



Women in Council Meetings | An Interview with Wendy Ulrich

November 22, 2023

Speaker 1 00:00:03 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 leading-saints.org/fourteen. That's leading-saints.org/one-four. We'll also give you access to all of our virtual libraries to educate about other leadership topics. It's really good stuff. So visit leading-saints.org/fourteen, or click the link in the show notes.

Speaker 1 00:01:25 So you're running on a treadmill. How's it going? Keep running. Run faster. I get all the time. People tell me I'd love to listen to Leading Saints as I work out. And so if you're working out, man, bless your heart. If you're not working out, let that desire work within you and consider going for a walk. And what a great way to, uh, to listen to the podcast. I have many people also tell me that we go on walks all the time together, Kurt. And, uh, so, hey, let's do this. Go on a walk, listen to some great content. Now, if you're new to Leading Saints, this is a podcast where we talk all things leadership in the context of the Church of Jesus Christ, Latterday Saints. So if you are a leader in the church, if you are a parent, any type of leader you're gonna benefit from, from this discussion, and this one is so good, guys.

Speaker 1 00:02:09 This is actually your return guest. We've had Wendy Ulrich on the podcast before. If Anna listened to that initial interview, it's worth going back. We'll link to it in the

show notes. But she has wr recently, uh, written another book called Live Up to Our Privileges, women Power and Priesthood. And I had the opportunity to, to get this book. I read every word of it, and I loved it, especially chapter eight. Okay. When you get this book, make sure you don't skip chapter eight and don't skip ahead to it. Okay? But you gotta read chapter eight. It's like I geeked out over the research and the topics in there. And that actually fueled that, the main focus of my interview with Wendy Ulrich. I had the opportunity to go to her, her home, and, uh, we chatted for about an hour, and this is one of those interviews I stopped and I thought, oh, man, that is so good.

Speaker 1 00:02:56 I can't wait to publish this. And so this is one that you need to listen and share, and I'll, I'll talk about that at the end. But nonetheless, you're gonna love this. We jump into really the, the nuance of priesthood authority as it relates to women in this church. We talk about equality in the church and, and how do we, how do we reconcile all that, especially there. I know there's individuals that really wrestle with this concept, and a lot of them are, are awesome women. And, uh, I hope you hang with us and, and know that we're trying to figure these things out. But I think there's a deeper sanctifying experience happening here, and Wendy and I talk about that. So, here is my interview with Wendy Ulrich, the author of Live Up to Our Privileges, women Power and Priesthood. The following episode is a throwback episode one that was published previously and was extremely popular to see the details of when this was originally published. See the show notes. Enjoy this throwback episode. Today I am in the home of Wendy Ulrich. How are you, Wendy?

Speaker 2 00:04:00 I am so good. Awesome. I'm so happy to

Speaker 1 00:04:01 See you. This is, this is, yeah. My second time here, and we're like old friends. Yeah, right. Meetings, once again,

Speaker 2 00:04:06 <laugh>. And once every 10 years we get together. That's

Speaker 1 00:04:08 Right. Once, whenever you decide to write a book, you, you invite me over, and that's always fun. So, and you've recently, uh, written a book called Live Up to Our Privileges, women Power and Priesthood. That's right. Wow. Just a light topic, you

Speaker 2 00:04:20 Know, just a light topic. Yeah. Just, uh, one of those things that I just, you know, know a lot about. Yeah. No, I don't, <laugh>. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:04:28 And we, we'll definitely get in the, the concepts and topics of, of the book, but maybe just give, if people aren't familiar with you and, and you've written several books, which, which people can find a desert book and other major latter saint bookstores. But maybe give, give us a background on who you are and put yourself into context. Well,

Speaker 2 00:04:42 I'm a psychologist by training Kurt, and so I've spent a lot of time listening to people's heartaches and challenges, I bet over the years bet, and trying to help people maximize a meaningful life and opportunities that come their way. But one of the things of course I'm aware of are some of the challenges that women face, especially in the church, but in society at large, and trying to figure out how to, how to contribute in ways that are

meaningful to them, and to feel like the work that they do matters and is valued by others. And this book was kind of a long time coming for me as I thought about how, what does it really mean for women to have priesthood power? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, that's a phrase we're hearing more and more lately from apostles and prophets who are trying to clarify our doctrine.

