



When Leaders Accidentally Limit Their Effectiveness | An Interview with Dustin Peterson

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Let's be honest, few humans enjoy meetings, and many feel trapped in meetings. As leaders, we don't want to burden those we lead, but meetings can seem to do that more often than not. We wanted to address the pain of meetings through the Meetings with Saints library. Here we have 15 plus presentations dedicated to improving the meetings we run. We have experts in the field addressing topics like getting people involved in meetings, staying on task, dealing with conflict in meetings, and a ton more. We'd love you to explore the full Meetings with Saints library over 14 days at no cost to you. You can do this by visiting [LeadingSaints .org slash 14](https://LeadingSaints.org/14). That's [LeadingSaints .org slash 14](https://LeadingSaints.org/14). We'll also give you access to all of our virtual libraries that educate about other leadership topics. It's really good stuff, so visit [LeadingSaints .org slash 14](https://LeadingSaints.org/14) or click the link in the show notes. I would be rude if I didn't take the time to explain to the newer listeners what Leading Saints is. Here goes. Leading Saints is an organization that started as a hobby blog in 2010 and then really caught some traction in 2014 when the podcast started. We talk about all things leadership in the context of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter -day Saints. We aren't owned by the Church, but we have a great relationship with them and always aim to be faith promoting, even though we talk about the tough topics. My name is Kurt Francom. I'm generally the voice you hear as the host of the podcast. I've tried to get other hosts, but people demand my smooth tone, and I really enjoy it. Check out [LeadingSaints .org](https://LeadingSaints.org) to really get into the weeds of what Leading Saints is and learn all about our mission to help

Latter-day Saints be better prepared to lead. He's back, you guys. That's right. Dustin Peterson from Houston, Texas. We've had him on a few times. Every time I have Dustin on, I get such positive feedback about the content that he provides and I anticipate that this episode will get the same positive feedback. I first start talking with Dustin about his journey of leadership that he's been on the last few years, and he's gone from being in the stake presidency to being a branch president to being a mission presidency and now recently called as the stake president. His experience and his approach to leadership is just, you can just learn so much about leadership, just hearing the stories that he has. Now, he is an executive coach as well and does a lot of leadership development in the corporate world, and so it's so fun to learn from these types of guys. We're going to talk about the law of the lid and how we limit ourselves with the best intentions as leaders, but not only limit ourselves, but in turn, we limit those that we lead because we've put a lid on it. So in this episode, listen for the different approaches as far as like removing the burden off of the leader's shoulders that we put on ourselves and giving it back to Jesus and pointing people to Jesus for the healing, for the answers, for the encouragement, right? And of course, it's still important. We still play an important role as the leaders there, but pointing them to Jesus is so important. And then how do we enable people, those that serve under our jurisdiction, how do we enable them to capture a vision that isn't limited by this artificial lid that either they've placed on their leadership effectiveness, or maybe we unintentionally did that as well. So you're going to love this interview, Dustin Peterson, I'm excited to have him back again sometime in the future. He's going to be a recurring guest as he should be. In fact, I mean, I should just turn the podcast over him, but he's busy. He's got plenty to worry about. So, but nonetheless, here's my interview with Dustin Peterson as we discuss the law of the lid. And Peterson, Dustin welcome back to the Leading Saints podcast. Thanks. Good to be back. Yeah, this is great. You, I don't know, it was a couple of years ago, I think when you first were on and you've been on quite the ride since then with some different leadership callings, I think was it at the time you were in the stake presidency? Is that accurate? I think first time I was on, I was in the stake presidency. Nice. And then I was on once more a couple of years after that. Nice. So, but then they put you back in the Spanish branch or ward or something? Yeah. So I was in the stake presidency, I did the podcast and then I got released shortly thereafter. And then I was in a branch president in a Spanish branch, did the podcast, got released again. And so with my new calling, I'm thinking this might be the catalyst. I don't, I don't, I wouldn't anticipate that because you're recently called as the stake president, right? So that's right. You're, you're like month, what, four of how many months, just so many, nine years worth of months. Four of nine years. That's cool. Now, I did want to ask you, you had a, before this calling, were you in the mission presidency? Is that right? I was, yep. So after the stake presidency in the, in the branch, I was in the Spanish branch for about three years and then was called into a mission presidency for two years, which was great calling. One of my favorite callings. Now this is a really unique calling.

