



Brain Science in Elders Quorum | An Interview with CK Bray

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Speaker 1 00:00:02 Have you ever heard of Scrupulosity? This is a mental health concern that is impacting more latter day Saints than you think. Scrupulosity is religious obsessive compulsive disorder where individuals are hyper obsessed about their worthiness and repentance. Sam Baxter, a former bishop, sat down with me to talk about his lifelong struggle with Scrupulosity and how he got treatment. You can watch this interview for free in the Mentally Healthy Saints Library by going to leading-saints.org/fourteen. This gets you 14 days free access to Sam Baxter's interview about Scrupulosity and 25 plus other interviews about ministering to those who struggle with mental health. The content is priceless for leaders. So visit leading-saints.org/fourteen for free access.

Speaker 1 00:00:50 Alright, let's go around the room, do some introductions. I'll start. So my name is Kurt Francom. I am the executive Director of Leading Saints, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. And we are dedicated, you know, have a mission here to help latter-Day Saints be better prepared to lead. Now, me personally, I live in Stansbury Park, Utah, which is in Tula County. I grew up in West Valley City and, uh, been running leading saints really since 2010 when it started out as a hobby blog. 2014 is when the podcast started and now we are over 10 million downloads. And, uh, man, we're glad that you are now one of those downloads. Let's jump in.

Speaker 1 00:01:33 Hey, a big shout out to Michael Plowman in Gilbert, Arizona. He's been helping me line up some phenomenal guests as of late, and, uh, you know, that's all it takes. A simple email from time to time and I get a lot. But, uh, be patient with me and if you submit a recommendation of maybe someone I could interview or talk to here on the Leading Saints

Podcast, uh, you might be surprised when they just pop up on the podcast feed. And today, thanks to Michael Plowman, he connected me with Dr. CK Bray. We call him Chris Bray here at Leading Saints. And he also lives in Gilbert, Arizona. A phenomenal individual. He's been Elko president three times. Also, his day job is, uh, he researches the brain and helps organizations better understand, uh, what's going on in our skull to, uh, simulate better culture. And, uh, all the good, all that good stuff.

Speaker 1 00:02:24 I might as well just read his bio here on his website. It says, Dr. Bray is a cognitive behavioral researcher. He specializes in change, adaption, human performance and potential, and their impact on organizations and individuals. He bridges the gap between science research and organizations and is known for his ability to take complex research and make it understandable and applicable to clients. And he does the same thing for Latter Day Saints. In this episode, he has a PhD in organizational development and learning a second PhD in industrial organizational psychology with an emphasis in the cognitive sciences. So, such a, a blessing to have, uh, Chris Bray on the podcast. He has his own podcast as well, that you may, I will link to in the show notes called the Dr. CK Bray Show, their 20 minute episodes to just help you learn all the brain science and help you succeed in life and in your career or whatnot.

Speaker 1 00:03:18 And obviously it's very applicable to, to church stuff and leading in the church. So it was fun to sit down with him on this episode. Listen to the, he talks about how do you stimulate change in our organization? Like what does that even look like? And how can a church leader approach their organization their calling in a way of stimulating change? Because it really, that's at the essence of what the gospel is, but is it really happening? And how can we stimulate it more effectively? And then the power of resilience and leading and teaching people how to be more resilient is, is worth it. And, uh, definitely stay tuned for those little ideas that, uh, Chris does as an elders quorum president with his weekly ministering visits as an elders quorum president, his getting men outside of the elders quorum and getting them serving in the community. Not necessarily as ward members or corps members, but as community members. Just really powerful stuff. You're gonna love it. Let's get into it. Here's my interview with Dr. CK Bray. Today we're headed to Gilbert, Arizona with, uh, Chris Bray. How are you?

Speaker 2 00:04:29 Oh, I'm doing great today, Kurt. How are you doing?

Speaker 1 00:04:31 Very good. Now, uh, I'm so excited for this discussion just in our conversations before, 'cause I love taking like the, some of the research that typically is discussed in maybe more secular context or professional business context and say, what can we learn from that in a religious or a latter-day saint context? 'cause you do, like, you've done a bunch of research about the brain and the context of organizations. How would you explain it?

Speaker 2 00:04:55 Alright, so I guess, but probably the best way to say it is we work with larger organizations and we help them solve problems mostly around brain health performance and optimization. So their employees, their team members, as well as their customers and clients. And we help, um, solve problems, create solutions for them based around neuroscience, cognitive psychology. We work with about 50 to 60 top researchers around the world from institutions I'm sure you're very aware of. And we use a lot of this new research that hasn't really

made it into corporate America. And we take it and really use it to solve problems in a way that we know works. You know, because we know how the brain works, at least some of how the brain works.

Speaker 1 00:05:35 Yeah. And, and I love it. And you know, it's one of those things like, I think there's times where, you know, sometimes our church culture and organization, you know, sometimes gets a bad rap just because we are an international church and we're sort of run by a institution. It's for the lack of a better word, or a corporate entity, sometimes it feels that way. And so there's moments where you kind of feel like you're in this, uh, you know, corporation where goals are coming down, you know, how many people are gonna baptize or maybe the missionary program feels that way, but then there's other times where we almost resist it. Like, wait a minute, we don't need to consider brain research and the gospel. Like, it should just be revelation led and all these things. But I think this, I think these, this is revelation that God gives us through research that we can consider and apply different things. I mean, is that a fair way of framing it?

Speaker 2 00:06:22 Oh, Kurt, 100%. Because the more I've studied and learned and been educated about the brain, the more the gospel really was opened up and how the gospel works, how revelation works. Yeah. And, and the best ways that, that we can do it because they're so synonymous. I mean, almost every week at church, I, I would say in some way I'm almost like an elder udo. I'm always bringing up the brain science and the brain research. And not that I'm very much like Elder Udo at all, but it's amazing how they so work together. Like just one example is we know that when people have insights, um, you know, these aha moments when all of a sudden things are opened up that brain researchers have and neuroscientists have tried to find out what, what really happens in the brain in that moment. Mm-Hmm. And we do know that there are connections that are happening in different parts of the brain, but it's almost if there's a flash of light that's seen by researchers, the moment these people have these aha moments, whether they be small aha moments of, oh, I'm figuring out this math problem or, or an issue that I have to these big aha moments of, oh, I need to make this large change in my life, what I'm doing or how I'm behaving or decisions I'm making aren't working out.

Speaker 2 00:07:30 And we have these aha moments and no neuroscientist can describe this flash of light. And, and I sit there and I smile and I think I know exactly what it's, whether it's the spirit or knowledge or revelation coming from, you know, our Heavenly Father and, and and the Holy Ghost, that really helps us have a broader understanding of who we are, what our potential is, the things that we should be doing, the people that we should be serving and helping. It's really that connection or that conduit coming from the heavens to us as humans through our brain, and then also through our emotions and through our spirit and, and and our Yeah. Say our our our spirit. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:08:06 Man, you mentioned elder Uchtdorf. I, I felt it felt the same way sometimes during his conference talks. I'm like, I think he's reading the same books. I'm reading <laugh>. I would love to, I would love to see his bookshelf. You know what I mean? Because he does bring in like these different research studies and, and you know, Steve Jobs perspectives

and quotes that they're like, wow, this is fascinating to hear in a gospel, uh, setting. So really good stuff. Oh yeah,

Speaker 2 00:08:27 Absolutely. And, and in fact, it's funny 'cause you know, he talks about being a pilot so much and all the time in elders quorum in our ward, you know, it's funny. People will be like, well, Chris, is there any brain science around this that you can share with us? And so it seems like I'm kind of categorized as that. And I, I I just, you know, that it's a world that I absolutely love. And as I said, it's so synonymous with the gospel. I mean, every little piece that, you know, we hear from general conference, I can usually relate it to some aspect of what the world is telling us. You need this, you need this in brain health, you need this in longevity, you need this for your brain, you know, for brain performance and productivity or even most importantly I think, which is the gospel is all about, is a gospel of change. You know, as you're talking about missionary work is, yeah, the gospel ask us to change and our heaven father asks us to change. And we're always filling the spirit of, Hey, how I can be better in this way? And so that's a lot of what we know in in brain sciences, you know, how do we do that? How do we change? And why is change so important?

