vertical relationship just with our parents, right? We knew that mom was in charge. As we grew older, we matured, but then we started maybe projecting that vertical relationship onto, like you said, organizations were a part of, or when we get a job, okay, he's the boss. I'm the subordinate. Yeah, and I'm glad that you mentioned that because I don't want it to sound like there's something inherently wrong with any kind of vertical Ness. We need parents. We need leaders. Hierarchy does serve functions. Yeah, so it's not that we want to obliterate any kind of hierarchy. It's who we just want to be more intentional and conscious about how we're using it. And I love that you emphasize that even when you walk into a room, it may be just a social gathering and there's just naturally our brain's going to pick out like, okay, he seems like he's running things here. She's like on the mic a lot. So she's running the show or whatever it is. We're just going to pick up on these cues naturally.

Maybe subconsciously about these vertical dynamics that are in the room. Yeah. But I'd say that's kind of the essence of what social anxiety is is when that gets out of control when that's taking up so much brain space. That you can't function while otherwise. But even people who don't necessarily call themselves socially anxious, do it. Yeah, love it. Okay. So let's look at, if we're a vertical, that means that we're in a position of winners and losers, and there's kind of only two options there.

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There's a one up and a one down. So when we go one up, that's any kind of superiority move, like sometimes we do it with name dropping or pulling rank, grabbing moral high ground, we can use shame to go on up. Any kind of energy of like what kind of a person are you? Even where I'm thinking an award council dynamic, where we're sitting in the room, right? At the end of the table, which person's in a suit, which person's not. Yeah, yeah. All that can happen. When it's like, well, as a former stake president, I think. Some of these are subtle and socially acceptable and some of them are more egregious and what kind of a jerk. But the point is that we all do these to some extent. As a way of managing our anxiety of holding on to a sense of self, we sometimes try to go one up on other people. And you say it's sort of this dynamic of we're afraid of being left behind in our tribe. Maybe that I need to one up to some extent so that I can prove that I have a place here, right? That I'm accepted. And that's at the core desire of every human life is I just want to be accepted. I'm like, amongst my group. And so I need a one up. And again, like you said, sometimes it's done in a mi monster reference, what's his name, Brian Regan, skit. But very egregious and almost like, you know, with your nose turned up to a point where you're just, you just mentioned, hey, my son's leaving on a mission this weekend. Isn't that great that I have and again, not what we were saying with words, but you're sort of saying, yeah, I'm part of this tribe because my kids go on missions, right? Yeah, absolutely. That happens. And even non verbally, like facial expressions, we can kind of grab some power that way, posturing, standing over people. Sometimes we do this with our kids or sometimes this is a tricky part of parenting teenagers that all of a sudden you don't have physical leverage. The one up position being a know it all can be one up position, talking over people, name calling of any kind. And like we talked about when we were having the conversation that they're a treat, name calling isn't just such a stupid head. Any kind of label that makes it easier for us to minimize someone else. So that can look like all kinds of things, whether this individual is less active, right? And again, not to say that we can never use these terms or we shouldn't label, but I think it's important to understand the dynamic is often happening behind the scenes with these labels in terms of what we're doing. Why are you using the label? Yeah. What we're doing for you in the conversation. Yeah, the example I used it there a treat was kind of an embarrassing one, but I think it illustrates how really subtle and socially acceptable sometimes these can be, and that was using a mimicking voice that sometimes will do this. We think it's harmless and it's just to make our stories funnier sometimes. But often serves a purpose of making sure that the listener knows that you are the normal one and the person in the story is the ridiculous one. You sort of

turns them into a caricature. Yeah, yeah. We might be telling a story about our mom or our mother in law and we used this judgy voice or we won't be telling a story about our teenager and we use this stupid voice. Oh, come on, mom. That's ridiculous. Yeah. So that's one that I've really had to call myself out on a lot once I kind of realized that's what I was doing. Yeah. And I really want to double down on the fact that, again, we're not trying to say that we just want to point out that this is going to happen good or bad. This is just part of being human. It doesn't, if you do it, it doesn't mean you're a broken person or your judgmental or whatever, I'm going to do this 30 more times today I'll probably do some of these things because it's part of our human experience of articulating our environment, our relationships and things, but it's what we're doing is not necessarily trying to call it out so it stops and goes away, but to call it out and saying, let's talk about this and recognizing what this is doing to our, especially our leadership relationship. Yeah, absolutely. And then I think once you see the behaviors, then you can start asking yourself more questions about why I'm doing it. Do I feel powerless in this relationship? And by trying to find power, do I feel out of control? Am I trying to find control? Or am I being lazy, like intellectually lazy and I don't want to consider other people's viewpoints because that's just hard work, emotionally, intellectually. So it's easier to just cut them down and then I can feel justified. Yeah. I'll tell you what being a bishop that has been ordained and set apart with priesthood keys.