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I'm just curious your experience with it because I mean, you almost don't even realize the mission president has counselors until you're a missionary, right? Like, Oh, I guess this is a pregnancy going on. So how did this calling come to be like, did it just come out of nowhere? I mean, it really did. So I'd been serving as a branch president for about three years and we had a new mission president come here to the Texas Houston South Mission, Matt Richards from, from Utah. And he kind of asked around some of the local stake presidents and said, Hey, who do you know that could be great counselors for me? And, and so my name got surfaced. I was kind of at the end of my time as a branch president. And so it really happened very quickly. It was a call, he extended the call on a, I think it was a Sunday morning, set me apart straight away. And like a week later I was released as a branch president and then boom, it all happened. You know what was interesting about that calling is unlike most other callings, nobody really sustains it. It's sustained at the area level, so nobody even knew. I just like suddenly I was back in my home ward, except now I had this name tag on and people were like, what, what do you, why are you wearing the name tag? What's going on? And it was kind of awkward in that way, but, but you're right. Mission presidency counselors, you know, really depends on the mission president. And it turns out president Richards was a master delegator. And so we, I mean, I really worked hard in that calling over two years and just loved it. She was so good at sharing leadership, but yeah, it's unusual. I mean, I think back in my mission, I don't know that I knew the counselors in my mission in Puerto Rico back in 1999. So yeah. So what was the, I know, like you said, each mission president really uses counselors differently. What was the general routine week to week in that calling? Yeah. My primary responsibilities, I was over training new trainers. So every transfer, when trainers are identified, I would help them understand their role. I would have weekly stewardship calls with leaders because of my job as a leadership trainer, I would meet with the zone leaders and the sister training leader across the whole mission every Tuesday. Wow. That was probably fun. 30 minute calls, trying to help train them up, which I love doing. I would do baptismal interviews, train in zone conferences, work with missionaries one on one as needed, attend district councils, and then go out and speak in wards when we were, when we were asked to do so. And so it was like all my favorite things in one calling. It was incredible. And then is there a story behind you being called as a stake president? Yeah. And probably it's long enough to merit its own podcast. Yeah. So I'll give you the clip notes version. Suffice to say, I thought I was kind of in the clear when it's time for a stake reorganization came up back in July or June, beginning of June, I look, I'd only been in the mission presidency two years. It's a three-year call. You serve the length of the time with the mission president. And I had some really great men that I recommended that could be really good for that, who are now my counselors in the stake presidency. And it just kind of, boy, every other calling, Kurt, I've kind of had a feeling or a sense that some change was coming. I just didn't know what it was. This one blindsided me and caught me off guard. So it took me the first month just to kind of settle into some imposter syndrome and figure out what I'm doing here. But anyway, it's been a fun ride for four months. I've loved it so far. That's cool. Anything worth noting as far as just like walking into that calling, like any surprises or you're just like calibrating yourself and your effort to that role? Yeah. A couple of surprises. One, I'd been a counselor before in a stake presidency, I've been a counselor then in a mission presidency. I learned that I'm a really good wingman. Like I'm super good at being a counselor. Give me a leader with a vision and I'll go make that thing happen. I'll be the best support in the world. But to actually be

the guy with the keys that has to kind of make some decisions and I just thought, wow, I'm going to have to really tune in. Like I'm going to have to just up the ante on revelation and just be really in tune and be open to what God wants me to do because I've got to make some really kind of difficult, challenging calls. I also realized I didn't know what a stake president did, despite the fact that I was a counselor to one for five years, I never really understood. And now that I, when I got the download from the former stake president of all the things he was working on that weren't part of working with organizations, I thought, wow, that's a huge ministry. It's a lot of ministering. So it's all about the one. Love it. And then in your day job, you continued to coach or, I mean, how do you, how do you describe your job? Yeah, it's funny you asked that. So I launched my business eight years ago, we've scaled up and hired some full-time executive coaches who do leadership training and coaching, and it's freed me up to have a lot of flexibility in my schedule to the point that I didn't really make a dollar for about the first six weeks of being a stake president. I was working like 30 hour weeks as a stake president, just pouring myself into it, trying to kind of learn. And one day I woke up and I had this really clear prompting of Dustin, you still gotta make money. Like there's gotta be balance in all things. It's not good to be all in on stake president.