Speaker 1 00:09:24 Awesome. And that's a perfect segue 'cause you know, if instead of us turning to you in elders quorum, we're, we're turning to you in maybe the broader latter day saint world and culture. And we're just saying, Chris, like, what, where do we begin with brain science? If you were to walk into a room full of church leaders and your task is to share with us some thoughts and perspectives about brain science, uh, where, where would you begin?

Speaker 2 00:09:44 Where would I be? Probably go to two different areas now. Okay. Pretty much within science, there's known as somewhere around seven or eight pillars of brain health, performance and optimization. How do we get our brains to work the best? And so the first, you know, area I talk about, if I was around people who who said, help us in our wards and our stakes or, or branches or even just our families, it's around change. You know, what happens in the brain when we change? Now we do know that anytime any change occurs occur, so whether it's a small change or a large change that our brains go to pretty much what's considered a threat or reward or somewhere in between. And then based upon that response or how we categorize our perception of that change, certain chemicals, neurotransmitters are released and those neurotransmitters are gonna cause emotions and feelings that maybe happen in a positive way.

Speaker 2 00:10:34 This is a reward state. This is a towards state, or maybe it's more of a fear state. You know, I had to laugh. Our, our stake recently, you know, just changed up the ward boundaries. And I, I was like, okay, everybody's in a threat state. Yeah. You know, what's gonna happen to my kids? They're stealing my friends. What war am I gonna be in? Yeah, that's right. Now I'm gonna have no friends. And even though they live two blocks away, we're never gonna see each other again. The friendship is over. But, you know, so we saw this threat state and we saw these reactions of fear and apprehension. People are worried. Um, they have angst and anxiety around it. And so that's a lot of that, that fear state. Whereas there's also the reward state of we know that, oh, when we change, you know, it, it's, I think the perfect example is how we're inspired in general conference or a talk in church or a lesson like, oh, I need to do that.

Speaker 2 00:11:20 I need to implement this in my life because it's gonna change. It's gonna make me a better man. It's gonna make me a better woman. It's gonna make me a better father. You know, it's gonna make me a better, you know, uh, um, you know, someone I can minister to. And so when it comes to change, we have to understand some of the best ways to change. And so knowing what we're gonna go to a, a threat or reward state is, is really good to know. I mean, I'm laughing now 'cause even as people are listening, within the first probably 90 seconds of hearing me talk, people thought, thread a reward. Okay, you know, Chris is gonna talk about things that I can learn about this is gonna be helpful. Or, oh gee, whizz, I'm gonna go back and, and listen to one of Kurt's other podcasts, <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:11:54 This is, this is not the podcast for me. So we know that the brain goes there, but we also know that, you know, it's gonna go there quite quickly. But when it comes to change, we know so much like what the gospel teaches us, that it's small change. It's these small changes and decisions that we make every day that create new habits, that create new neural networks, that create these neural transmitters that motivate us to continue on to a change. It, it isn't the big huge changes, it's the small changes. So, perfect example, I have a daughter who's on a mission right now in Louisiana, and of course she's working on helping people. She's teaching changes. It's so hard to get people to keep their commitments, you know, and, and, and I often use another term for me, members of church here keep our covenants and, and do the things that we should be doing.

Speaker 2 00:12:40 And I kept on saying to her, if it's hard for them to do what it, what they're, you're asking them to do now make it smaller. Same. Maybe just read for three minutes the Book of Mormon instead of five minutes maybe if it's hard to pray two or three times a day, just pray once a day and the rest of the day have a prayer in your heart. So that's one of the things is we have to realize that changes occur in small ways. Changes, you know, it's a frightening thing when, when we think of, and, and I have to laugh, we're we're looking at people who've had held all sorts of church callings in the moment it's announced, Hey, we're having, you know, a stake meeting and we're gonna realign the wards. It just causes people who have strong testimonies to worry about what's gonna happen.

Speaker 2 00:13:15 Now we darn well know that the Lord's Church is gonna move ahead and it's gonna be good for us and provide us opportunities. But getting there sometimes is small changes. And as I've watched over the last six, seven months, people get callings that maybe they wouldn't have had in the other ward. People make new friends in the new ward. And it's these small things that happen every week that then get people to, I think where the Lord wants us to be and the spirit is encouraging us to be of, of the type of people that, that we should be. So change absolutely would be the number one. Now, the number two thing, and maybe I should pause there and see if you have any questions about the change aspect.

Speaker 1 00:13:47 Yeah, for sure. So the, you know, I guess I've heard it framed, you can either use the stick or the carrot, right? <laugh> to, to prod people in the change. Right? And I think we all, all all have examples of seeing either the guilt trip lesson or the passive aggressive, like, well if you do this, we'll have a pizza party or whatever it is, right? Or, or promise you eternal blessings if you act a certain way. And I appreciate this reframing on, we're we're looking

for small change. And so I'm just curious maybe what that looks like. Or if you were coaching an elders quorum president to stimulate small change. 'cause sometimes you just see the big problems. You think this has got to change, we gotta come together and change this big thing. And it feels overwhelming to that group, right? Like, I don't, does it really matter? Like, if I do this differently, will it really change? Mm-Hmm, <affirmative>. So how does one lead generally, or if a story comes to mind, you've had, you have been elders quorum president three times, which, uh, maybe we can drop on, but what comes

Speaker 2 00:14:42 Mind, thanks for letting everybody know I can't get it right. You can't get this call right? I mean, look at me. I'm an old elders, old elders quorum president, I'm like, you sure you don't wanna call someone who has the energy to, you know, in their thirties and forties? But no, I think

Speaker 1 00:14:55 It's good. Anyway, so I mean, what, how do you begin with focusing on the small change rather than trying to push the big change?

Speaker 2 00:15:02 Here's what a lot of researchers says, and as, as I say, it's very synonymous with what, what the gospel teaches us is we can't force people to change. You can't, it has to come internally versus externally. Now external, we can have external motivators, rewards, or like you said, or maybe there's the threats or the sticks that cause us to do that. But really when we see the brain really begin to change in new neural networks happening, and the synapsis firing off is when I have that aha moment when it's a personal choice that I accept change. Because the moment I decide, Kurt, I want to change, I, I wanna do this, what then begins to happen is that all of a sudden chemicals are released. Um, you have dopamine, which is the motivation, you know, chemical that says, Hey, I'm gonna work this out. And the brain starts finding ways to solve the problem and make the change and, and the behaviors and actions and communication and relationships, all those things that they begin to focus on the change.

Speaker 2 00:15:57 So when I think about, you know, speaking to Elders quorum really anybody in the church that we're trying to get people, you know, Hey, go out and minister to your people, you know, or Hey, make this change in your home. We really, really, we should be doing, come follow me. We should be reading the scriptures or holding family home. Eating. It really is helping them make that choice. And the best way for people to make that choice is in a way that they can say, I can do this. Because, you know, as we know nowadays, especially post covid, people are busy. They have lots going on, they have a lot of worries, a lot of hardship, you know, life can be very hard. But when we make that change small, then they're able to say, I think I could do this. And we call this self-efficacy.