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It is very easy to say, hey guys, listen, I'm the key holder here. So we're just going to do it my way. I'm open to your perspective, what not, and again, not that we're using these words, but you can see how that can be an easier dynamic than saying, you know, I'm going to actually release control here and try and stimulate revelation amongst my word counsel or Mike's my ward, and then even if a decision is made that I don't like, I'm going to say, yeah, let's move forward with it, right? Those are two different dynamics, and you can see that one is maybe a lot easier, even though it's maybe less effective. Yeah, I mean, you can check yourself with looking at what your motivations are and then the other dynamic is especially if you were raised in a family of origin where these power plays were really common. It might feel safe and comfortable for you. I guess that's kind of my therapist self pulling that card out, but it's true. If that's what you're used to, that's what's normal, then that's going to feel safe, oddly enough, even though a lot of these things that we're talking about are mean. If that's what you're used to, that's safe. And maybe this is an extreme example, but I think you sometimes see this especially in the therapist's office of maybe women who grew up in very verbally abusive homes. They sometimes end up with a very fertile abusive husband. You know, it's like they were just sort of drawn into that because that's what they know and what they're comfortable with, even though it's on a level of abuse. Yeah, same dynamic. Yeah. Yeah, I'm glad that you were able to share some examples where you have seen it and word counsel and stuff. Is there anything else that's come to your mind as we've been talking about these last couple of weeks? Yeah, about one up situations. One thing I think and sometimes they have deep roots in our traditions, right? Like even this tradition we have, and something that I've stopped doing, I have it on, well, let me tell

you what it is. One of the things I've stopped doing is when I go do fire sites, where I speak somewhere, I've specifically asked the person and I removed it from my bio to list the previous callings that I've had, like leadership callings, right? I've been a bishop in a state presidency, right? And obviously we do that to sort of there's this one up dynamic. And this is why you should listen to this person about to speak, right? I still include it in some places on the leading saints website for other reasons, but we won't get into that. And there's still one up reasons. But nonetheless. That's one thing we do, right? That and even the feeling of showing up to church on Sunday, right? I want to say, hey, I'm here. I'm here. Or I'm in a suit here. I'm in the white shirt, right? I'm one of others. And again, we're not saying that these should be abolished or go away, but just the fact that the bishopric literally sits up on the stand, the podium, right? And obviously it's a sort of acts as a stage and it's easier to see and whatnot. But these traditions we have there is this one up dynamic. And again, as we get into this, those don't have to go away to fix that dynamic that goes into it. But anyways, those are some of the ones that come to mind. Yeah, and as you're more aware of the things that are there, you can mitigate for them. If you notice, the fact that I'm sitting on the stand might make people less likely to engage with me in an authentic way. So I'm going to be really intentional about inviting them to engage with me to kind of mitigate this natural power structure that's there vertically. Yeah. Okay, then there's one down. Are we ready? Yeah, let's do it. Okay, this one, it feels a little more complex. Because it's maybe a little less obvious little more nuance. We go one down whenever we're taking a victim role. And we take a victim role whenever we're minimizing our choices and acting like we're forced into things, when we hide our needs or desires we're going one down, saying I'm fine when I'm not fine. Any kind of manipulation is going to be one down. There's an innocent victim stance. I'm never enough. I can't do anything right. Quitting early without really giving it a good shot can be going one down, going silent. Playing small in general, resentful accommodation. So this is a phrase that some may be more familiar with others, but resentful accommodation essentially means I'll do what you want. I'll accommodate you, but I'll hate you a little bit for it. Strong word and that probably makes it a little uncomfortable. Maybe that's a little over the top, but I'll resent you a little for it. Yeah. Resentful accommodation. I hate to say. But if you've been married, you've probably. Besides, I've given it, I've taken it. It's just there. Yep. Also, allowing or expecting someone else to do things for you that you know you could do yourself because you're going to take in a one down or asking people to emotionally protect you or letting people emotionally protect you.