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And so I told my wife, I think it's time for me to go make a dollar again. And she's like, yeah, you need to make some money. So yeah, I'm spending time coaching and training still and doing workshops and then balancing that of course, with family time and with, with stake president calls. So, so far so good. We've been able to kind of strike that balance. Well, you're definitely one of those names and figures I want to have a sort of cycling through here every, every so often. So hopefully isn't our last time we talk on this platform and cause you always have just a perspective both from your, your day job, but also from your Sunday job, your Sunday callings or whatnot that really, and you do a great job sort of mending those two things together in a helpful way. So maybe just introduce your, the topic that we hope to explore today. Yeah, we, and I kind of thought of a couple of things that have been helpful to me since I became a stake president that are leadership principles. And one really rose to the surface because it's really made a lot of sense lately. The concept is called the law of the lid, the law of the lid. And I'll tell you kind of how I discovered it. You know, a big gap in most organizations that we serve is that their senior leaders come in and they hire an organization like ours and they say, Hey, we need you to train our mid-level leaders. If our managers could figure this out, we'd be more effective. So we swoop in and we train all the mid-level leaders when in reality it's the senior leaders that need the training, right? And so we create this training gap where the mid-level managers all have their own language, they're highly trained and the senior leaders continue to kind of struggle along. They don't speak the same language now, they don't have the same level of training. And so a guy named John Maxwell coined a phrase or a maxim for this called the law of the lid. And the law of the lid essentially says that an organization will rise no higher than the effectiveness of its leadership. In other words, leaders are the cap or the lid on an organization's

effectiveness. So if you're hiring trainers to come in and train your mid-level, but you're not getting any training yourself, you're going to become the lid on that organization's growth. And so this is kind of, I discovered this a number of years ago and we've applied it continuously in our business practices, but I started to see some application in the church as well. And I thought, wow, you had a lot of literally plays out. One obvious connection that I saw is back when I was in the stake presidency about a decade ago, we started to teach this to our bishops because we noticed that bishops would really want their members to be praying more, studying their scriptures more, fasting more fervently or with more intention, going to the temple, serving their callings. And yet we found that sometimes bishops or bishoprics wouldn't be doing those things themselves, right? They're too busy, Dustin. They're too busy to do it. We just don't have the members. And so we started to teach this and we said, hey, this is called the law of the lid. You can't ask people to do something you won't do. The ward or the stake or the relief society will rise no higher than the effectiveness of its leadership. And so that's kind of really where this came to be. And you know, this, I just was at lunch with a guy talking about, you know, church leadership and whatnot. And I truly believe this, but I also recognize my bias as the, you know, quote unquote leadership guy as you know, in the church and I'm the host of the podcast, right? But really there's only one problem. This comes from Sterling W. Seal that he always said, there's only one problem in the world and it's leadership. Like if we can get the leadership right. Like it's amazing what problems just magically seem to fix themselves, right? And so it's so easy to look externally as the leader and being like, well, I can give you a list of problems, but it's hard to look internally at times realizing that we're sometimes stimulating those problems to exist. Yeah, I love a quote. I think Warren Bennis said it, but I might be wrong on that, but the statement is the hardest person you'll ever have to lead is yourself. And when I get in a coaching session, you know, oftentimes people say, well, if this person would do this or if this person would do that, and this happens in the church, right? If this leader would do this or if this person would pay more attention or if this person was more organized and yet the hardest person you'll ever have to lead is you. If you just would focus on yourself, I oftentimes tell clients I can only coach the person in the room. The other people aren't here, it's just you. And so how can you become more effective? How can you increase your personal effectiveness? And if we can just solve, like you said, that leadership dilemma, a lot of things clear up. Another sort of dynamic that comes to mind, and maybe you can bring some more context to this, or that it's so easy for members who aren't in the leadership positions to hear the law of the lid and be like, oh, Dustin, absolutely. I mean, I see how inept my bishop is. And you're right, we can't succeed in organization because he just doesn't get it, right? And so then we use that as an excuse of us not leading ourselves, right? As if we're the victim to the law of the lid, when in reality, I truly believe that there's no adjustment of the handbook needed, no policy, no program needed for us to flourish as the kingdom of God, as the restored church.

