

Rock Solid Family Relationships: Strengthening the Husband/Wife Relationship

BYU Education Week
August 2008

It Takes All Kinds

"With thirty years in the LDS Church (10 states and four countries). I think I am something of an expert on Mormons. Enough of an expert in fact to know that I'm going to catch hell for this. Here it is. In the entire world there are only five kinds of Mormons. Basically.

"The first kind of Mormon is the **Liberal Mormon**, this includes all Mormons who attend church only when they feel like it. Liberal Mormons anywhere to the left of the Republican Party, are not rabidly pro-life and don't think every word that falls from the lips of a General Authority represents the actual personal opinion of Jesus Christ. Liberal Mormons are going to hell. Just ask any of the other four kinds of Mormons. On the other hand Liberal Mormons think the intolerance and naive stupidity of other Mormons is more of a threat to mankind than Russian missiles, wheat weevils or 'R' rated movies.

It Takes All Kinds

"After Liberal Mormons come **Genuine Mormons**. Nearly every Mormon thinks this is the kind of Mormon he is. In reality, Genuine Mormons are about as rare as, oh say, angels or golden plates. Genuine Mormons are unimpressed with themselves and their opinions. They are affable, easy going and keenly interested in the well being of others. They live various lifestyles and when compared to the more outlandish lifestyles of other Mormons, tend to be dang near invisible. A friend of mine says that this is because they have all been translated. He is wrong. My studies have proved there are only 11 Genuine Mormons on the face of the earth. Two of them live in Utah, three in the remainder of the United States, two in South America, one each in Japan, Canada, Samoa and Spain. There are no Genuine Mormons in California or Idaho. One doubles as a Liberal Mormon, of the remaining ten, four are the Three Nephites and John the Beloved.

It Takes All Kinds

"The third kind of Mormon is the **Conservative Mormon**. These kinds of Mormon are the suit and flowered dress crowd you see at church. They tend to be a little overweight and Republican. They attend church 95% of the time but may, if pressed hard enough sleep through General Conference. They pay tithing on their net income and have 4.5 children. The homes of C.M's are decorated with Relief Society nick-knacks. Conservative Mormons humor Liberal Mormons because after all, they are God's children too. 75% of the LDS church is C.M. and 99% of all Conservative Mormons were born into the church.

It Takes All Kinds

"Fourth are the Orthodox Mormons. Orthodox Mormons would not miss church for the death of a relative. Left to their own devices Orthodox Mormons would eventually make the bringing of dry cereal and Tupperware bowls to Sacrament Meeting a gospel ordinance. Orthodox Mormons have 7.8 children - not because they enjoy them but because somewhere it says that they should, and because even abstinence is an intolerable form of birth control. Orthodox Mormons are scared of Russians, MTV and accidentally partaking of the sacrament with their left hands. They believe Liberal Mormons are the children of the devil. Orthodox Mormons pay tithing based upon their gross income and believe Diet Coke is part of the Word of Wisdom.

It Takes All Kinds

"Finally there are the Nazi Mormons. 10% of the LDS church is Nazi Mormon. Of that 10% 90% live in Utah and most within shouting distance of BYU. Nazi Mormons are prone to wild claims in testimony meeting about things which cannot be proven. Nazi Mormons claim Diet Coke is the same thing as heroin and heaven is a multi-level marketing system. Nazi Mormons always want to have private talks with you about either golden futures, alien landing strips or soap. Nazi Mormons believe french kissing is cause for excommunication, they routinely take the advice of General Authorities and even improve on it. If no single dating until 16 is good, no single dating until draft age is better. Nazi Mormons pay tithing on their gross income including the stuff they get from the Bishops Storehouse.

"There you go. Remember, it is possible to fluctuate between levels. In truth one could find himself swayed from the Conservative Mormon level to the Orthodox Mormon level by a particularly powerfully fireside speaker. This only applies to one-level jumps. A Liberal Mormon for example, could never drop four levels to Nazi Mormon" - Robert Kirby

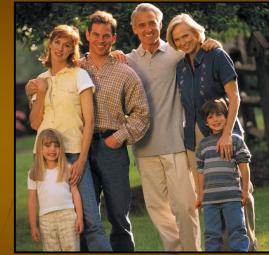
Singles Ward



- Whether you loved the movie or hated it, the funniest part for me were the typical stereotypes:
- What were they?