Speaker 2 00:16:35 And self-efficacy is the belief that, hey, I can actually do this. I didn't think I could do it before, but I think I can do it now. And it is what I call just the key to unlocking potential. All of a sudden people think, wait a second, I can do this. And not only can I do this, I can be really good at it. I can think I can do this, I can, I can have come follow me and I can really influence not just my spouse, you know, or my significant other, my children, but I'm gonna have an effect on myself too. So the smaller we can make it, I, I always tell people, if you do

something three minutes every day compared to, Hey, I'm gonna study my scriptures or go serve an hour every day, and then you can't fit it in that three minutes adds up really fast. And it's amazing what we can do in small amounts of time. So yeah, it's the small chains and small decisions that get us there.

Speaker 1 00:17:21 Wow. There's so much there. And just a, a few things that come to mind is like, like, uh, the, you know, you talk about ministering, you talk about things you can do in your home. Like I feel like many times as leaders, we try and solve the problem in the, in the room at church, like in the elders quorum or the, the release side of room. And you know, that's a good sort of rallying point, a meetup point, connecting point. But we just, sometimes we fall in the trap of like, alright, this Sunday I'm gonna teach the most epic lesson about ministering. And by the time they leave that room, they'll have dozens of quotes and like hundreds of scriptures, you know, thrown at them. Then they'll understand that they need to go minister. But oftentimes this change happens by getting out of the room, by giving them experience outside the room in, and then pairing that up with this, this self-efficacy principle of giving 'em something that they can, they can simply do that it's easy and maybe you go with them on the first time they do that Mm-Hmm. Whether it's a service assignment, whether it's a, you know, talking to somebody in their home. But, so I come back to that theme was sort of my mind of like, a lot of this doesn't necessarily happen in the room of elders quorum Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:18:24 Oh, a apps 100%. And we could go talk about missionary work, we could talk about mastering, right? There's so many areas we could go to, but maybe I can give one really good example and cool. And when we teach in our ward, we do lessons very different because the whole goal I think in, in using the prophet words is to hear him. And our, our goal, and I, if I was to use a brain science, you know, term would be to have an insight or that aha moment that causes that person to want to change. And then we help them make that action or take that first step so that they experience it. So I think one of the best things to do is, and and I'll give you a little history here, is I did a lot of schooling in Oklahoma and I had a lot of really good friends and they would invite me to Bible study.

Speaker 2 00:19:07 And I loved, you know, Bible study, going to Bible study with them. And I remember going the first time it was a men's Bible study. We sat down, it was early in the morning, and before we even got into the Bible study, all these men sat around and one, one said, okay, one of the men said, what you know are your wins and successes, let's share those. And so it kind of went around the room, there's probably six or seven of us. And then the second question that this man asked is, what are you struggling with? What's hard? What are you worried about? And I about fell out of my chair, Kurt, because they were sharing things that literally I was like, oh, wow. Like this is a real safe place. So vulnerable. And they shared things. And at the end of, of the Bible study, after they shared, and we, and we studied the scriptures, they, they then said, okay, we're gonna say a prayer for each of the men here.

Speaker 2 00:19:50 And this week will you pray for them? Well, I went to Elders Quorum that next Sunday, of course. And I'm sitting there and, and we're talking about things. And it was amazing how so many people, they weren't willing to share like the hardships. You know, we, there was this just this perfection of, I have to show that everything's okay. And so when I first

became Elder quorum, one of the first things that we did speaking about, you know, having change, is I wanted people to experience that aha moment or hearing this spirit, or having this small bit of revelation by really getting to know the other elders and seeing what their lives were like. And so we started instituting that, Hey, what are your wins and successes of the week? Let's share them today. Let's celebrate as a quorum. And then what of course are you struggling with?

Speaker 2 00:20:30 Now, the first week, I'll tell you, Kurt, it was such a worry because I as a presidency rock, it's gonna be dead silent. So <laugh> be prepared. One of us needs to share first. But then this, this quorum member, I would say, who was in his late fifties, looked the epitome of an individual who has everything in control. Hmm. Said, I, I have something to share. And my daughter, one of my last children just went left for college. And within one week she called me and she said, she's not gonna attend church while she's away at college, that she needs a break. And as he shared that, I mean, tears filled his eyes and there was a spirit that came into the room in that elders quorum. And he said, you know what I need, I need your prayers, but I need someone to stop by and make sure I'm okay.

Speaker 2 00:21:11 And I mean, no epic lesson could ever compare to the invite that he gave, not just to his ministering brother, but to the quorum of, I need you and I need you outside of this room for an hour. And so then we kind of came up with a plan as a presidency. Of course, his ministering brother encouraged other people to go. And that one comment, I would say, changed their elcor because all of a sudden it wasn't something we talked about. It was all of a sudden men in the ward were stopping by on their way home or texting or calling or dropping something off. I mean, I, I'm laughing. I'm like, we can outdo the relief society anytime we're dropping off bread and cupcakes and you know what corp does that, but we need to drop stuff off and stop by and see them. And it changed how we ministered because all of a sudden they were doing it outside. We weren't talking about, we were doing it outside of, of, you know, our the church period of the church blocker in that room. It was everyday life.

Speaker 1 00:22:05 Yeah. And so this started with just that simple question of asking for wins and, and struggles at the beginning of each quorum meeting.

Speaker 2 00:22:12 Yeah, absolutely. That is, and and I'll be honest with you, Kurt, it doesn't matter to me if we take five minutes or 15 minutes because we need to know how the brethren and the families are doing in our quorum. And I thought, you know, as we moved to two weeks later and we do it, I thought my, you know, are people gonna continue doing this? And it literally has, I'd say, flourished in that people feel like it is safe. In fact, just a couple weeks ago we had an individual in our ward whose son suffered just almost a mental breakdown during the week. Hmm. And I have never seen a rally and cried like when word went out like, Hey, we need to take care of the family. They were redoing some of their house. So they were in a rental house and they had to move to a different rental house to get people to come and help.

Speaker 2 00:22:54 It was because that brother shared that in Elders Quorum. It's like, everybody just was like, oh, it doesn't matter what we're talking about here. What can we do for you outside of it? Do we need help finding your home? Do you need help moving? Do you need

us to take your other kids while, while you're working this thing out? So it really has flourished in a way that it's a safe place. And almost now what I like is yes, the wins and successes are there. We love celebrating. But as you know, we've heard in general conference so many times, if you know every person you really meet, I think that's Elder Eyring. Every person you meet, you can assume that something's going on in their life. And I will testify that that is so true. But now we know because the men are sharing and feel comfortable to share. And if they don't share it, they'll stay after and they'll say, Hey, I want you to know this is going on. And if you as a presidency or, you know, that has, I would say, changed the relationship amongst our our core members. Yeah. And the

Speaker 1 00:23:49 Ward. Yeah. And, and I think my, in my experience, most of the time it's not even, even if it doesn't lead to like, oh, we can do something for you outside, uh, you know, church or whatnot, but most of the time people just need that struggle to be witnessed. Right. They just need to know that, wow, you know, today there's, this week was a hard week and others would be like, love you brother, like <laugh>, you're, I'm glad you made it here, here, here you are. Right. And we also have this, this culture of like, or tradition of like, yeah, we wanna help and it should, you should share what you're struggling with. But let's step into the bishop's office. Like, okay, like, what are you struggling with? Or, or let's come into your house as ministering brothers and sisters. Like, okay, like here you can tell us and we'll, we'll go tell the bishop, you know, we'll make sure <laugh>, but to, to be like, to be an elder's quorum in release sign and be like, did this week was hard for me, or guess what guys, I got a job promotion. Like this is something I've been gunning for for a while. And it came. And just sort of having that moment like that, it's that community, not necessarily the connection of another person hearing it, but having your community hear it, validate it, and like sit with it just can be so powerful.