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Even the members have a law of the lid that we don't have to sit around and wait for our local leaders to discover the law of the lid to find success and see change and transformation happen in our own community. Yeah, the law of the lid trickles down. And it trickles down to every individual. You could say that a family will rise no higher than the effectiveness of the parents. You could say that an individual will rise no higher than their own personal effectiveness. In other words, if we're not improving, we're flatlining or declining. And so that's what the law of the lid is really all about. How do you keep improving? You don't wait for somebody to listen to podcasts and start to improve. You start the improvement with yourself in your own sphere. And that can be just you. It could be your family. It could be the organization you lead. It could be just simply in your calling. But the law of the lid has some serious power. Yeah. So where do we start? Or what's the next step as far as unpacking this and applying this in our own life? Yeah. So an interesting thing happened. So I'm released from the stake presidency. I go to become a branch president of a Spanish unit and I'm thinking about this law of the lid. And so we're all in on scripture study and prayer and fasting and tithing and all these things. And an interesting thing occurred. I had a really hard first year as a branch president. It kicked my butt. I mean, that was probably the hardest calling we ever served in. And the reason why it was so challenging is because I was sitting with individuals and families who had really complex issues, really difficult things. They would come in to me for counseling and to work with them. And I just would feel so like empty. Like, how do I help these people? Like, how do I even begin to solve somebody whose marriage is falling apart or they can't war on me? It really taxed me. And I thought I started to feel like, wow, I'm ineffective. And these people are on the log jam to their effectiveness. Right. So about a year goes by of struggling through this. And I'm talking with our stake president one day and he says, Dustin, you seem really like weighed down. You seem really kind of, I don't know, tired. You've only been doing this a year. Buckle up. You got a few more years. Don't give up on me yet. And I said, man, this has been really tough, president. Like, I just I'm really struggling. He said, tell me about that. I said, you know, people are coming in with these really big problems and I just don't know how to help them solve those problems. I'm trying this and I'm trying that. And he listened patiently and then he said, Dustin, I'll tell you what's going on. The problem is that you're trying to solve their problems. I said, what do you mean? He said, they're not your problems to solve. You are becoming the lid because you don't have the ability to solve their problems. They're not yours to solve. I said, oh, yeah. Say more about that. Whose are they? He said, it's not yours to solve. It's the saviors. Only Christ can help them solve their problem. And I thought about that and I thought, yeah, that feels good. How do I do that? And he said, you've got to point them to the savior. Like, yeah, what does that mean? He said, you literally point them to the savior. You listen to them. You listen to their thoughts. You ask them questions and then you point them to the savior. You point them to prayer. You point them to the scriptures for answers. You point them to fasting. You point them to temple. You point them to places where the savior is and you let him solve their problem. You let him work through their problem with them. And you're the guide. You stand alongside them. You don't leave them. But it's not your problem to solve. The reason why that was powerful to me, Kurt, is because I realized as long as leaders believe that it's up to them to solve the problems, you are always going to be the lid. In fact, it's a little bit of a scary concept to think that the bishop or the Relief Society president is the lid on their organization. That means that your group will be no more effective than you. That's heavy. Yeah. But what if we look to the one

person who doesn't have a lid? What if we say, wow, Jesus Christ never had a lid. He has no lid. And if we point people to him, the people we have stewardship over will become way better than us. They will progress way faster. They will rise above us even as leaders because they're following the true leader, the savior who doesn't have a lid. Yeah, that's so powerful. And, you know, this is the this is really where like the rubber hits the road with what we believe in our testimony, like it's easy to sort of be the leader that stands up and testifies of Christ or makes it, you know, even or any member of the church making a comment in Sunday school that, you know, Christ is the great healer and whatnot. But so often in application, we'll remove him from the equation with the best intentions. Right. It's like, OK, you know, I've seen the bishop and the bishop's thinking, well, you know, let's get you some good therapy and here's, you know, this book and that book. And why don't we meet together? Have you prayed? Maybe try praying three times a day or, you know, we sort of get trapped in these these efforts, these behaviors, these resources. But do we really believe that Jesus is the healer, that he can really do the healing? And of course, you know, this isn't some backwards way of saying that they don't need therapy or that, of course, those resources that are needed.

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But to really say, like, I'm going to point you to the savior, I don't entirely know what that looks like for you. But let's work together to figure out not necessarily your problem, but how to get you pointed to the savior. Right. Yeah. And as you're as you're sharing that, a thought comes to mind that we oftentimes point to the mechanism or the vehicle as the thing that's going to help them heal. Prayer, scripture study, the temple. I even said this just now, but it's not actually those things that provide the healing. It's like we're leaving out the key words, which is pray to God, study the scriptures to hear his voice, go to the temple to feel his presence. It's him that's going to heal, not the mechanism or the vehicle. And so this became really powerful for me in that presidency. I started to think, OK, the key here is that I've got to help these individuals hear God's voice. And the way to hear his voice is, again, prayer, studying the scriptures to hear his word, attending the temple, going to church, seeking revelation. It's that quote from President Nelson. Right. In the coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, constant influence of the Holy Ghost. And why is that? Because if we're turning to man, if we're turning to our leaders, if we're turning to our sisters who lead us to solve our problems, they won't get solved. Only Christ can solve them. And that was revelatory for me. It kind of turned everything in that presidency. And I started going into these meetings, I started to share with people and a couple of really powerful things happened. First thing that happened is people hated it. And maybe that's a that's an overcharacterization. They didn't hate it, but they didn't like it because suddenly they'd come in and say, President Peterson, President Peterson, this thing's happening. Help me. And I say, oh, my gosh, I'm so sorry to hear that. Have you talked to God about it? And they're like, what? Talk to God? I want you to solve it. Like, help me. And I'd say, you know, I want to help you and I'll walk with you, but I can't solve this for you. He can solve it for you. And they would look at me like, but you've