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What would be a good example of that one? Oh gosh. Well, families are rampant with this one, where they don't tell mom she couldn't handle it. Dad will fly off the handle if he finds out where we let our fear of other people's emotions dictate our choices and sometimes the person plays into it. By overreacting to every little thing that's going one down like, I don't know, I kind of think of old fashioned like my nerves, my nerves. Yeah. Like a bride and prejudice mom. Can't handle it. But she likes that that gets her out of a responsibility of stepping into it and handling it. So she

plays this card of I can't believe you'd break my heart like that. Very manipulative, right? And I'm just thinking in a church context, like even the sense of like, oh, let's not push a mission too much on the youth or let's not bring it up because we don't want them to feel like they shouldn't. All those things, those dynamics, we don't want them to feel overwhelmed or that pressure to serve emissions. So let's just not talk about it, right? Yeah. We're sort of playing down in order to protect others feelings and how they'll respond. Yeah. Anytime we're keeping the peace in a way that isn't really keeping long-term peace or investing in relationships, it's just reducing conflict in the moment, you're probably going one down. Or going along with ideas that you know are bad, but you just don't want to deal with speaking up. Yeah. Now how often does that happen in word council? It's not until you get home and wine into your spouse about you wouldn't believe what counsel today. And your spouse is kind of thinking, well, why didn't you say that? But if you're in a one down mindset, it doesn't even occur to you. I guess my opinion isn't welcome here and where you just go one down instead of stepping into, I have something to say here. Yeah. Can I give a few that come to mind in a church context or lead to context? Just this playing small I see it a lot where you deflect like when you deflect maybe there's the bishops being released and an individual says, hey, you would be a good bishop and you say, oh no, not me. I would be awful. You wouldn't want, even though you wouldn't be like you'd be fine, but you're sort of playing it down, oh, I'm not supposed to want those things like this tradition of avoiding aspiring. So that's another way of playing small. Or being self deprecating. Like obviously there's a role for that and sort of fun, but I think we all know people and sometimes leaders that are so self deprecating to a point of like, listen, man. You are beating yourself up so much, but almost feels like you're looking for, you're just fishing for compliments at that point. Yeah, you're not that bad, right? Another way I think we go one down is when we blame things on God or on revelation, like, hey, listen, the bishopric came together. We prayed about this and we feel really strongly that you should be in the elders quorum presidency and again we're not owning it. We're passing it on to like this is just what God wants so you can either say no to God or yes to God, right? Very manipulative, right? Yeah, and we do that to ourselves in our relationship with God and that's maybe kind of a whole other conversation, but I took this job that I didn't really want. We had this baby that we weren't really sure about. Whatever the life decisions are, of course, sometimes got asked things of you that you have to step into the uncomfortable. Yes. But there's also this room where we just, we just blame God and never actually own the choice. And that's a slippery slope. Yeah. And there's another one that I really have been intentional not to use is when we act like God is sort of being like is toying with our life. Oh, I said that we would never move and well, God had to something else in mind, right? And it's like, I don't think God's up there trying to be like, oh, you think that will watch this. No, no, no, knock on wood. Then here it comes. Yeah, exactly. We just did a mimicking voice. I love it. Sorry, Brooke, we're just calling each other out here. So deep. So deep. Very meta episode. Very meta. Anyways, anything else with this one down dynamic that would be worth considering? Yeah, I guess, well, what we were able to explore at the women's retreat was specifically how historically women have used this one down spot for power, which sounds maybe funny at first glance because it seems like one up is powerful, but there's power in one down. There's a victim power. And I guess I want to couch that in. That's not blaming women for having done that because historically they've been denied opportunities to be in

decision making roles in their lives. So you do what you got to do, but I think if we're going to try to strive for Zion, it's worth looking at this.