Speaker 2 00:24:51 Oh. And I think as members of the church we're known for having a community, but I will say post covid, I think we've lost some of that community. Now I'm saying from, you know, I've lived in areas where in, you know, just outside of New York City where, you know, our, our ward expanded, you know, miles and, you know, 30, 40, 50, 60 miles, you're driving an hour to church. And now I live in Gilbert, Arizona where it's like one square, one square block, walk mile. Yeah. Um, but it, we have lost that sense. In fact, there was some research done in the 1950s that asked men, how many people could you call up if you had something go wrong in your life? And the answer was like, five or six, I have five or six men I could call in the middle of the night if I needed someone to come over.

Speaker 2 00:25:31 Well, the same question was asking, this is just general public in the early, you know, early to mid two thousands. And the answer was less than one. So a lot of people are saying zero. I don't have anybody that I can call. And so I think post covid, you know, we have to get back now to where, like you said, it isn't just let's, let's hush it up and keep it quiet. It's, let's share it. Yeah. And like you said, I love how you said it, not so much that we can help. 'cause in some ways we can't help. Right. But in other ways you just know that someone has your back and someone's listening to you and someone knows and someone's praying for you. But, but Kurt, not just, and the thing that I think, so key here, especially post covid, is not just in our wards, but I think as an, as you know, in the elders quorum presidency, that we're

responsible for every man who is in our ward boundaries because they're going through the same things.

Speaker 2 00:26:20 You know, they have hardships, they have marriage struggles, you know, they have all sorts of issues. How are we helping them as well? Not just as ward members? How are we serving not just our ministering to our own, but how are we ministering outside of that? And that has been a big aha moment for our ward, for me, for ministering brothers that hey, you, yeah, you have, you have people you're assigned to, but guess what? You got about 60 others that you're assigned to. Now you have a job and you have a family and you know, kids have cheerleading and soccer and music and all those things, but your neighbor, that's an assignment. And let's figure out ways together that we, we can do things. And so it's been a big mindset change, just not for men, because there's a lot of men who in our ward need our, our help who are in our ward boundaries, but not specifically in our ward.

Speaker 1 00:27:06 Yeah. Yeah. Alright, so let's, uh, the basic like premise we're talking about is like, as a leader, you're creating these aha moments and it's often you're, you, you're speaking in the context of like sharing community. 'cause again, it's not about sharing that mic drop quote from conference and being like, aha, doesn't everybody have an aha moment? Like those are, those are helpful and, and those are needed, but to like come together and make it not just a, a teacher talking, but a community there in that room that that's sharing these moments and that those aha moments happen, which take us back to like that, uh, that it's stimulating change in that group. Oh yeah. When that's happening. Is that a good reframe there?

Speaker 2 00:27:44 Yeah, absolutely. It's just getting people to think and act and communicate maybe differently than they thought of before. It's really cur changing perception. Yeah. Changing perception of themselves and also changing perception of how they see, you know, the people they minister to or people in the quorum or their spouse or their children. That's, we wanna change those perceptions. And, and one thing that we do at, at the end of elders, every elders quorum is, you know, we, everybody's talking, we give breakout time that people can take that lesson and, and really think about it and simmer on it. But we always close out with tools. What are one or two tools? Here's what we think, you know, and the teacher instructor, here's a couple tools. What are other tools that we can use it then this week, like, what are we gonna do this week that if you didn't have an aha moment, you know, we're famous for saying, you know, hopefully the spirit has said something that you need to do, but oftentimes it doesn't. So, but the spirit's gonna speak something this week if you just listen and, and hear the spirit to the tool that you should use of someone you should talk to or some way that you should change. Because sometimes, you know, we think of, oh, we always hear ways we can serve. The spirit tells us, well, I'm telling you, a lot of times the spirit's gonna whisper to you. Hey, you can serve yourself well by changing this one thing in your life. Yeah. It's gonna make your life a whole lot better.

Speaker 1 00:28:54 Yeah. Wow. That principle, just seeing things as they really are, you know, thinking about that's like elder bednar, elder Maxwell like thing. And 'cause when you walk into say, a core meeting or release sighting meeting, like your perceptions could be completely

off as from things as they really are. And so by, you know, stimulating this discussion, inviting people to share things as they really are, then it shifts, you know, you gain a new perspective in that room and that changes you of how you approach that room, how you show up and, and so forth. That's powerful. That's

Speaker 2 00:29:21 Great. And, and Kurt think of what's happening all week. So all week, I feel like there's a perception shift happening every week. So you go out in the world and you're working in the world and your perception has shifted based on what you're seeing in the news. People you're working with, you know, social media, you know, what you're watching on television. And then I feel like, boy, that Saturday and, and the Sabbath day, let's get that paradigm or your perception re-shifted to what's super important. You know, your marriage, your faith, your testimony, you know, being a dang good dad, you know, changing the lives of people around you. And it isn't like, the one thing I never wanna do is load more on No, it's not that we have to do more, it's just you have to weave things in. Like if I go out to the mailbox and my neighbor's out there, oh boy, I better say something.

Speaker 2 00:30:06 How are you doing? What's going on? You know, what can we do? You know, it's hilarious. Like the other day I was racing to get a, a child off to a sporting event on Saturday and I saw my neighbors all around the garage huddle. And so I asked them, Hey, threw the car, what are you doing? They're like, oh, we need one more person to help move a refrigerator. <laugh>. Now, at that moment I'm thinking, okay, they're go, I'm gonna be late to the basketball game. But it's those little things and it took five minutes, but yet I, that was a perception change that we need to, you know. Yeah. It's just a constant shift going back and forth. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:30:34 And again, if you can do that, it sort of ignite that perception change on Sunday is going to perpetuate throughout the week. Right. Oh, rather than, yeah. Anyways, yeah. That's, that's really helpful. Um, anything else as far as, you know, you mentioned two things to consider, one change. Anything else in the change world that you wanna make sure we hit on? Or do we cover

Speaker 2 00:30:50 Pretty well? Oh yeah, we have do, we can spend a couple minutes here, but I think Okay. When we talk about resilience is key. Now life is really difficult. You know, once you've been around long enough, you know, hard things happen to everyone. And I think it's really key that leaders, family members, parents learn a little bit about resilience. Like, how can I become more resilient? How can the gospel help me become more resilient? Like as, as we've studied resilience and looked at a lot of the research, it is amazing how like, literally how it's woven into the gospel from, you know, sabbath day rest and rejuvenation to fasting is so good for the brain and the body to what we eat, you know, to rest and rejuvenation. You know, so many people sleep but they never really rest. And, and what things we need to, so there's a lot of things that work, but resilience and, and we think of missionaries today and, you know, being resilient amongst the work that they're doing.

Speaker 2 00:31:42 I think it's really key. And, and boy, we could spend an hour or two on, on resilience alone, but people learn how to be resilient. So when I, let me give a definition.

There's, when we talk about resilient, it isn't just, I survived something, a challenge or a hardship, but I actually grew and developed through it. I came out of that challenge or that hardship better. I was different. I grew and developed as an individual and I actually thrived, you know, through it. I, I came out on the other end and better than now we, we know a lot of people go through hardship when they look at it. About 18 months to two years later, literally a large percentage of 'em say, this is one of the best things to ever happen to me. You know, maybe it brought me back down to my knees.

Speaker 2 00:32:20 I relied on heavenly father more. You know, I figured out I could do different things than I thought I could do. I became a different person. And so I think it's really key that we learn more about how to be resilient in a world that seeks to tear us down in literally, you know, and there's a lot of good stuff out there, but in a lot of ways we know that the world is trying to tear us down, you know, gotta be careful social media. We gotta be careful what we watch and what we read. 'cause they really do tear us down. And, you know, marriage is important. Our role as fathers and mothers is important and, and our role in even what we do in our own little neighborhood or community is so key. You know, I I think one of the best things I've learned from elders president is I can't minister in a way that everybody needs it.