The Movie I want to Make:

- "Residential Ward"
- What would the stereotypes be?
- "Detailed" person
- "Idea" person
- "Critical of Everything" person
- "Whiner" person
- "Behind the scenes" person
- "Up in front" person
- "Program" Person
- "People" Person
- "Everything is a crisis" person
- "Organized" person
- "Rule" person
- "Joe-Scouter" person
- "Genealogist" person
- "We buy all our furniture at Deseret Industries" person
- "Free Spirit" person



Elder Carmack's Personality Profile:

1. **Analytical Leader:** Give him all the data and facts. Give him reasoning and analysis. He will help with the education of our young people as he reads, listens, and studies the issues along with your suggested solutions. He him according to your best perceptions and needs.
2. **Driver Leader:** [This is] fairly common around here, remember that these people want to make the decisions. You help them by giving them alternatives and choices. Help them see how they can be effective, but do not dictate to them. They can really move the work forward, but these people respond especially poorly to weakness.
3. **Expressive Leader:** [These leaders] want vision, and they want expressive involvement. Show them how their involvement can help. Give them vision, and show them the glory of the work of education. Dramatize your points with expressive language. Paint a picture.
4. **Amiable Leader:** You may want to share with him the work of the people he admires, those who are doing some great things. He cares about others and is inspired by them. He will be more relaxed. You may even need to push a little here, but if you understand his style, you can get the job done.

Color Code and Personality Theory

- **Psychological Reasons Behind Color Reactions**
- In 1978, Don Lowry suggested that like four humors of Greeks, four major Myers Briggs Types, four temperaments, there are four basic color personalities. He theorized that your choice for four major colors; blue, gold, green and orange, depicts your emotional reactions in the real world situations.
- Psychologists agree that different colors may have different influence upon different people, depending upon their past related memories. An orchard of red roses can make you jollier. However, red blood can have entirely different impact. However, color personality tests have developed generalized behavioral meanings of colors.

Color Meanings

- Different color personality tests use different sets of colors. They differ even in the number of colors. Some important colors and their related generalized color meanings are given here for your amusement.

1. Orange Color Meanings

- **Orange is related to energy, strength and power. Your preferred choice of orange shows you a fighter. You love to win. You are a competitor.** You are considered more suitable for the careers in sports, architecture and engineering. You fancy for design and form. Color personality tests term you as an energetic motivator.

Color Meanings

2. Gold Color Meanings

- **Gold color represents loyalty and responsibility. When your primary choice is for gold, the color personality tests consider you an organizer.** You love a peaceful environment. You value work and service oriented tasks. You have a greater degree of performance, stability and orderliness.

3. Green Color Meanings

- The color personality preference tests assume that **green color represents persistent, decisive and resistant state of mind. You are considered assertive. You care very little for feelings and focus upon the available information before making a decision.** They consider you suitable for careers in science, research, accounts, and auditing. You are capable to analyze the details in minute.

Color Meanings

4. Blue Color Meanings

- Blue color is related to calmness. When your primary choice is blue, the color personality tests consider you creative, balanced and harmonious. You avoid too many conflicting opinions. You are peaceful and possess a developed aesthetic sense. You are considered suitable for careers in art, music and literature.

5. Red Color Meanings

- Red color excites... The color personality tests associate it with enthusiasm, strength and competitiveness. You love and hate with a certain degree of intensity. You are courageous. You are considered better for careers in surgery, emergency medical services, weight lifting, athletics etc. You can communicate well and tend to be talkative. When you start listening others, you can solve problems better than others.

The Impact of Unrealistic Expectations

Recently the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists reported on the most common problems facing couples entering marriage. The therapists ranked unrealistic expectations of marriage or spouse as the number one problem facing LDS couples entering marriage (71%), followed by communication (69%), money management/ finances (58%), decision making/problem solving (54%), power struggles (53%), and sex (50%). Unfortunately, couples who are not prepared to resolve some of these problems end up terminating their marriages too quickly.

The Key:

"If each spouse is forever seeking the interests, comforts, and happiness of the other, the love . . . will grow" (Spencer W. Kimball, *Marriage and Divorce* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, Co., 1976], p. 23).