always solved it up until now. Why aren't you solving it? And so if you try this, by the way, the natural reaction, don't be surprised, is that people push back a little bit because it's hard. Like you're asking them to go get revelation. But the second thing that happened is that I felt a huge relief. I felt this burden release. I suddenly didn't feel like a failure as a branch president. I thought, oh, man, I can do this. I can point people to the savior all day long and help them figure out how to access his power and his grace. And you know what happened is people began to become converted and they began to really wrestle and try to figure this out and come closer to him. And that was a turning point for me with the law of the lid. I realized that as long as I'm the lid, I will be just that. But if I point them to the savior, the potential is limitless. Yeah. You know, I often think of these like there seems to be this handful of questions, especially in the context of like a bishop's office. But even as a parent or, you know, any any type of leader who's engaging with someone one on one, like these go to questions that almost can you can go to in any situation. And one of those that I talk about a lot is comes from the Garden of Eden when God said, Adam, where are you? Right. Like just asking somebody, where are you? What's your story? Like you're almost reframing of like, OK, you've identified the problem, but how did you get here? You know, what's the story behind all this? But another one that surfaces as you're talking through this is the simple sort of turning it back to them of what do you think you should do about this or what what promptings have come to to your mind about this? Because oftentimes the prompting has come, but maybe the person is just unsure about the faith in order to take that next step to do those things. And so, again, it removes that burden from your shoulders and puts it back on them where probably a lot of the inspiration is coming to. It absolutely is. And I found and you've probably found this, too, that people often know the answer. I mean, the same is true even coming into into coaching conversations in my work, that people come in with these really complex situations and they kind of unload them and we talk them through. And ultimately the answer, they knew the answer before they ever walked in. They just needed the affirmation or the confidence to go do something about it. And so I think you're right. I think, you know, a lot of times, again, in that calling, if somebody would come in with a challenging welfare issue, I can't pay the bills. My was, response well, how do we do that? How do we solve that? Right. And in reality, when I point them to the savior and help them, like you said, what? So what have you felt? What ideas do you have? What promptings have come to you? They know. They know. And they know how to go solve it. It's just hard or they might lack the faith or it's uncomfortable. That's where we can really be a support as leaders. That's where we can really lift them up. Yeah.

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And again, you're going back to this principle of the law, the lid, you're removing that lid and like pushing them towards the savior, being like, that's where the answer is. It's not in this office, per se. That's right. That's the key. So that became a powerful turning point for me. Now, let me say just as a sidebar, I think it's important that we still develop our personal effectiveness as leaders. So it might be easy to listen to this and say, oh, easy. So all I got to do is point him to the savior.

And I can continue to be kind of floundering or average or just kind of not developing my skills as a leader. I just don't believe that. Right. Yeah. We still got to develop our skills. I think we still as leaders in the church, we need to kind of take this seriously. We need to be kinder. We need to be more inclusive. We need to be more organized. We need to run better meetings. We need to be work on our speaking and not just be content with giving the same structure of talk in church on Sunday. I think we got to be improving because, again, ultimately, we're going to be the lid on our own effectiveness, if not the effectiveness of our family. So for sure, point to the savior. But we got to keep working on ourselves, too. Yeah. And is there any like general guidance on what that looks like? Is it anything specific that comes to mind? Well, you didn't ask for this, but I'll say it. Look, I think leading saints fills a gap in that way. And so this is my testimonial for this podcast. I emailed you. Actually, we connected a couple of months ago. I was a brand new stake president. I was going in to extend the call to a brother to serve as a bishop. And so I invited his wife in and I was on my way to the appointment. And as I was driving to this appointment, I thought, man, I have no idea how to extend the call to a bishop. What do you do? Do you just kind of small talk and it's a little awkward and they're looking at you like we drove 30 minutes to meet with the stake president on a Thursday night. We're here for a reason. And anyway, I suddenly kind of got a little panicky, like, man, how do I even do this? So I go look it up on leading saints. I'm like some it's got to be out there somewhere. And sure enough, you've got a post from a number of years ago. This is how to extend a call. And principle number one is don't bury the lead. Skip the small talk. Get right to it. Let them know I'm here to extend a call to you and then do all the discussion afterward. just And that small intervention of personal development changed the tenor of the conversation so that when I sat down with that brother, they walked in, we sat down before we even small talk, I said, let's start with a prayer. We had a prayer. And then I said, I just want to be really upfront with you. I'm here to extend a call to you today, brother and sister. I'm going to ask for your sustaining of your husband as I extend this call. And before we talk about what that call is, I do want to know about your family. Can you just give me a feel for where your family's at? I want to hear about your kids and then we'll talk about the calling. And it just was like a so much smoother. And so when you say, what do we do? I think we got to be looking for ways to increase our personal effectiveness. Leading Saints is one way because you've got just a lot of great content. Again, you didn't ask for that testimonial, but it's saved money. I need to go look at that post a little closer, because that is an old post. I wonder if I disagree with it. There was one from like 10 years ago, and then you updated it like five years later. Nice. And I went with the updated version was OK. Yeah, good, good. But man, you saved my bacon on that day. And so I think doing things like that, I think we can also look, the scriptures are full of lessons, leadership lessons, as are all the materials put out by the church. But one thing I love about my profession, and this is not how to reach for anybody else, is that you can just start to learn about leadership, right by a leadership book and read about it and figure out how it transfers over. There's a lot of great stuff out there about how to be a good public speaker, about how to organize a meeting. Anyway, there's a lot of great resources. Yeah, I completely agree. Just this feeling of like, it's not like there's these five books you definitely got to read or whatever, but just like being positioning yourself into a place of taking in information. And it's almost like sometimes it's not even the thing you read, but almost through osmosis that it just sort of finds its way, the category of your brain where you need it when you need it, you know, and it's a practice. Yeah, it'll come