Speaker 2 00:33:00 But it's amazing how there's so many different personalities and expertise and talents in the elders quorum. And the right person seems to always be there. Like, we've got someone who can help you out in some way. And it's just amazing how the Lord has put together all these people a real different mix that really to help each other out in ways that, you know, you may need it or I may need it at the right time. So I think that we have to learn more about resilience and ways that we become more resilient so that we can, you know, I think grow our testimonies and, and become better parents and yeah. And church members.

Speaker 1 00:33:31 So what does that look like generally in practice as a leader who maybe wants to stimulate more resilience? Is it bringing that up in the lesson more? Is it maybe making that a lesson more? Or like, how can a church leader better stimulate, you know, solid resilience?

Speaker 2 00:33:47 I think one of the best ways to do it is to encourage individuals to have moments of prayer slash meditation. Now we know from research, if you even just meditate, pray, read your scriptures, have moments of quiet. So there isn't so much noise going on. Our phones, our watches, the television, you know, everything around us, but we have moments of quiet that the brain changes and the brain opens up and relaxes. You know, all of a sudden all these chemicals that calm us down, the parasympathetic nervous system, that those things slow us down and help us really to be open up, I think, to hearing the spirit, hearing things that we should do, but also just calming us down and helping us be better in our jobs, be better with our families. And so I'm gonna really, I think one of the best things that we can do, and, and when I say this, it's literally, we see the brain change in three to four minutes.

Speaker 2 00:34:41 And people say, well, I want to go meditate or pray and I'm gonna pray for 20 minutes. Well, we see once you hit about five, six minutes, that really exponentially you've hit about 80% of the benefit of what you're gonna do. So really it's just finding those quiet

moments of prayer or of just sitting and going for a quiet walk or sitting in your car maybe getting out of work for a minute. Say, I'm gonna take five minutes and just have some peace and some quiet and just think is so key to follow. And I think the prophets guy said, we need to hear him. Yeah. And it's really hard to hear. I mean, we work with one of the top brain researchers, Dr. Michael Mersch, who, who's around brain plasticity. And he found, boy, if you want to take someone down fast, and he did a lot of animal studies early, give them constant noise.

Speaker 2 00:35:25 People can't think as well, they can't make decisions. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, they're not as calm, they're agitated. Anxiousness goes up, depression goes up, anxiety goes up. It's that constant noise our brains need quiet. So I, I think one thing that we can do is encourage our leaders to teach people, Hey, we need to take this couple minutes and pray and have quiet and peace and scripture steady and just listening. It's so good for the brain. It's, it's really what I call candy for the brain. It's so good for your brain. Great things happen when you do it.

Speaker 1 00:35:53 Man. There's, there's such a, there's just the way you said that helped me see it in a, in a new perspective because, you know, again, some people may hear that and think, oh, Chris is giving the old Sunday school answer. You know, read, pray, do go to church, those things. But you're, you're saying it in a cadence of not like, oh, go do this thing, but you're saying it in a context of actually do nothing in the context of these things. So it's not that. 'cause sometimes the problem that we run into is that we're like, no, I, I study my scriptures, but I do it in the approach of, oh, I gotta get, come follow me, done. Right? I've gotta get through the lesson, but it has to start from a cadence of like, I'm depressurizing rather than just like, oh yeah, I gotta do these, these religious things as well.

Speaker 1 00:36:37 So the way you said that is so helpful because it, it needs to be that reset. And I, I don't even think like in the beginning of a core meeting or release sight meeting, a sacrament meeting or whatever, like even the, the cadence of sacrament that you're not allowed to even play soft music during sacrament. We need nothing but the sacrament. And, and it's not an extra effort thing. I'm just sitting here in silent and there's, there's such divinity in that, you know, of slowing down and stopping. And that means you're reading a few verses of scriptures, great. If it means you're sitting in quiet prayer. Great. Right.

Speaker 2 00:37:08 Yeah. And you just gave me an idea. Let's take it from a different angle. Let's take it. I I love what you said because it's so true, especially when it comes to the sacrament, is, you know, we're working on really trying to be the best we can be. You know, we're trying to become more like our heavenly father and savior Jesus Christ as much as we can. And it doesn't happen through the check mark. I grew up in the check mark era <laugh>. I'm reading my scriptures, I'm writing my journal. I mean, I was a check mark kid, if you ever met one complete with my Franklin Covey planner that I had from my, you know, from the mission on I was, I was all in. And then I learned more as I got older and started to study this as, it's not what I'm doing, but who I'm becoming.

Speaker 2 00:37:48 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that it didn't matter if I read 10 minutes of scriptures or five minutes of scriptures. It was what did I take out of it? And who am I becoming

Now, we do know, when it comes to the brain, self-reflection is one of the best things we can do to become a better human. Because when we understand who we are and understand our purpose and maybe why we're placed here on the earth, and there's a lot of different ways to go about doing that. But why I'm here and who I am and what I can bring to that, it changes our own outlook on who we are and what we can do. But it just makes it bless, I think, the world as well. And it's not by doing more, it's by slowing down and saying, okay, I am gonna read the scriptures and I'm going to pray, but how is it helping me become the person that heavenly father wants me to come? It's that who am I becoming, not what am I doing? Because you can do, do, do, do, but you aren't becoming. And I think even in my forties, it's just like that world opens up to me and oh, I'm becoming more the person I, I need to be to better hopefully fit into Heavenly Father's plan.

Speaker 1 00:38:50 Ah, love it. Awesome. Anything else around like, the topic of resilience that would be worth mentioning or,

Speaker 2 00:38:56 Yeah, I, I just, I know the church is offering a lot of different courses and classes that, that you can take. I think it's key, key that people right now in the world we live in, learn about, you know, resilience and ways to be resilient. And I'm just talking little small tools, things that you can do in three to five minutes to calm down from those anxious moments and really just be able to be like, okay, I can handle the day. Because we're so busy the world, I mean, we live in a hyper novel society that the world is changing faster than really our brains can even comprehend and just wait. As we, we move into, and you see the research around ai, I mean, it's moving so fast that evermore, we need those sacrament type of moments where it's silence and we're thinking about the savior, we're thinking about our families, we're thinking about who we are and, you know, learning more about who we can become and you know, who we are. And I think that will help us navigate, help this world of increased, you know, depression, anxiety, and of course I'm not taking away from diagnosis of depression, anxiety, and medications, those things. I'm just saying there are ways that we should teach kids from a very young age that we have to know how to handle stress and anxiety because it is ever amping up and increasing.

Speaker 1 00:40:07 Perfect. Okay. So, and those, so change in resilience. What was the original context those were in as far as like how the brain, like what's, how to help people change and, and also how to help people be resilient? Is that the

Speaker 2 00:40:19 Yeah, and I think, well change of course is the gospel's teaching us, it's the gospel of change. So what are ways that we can change? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's through I think, doing smaller things. Okay. More regularly every day. So if you can't read your scriptures for 10 minutes, I'm say go down to five or go down to two minutes. It's just the cumulative effect of what happens in the brain is amazing. I mean, there's lots of studies that have been done around people losing weight. And of course, what do we do? End of the year's coming, beginning of the year is coming. Yeah. People are gonna join the gym. We're gonna be carb free, sugar free, cholesterol free, you know, and what, whatever, we go crazy, we're gonna go to the gym. Yeah. But what was found is a lot of research that was done is people who

literally were told to put your shoes right by the, your, your exercise shoes, your sneakers, your tennis shoes, right by the front door.

Speaker 2 00:41:05 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And this week, that's all you're gonna do. That's all you're gonna do. Okay. This next week all you're gonna do is you're gonna walk down to the edge of your driveway. We don't want you to do anything more. Well of course, is anybody gonna do that? No. And then the next week it was, okay, why don't you walk to the end of the block? And what's amazing is people who did this, the smaller and because first of all, you're gonna have more wins because you're doing it, which releases the right chemicals motivate you. You feel like I'm doing things, I'm making progress, versus I didn't hit the gym, I ate these, I did these things. But these little small things that those people lost more weight, kept it off longer than anybody else who did the big changes. So I think that's why we have eternity.