Speaker 2 00:05:26 And, uh, from the relief society, general presidencies and others who are trying to help us understand what is the role of women in the priesthood and in the church, and what is the role of the priesthood in the lives of women. And we're learning that women do have access to priesthood authority when they are authorized to do a calling. We learn that women have priesthood power through doing whatever it is they're doing. They, they're asked to do in the church. The Holy Ghost can bless us with that power, and we are endowed with it in the temple. So I'm trying to understand better. Yeah. How do we get that power? What does it look like in our lives? And, uh, how do we use it effectively?

Speaker 1 00:06:03 Yeah. And I have no doubt other women and and men as well are trying to understand it themselves. Right?

Speaker 2 00:06:08 Yeah. Interestingly enough, to me, I find that men are often more interested in this topic even than women sometimes I think in the world that we live in, men are tired of feeling like the bad guys who are avoiding all the power, especially good righteous LDS men. And they're also trying to figure out in their own lives, what does power look like for me? And if I, um, if I understand it better in terms of what it looks like for women, maybe that's gonna help me as well to see what does it really look like? Not to just be authorized to have a certain office or to do certain callings, but to actually do those things with power. Yes. Which is something that both men and women are, are encouraged to do. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:06:44 And I would imagine that long before you decided to, you know, turn this, uh, turn your research into a book that this was, was this a topic that you just, in your personal study was, was diving into?

Speaker 2 00:06:54 Absolutely. You know, I've been thinking about and pondering for many, many years, both through times of frustration Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> with feeling dismissed or feeling like I didn't live up to my, to my privileges, but also in trying to help others. And in trying to help my under myself understand what is it really that the Lord would expect of me. Yeah. And what is he willing to do for me and with me to, to create the kind of power that he has in my life, which I believe is what he's trying to give us. All, you know, is, is the power that he has. So what does that power consist of, and how is it transferred? Or questions that have long intrigued me.

Speaker 1 00:07:30 Yeah. And as I approached this book and, and read it, you know, I, I do. So from a perspective, I really want to understand the experience that women have in this gospel, in the culture that, that we've created, sort of around that gospel. And you use the word dismissed. And, and sometimes we can apply that to, you know, maybe a, a male leader dismissing a female leader. But is there more to that word as far as like, what does it mean,

what does the female experience in the church around this concept of feeling dismissed? Some, sometimes maybe it was intentional, but oftentimes maybe not.

Speaker 2 00:07:58 Oh, I think normally it's not intentional. Yeah. I think people are just doing their jobs as best they know how and following the, the patterns and the examples that they've maybe seen, maybe not without a lot of thoughtfulness sometimes, but not intending to be domineering or not intending to be dismissive. Yeah. But it can feel that way to women. And that's true in the society at large. The work that women do is often invisible. It's often misunderstood. It's often misrepresented in, uh, the society that we live in. And as long as the work of women is not really seen as valuable, because it's not really seen, period, women can have the feeling that their opinions or their, um, the contributions that they're making are not really seen, because sometimes they're not Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> women and men have different styles of how they communicate. And when women walk into a meeting or a, a council or whatever that is predominantly men, for example, men are just using the style that's familiar to them, and it works great for them because they all get it.

Speaker 2 00:08:59 Yeah. They don't think about it. You know, it's not necessarily a conscious thing, but they're used to it. And so they just fall into that very readily and easily. The style that women use when communicating with each other is a little different. And so when we walk into a men a male setting, uh, we can feel like nobody's paying attention to me. Everybody's ignoring me, they're talking over me, they're interrupting me. Those are styles that are very comfortable and familiar with men talking to other men, but that's not the way that women typically communicate with each other. And so we can feel like nobody's paying attention, and it's just because my ideas are not really valued here. Yeah. When in fact, it's just a different style of how people communicate that that can leave women feeling like they don't know how to participate effectively.