A Second Witness:

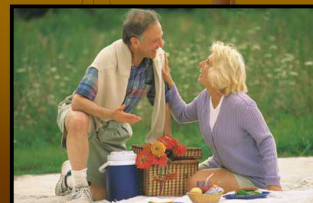
"The secret of a happy marriage is to serve God and each other. The goal of marriage is unity and oneness, as well as self-development. Paradoxically, the more we serve one another, the greater is our spiritual and emotional growth." (President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), "Fundamentals of Enduring Family Relationships," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 60).

Standing Side by Side

Elder Hugh B. Brown has written: "Where there is deep and mature love, which is being nurtured and jealously guarded, *the couple will confide in each other and discuss all matters of joint interest—and in marriage everything should be of interest to both*—they will stand together in adversity, will lean on, support, and give strength to each other. They will find that their combined strength is more than double the strength of either one of them alone" (*You and Your Marriage*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960, 30.)

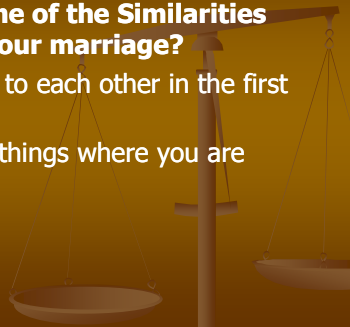
Married People Should Be Best Friends

"Married people should be *best friends*; no relationship on earth needs friendship as much as marriage" (Marion D. Hanks, *Ensign*, November 1984, 36).



Where Are You Similar?

- **What Are Some of the Similarities You have in your marriage?**
- What drew you to each other in the first place?
- Write down 10 things where you are totally alike:

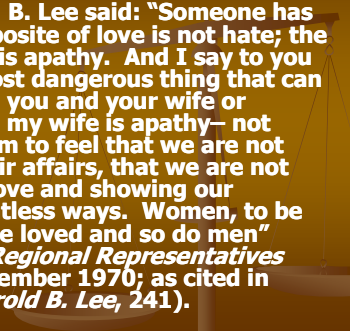


Feeding the Lawn



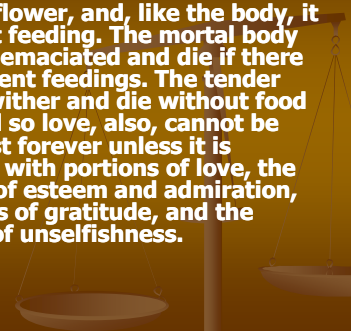
Apathy in Marriage

President Harold B. Lee said: "Someone has said that the opposite of love is not hate; the opposite of love is apathy. And I say to you brethren, the most dangerous thing that can happen between you and your wife or between me and my wife is apathy— not hate, but for them to feel that we are not interested in their affairs, that we are not expressing our love and showing our affection in countless ways. Women, to be happy, have to be loved and so do men" (Harold B. Lee, *Regional Representatives Seminar*, 12 December 1970; as cited in *Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, 241).



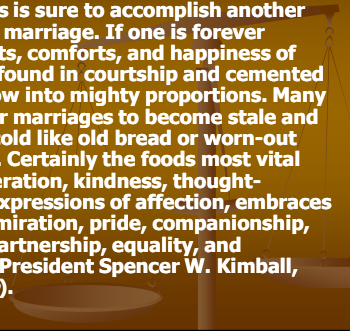
Love Is Like a Flower

"Love is like a flower, and, like the body, it needs constant feeding. The mortal body would soon be emaciated and die if there were not frequent feedings. The tender flower would wither and die without food and water. And so love, also, cannot be expected to last forever unless it is continually fed with portions of love, the manifestation of esteem and admiration, the expressions of gratitude, and the consideration of unselfishness."