Speaker 2 00:41:42 There's a master plan in here that it's the small changes throughout our lifetimes that really help us become the people that, that we need to be. And then to be able to conquer that, I think is, comes through the resilience. Yeah. Being able to get through the hardships and hard times that we all face and, and be like, I, I can make it through and I I can do this because life, I mean life is really difficult and we need to be able to be resilient and rely on the gospel to be able to make it through those hard times and the knowledge we have.

Speaker 1 00:42:09 Yeah. So this is great. I think if there's like a leader out there listening who just sort of feels lost in their calling or they're just maybe caught up in the, the administration of it, the day to day, the week to week and say, okay, let's refocus and say your mission is to stimulate small change and to stimulate resilience. What a great place to start from. And that may flood your revelation machine there and, uh, give you a direction to go with with your organization.

Speaker 2 00:42:34 Absolutely. And that may even be enough, because all of a sudden it's like you light this little fire and you ignite it, and then all of a sudden it spreads throughout your quorum and your ward that people are open and sharing in small changes. It is really, you know, elders quorum called for presidents aren't called for two months. They're called for, you know, a couple years or two or three years. Because that allows them to make those changes in that time. That's how change, of course, that great lesson, it's gonna change perception, but lasting change is gonna come through time and experience and being able to do those activities, that's what's gonna make the change. So we're, we're in for the long haul here. We're not just in for the, the, the short duration.

Speaker 1 00:43:12 Awesome. Well, I have a few other questions or whatnot that, that can take us in a direction, but I'm curious if there's anything else related to this. Any other point, principle or concept you wanna make sure we, we hit on before I fire those at you?

Speaker 2 00:43:25 Well, we've handled one question in the last, what, 35, 40 minutes? So I'm not, I'm, my batting average is not that good. That's great. I I tend to talk too much. That's great. But you know, that, that gives you an idea. So let's, I, I think I've given tons there, but let's move on. And

Speaker 1 00:43:37 So you sent me just from your experience as an elders quorum president, various times, uh, some different things that you've tried, and you've touched on some of these a little bit. But, you know, you talked about the, the sharing win successes and, uh, blessings. Anything else as far as just like how you start off that elders quorum meeting or anything else you did to stimulate similar result?

Speaker 2 00:43:58 Well, I'll give a couple suggestions. And of course this is, you know, ideas and revelation that came to, you know, our presidency and our instructors and things like that. And it may absolutely be different for your ward and the needs of the men and the women and the families in your area. But one thing that made a big difference for us quickly is our lessons. We really changed our lessons from the ELSs Corp. Lessons have been going on for how many hundreds of years. The same way one person stands up to it is a group discussion, like it's led by an instructor and, and we teach them how to do this, led by giving some key points, some learnings that came through it. And then we break up each of the men into groups and, and we try to get them. Now there's a, there's some meaning behind this.

Speaker 2 00:44:43 I guess they're gonna find out if they listen to it. But we want men to get to know each other. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> because oftentimes, you know, in church we come, we sit, we race to second hour and then we're out with our families. 'cause we need to go get home and something to eat. We don't get a lot of time to talk and communicate and get to know each other. So we put men in different groups and we give them 10, 12 minutes that they can sit and talk about the one or two points that we have up on the blackboard or on the slide or whatever, um, that they can listen or that they can discuss it. How does it work for you? Would you do it in your family? You know, what are things that you're doing? And then we come together, the last, you know, 10 or 15 minutes, and each group really shares.

Speaker 2 00:45:17 So it is a group effort. Now, the best part of this is number one, men get to know each other, people that they never talk to. And all of a sudden a lot of men have said, Hey, all of a sudden I'm going out to lunch with this brother. Or I know them so much better than I, you know, we've been inward for eight years together and we've never even barely talked to each other. Number two, they get to think and teach each other, which I really like. And they get to have those insight, aha revelatory, you know, moments of, of being together so that it, it really begins to work together. It's not just one person standing up, here's what you need to do that. Great ideas, experiences are coming from everybody in, in the room. And what's hilarious is sometimes it's like, okay brethren, we gotta put down chairs lesson's over.

Speaker 2 00:45:58 But they're still talking and still like, wait, I've got one more comment. So now it takes time to get there, but we really focus on those lessons and really facilitating a discussion of experience that all men. And here, the third great thing about it's no one's on their phones and no one's on their iPads because you can't do it because your group is talking and they're small enough groups, you can't hide. But big enough groups that if it is uncomfortable for, you know, some men, I don't wanna speak up. Absolutely. You can say, I, I'm, you know, I always tell them, you're driving the bus. So if you want, if you don't wanna speak up for your group, sh turn to a brother and say, Hey, will you share these comments for me? You know, we're all uncomfortable or comfortable with different things. So a lot of benefits come. I, I'd say

that number one is how we do the lessons have really changed the activity and, and men coming and staying in, you know, in elders quorums. So that's one, which I don't dunno if you have any questions about that. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:46:50 For sure. So I, and I love that response and I'm just, my mind goes to, like, sometimes there's some risk in that, like you mentioned, like that first elders quorum mean you stand up and say, will someone share your success or your struggle, whatnot. And, and you run the risk of it. Nobody's saying anything, right? And so, and there's a risk in like, what if you, you know, break the lesson up into groups and they're talking and people are like, ah, you know, there's, there's this natural resistance you have to push through. If people are like, oh, like I came in here with the expectation that I could sit here and just, you could talk, and then I'd go home and it's fine that way. So, I mean, if you were coaching someone on, just like, I feel, you know, they may say, Chris, I feel uneasy, like asking the quorum to sort of break that mold. Any encouragement or, or simplicity you could bring to just how to do that.

Speaker 2 00:47:38 Oh, so the first is gonna be good. You need to change it. <laugh>. It's, it's, it's an old process that needs to change, especially post covid. And it is uncomfortable and it's good that it's uncomfortable. 'cause it isn't all about coming to El decorum just to feel good. Now that's part of it. And we're building a brotherhood, but it's also that we're becoming better men. Like we're becoming better disciples of Christ. That's, that's what we're doing. Now, of course, we strategically, especially first, initially, Hey, let's have a certain man who we know will speak up and we know will help lead the group, or whether it's a presidency member in these different groups. So we helped facilitate it. Now remember, it goes back to change. Yeah. Small changes at first. And so maybe if initially at first there were one or two groups that didn't say a lot, then we'd focus, hey, the other groups.

Speaker 2 00:48:25 But next week, hey, I want you to say one thing to share one thing that you talked about. And so it really is the small changes that are gonna get you there. But it's key because the men aren't gonna get the revelation by coming and sitting like they have for years. Well, I shouldn't say they're not, they may not, I think the increase of chance is gonna, you know, be much higher if they come and participate and think and open up their scriptures and have discussions about the topic versus be on their phone texting. Yeah. Looking at the news. Like, we've gotta have you involved. And it, it is funny because, you know, initially some men were on their phones, but then some brethren like, brother, come on. Like, I want your comments. You've had good experience in this. So it's an encouragement. But once again, it, it does take time. And it, and it is a risk. But I like that risk because I think the reward payoff comes over time. Yeah. In the changes that we've seen. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:49:18 Yeah. And there's is this, uh, and I don't know if this is like the scientific words to use, but oftentimes I'll be in a lesson, I'll look around and with the teacher just teaching at the front or you know, lecturing or dominating time. Every, most people in the room are like in a beta state where they're just sort of like, they're there. They may be listening and maybe even enjoying the lesson, but when you get them in an alpha state where you're like, all right, you're, you know, discuss this with two other people, or let's stand up and some of you move over here,

like suddenly it engages the brain. And you mentioned in your email that the brain does not learn or change habits when somebody's just at the front of the room teaching.