to the surface. The Holy Ghost will bring it to the surface and you'll be able to apply it. So let me share maybe a couple examples. So I'm called as a stake president back in June and I'm starting to kind of try to figure out what I should do. I start thinking about this law of the lid and let me just share maybe three brief examples of ways we've tried to apply this, this concept of constantly personal developing, if that's a phrase. First is with our high counselors. You know, a lot of high counselors, this isn't the case across the church, but in a lot of places, there's some lack of clarity about what that responsibility is. Like, what do I do exactly? And tomorrow night, as a matter of fact, or Thursday night, we're going to be having a training with our high counselors exclusively focused on how do you raise the lid? Like, how do you be effective? We're going to talk specifically about how do you be a good speaker.

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And that's going to be a little weird. Like, I don't know if you've ever had anybody teach you how to be a good speaker, but we're literally going to like talk through principles of effective public speaking. Oh, my goodness. I can feel the gratitude from your stake just beaming right now, even though they don't know. Suddenly they feel like, why am I so grateful for President Peterson? Well, now this is it. This is why. Yeah. And we'll socialize it, right? This isn't to say I'm a great public speaker, but a lot of people kind of chime in and we're going to talk about some principles because, look, we should learn to lead with a hook. We should learn to tell stories. We should learn to, you know, be engaging and make eye contact and keep it to a certain amount of time. And I just feel like we've got to talk through some of these principles and help raise that bar. Matter of fact, you asked about resources or ways we can do this. I came across this great talk in LDS Living that I'm also going to kind of reference for what it's worth for people are looking to be better. It's called Elevate Your Next SACRT Meeting Talk with a Few Easy Tips. And when I clicked on it, I thought, oh, man, this is going to be some of the kind of regular vanilla advice. And it was super good, really specific. We will link to it for sure. And I thought, man, that's great. So that's one way helping elevate the high council. A second way we've really focused on this is with our primary. So I'm just convinced that the future of the youth of the church begins in primary. And we've really got a missionary focus in our stake right now with the youth. But it's occurred to me that if we don't start with the primary, then by the time they get to youth, we're having to kind of retrain. And so we've begun really working with our primary teachers to see their calling as a primary teacher as less of a 25 minute a week calling and more of a personal ministry. Raise the lid. So we've got a couple in our stake in particular who's incredible. They were called as Valiant 10 teachers. And when they became these Valiant 10 teachers, they showed up on day one to teach their class. Nobody had scriptures in the class. There were about 10 kids in class and no one brought their scriptures. Nobody really knew much about come follow me. So they raised the lid. They went out and began to meet with each one of these young people one at a time throughout the next four weeks in their home, sat down with them. They said, tell us about you. What's your favorite color, favorite food, favorite sport? Like, what do you like to do? Tell us about your future plans. Do you want to serve a mission? If