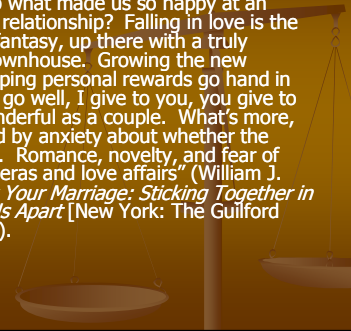
Love is Like a Flower

"Total unselfishness is sure to accomplish another factor in successful marriage. If one is forever seeking the interests, comforts, and happiness of the other, the love found in courtship and cemented in marriage will grow into mighty proportions. Many couples permit their marriages to become stale and their love to grow cold like old bread or worn-out jokes or cold gravy. Certainly the foods most vital for love are consideration, kindness, thoughtfulness, concern, expressions of affection, embraces of appreciation, admiration, pride, companionship, confidence, faith, partnership, equality, and interdependence" (President Spencer W. Kimball, *Marriage & Divorce*).



Take Back Your Marriage (Cont.)

"Why do we give up what made us so happy at an earlier phase of our relationship? Falling in love is the ultimate consumer fantasy, up there with a truly wonderful SUV or townhouse. Growing the new relationship and reaping personal rewards go hand in hand. When things go well, I give to you, you give to me, and we are wonderful as a couple. What's more, our passion is fueled by anxiety about whether the relationship will last. Romance, novelty, and fear of loss— the stuff of operas and love affairs" (William J. Doherty, *Take Back Your Marriage: Sticking Together in a World that Pulls Us Apart* [New York: The Guilford Press, 2003], 17-19).



The Need for Rituals to Reconnect

"Rituals are social interactions that are repeated, coordinated, and significant. This is the classical, anthropological definition. Rituals can be everyday interactions, or they could be once a year, but they're repeated. They're also coordinated. You have to know what is expected of you in a ritual; you can't have a meal ritual together if you don't know when to show up for it, and you can't dance together if you don't know what kind of dance you are going to do.... Rituals are not only repeated and coordinated, they are significant. A ritual is something that has positive emotional meaning to both parties" (William J. Doherty, *Take Your Marriage Back*, [New York, Guilford Press, 2003], 126).

Rituals vs. Routine

That lack of significance is what distinguishes a ritual from a routine. "A marriage routine is something you do over and over in a coordinated way, but that does not have much emotional meaning. You can have dinner as a couple every night, while one of you watches television and the other reads the paper. This is probably a routine because it lacks emotional significance" (William J. Doherty, *Take Your Marriage Back*, [New York, Guilford Press, 2003], 126).

Connection Rituals

Connection rituals are "rituals of everyday life in which the spouses share time and attention with each other. They are often low key as opposed to intense, comforting as opposed to sparkling. Connection rituals are at the base of the pyramid of marriage, right above commitment" (William J. Doherty, *Take Your Marriage Back*, [New York, Guilford Press, 2003], 126).



Examples of Connection Rituals

1. Checking in on the phone each day as a couple. I know another couple who text message each other daily. Remember, it's only a ritual if both couples know that it's connection time.
2. Goodbye's in the morning, greetings in the evening, and going to eat and talk
3. Some couples always express love for each other. One couple says "I love you" every morning before he leaves for work. They never know if they will see each other again.
4. Working together in the yard or on a home improvement project.
5. Watching your favorite TV show together

Greeting Rituals



Talk Rituals

"Every marital advice book stresses the importance of taking time to communicate. But if a married couple with children has fifteen minutes of uninterrupted, nonlogical, nonproblem-solving talk every day, I would put them in the top five percent of all married couples in the land. It's an extraordinary achievement. When I say that to my undergraduate students who are not yet married, they can't believe it. When we are courting and falling in love we have oodles of time to talk... it's talk that propels most of us to fall in love and want to get married. After we get married... we still have time to talk, but even then our time is starting to erode because of the TV, the Internet, the newspaper, and general household management. If we then have kids, time to talk takes a big dive. You're not going to have time for personal talk, if you have children, unless you ritualize it. Mumbling at 11 o'clock at night when you are exhausted does not count as a talk ritual" (William J. Doherty, *Take Your Marriage Back*, [New York, Guilford Press, 2003], 129-130).

For Parents Only



"Earlier I mentioned a talk ritual that Leah and I came up with when our youngest child was four. After dinner, we would clean up, give the kids dessert, start the coffee, and then send the children off to play. We taught them to leave us in peace while we had our coffee, so that we could talk. We asked them not to interrupt us unless the house is burning or something equivalent, in which case they can always call 911 and then interrupt us. This ritual gave us about 15 minutes every day to talk as a couple. We do it to this day, even though the children are gone (mostly)" (William J. Doherty, *Take Your Marriage Back*, [New York, Guilford Press, 2003], 130).