Speaker 2 00:49:55 Not at all. And, and I mean, you have to laugh because some people went to the bishop and I'm like, here's what he's doing. I have to talk. So we had to prep the bishop, Rick to say, some people may come say, this is really uncomfortable. You've gotta say, well, I think this is a good thing. Why don't you try it? You know? Mm-Hmm. And that's why I always do say, 'cause some people don't like to speak up on it. Never want people to feel that kind of uncomfortableness because it's gonna take away the spirit of, is he gonna call me on me? Is he not? And that's why we do the groups that yeah, someone in the group is gonna want, wanna share. But I do wanna make you a little bit uncomfortable because that's when you learn, that's when the brain, like you said, activates because you're having to change something. Your perception, your behavior, your actions. And I'm causing that just a little bit of uncomfortable for you to question, say, maybe I do need to change this. And, and boy, what's funny is people used to never speak up. Now they're the ones you can't get to, to be quiet. <laugh>, you know, we have 10 minutes here, brother. Let, let's get to everybody. But you, you get the point.

Speaker 1 00:50:51 Yeah. And I think it's one of those things, like you just have to stick with it. 'cause I'm sure if, if we got 10, you know, individuals or leaders to, to try these approaches, nine of them are gonna come back after the first try and be like, Chris, Kurt, that was a disaster. Like, I'm never trying that again. It was horrible. But you almost need to expect that the first, the second, the third time, and then it's the fourth, the fifth time where suddenly it's transformational what happens.

Speaker 2 00:51:15 And it'll happen. And it's a lot of prayer, you know, going into that and a lot of good lesson preparation and, and a lot of strategic placing men in certain areas. But absolutely, it's not gonna be a huge success at first. But I think in the world we live in and what we need to be doing, we need to have everybody involved. I need every brother in there involved in the way that their talents and abilities are there and their potential will come through. I think as an elders quorum president, we don't talk about this. I think one of my jobs is to help bring out some of these men's potential. Yeah. You know, and help them see them. How I think I see them, and I know the Lord sees them in things that they can do to not only better themselves and their families and their marriages, but people around them in the ward. I mean, more than ever, I think I realize we need every person in that ward. You have something to offer. And most of the time, people either too afraid or they don't know. I often will think that people don't know. They'll say, I, I have nothing to offer. You know, and that's why I'm gonna say no to the calling. Whereas I'm like, oh, there's someone's life you're gonna touch. We just need to find out what it's and how to do it.

Speaker 1 00:52:20 Yeah. And again, I think that the broader goal, like you mentioned early on, isn't necessarily what happens in that room. It's what happens outside of the room after that, that experience. Right. So just keep pushing. I think it'll, it'll be, so for sure. You also mentioned this, uh, you have monthly men's community activities. I'm so intrigued right now. Please tell us what this is and how it works.

Speaker 2 00:52:42 Now. I realize now a lot of men out there may go to threat state when I'm talking about all these changes, which I expect. Yeah. But you try it, you're gonna move to a reward state because change is hard. Most of the time. Our brain, 80% of the time, 85% of the time, our brain does not like change. But what we found, a couple things we found is that, like you said, a lot of what we wanted to occur was not incurring at church. You know, because of just how, how church is set up. And we needed to get men outside of it. Now I realize we live in an area that we can get men once a month to come. And maybe it's just a quick car drive or a walk down the street. I, I, I get that proximity plays a role, but I think there needs to be time where men get together.

Speaker 2 00:53:22 Now, initially we started doing, you know, this Elders quorum activities. But what was amazing is all of a sudden we'd be talking to men. They're like, we heard you playing pickleball. And we, we do what's called like chicken and pickleball, chicken wings and, and come play pickleball. We heard you playing pickleball. What's going on down there? Chris and I had this aha moment of, wait a second, this needs to be community for men, not just for us, and talk about missionary work. And so we started inviting everybody, every man. And, and what's funny is, you know, we'll do pickleball usually 'cause you know, a couple of people off courts just right in our neighborhood. And what's funny is most of the men don't even come and play pickleball. They don't even, they come because they want to eat chicken wings and drink a Sprite or a Diet Coke and just hang out, have a little bit of a man's night for an hour or so.

Speaker 2 00:54:06 It's amazing. And then some men do wanna come and play. They just want to come together. That's one of the eight pillars of brain health, is social connection. The church gives us that. But there's so many other people, I think both in the church, outside the church, they need to get together outside. And of course you meet men, you dunno, in the ward and in the community. So we have these community men's activities. Now, a second part of that is we found that it's not just having fun together, but I think oftentimes in the church we feel like, oh, we need to serve others. Which I absolutely hundred percent agree. But I think even more importantly, we need to serve together with people who are not members of the church. I've seen amazing things happen when we're serving together side by side. And so we've started some initiatives to help prepare people in our neighborhoods, families, men's get prepared, make sure you have water.

Speaker 2 00:54:54 Seven, two hour kit. You know, things that we try to do once or twice a year, where, I'll give you a perfect example. We're having a fall festival come up for Halloween here soon. It is a community fall festival. And it isn't just members of the church who are bringing the food and setting it up. Oh no, no. We have a little scan thing that they can scan and do a signup genius. We deliver it to the doors and say, what can you help bring? So everybody in the community, whether you bring cookies or you help set up something, chairs or the trunk or treat or whatever, it's, it's not just the members doing it. It's everybody in the community doing it. And it's grown over the years to where now I'd say we get probably 70% of the community out and we want 70% of the community to be doing something.

Speaker 2 00:55:37 You're involved. So they feel like I'm doing something with my community. And it, it just changes relationships. We get to know our neighbors, they get to know

us. And it isn't just, oh, members of that church are, you know, we're holding this and we're gonna come 'cause it's fun and our kids wanna come. It's, our community holds this. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> not just that our community doesn't. And that's a change in perception for the relationships that we have. And, and opens up for a lot of missionary opportunities as well. Not just to do for missionary opportunities, but we're doing it because we love our neighbors and we wanna be a community who helps each other and who knew is there for each other. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:56:09 Love it. Uh, tell me about this, uh, once a week presidency ministering that you do. How does that work?

Speaker 2 00:56:14 Alright, well, initially it started out a lot of it coming to the stake that we do ministering. But we noticed that again, once again, it's really outside of the church that really great things happen. And what we do is, we're in Arizona, it's really hot during the summer. We get in shorts and t-shirts. During the wintertime. We might be in Levi's and we go and visit. And here's what's great about, we're not calling you and telling you we're coming and sit in your home and giving a 35 minute lesson. We're dropping by your door. We may have some cupcakes or some cookies. And we do three or four families. And we are, how are things going? What's up? What great things are happening? What are you working on in your house? Like, what hobbies do you have? It is just literally a get to know you.

Speaker 2 00:56:54 Now what's amazing is usually some type of gospel topic will come up and, and we'll, you know, we'll talk about that. But it's getting to know the men and their families in a way that is in their domain, not the church and probably our domain and the bishop's office or the elders quorum, you know, teaching room. It's, it's, we're getting to know you there. And it is amazing because then if something does go wrong or something great happens, they're more apt to call us and they're more apt to call their ministering brothers. So we absolutely do this. And, and we've now switched it to where we'll do one week ministering and then the next week, because of proximity for men who are around a lot of people working from home, let's hit lunch. Yeah. And we'll have three or four or five men. And guess what?