Speaker 1 00:09:44 Yeah. And I think that's a great example of how sometimes unintentional being dismissed unintentionally in that, that scenario. And I think, and what I preach about this, your book, is that I would guess that a lot of women can look at the doctrine, look at the history, look at the culture of the church Absolutely. And feel dismissed almost by the doctrine, or dismissed by the, the, the structure of the church. All

Speaker 2 00:10:04 You to do have do is read the scriptures and feel like there are three women named in the book of Brooklyn compared to a thousand males. You know? And wonder what exactly does that mean for me as a woman I mature?

Speaker 1 00:10:14 So with that frame of mind, how do you approach a book to 'cause, and I, and I, maybe the right answer or the right question to ask you is throughout the book, you structure it according to the priesthood offices, deacon, teacher, priest, right. Uh, elder bishop, apostle, those things. So what led to you deciding to format it in that way?

Speaker 2 00:10:33 Great question. Because that was a not where I started, you know? Mm-Hmm. I didn't know when I started this question exactly, what is women's power? What does it consist of? What does it look like? I didn't know where I was gonna go, what I was gonna

find, but I began to realize that the work of the Lord in the world seems to be captured in those offices of the priesthood. If, if I understand them correctly, it seems like everything that God does can be sort of found in, in those offices of the priesthood, which can make me as a woman, feel like, well, then that's what God does, is priesthood stuff and priesthood offices. And that has nothing to do with me. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But I began to realize as I looked at those offices in more detail, that the work of women is also captured in those offices.

Speaker 2 00:11:18 And if I can take a step back from my sort of sexist sensibilities about, about men's and women's roles, I begin to see that much of what women do is actually stuff that is in those offices. That seems to be, it seems almost like God is using those offices to teach men about work that women learn in other ways. So it was helpful for me once I realized that, to sort of step back and say, okay, well let me look at each one of these offices then and see do women participate in this work? How do they participate? And in fact, is the way that they participate just as meaningful. And I began to see that it absolutely was. In many ways, women do do more of the work that we would associate with that office in, in the natural course of their lives than men might, for example.

Speaker 2 00:12:09 And I also began to realize that in a funny way, because it's funny, because Jesus Christ is, his name is associated with the melted priesthood. It is normally called the priesthood after the order of the Son of God. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And we call it the melted priesthood, more out of convenience and reverence for his name. But Christ was not a priest in, when, in his mortal life, he did not hold the priesthood of his day. He was not born into the correct lineage to be able to, to function as a priest in the temple. He functioned as a rabbi, certainly, which did not require a certain lineage. But the priesthood, as they understood it at that time, was not something that he held. We never see the word priest use in the New Testament after the time of Christ in the New Testament church, they didn't think of themselves, it appears as holding priesthood in the ways that they were used to seeing priesthood. So we maybe as women who also don't see ourselves as holding priesthood in the ways that we've typically been taught to see priesthood, maybe have something to learn from looking at the, at the life of Jesus Christ and how he functioned with enormous, astounding is the word that is used again and again, priesthood, power and and if authority. And yet he was not seen by the people of his day as having any right to the office of the priesthood that they were most familiar with.

Speaker 1 00:13:33 Yeah. That's interesting. And he really, uh, challenged that. I mean, oftentimes not so many words, but people were saying, you know, what gives you the authority to stand here and preach to us, or Right. And he, because, you know, according

Speaker 2 00:13:44 To, and he would say, I have that authority because I've been given it of my father. Yeah. And because I do his work, and I only do the things that he's asked me to do. And women too can say, yeah, I am doing what I do under the authority of that, of that I have been given in my calling, in my temple endowment, in my home, in assignments I've been given, in things that I've been asked to do. I have been given authority to do certain things, and therefore I have the right to the power of God in fulfilling those