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That it's like in that movie, my big fat Greek wedding or the mom tells the daughter, the man might be the head, but the woman is the neck and the neck can turn the head any way she wants. It's like funny we all laugh. Like another good example of a one down is like in priesthood meeting when you hear men put their wife on a pedestal. You're like, oh, well, this is in charge, right? We were turning into a victim. And I love how you frame it that these are both power positions or I would even frame them is that they are both pride a positions, right? And we've been commanded to avoid pride. We often think pride is when you think you're better than other people or, but it can also mean when you're sort of this, you know, you're playing small or you're rejecting opportunities or what not like that's also a prideful position as well. Yeah, it's not full partnership. It's not. So yeah, that can get tricky and then also one down can get tricky because sometimes we like to call it the christlike position. Which is a little muddy. Like the submissive meek. I'm not going to push back. You walk all over me because I just want to be nice and like Christ like, right? Yeah, yeah. And we often will use the scripture about turning the other cheek to try to justify that. And that was one thing that I was really excited about sharing with the other women was something that I've learned about that verse. And I actually saw this for the first time in Patrick mason and Daniel pulsar's book proclaimed peace. They got it from a man named Walter wink, but he puts that scripture and cultural context of the way that this slapping dynamic works back then. It wasn't just about if someone hits you, let them hit you again. That there was something there about, okay, so in the culture at the time, you would only use your right hand because the left hand was unclean. So if someone is hitting someone else with their right hand, it's going to be a backhand, which a backhand was culturally symbolic of power. So you would backhand a slave or a Roman would backhanded Jew or a husband went back into wife. It was a power play more than an actual physical injury. So and this is kind of complex. You kind of have to act it out to really understand the dynamics of the right cheek and the right hand and the backhand, but if someone who is being a backhanded turns the other cheek, then they're offering the left cheek, which means that the only way they could be hit is with the open hand. And open handed hit would never happen between a master and a slave because it would actually be elevating the slave. It would be saying that you are my equal. I'm engaging with you in a fist fight of equals. So I just think that really changes the dynamic because we're looking at what is Jesus really asking of us. He's not saying if someone hits you, let him hit you again. He's saying, turn the other cheek so that you are on equal ground with them. Yeah. That it's establishing your dignity as a human being. So that is kind of the pivot point from looking at vertical relationships of power and one up in one down to what Jesus called us into, which is a horizontal relationship with the people around us, where there is equal footing, where if there are offenses made, they're done so between two humans, both deserving of dignity. Yeah, there can be this offense, right? But the point is, is you're going to turn that cheek and say, I am your

equal. I matter. You can't just hit me like a slave because I'm not your slave, right? You're going to have to hit me with the front of the hand if you're going to hit me because you can't hit me with the back of your hand. I reject that premise. Yeah. I feel like there's so much power in that. Just to have that visual to kind of ground us in what it means to be horizontal. Right. And you saw that. And then just in the life of Jesus Christ, right? He didn't walk into a synagogue and take a seat and say, well, if I could have 5 minutes. Of the meeting, that would be great. He walked in there and said, I'm the son of God. Prophecy fulfilled. And that can look like, oh boy, you know, you shouldn't do that to a meeting, but like, no, I'm turning the cheek. I'm saying, I am your equal. In fact, I am God. And you will listen to the message I have to share. This is who I am. Yeah, he didn't apologize for who he was. He owned it in every instance. Yeah. The call of Christianity isn't a call to be a victim. It's a call to step into. And that concept is really, to me, I wanted to be at the core of everything leading saint stands for is that leadership is not this role that we submissively fall into, like, oh me, like I'd never be a good leader.

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And this is my position in even my local engagement with my ward of, I don't need to be the bishop, but if you're calling a bishop, I better be on the list. I want to make a difference in the kingdom of God. And you don't have to pick me, but I'd be a good one, you know? And I do it my way, sure. Or I'd have a different approach than maybe others would, but I want to roll in the building of the kingdom of God. I've got skeleton I've got experience. Yeah. And I'm sitting at the table. Yeah. That's right. That's right. Love it. Where should we go from here? So what does it mean if you once you start to see these patterns, if you see someone pulling that one up card on you, what does it look like to invite them back to horizontal ground? Gotcha. Yeah, like how do we literally turn that cheek and say, you're not going to one down me, you know? I'm not going to one down you. We're going to be equals here. And what I love about this concept is it so fluidly applies to all of our relationships that we can practice this in our marriages. We can practice this as parents. We can practice this with our word counsels and whatever calling we serve in in the community and that it's all it's all the same muscle that as we develop it in one aspect of our lives, it's going to flow into others. So we can kind of get out of this idea of lists of things that we have to get good at, a list of different roles in realize that as I improve just as a person, all these roles are going to get better. So maybe we'll start with the most personal of a marriage situation. Yes. So this is a true story that I have my husband's permission to share. I'm not throwing them under the bus. And I know your husband, he's a phenomenal individual. He's a pretty good guy. But we were in a back and forth. We had to use the word fight, an elevated conversation. And we got to that place where I think most people can relate where the tide kind of turns and you're not really talking about the thing anymore, the low blow is made. And then our dynamics up to that point that was kind of our pattern was something hurtful would be said and then either that invited the other person to say something more hurtful and go on up or invite other person to start crying and go one down. I can't believe you'd say that. Lock yourself in the bathroom, whatever the thing you do. And I'd been learning about this concept and so

