

# WHAT I WOULD HAVE ADDED IF I HAD TWO MORE HOURS TO SPEAK

[In No Particular Order]

- *What would the Book of Mormon be without Alma the Younger's amazing story of hope and redemption? There's so much that I love about it: his father's prayers that summoned an angel from God to correct him; his incredible conversion story that so eloquently demonstrates Christ's power to heal any of us; Alma as a discouraged missionary who is comforted by the same angel that had called him to repentance years earlier; I love his fatherly counsel to his three sons who were not all alike; and I love the fact that the people forgave him and accepted him as their prophet even though he had earlier been the wayward son of Alma Sr., who had gone about, as he said, "...seeking to destroy the Church of God."*
- *I had an experience when I was caring for my daughter's children during her mania: I became concerned one day when I realized how often I had told Liz's oldest daughter how much she was like her mom, i.e. her appearance, mannerisms, temperament, and personality. What if she might feel doomed to follow her mother's path into mania as well. Luckily because of my mediation training, I first asked her the question, "How does it make you feel when people tell you that you are so much like your Mom?" She responded, "Oh, I like it because she's wonderful and I would like to be like her in many ways." What if I had unthinkingly imposed those fears on her?*
- *All of my children, except Kaj have received their patriarchal blessings and it is so evident that they didn't come from the patriarchs themselves, who had no way of knowing our children (never in the same ward), but straight from a loving Father who knew them intimately. Their unique gifts are identified--some being very unusual, such as Tim's (my middle son) ability to be multi-faceted and to handle many tasks at the same time.*
- *How important it is for spouses to pull together during times of adversity. My husband and I never blamed each other; how hurtful that would be! We both knew that we had never intentionally done anything to harm the children. I believe that the vast majority of parents do the very best they know how. It's not easy being a parent, but it's the most important thing in the world and one of the main purposes of our existence. It's also the best way to come to understand our Heavenly Parents. Of all the titles Elohim could have, hundreds of them, He has chosen simply "Father" to be His greatest. That's what our Savior taught us.*
- *Both Kaj and Liz are using their past experiences to help others who are still struggling; Kaj volunteering at Decker Lake Correctional Facility in Salt Lake City, and Liz running art therapy and spirituality groups at a local rehab. They've been able to help so many people because of what they have gained from their personal journeys.*
- *I grew up with an older sister who adored me, as she had waited 10 years for me to arrive after two brothers. It was like I had a fan club following me around and applauding me for anything I did. On the one hand, it gave me a lot of*

confidence to feel like I could attempt anything, but I realize that I also grew to like getting the approval of others. I love the insight Sister Virginia Pearce offers in her talk, "Fear" from October Conference, 1992. She and Sister Grassli "...were on a training assignment together when a local leader began to describe in glowing details the auxiliary leaders who had come to that area the year before. As she told about the wonderful things they had done and expressed her hopes that we would do the same, a sick feeling began to settle in my stomach. That night after our hostess had left, I expressed to Sister Grassli my fears: I was afraid my performance would be far less than those who had come before, and I would certainly be a disappointment to everyone and probably an embarrassment to her and the Church. She said, 'I have had those same feelings, but it is comforting to me to know that I need only be concerned that what I do and say is acceptable and pleasing to the Lord.' Her words brought such immediate peace to my mind that I have repeated them over and over to myself in countless situations."

- *I have a desire to change my focus; to learn from others who are different from me. I see what they mean in mediation training when they tell you to think, "I have nothing to teach these people; I have many things I want to ask them." I've always been the talker, the teacher, the performer, but there's something really nice about being the listener, the student, the audience. A friend talked about our tendency (people in general) to isolate ourselves from those who are different from us and surround ourselves with those who tend to agree with us about almost everything. But that's hard to do within your own family if it's anything like mine. Maybe part of the reason we're given to each other; then we can't avoid the interaction from which we might gain the greatest insight about ourselves and others.*
- *Here's one of the things I like to do at the temple, ask those ancestors that I'm doing the work for, "Will you help in my child's life. Will you do some of the things for them that I can't right now?"*
- *Having the wonderful experience as a ward missionary of seeing a neighbor baptized and his wife reactivated. She had grown up in a very active family who were all there when this couple was sealed the next year. Her sister said to me, "I never thought I would see her here." And I was able honestly to reply, "Really? I could always see her here." Maybe others will do the same thing for my child.*
- *Because I have felt concern about the fact that most of my grandchildren are not being raised in the Church, I was reassured some years ago when the Relief Society Presidency in our ward consisted of three amazingly spiritual women, who had all grown up in inactive or even antagonistic families. One of them said to me, "Heavenly Father knew to send me there because I had a rebellious spirit and I was able to rebel toward the Church instead of away from it."*
- *I love what I've heard Brother Michael Wilcox say: "If you have righteous children, it could be that you did a good job, or it could be that they were so good that you couldn't mess them up. And if you have rebellious children, it could be that you did a bad job, or it could be that you were the best chance they could have." My thought: Stop trying to judge what you are by how your children "turn out".*
- *Brother Wilcox sometimes teaches the Olive Tree Allegory in Jacob 5 as a parable where you see how much the Lord of the vineyard loves all His children. And when He plants some in a poor spot of ground, He compensates by*