Speaker 2 00:57:34 We invite our neighbors, Hey, just you're working from home. Just come for an hour meeting at the taco place right down the street, and let's just have literally a 35 minute, how are you doing? Get to, and it's just a bunch of men getting together and it's just, it's great. Yeah. I mean it's, it's really fun. But it's also, I think serving the, the greater good Yes. In building those relationships. So it's not like, now, of course sometimes I'm on my way home where things going, I'm like, oh my goodness, we have ministry. It's one of those things like, you know, oh, I don't want to do this <laugh>. I've got 10,000 other things to do. Yeah. And then the moment you're there for five minutes, you're like, this is the best thing ever. Yeah. Like, these guys are great, I know them better. So I feel like everybody else does. We all have 10 million things to do. Yeah. But once I'm there, I'm like, oh, this is the best. Yeah. Like I, I love these men and I, I have more friends than I've ever had before <laugh>, which is a, which is a good

Speaker 1 00:58:20 Thing. That's great. Yeah. And I just so much appreciate, like, I think for whatever reason, I don't, I'm always trying to find a reason, but sometimes there's this feeling of like, I don't want, I wanna make sure people know we're coming. And so, you know, then we

create this big assignment, administrative hurdle that like the, the secretary has to call all these people and whatever. Yeah. But there's something about just like showing up, like it's 1993, knocking on the door and being like, yeah, I know you weren't expecting me, but hey, we're gonna have a conversation here on your doorstep and, uh, here's some brownies and how are things going? Right. And that's okay. It doesn't have to be like this 30 minute lesson focused, you know, if where somebody's crying at the end, it, you can, it can just be that touchpoint.

Speaker 2 00:59:00 Oh. And it's two to three minutes. Yeah. And oftentimes they'll say, come in, come in. We're like, no, we say no, <laugh>. Like, no, if you wanna talk to us, we're gonna talk right here at the door. Now what's amazing though is oftentimes they're like, you know, oh, we just finished dinner and we did a brisket. Do you wanna come in and try the brisket? I did it on my, I I just did it for my first time on the barbecue or something. It's, it's amazing the things that come out, but it isn't about that. So that the thing we wanted is when we come back, people know, this is two to three minutes. You've got things going on. We just care about your family and we want you to care about us. And so we just want to hear what's going on. And, and that's when you find out a lot of what's going on.

Speaker 2 00:59:34 And of course it's, you know, oftentimes the right place at the right time that we just oftentimes get there when someone's like, oh, we need something right now. Help. Can you help with this? Or can you help us with a blessing? Or, you know, things like that. But if not, we're there two to three minutes. And oftentimes we're the ones saying it's great talking to you. We're going like, we've gotta go <laugh>. Like we're, you know, they're like, we, I guess you always want want them to wanna leave wanting more of you. So we're like, Nope, it's done. Great talking to you. We're out. See you later.

Speaker 1 01:00:01 Love it. Love it. And again, you know, I'm just, I always try and keep in mind the, the wards in Iowa or whatever, they're spread out. Yeah. Yeah. And again, you can go to one, you know, for that ministry night, go to one area in the ward and spend, you know, hit two or three homes or whatever it is and call it a night. You know, even if you just hit one home, it, it was well worth the drive. So. Right. And

Speaker 2 01:00:20 Maybe you're doing it once or twice a month. Like it doesn't need to be every week. It's just, Hey, we're, we're gonna do it. And, and maybe it's, you know, sending in a text or calling them up on the way home from work. I just think there are lots of little things that we can do. These touch points. 'cause you, you hit it right on the head, Kurt, it's outside of my wearing my suit being the elder's quorum president. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. It's outside of that. It's like you're seeing me in our normal basketball practice, stopping at your door waving as you drive by, you know, sending you texts. I think that makes a difference. And I can always be better. You know, we have a new ward and we're starting all over again. You know, it's like, okay, here we go. I don't know any of these, A lot of these men, I don't know. And so we've gotta start again. So. Yep. It's a journey.

Speaker 1 01:01:03 It is. For sure. Alright, Chris, any other idea approach, a shift in perspective that you wanna share before we wrap up? Or how'd we do?

Speaker 2 01:01:10 Yeah, I think the last thing here is, number one, let go of the perfection and the perfect Elders quorum president or the perfect secretary. All those things just use your talents and abilities to be the best that you can be in the calling. And we're all not perfect. We all have things happen and, and I just, I really have let that go and just say, I'm always doing my best and trusting in the Lord that I'm at the right place at the right time. And I'm just trying to, there's, I don't put a lot of stress on myself of, oh, I'm not doing enough. I just wanna do enough of the right things. And usually for me that's contacting people is the right thing. And a lot of this other stuff, you know, we can all work out. But it's just the small things. And, and of course I think you can never go wrong when it just is repeating.

Speaker 2 01:01:56 What we hear in conference and, and from President Nelson is work on revelation because the spirit's gonna tell you exactly what you need, what your marriage needs, what your family needs. We can't, you know, you're not always gonna get that from church or elders quorum or sacrament meeting, but the spirit's always gonna whisper to you. So you've got to just stop and take these moments of, okay, I I just need to put out the noise and listen to the spirit. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And you may not get something, but you know, once a week you just might get something that's gonna really change and affect your life in a really positive spiritual way.

Speaker 1 01:02:26 Yeah. Well, I know, Chris, you didn't, uh, come on the podcast to be promotional by any means, but if people do wanna learn more about what you do in your day job and your business and and whatnot, is there a place you could send them to learn more about that?

Speaker 2 01:02:38 Oh, sure. You can go to the Adaption Institute. That's Adaption Institute. I'm, I'll give it to you, Kurt. You can put it in the, in the show notes. Okay. But Adaption Institute, and that's the work website. And you can sign up for a newsletter that we give you all the brain science from work to marriage to making your life better. And it's just a once a week newsletter. Super short as well. I have a couple books out. We'll have two books coming out next year around the Brain at Work, as well as Brain and Leadership. I did write and kind of offset things. I did write a parenting book last year, and so you can find it anywhere that you buy books. And it's called, I, I'll just tell you, it's called How to Raise Remarkable Kids Without Ever Talking to 'em. Now if that isn't a good title. Nice. And that came from my daughter, that came from my eldest daughter. Nice. So anyway, so we're, we're good there. But that's, I think that's a, you know, a fun, easy, it's a short book just on ways that we could be better, you know, better father, better parent. Awesome.

Speaker 1 01:03:29 Awesome. Well, we'll definitely link to that. And the last question I have for you, Chris, as you, as you reflect on your time as a leader in the church, how has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ?

Speaker 2 01:03:40 I think that the experiences I've had and the relationships and getting to know these men and families, you know, you see people at church, I think when I've seen them in their lives and the incredible service they offer and the people they are, it has inspired me, I mean, weekly to be a better follower or disciple of Christ. Because I just see these people who

look, you know, we all look so normal, and yet they're doing these incredible things that no one ever knows about for their neighbors and their families and in the community. And it just is amazing. And so I think it inspires me that I see these people and I'm able to serve them in some little small way. I mean, I'm trying to be as good a elders quorum president. I can, but it's those things that have inspired me to be a better follower and disciple of Christ. I think it's just a huge, you know, huge blessing to be able to, to work with these men.

Speaker 1 01:04:40 That concludes this episode of the Leading Saints podcast. Hey, listen, would you do me a favor? You know, everybody's got that friend who listens to a ton of podcasts and maybe they aren't aware of Leading Saints. So would you mind taking the link of this episode or another episode of Leading Saints and just texting it to that friend? You know who I'm talking about, the friend who always listens to podcasts and is always telling you about different podcasts? Well, it's your turn to tell that friend about Leading Saints. So share it. We'd also love to hear from you. If you have any perspective or thought on this episode, you can go to leading-saints.org and actually leave a comment on the uh, episode page or reach out to us at leading-saints.org/contact. Remember to watch the interview about scrupulosity, go to leading-saints.org/fourteen for free access to the Mentally Healthy Saints virtual library.

Speaker 3 01:05:38 It came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of Heaven, who brought forth a restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And when the Declaration was made concerning the own and only true and living church upon the face of the earth, we were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.