when the tide turned and he said something kind of below the belt and I wanted to just cry really in the moment, just kind of collapse. I held my ground, noticed the dynamic and I said, I don't think you really mean that. I think that you are really upset and you're hurting and you want me to hurt too right now. And it was like, wow. That was just not our normal dynamic for me to call it out like that. And we kind of looked at each other, like now what? Took a couple beats a couple breaths, and then we're able to re-engage in a totally different kind of conversation that wasn't just this back and forth of one person going up. The other person going down, then flipping that person going up, another person going down, or just continually trying to up and up and up each other. It was different. It wasn't horizontal anymore. I mean, it wasn't vertical anymore. I get my words right. We stepped into horizontal. And we're able to get back to the actual issue. And when we're in that vertical dynamic, like someone always has to be on top. And so you like battling for that position or you're completely shifting to victim. Like if I can get to the bottom quicker than he can get to the bottom, then I'm going to look like the victim he'll look like the perpetrator. And then I win, right? So there's no place on the vertical dynamic where it's like, okay, we're both even because the minute you get even suddenly shifts horizontal. And it's never good long term. Yeah. Even if you get to a place that end the argument, you're never better off for it if you stay in those vertical holes. So that's at the personal level. How does that look like in my private life? But then it's the same principle at play when you're in a meeting with leaders and you feel like you were bulldozed. And you are able to say, I don't think I got a chance to share the way that that would affect the many women in our ward. Can we come back to that? It's the same thing. It's just speaking to this dynamic is happening, and I'm not going to participate in it. You know, I think that's really, really applicable in word counsel. How often do we, oh, okay, I guess we're just going with that decision, just in our lips, is that one down? Okay. Well, go home and complain to our spouse about it. But that reinforcing the vertical Ness.

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You can step into horizontal with that moment of courage and saying, I don't think I've had a chance to share. Yeah. Can I make sure that scene? Yeah. And this is a dynamic. It's really tricky, but it's worth engaging and trying. Because you can always try again, right? Because I can see someone could say, oh, I'm going to do that. So I'm going to say, I'm a woman, and I don't feel hurt in this meeting. Well, that's one up, right? All right? But to shift it and I think you phrased it perfectly. Even if you say it wrong, like you can come back and say, wait a minute, I'm sorry. I said that wrong. What I'm meaning is I'm not feeling heard, and I thought I was a member of this council. But I'm not feeling hurt yet, you know? And again, it shifts and then that goes horizontal that we're all equals here. Yeah, and that's a good point that often when I teach people about this, they want me to give them more phrases. That sounded so good. Tell me what I should say in this situation. Tell me what I should say in this situation. But the thing is, I can't tell you the words, but I can teach you how to check yourself. So if you can check yourself, like, am I just going to try to go one up? Am I going to belittle in the name of trying to get my voice heard? Or can I really step into, I'm not here to belittle, I'm just here to be on equal

ground. Not one up. I don't think I had a chance to share yet. Is it okay if we go back for a second so that I can make sure you hear this perspective? Yes. Yeah, that's so good. And just like, again, you're just like saying what it is. I don't want to be little anyone. I just want to feel like I'm an equal here. So am I in equal here or should I leave? And I love that you said that you might get it wrong. And that's okay. You might shift a little bit to the one up or the one down because that's what we're used to. And that's okay. You can try again. And if it didn't come out just right, you can say, can I say that a different way? Yeah. It's definitely more of a cadence than a specific phrases that you use. So you can try and write it down like, oh, I'm going to walk into this meeting and say this. But just walk in with the cadence of like, I'm here looking for a horizontal dynamic. And I'm going to, we're not going to proceed about details and tell that is set. And then we can move forward as equals. Yeah. And then sometimes even trickier is to figure out how to react if someone goes one down on you. If they're playing the one down card, when you notice someone saying, I'm fine, yeah, that's fine. It's no problem. With a shake in their head that tells you you know they're not fine. They're accommodating and they're probably going to, like we said, hey, a little bit for it. You can invite them into that equal footing by just calling it out by saying, I heard you say you're fine, but I notice you're shaking your head in a way that makes me wonder if you really are. Do you want to talk about this some more? And the person might say, no, it's fine. And that's their choice. If they want to hold that one down card, that's where they want to be. But you invited them to equal ground. Yes. By just saying, I noticed this. Do you have more to say? Yeah. What's next here? I guess let's just talk about how anxiety works with this because we talked about how we often will do the power plays or the one downs, it's really of anxiety. And we do. But that's not to say that when you step into horizontal that that's not an anxiety producing situation. Because let me tell you what. All the situations I've shared have been ones that I've experienced and they're heart racing experiences. And that fight with my husband was like, all I could do to just to say stay there and say that in my own space and to be in meetings like that and just say, can we come back to this? My heart's going crazy. It's not an anxiety free situation at all. There's anxiety there. But I think the point is that anxiety is going to be a part of life so we can use it to grow or we can just keep finding these release valves. And then we can't harness the anxiety to move us into being a better version of ourselves when we just keep releasing it. And when we go one up or one down, either way, it's just a release valve. When we go horizontal, the anxiety might mount, but it's a tension that pushes us into a better version of ourselves. And it pushes the relationship into a better version of that relationship. Yeah. So I don't want anyone to come away from this conversation thinking that it's going to feel warm and cozy. To step into more horizontal relationships, whether at home or at work or at church, it's painful in a way, but it's a pain that is meaningful because it's growing you. Right. Yeah, and just shifting back to award counsel dynamic. Like we said earlier, it's easier for the bishop to come and make all the decisions.