Group Counseling 101

At this time, I would like those of you who are married, or have been married, to reflect for a moment on your own marital rituals of connection, intimacy, and community--big or small, daily or yearly. Here's the plan. I'm going to give you a moment of silence to reflect and come up with a favorite ritual you can share with our group!

Examples from Smart Marriage Conference

"Well, Annabel just wanted me to share with you that we fell into a beautiful ritual in the last year and a half. We decided to take up ballroom dancing every Wednesday night for an hour and a half. And so she just shared with me that when I'm out of town it ain't the same."

Examples from Smart Marriage Conference

"We were married on the 22nd of August, and we celebrate each month our monthly wedding anniversary on the 22nd. We do something special. It's not necessarily a big thing; this past month or this month, in June, we were married 430 months. Always tell that to couples at Pre-Cana or at Engaged Encounter and let them try to figure out what that is in years. It keeps them thinking. But it isn't necessarily a real great thing? I mean it is a great thing between the two of us, but it might be going out to dinner, it might be a phone call during the day to say "I love you," it might mean leaving a note in the morning, it might mean going out to McDonald's, maybe, for dinner, it might mean stopping off at Wal-Mart or Kmart and picking up a new potato peeler or wooden spoon, but the thought is that 'I love you' and it's a special day, and we try to keep it alive, and do so each month."

Examples from Smart Marriage Conference

"We have for 25 years written a daily love letter to each other. We haven't missed a day, even when Joe had open heart surgery. And we have 18-19,000 of them in a closet and the kids are going to read them when we're gone. We don't do it at XYZ time every day; but we do it. We don't go to bed without having written that love letter and talked about it" (William J. Doherty, *Take Your Marriage Back*, [New York, Guilford Press, 2003], 134).

Everyday Ways to Take Back Your Marriage:

- Establish a set time every day to talk— just to check in, with no discussion of money, children, or chores.
- Create a greeting ritual that marks the moment and has meaning for the two of you
- If you've stopped going to bed together regularly, start again
- Leave an affectionate note for your spouse that has no practical purpose
- Start dating again. Go out on a spontaneous date or plan one right now.
- Spend more quiet time together without the television on
- Move the television out of your bedroom
- Notice something you like about your spouse and share it

Becoming One in Marriage

"We believe that when a man and woman are united as husband and wife, and they love each other, their hearts and feelings are one, that love is as enduring as eternity itself, and that when death overtakes them it will neither extinguish nor cool that love, but that it will brighten and kindle it to a purer flame, and that it will endure through eternity" (George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses*, 14:320).

A Lesson from A Prophet

Elder Hugh B. Brown served in the First Presidency, as an Apostle, and in many other important church responsibilities during his lifetime. And yet, it was perhaps his service to his wife and hers to him that was most impressive about this man. In his first address after being called to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Brown said, "I would be ungrateful if I did not acknowledge that Zina Card Brown, my beloved wife, is more responsible for my being here today than I" [*An Abundant Life: The Memoirs of Hugh B. Brown*, 1988, p. ix].



A Lesson from a Prophet



"The Brown's daughter, Mary Firmage, related: "Up until mother's stroke they go through a ritual daily... He'd kiss her goodbye and then they would walk to the front porch together. Daddy would go down three steps, and then turn around and ask, 'Did I kiss you good-bye?' Mother would answer, 'Why, no, you didn't.' Daddy would kiss her again."

"As he walked to the car, Mother would run into the dining room, where she would blow kisses to him from the window. While daddy was backing the car out of the drive, Mother would run back to the porch where she'd wave a handkerchief until he drove out of sight. Just before the car turned the corner, Daddy would blink the brake lights three times, his code for "I love you" (*Church News*, 26 October 1974, 5).