so, where do you want to go? If not, what are your other plans? You want to go to school, college? Just trying to get a feel for where these little 10 year olds were at. And then they said, do you have a pair of scriptures? And if they did, they said, will you go get these scriptures? And they'd go get them. And they'd say, do you know what the come follow me lesson is this week? And the kid would be like, I have no idea what that is. They said, let me mark it for you. Will you read this in preparation for Sunday and come ready to discuss it? Over the course of four weeks, they went from 10 kids in the class to 12 to 14 with two or three of those being non members. And every one of those kids brings their scriptures every Sunday. And every kid comes ready to discuss come follow me. And there have even been parents that have said, my kid is leading come follow me in our home. Like they're the ones teaching the rest of us about come follow me. So much so that other families in the ward actually want their kids in that class. Like, how do we get our kids in the 10 year old valent class? Because these leaders have raised the lid. Like they said, look, we could just make this a 25 minute a week calling or we can really make it a personal ministry. And so that's just an example in the primary of raising that lid, just not being content with what it's always been. Right. Yeah. So I want to analyze just sort of the dynamics going on here is why this is so effective, because I think the with the best intentions, the sort of the trap that leaders can step into is that they can kind of see the discrepancy of things not measuring up in their organization. And so they think, hmm, well, maybe we can help them. And whether they realize it or not, I think maybe we can do it for them or tell them what to do. And so this is why a part of me why I'm sometimes a bit critical about like having like ward programs or ward themes or efforts like, you know, maybe the bishop stands up there like we're going to do, you know, we're going to index a ward, you know, like we're going to get into indexing and come together. And in their mind, they're thinking, wow, this would be like this unifying effort. And we'll always talk about it. And Spirit Elijah will be mixed in there. Right. And again, if you want to do that and you feel inspired, sure, do it. But what often we do is we say we're going to give you a new lid. Now, it's a little bit higher than where we think your lid is. So we're just going to give you a new lid and we're going to come into primary and say, OK, what we're going to do is we're going to ask you to reach out to one child every day. Right. So you sort of become too prescriptive of what it is. But instead, you went in there and said, you know, you are when you remove the lid, you're casting vision and you're enabling those people to say, you know, here's our goal.

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We want this to be a personal ministry, not a twenty five minute calling. And so then that gets their brain working and the inspiration starts to flow in and then they can articulate and or move forward in the way that they feel inspired to do that. So, again, they'll probably do things that you could have never have dreamed up in your stake presidency office. Right. Totally. And they each get to do it in their own way. We've got other primary teachers that don't do what I just described. They just maybe they we have one that had everybody over for a pool party before they went back to school. They have one that brought cookies over to their kids and just

connected with them. We have others that maybe do something different. And so I think you're right. It's less about being prescriptive and more about setting the vision of make it a personal ministry, whatever that means, and then let the savior do the dictating. He knows these kids, he knows what they need and every class is different. Right. Any other examples come to mind that are worth sharing? Yeah, there's one more. So Elder Nash is the one that Marcus Nash came and he's the one that reorganized our stake presidency and set us all apart. And he had this really powerful example when he was in our stake leadership meeting that had a big impact on us. He shared a scripture with us, this Doctrine and Covenants 84, 106. And this has become kind of a theme. Sorry, Kurt. A theme for our presidency. Not for the stake, but just for our presidency. OK, that's fine. And again, I get that there there might be some differing opinions on this as a general rule. Yeah, you get what you're saying is sometimes it's not the best to cast a theme and say, well, this interview is over, Dustin. I'll tell you. Yeah, you're done. So the NC 84, 106 says, and if any man among you be strong in the spirit, let him take with him him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also. So it's this concept of the strong and the weak and the strong carrying the weak along into the weak and become strong. And so he shares this scripture and he does this really interesting example from the pulpit. He says, OK, I want you to watch this experiment. He steps down from the pulpit, walks down the aisle to this poor, unassuming sister sitting in the aisle and says, sister, he drops down to her knee. So he's kind of eye to eye and says, would you be willing to come with me up to the pulpit and just, you know, be willing to kind of come to church, so to speak, and and be with us up there? And she says, OK. And she follows him up there and they walk up together. And then when he gets up there, he says, OK, now, will you go find somebody else and I'll go find somebody else and let's go bring them up here as well? And she's like, yeah, I'll do it. He does this a couple of times. And within like four minutes, you've got 20 people standing on the stand. This is before the meeting is? No, it's like right in the middle of the meeting. Oh, OK. Gotcha. It's what made it so amazing. So you've got 20 people up there. They're like, what are we doing up here? Right. But there's 20 of them. And then he shares the scripture again and says, what did you just see? And people noted that this personal one on one ministry, getting down on the level of the individual on your knee, eye to eye, bringing them up, walking with them, bring them to the front and then turning around and inviting them to do the same is powerful. So we started to teach this as a stake presidency to our elders quorum presidents. We said, presidents, one thing we maybe are not as great at as a stake is that we have a lot of endowed members who don't have active temple recommends. And at one point in their life they did. And they made covenants in the temple and they had this active recommend and now they don't. And so what we'd invite you to do is to identify with your counselors six people who have elapsed recommend that you can go out one on one and visit and invite them back and then invite them to do the same and invite somebody else. And in the course of just a few short months, we've seen some tremendous miracles because it's this, again, one on one personal ministry. Most elders quorums oftentimes see their calling as a lesson, an activity, maybe a little bit of ministering here and there. But when we look at it as a true personal ministry, it blows the lid off of it and people start to go out and miracles happen. People come back that haven't had recommends in decades and we start to see a lot of change. So it's just the idea of, again, the organization will rise no higher than the effectiveness of the leaders. And if the leaders are looking to constantly improve and do things in a different way and have a personal ministry, the