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It's easier for the primary president just to not say anything and stay quiet the whole meeting and just nod your head with whatever the bishop wants to do. It's easier to do that. But this is a higher and holier way that stimulates revelation, like in my opinion after understanding the dynamics like in my opinion, revelation can only be established at the Pinnacle with a horizontal identity of that group. That a horizontal relationship has to be established among everybody in a minute that gets out of whack and it happens so subtly, right? That suddenly we're just kind of leaning on what the bishop says. The bishop's opinion means a little bit more than maybe the elders quorum presence of beta, right? Correct that. And then move forward with making decisions or whatnot. And then this is sort of how we check ourselves, right? Is there a horizontal dynamic happening here? Does anybody feeling misheard? Is anybody feeling like I'm talking too much? Or whatever it is. Yeah. Which is really at our theological core that we believe in the doctrine of counsels and that that's where God's power comes from. And hopefully I'm not jumping ahead, but just consider our tradition from the beginning of time, literally. Even the plan of Salvation was determined on a horizontal council situation. God didn't come to us and say, this is my plan, get in line. Who's going first? He said, here's my plan. What do you think? And he didn't go to the save and say, you're going to be the savior. He waited for the savior to say, you know what? Here am I send me? I would go. Because I collaborative experiences. It's a collaborative experience. And we've worshiped a collaborative God. And that's why I love the tradition and doctrine we have of council meetings. And revelation coming through the practice of council meetings, right? Another part of the way that this influences our roles and award, I think, is so often members of the word council, the leadership and award experienced burnout. And there's a lot asked of people in those positions, and they can feel really drained and put upon pretty easily because a lot to ask of them. But I think it's related to this because you don't get burnt out if you are receiving as much as you're giving. And if you are in a vertical place, you're not able to receive well. Because if you're one up, that means that you're receiving things as accolades on a pedestal, which is a lonely place to be. And will lead to burnout. Or if you're going one down, you're receiving in the form of head pats and being patronized. Which is also a lousy place to be. And you'll get burnt out. But if you can be on equal footing with the people you're serving with, there's this free flow of giving and receiving that just can't happen if you're always one up or one down. Yeah. Love that. This burnout is really crucial because we see it so often in our faith tradition, right? I mean, in a lay leadership that you have so many other demands in life, like if you don't keep this dynamics horizontal, it's got to be a team effort or else it's just going to burn you out and you see that a lot with bishops. My mind goes to the dynamic of the focus on the youth and the delegation to relief society and elders quorum and they're still like we have this tradition of sort of this vertical dynamic when it comes to I'm the bishop and you report to me as a really exciting and elders quorum president. But I mean, on paper, sure, right? With keys and whatever. But to switch that and say, actually, we're going to get in the room and we're a team. I've got the youth. You got the elders. Like, what can I do so that you feel more empowered with the others? Sister Jones, what can I do to something you feel more powered with the sisters? How can I get out of your way so that we're all on the same horizontal playing field? Yeah, and that doesn't mean that sometimes decisions are going to have to be made that not everyone's really thrilled about. But I think we all know that there's a difference between someone making edicts. And someone truly engaging with their counsel. And at the end of the day, maybe you still don't like their decision. But there's a

qualitative difference in the way the relationship is handled regardless of what the actual decision at the end of the day is. Yeah. Yeah, that's right. It's worth it. Yeah. Anything else related to burnout that we haven't hit on. No, I think that's where I'm also wanted to go with it. Just how much we don't receive when we're in leadership callings and sometimes it's our own posturing fault. That makes it hard for those people. People are trying to give. But if you're posturing yourself above or below them. And don't you see this sometimes in service? Somewhat easier to give service in that vertical position, this may be another one.