Ideas for Restoring Oneness in Marriage:

1. **Have goals together as a couple and review them often.** I'm sure you wouldn't be surprised that when I ask couples about goals, they look at me with a blank stare.
2. **Weekly Couple Meeting; each Sunday.** A time for goals, reviewing the calendar, working on weaknesses; planning meals, budget and financial issues, teaching the gospel. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
3. **Night and Morning Prayer ...** to say thanks, to ask for help in your marriage and family, to worship together. Read and study together as a couple.

Ideas for Restoring Oneness in Marriage:

4. **A Daily Phone Call or Personal Conversation ...** to say "I love you," to touch base, to discuss the day, to show you care.

5. **A Weekly Date ...** to a favorite park, a concert, the library, the gym; or staying home for a candlelight dinner, a game, or a mutual hobby. Dating your spouse weekly has everything to do with being the right person. Love is a daily decision and a daily portion keeps the marriage alive.

Ideas for Restoring Oneness in Marriage:

6. **Daily Service ...** helping with house or yard work, mending a piece of clothing, taking a turn with the sick baby, fixing a favorite meal. (*Write it down. Do it!*)
7. **Daily Scripture Reading ...** to learn the gospel, to receive inspiration for yourself and your marriage, to become more like Jesus.
8. **Working Together ...** caring for a garden, painting a bedroom, washing the car, scrubbing floors, building a piece of furniture, writing a poem together, team teaching a class.
9. **Courtesies ...** like saying please and thank you, not interrupting or belittling, not doing all the talking, continuing the niceties of courtship.

Ideas for Restoring Oneness in Marriage:

10. ***Occasional Gifts ...*** such as a note, a needed item—but mostly gifts of *time* and self.
11. ***Showing Your Children that Your Marriage Comes First. Set boundaries. Let your children know that you are in a conversation or activity with your spouse, and that takes priority. You will attend to the child's needs in a moment. Have a Check in time.***

Marriage is the Sun; Children Planets

"I don't hold out my own marriage as a model for all couples. And I don't mean to imply that we had no struggles with our children, or made no mistakes. We had our share of both. But I know we did one thing well: we taught our children that we valued our marriage without devaluing them, that more for us meant more for them, that we were mates before we were parents, and that in the solar system of our family, our marriage was the sun and the children the planets, rather than the other way around" (Doherty and Carlson, *Putting Family First*, p. 137).

From the 3rd Lecture on Faith

- 12. From the foregoing testimonies we learn the following things respecting the character of God:
- 13. First, that he was God before the world was created, and the same God that he was after it was created.
- 14. Secondly, that he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness, and that he was so from everlasting, and will be to everlasting.
- 15. Thirdly, that he changes not, neither is there variableness with him; but that he is the same from everlasting to everlasting, being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that his course is one eternal round, without variation.
- 16. Fourthly, that he is a God of truth and cannot lie.
- 17. Fifthly, that he is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of him.
- 18. Sixthly, that he is love.

From the 3rd Lecture on Faith

- 19. An acquaintance with these attributes in the divine character, is essentially necessary, in order that the faith of any rational being can center in him for life and salvation. For if he did not, in the first instance, believe him to be God, that is, the Creator and upholder of all things, he could not *center* his faith in him for life and salvation, for fear there should be greater than he who would thwart all his plans, and he, like the gods of the heathen, would be unable to fulfill his promises; but seeing he is God over all, from everlasting to everlasting, the Creator and upholder of all things, no such fear can exist in the minds of those who put their trust in him, so that in this respect their faith can be without wavering.
- 20. But secondly; unless he was merciful and gracious, slow to anger, long-suffering and full of goodness, such is the weakness of human nature, and so great the frailties and imperfections of men, that unless they believed that these excellencies existed in the divine character, the faith necessary to salvation could not exist; for doubt would take the place of faith, and those who know their weakness and liability to sin would be in constant doubt of salvation if it were not for the idea which they have of the excellency of the character of God, that he is slow to anger and long-suffering, and of a forgiving disposition, and does forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin. An idea of these facts does away doubt, and makes faith exceedingly strong (*Lectures on Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 3:16.)

Men and Women Compliment Each Other

"Our Father made men and women dependent on each other for the full-flowering of their potential. Because their natures are somewhat different, they can compliment each other; because they are in many ways alike, they can understand each other. Let neither envy the other for their differences; let both discern what is superficial and what is beautifully basic in those differences, and act accordingly" (President Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 315).