Lord can do his own work and he'll take care of the rest. Yeah, that's so powerful. Just thinking, going back to that where you started with considering your own effectiveness as a person or your own as a disciple, because sometimes the lid of these opportunities is the calling, right, that I'm a bishop, so I can only do this much. I'm an elders quorum president this much. But to sort of step into the posture with God to say, what if we remove the lid that I think is there and what does that look like? And then the invitation to come.

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And I love that the story of that invitation that it often comes to that, like he wants you to step into that, whether it's personal ministry or whatever. Yeah, it's a powerful concept. It's, again, kind of shaped our presidency. And I know it's been on my mind a lot. I oftentimes think, OK, I need to point people to the Savior and I need to be improving my own personal effectiveness as a leader because I don't ever want to be the barrier to our effectiveness as a leadership team, as a stake presidency or as a stake in general. And so we're pouring a lot of time and attention into training and just really helping all of our leaders at all levels understand and get trained. Right. We just and trained according to the handbook, but also trained according to just fundamental of principles interpersonal communication and meeting effectiveness and public speaking and and things that we hope will help elevate the culture of the stake. That's great. Any other concept or principle that we need to tackle or we do it? I think we did it. It's a powerful one as you take it back. So maybe the next step, you might say, so what do I do if I'm listening to the podcast today? I think there are a couple of things that come to mind. First of all, in Preach My Gospel, there's a self -assessment of Christlike attributes. It's a really great place to start where you can go through and work this self -assessment and ask yourself, how am I doing with regard to these various traits or characteristics of the Savior and then continue to set goals to develop in certain areas to increase your personal effectiveness? I know with teaching in the church, there's also a teaching assessment that you can do. Let's come out with our Come Follow Me teaching instruction. You can look that up on the church's website and you can assess yourself as a teacher. How well do I do engaging the class, asking good questions. And so these types of assessments give you a good benchmarking to figure out what to improve. I think most importantly is, again, go to the Savior and ask him, turn to the Savior and ask, Lord, what lack I yet? What could I do to be a more effective husband, father, mother, wife, brother, sister, church member, a more effective leader? What can I do to just be more effective? And the Savior will tell you, he will show you and then continue improving. And as you do, that lid will just get higher and higher. Your effectiveness will increase. The people you serve will be blessed and you will feel that strong connection to the Savior. So powerful. And I encourage people to, we'll link to all the other interviews that Dustin has done. I forget what we titled it, but the one you talk about, like finding your calling. Yeah, we talked about purpose and then we talked about talents on one of those as well. Yeah, the talents. That's right. And you wrote a book about that came from sort of that discussion, right? I did. Yeah, that discussion fueled a book about talents. That's right. Nice. Anywhere that you'd send if people want to know more

about you, even with your day -to -day job, maybe they work at a company that would benefit from your services. Yeah. So two websites that might be helpful. My personal website is dustinpeterson.org, and that's where I've got information for people in career discovery, leadership and in spirituality. And I linked to my talented book. And then our professional website is proofleadership.com is the name of the organization. We do, again, executive coaching, training, workshops, retreats, that type of thing. Awesome. Well, we wish you many blessings in your in the future, eight and a half years. It'll be gone before, you know, I promised us. But I've probably asked you this before, but I love how this question or the answer to this question evolves as you consider your time as a leader now a stake president. How has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? Yeah, I think one thing that's been powerful in each of the callings I've served in is that it's helped me understand my reliance on the savior. The faster I begin to rely on him in each calling, the smoother things go. And it's helped me kind of feel really the power of grace and his ability to swoop in and strengthen me and help me to be better than I could ever be on my own. And so I'm grateful for these callings. I ultimately think that's why they any of them exist anyway, is just to simply help us become more like Christ and help us develop that reliance on him. So it's been a powerful thing for me, for sure. The end, that's it for this Leading Saints episode, I encourage you to check out some of the most popular episodes of the podcast that we list at the bottom of the show notes. If you haven't listened to all of those, do so now. Remember, solve the burden of meetings by visiting LeadingSaints.org slash 14 and getting 14 days access to the Meetings with Saints virtual library. 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.

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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 cannot shrink nor run away and to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.