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Oh, you're sick. Well, I'm going to bury you in casseroles. It's going to be great. And you're going to love it. But then we're the one that needs the casseroles. It's like, I'm not going to tell anybody. I don't want the attention. Yeah, I'll figure it out, type of thing. And so yeah, you can see how that burnout can happen when you're either always giving or you're never receiving. Yeah. And that that doesn't feel good either. People feel that vibe if you're giving to them from a place of superiority. Yeah. Nobody likes that kind of service. I guess just with this issue and so many other things we talked about. It's not the outward behavior as much as the inner intention. Yes. The same scenario could play out with bringing someone dinner when they're sick that could be from a one up position and it would just probably hurt the relationship more than help it. And the same dinner could be delivered from a horizontal ground, I love you and this is a gesture to show it. And it could benefit the relationship deeply. Same gesture, different intentionality, different motivation. Yeah, and that's exactly where I want to reiterate here that this isn't some like sly episode to influence that we abolish all authority or priesthood keys. We're not saying, well, now the bishopric should actually sit in the pews with the rest of us or we shouldn't have this doctrine of priesthood keys or there shouldn't be accounts of the 12 apostles. They should just be 12 guys who speak every single like we're not saying any of that, right? We're saying this is an inner intention of everything we're doing. You can be the bishop with all the authority with all the keys sitting on the stand and still approach your ward with an inner tension of we are all Zion here. We are all have a place I want to hear everybody's opinion as much as I can with my mortal limits. I want to make decisions with everybody's perspective in mind as much as that is possible. I'm going to be that bishop with the inner intention to be horizontal with everybody. Absolutely. What do we miss Brooke? Did we cover it all on me? You're 6 book series. I'm sure that'll come out someday. We'll cover it all. Well, and that's what's been really fun ever since the retreat having a chance to talk with the other women there. Well, that's what's cool about their treat format in general, that you can have a presentation introduce an idea. And then you're still spending time with the participants for the next, I mean, I had another two days after I presented to hear the way that people were internalizing it and the questions they had about it and where they'd like to dive in deeper and so yeah, it's a frame that hopefully is helpful for people and as you think more about this framing, more personal application and questions will come up. And what I love about it is that I get the emails leading saints, right? The tyrannical bishop or stake president or relief society president and man. If they

would just change, how can I get them to listen to leading saints so that they begin to embrace these principles like what I love about it is you can't just throw the leader on their bus. You can't just say it's his fault or her fault. If she just did it right, then we'd be happy again because that's what you're going one down. You're becoming the victim. So regardless of where you're at, the calling you have, this is what it's so enriching about is that this is how you can lead. Is that regardless of where you are, you can stay horizontal. You don't have to go to victim mode. You don't have to go to tyrannical mode. You could say I'm going to regardless of where I am, how can I go horizontal? And you don't need a calling either. I had an experience in my stake when we first moved here and I was a nobody. I didn't have a calling yet. Nobody knew who I was, but there's something at the stake level that really bothered me and I felt myself going one down. I could tell because I was whining to my husband about it a lot. And I knew that I wasn't stepping into horizontal. And for me in that situation, it meant writing a letter and saying, I don't know that you see the way that this thing affected me and people in my similar situation. I didn't have a calling. Nobody asked me for my opinion. And yet, if I really believed this business of everyone as a seat at the table, why wouldn't they want to hear from me? Why wouldn't I write a letter and just say, this is how I experienced it. Yeah, that's so helpful. I'm just thinking about that person because again, I get these emails of the person saying Oprah, you just don't understand. I mean, I appreciate your cute little model here, but if you had experience with my bishop, like I've done the things I've written the letters, I've had the meetings I've tried to speak up and this and that meeting. It just doesn't work. And he just refuses to go horizontal. He may is committed to a vertical dynamic in our work. Like what would you say to that person? I guess I would just say to go back to like that analogy of turn the other cheek, you still might get hit.