*nourishing them well, so they still bring forth fruit. There are also some who are planted in a poorer spot, and Brother Wilcox says, "There will always be someone in a poorer spot," but He increases the nourishment and the fruit is still good. It's not so much where you're planted, it's how you respond to the nourishment of the Lord."*

- What is it about competition that has made it, in our society, the pre-eminent way of relating to each other? We have made it #1 in our culture and our language. We have Competitions for everything! When do we ever hear about holding a great Cooperation--or Collaboration? I must tell you, that as a mediator, I am offended by that--but even more so as a daughter of God, for it is at the heart of the pride we're so often warned about. As President Benson quoted C.S. Lewis in his talk on pride: "It is the comparison that makes you proud, the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone." And as Elder Holland asks in "The Other Prodigal", "Who makes us feel that if God is smiling on another, then He surely must somehow be frowning on us? You and I both know who does this--it is the father of all lies. It is Lucifer, our common enemy."*
- Elder Oaks talks about having patience and trusting in the Lord's timing. I love how this quote goes with that thought. "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." [Isaiah 40:31]*
- Elder Holland said, "The first and great commandment on earth is for us to love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength because surely the first and great promise in heaven is that He will always love us that way." [October Conference, 1993]*
- Quote from Harold Kushner: "God not only forgives our failures; he sees successes where no one else does, not even ourselves. Only God can give us credit for angry words we did not speak; temptations we resisted, patience, and gentleness little noticed and long forgotten by those around us. Such good deeds are never wasted and not forgotten, because God gives them a measure of eternity."*
- Elder Holland said in "Come Unto Me" [Ensign, April 1998] "The Church is not a monastery for the isolation of perfect people. It is more like a hospital provided for those who wish to get well..." and a friend adds, "The patients are running the asylum."*
- Elder Scott says, "This life is an experience in profound trust...to trust means to obey willingly without knowing the end from the beginning...to realize that...the Lord knows what He is doing with you and that He can accomplish it for your eternal good, even though you cannot understand how He can possibly do it..." And he adds, "The Lord will place in your path packets of spiritual sunlight to brighten your way. They often come after the trial has been the greatest, as evidence of the compassion and love of an all-knowing Father..." ["Trust in the Lord" October Conf. '95]*
- These are quotes from a wonderful talk by a sister at Women's Conference years ago, but I don't remember her name: "The worst advice (from the pulpit): No parent can be happier than their saddest child....The best advice: A person with an addiction is trying to answer a spiritual calling by going to the wrong address...It'll all come out in the wash and if it doesn't come out in the wash, it'll come out in the rinse... As a child brings broken toys for us to mend, I bring broken dreams for God. Then I hang around to see what He's doing, finally*

taking the pieces back and saying, 'How could you be so slow.' And God's answer: 'My child, what else could I do; you never did let go.'....And it came to pass--it didn't come to stay. Nothing is forever....The gift of discernment allows us not only to detect evil, but also allows us to detect goodness in those not thought so....Prodigious means marvelous and has the same root as prodigal. How is the prodigal in your life amazing?...It seems we women would rather feel guilty than out of control....Do we allow the prodigal to come home? If we were to believe that the prodigal were closer to coming home--maybe just around the corner, what things would we not say....Share your inadequacies with your children; they've probably already noticed....Many of us react like this: A child falls down a mineshaft and we stand at the top and yell, 'Now you get out of there, right now!' We need to go down into the mineshaft and help them out....She had a string of hippies that came through her house. Her son said he sent them to test her Christianity....Speak love every day of your life!"

- [Ensign, Sept. 2002, p. 10] "At first I tried to override my son's agency with my prayers. Finally understanding that no amount of pleading could make our son come back, I began to pray that he would receive the experiences he needed to help him want to come back."
- [Ensign, Aug. 1982, p. 13] "I find it very difficult when members of the Church stand and talk about how successful their families are. On one such occasion, I felt in the depths of despair. I was able to understand the pride the speaker felt in his accomplishments, however, and forgave him in my heart. At that moment, words came to my mind forcefully, just as if they were spoken or written: 'The Lord loves you. Your son will one day be strong in the Church.' And so I know that the day will come when my prayers will be answered. I am grateful to the Lord for his love and reassurance."
- Talk by Jack Marshall: "In the Church, we most persecute families right from the pulpit, with some of the testimonies: we have 12 children, all married in the temple, etc., etc." He quoted a story from The Teacher Within by a Dr. Clark: Elder Marvin J. Ashton was being introduced by a stake president, who managed in his introduction to include information about his own children and how well they were doing. Elder Ashton, as he got up to speak, turned to him and said, 'President, you go home and kneel down in your closet and express thanks to your Heavenly Father, but don't burden the rest of us with your successes.'
- "Those with true hope often see their personal circumstances shaken, like kaleidoscopes, again and again. Yet with the 'eye of faith,' they still see divine pattern and purpose." [Elder Maxwell, October Conference, 1994]
- From "The Other Prodigal," April Conference, 2002: Elder Holland relates, "...The tender image of this boy's anxious, faithful father running to meet him and showering him with kisses is one of the most moving and compassionate scenes in all of holy writ. It tells every child of God, wayward or otherwise, how much God wants us back in the protection of His arms."