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You can't control other people. They might insist upon the vertical roll. But you can make it qualitatively different by stepping into your own space. So the hit still might happen, but it can happen as an equal. And you have control over that. You can't control if they swing at you or not. But you have control over if they do so in a demeaning way, reinforces the dynamic of you being less than them, or you can do so in a way that steps into your own dignity. Yeah. So yeah, it might not change. But the fact that you did what you could to invite the other person into horizontal means you changed. And the relationship is essentially different. Yeah. Yeah, you may have that tyrannical leader that he or she can not control how you show up on Sundays. Yeah, right? Or if you do show up on Sundays, unfortunately, right? You don't have to go to church. And I hate saying that because of course I want everybody in the pews there on Sunday. But you have the power to set a boundary and say, you're not going to hit me like that. Or you're not going to engage with me like that. So you either don't engage with me, or you hear what I say, or you move it to horizontal, right? As we wrap up, I'm trying to anticipate all the emails that because people can take this the wrong way, right? One, I think, would be worth addressing is you are not saying victims don't exist or any victim in the world of abuse has no argument. In fact, there are instances and marriages or even organizations where real abuse

and trauma is happening. And so anyways, what comes to mind for those people who are literally victims of abuse in a relationship? Yeah, absolutely. I'm glad you mentioned that. Of course, there are real perpetrators and real victims. And there is, I guess I would say there is always some way to find your dignity in it. And that's the challenge of all of us in any situation in any power dynamic is where is there a space for my dignity? How can I respect myself in this horrible situation? There are situations that people are powerless to change. But we can always ask ourselves, how can I respect myself in the way that I respond to it? Yeah. My mind just went to you think of Elizabeth smart. I mean, look at the dignity that she's found in herself from that long experience that absolutely she was a victim. There's no way to describe any other way. But the way she's carried herself from there is, I mean, she just spills dignity. I mean, it just comes out of her. She's just a remarkable individual. Rick, do we do it? We covered it all. I think we can talk about it. I can talk about this stuff all the day long. That's so good. So good. And people ask you this at the end of your presentation like if people do want to know more about this. And I think this isn't just come all from your brain, even though you're brilliant, but this is a lot of study and research and whatnot. But if people do want to learn more about this philosophy this approach, this framing, any resources you would recommend. Yeah. So in the psychology field, you can trace it back to a guy named Alfred Adler who's like a contemporary of Freud, but took a very different angle than Freud did. But he kind of introduced this idea of one up and one down. So if anyone's trying to research, where did this idea come from? That's a great name to go to. There's a book called the courage to be disliked that is a good outline of what Larry and philosophy is about. A resource that really kind of started me and my journey with this was the work of Jennifer Finley. She does quite a bit of work around this concept in marriage. And what it looks like. She is a future guest of league and states. I want everybody to know. I'm not avoiding her. I'd be on a few emails like, why am I talking? It's going to happen. But she's great. Yeah, she's awesome resource. Yeah, she's great. And a lot of the things we talked about today are themes that come up in her work. And yeah, I guess I would say those two are great places to start. Jennifer Finley said in fact, that's a great archive on her website of both classes and interviews that she's done. And that book, the courage to be disliked as a good one. Love it. And I'm just thinking, you know, obviously with most of my interviews, I have a specific question I end with. And I just like in the context of this discussion, you know, I typically ask, how is being a leader helped you better follow Jesus Christ? And what I'm really asking there is how has being a leader helped you discover more horizontal relationships that helps you become more like Jesus Christ. So anyways, now confusing and muddying the waters. But Brooke the last question I have for you is just reflecting on your role as a leader, both as we know that that doesn't necessarily mean what the title and just in your how you show up as a leader in these various contexts in your life.

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How has that helped you become more like Jesus Christ? I think it's helped me, well, maybe I guess I'll turn it a little bit, how is Jesus Christ help me be a leader? I think it's kind of the same

thing just an inverse. But just find courage. I just look at the life of Jesus Christ as so inspirational to how to step in to this courageous space of growth and to see that that is the essence of leadership is to let people see you owning your life and being courageous, stepping towards the things that need to be said or the actions that need to be taken. And leadership has a pretty deep connection to those two things. What's the point of having leaders if it's not to help the group have the courage it takes to move to higher ground? And Jesus Christ showed us how to do that. 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 or go to 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 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 ward council or other leaders that you may know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed. Remember, we'd love to have you at our next in person retreat, go check out the different options and locations where we're having these at LeadingSaints.org/gathering. 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 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 of which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.