Speaker 1 00:14:12 Responsibilities. Yeah. And once, since, you know, crisis is sort of challenging that cultural dynamic that everybody understood, and we can maybe step back and look at, you know, what, what dynamics are or assumptions do we make about authority that may be off, that may bring more worth and value to women in the church. Right. A lot of times with this concept, just generally speaking, when it comes to women and the priesthood, we sometimes project some secular perspectives on when it comes to fairness, or we try this, try the same arguments that you hear in the secular world when it comes to women in fairness, as that we're used to, you know, equal pay, equal opportunities, these types of things. And so it comes back to this fairness, and you, you said the book, but while God has not fully explained why men in his church hold the priesthood and women do not, I trust, and I mean that word literally, that it is not his goal to inflate the roles influence or, or value of his beloved son above those of his equally beloved daughters. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So my mind goes to like, what do we need to understand as far as the equality, that you're not necessarily saying all things are gonna be equal, or they should be equal, or we should expect them to be equal. So when I think a lot of individuals will look at, as far as the priesthood concerned, or women are involved, like there needs to be some equality here, and we're gonna push for that. So what can we better understand about? It's not about equality?

Speaker 2 00:15:28 Well, it depends. I mean, these are semantics to some extent. You know, what are we talking about when we say equality? Do we mean that, that women and men have equal opportunities or equal importance in the kingdom of God? I certainly hope so. And to the extent that that doesn't feel like the way things are going, then things probably need to be looked at and examined more carefully and changed. Does that mean that we're going to be the same? No, it does not. And you know, that's a tricky argument. Yeah. I mean, it's tricky to say, well, how can we be equal if we don't have the same opportunities, the same callings, the same priesthood authority, that kind of thing. And you know, I don't pretend to have all the answers on that one. I think the answers that work for me may not work for somebody else.

Speaker 2 00:16:18 And I can certainly understand and empathize with women who feel like women will never be fully respected in the church until they have the same opportunities for everything that's done in the church that men have. On the other hand, I think the doctrine of the church emphasizes pretty clearly that the reason we are here on this earth is to be become empowered with the, with the power that God has. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, there is something about both earthly power and earthly powerlessness that seems to be important in that training. And in that learning, there are ways that we learn from our weaknesses, not just from our strengths, that seem to be a very important part of the mortal experience. There are things about what God, who we believe God is, in particular as latter day Saints, that are really important to look at in terms of the roles of women.

Speaker 2 00:17:09 Because we believe that the most important thing God is trying to do is to create eternal relationships, eternal families, and to use those relationships to empower people within them to become like him and like her. Yeah. And in that context, what we experience with powerlessness may be just as important as what we experience with power. Wow. What women do in the world that is invisible in some regards and is not necessarily seen maybe just as important in the eternal scheme of things or more. I was reminded once by a, a

feminist writer, I don't, I wish I could remember where I read this, but she was talking about male and female in the animal kingdom, basically. And in the, in the world at large, that, that the prized commodity in a, for, to a farmer, for example, raising sheep, let's say, is the you, the female lamb or female sheep that can give birth to the lamb.

Speaker 2 00:18:11 So you don't kill your female sheep, you kill off the males. You don't need very many of them. Yeah. Yeah. Their role, they're disposable, perpetuating the, the flock is pretty limited, you know, and so you eat them. And in a funny way, we do the same in society. We don't, we send men to the front lines. We send men into the, into the factories and into the workplace. In part, we, you know, it can start to look like and feel like, well, we send them there because they're important and they're in charge, and they're what matters. No. We send them there to protect women and children, to protect the family, because that's what, even in our secular society, we have typically seen as being what keeps things going along, moving along. And it's not just because women are weak or stupid, it's because women are the prized, you know, resource for keeping society growing and going.

Speaker 2 00:19:02 And that was kind of a shocking realization to me, you know, to think about and think, yeah, I, I can see that now, you know, as a mother, I, I think about what that means for my son and for my grandsons, and I'll get teary. You know, I, I don't like that idea. I don't want them going off to war. I don't want them being physically compromised because of their, of their sex in ways that my daughters and my granddaughters are not. But yet, I, I appreciate when I think about the sacrifices that men make, I think as women sometimes we don't, we don't stop and think about why those sacrifices are being required of men. And it is certainly not because men are, are less valued than women, but I don't think it's because they're more valued either. I think the Lord is saying, my priority is the family and raising the next generation.

Speaker 2 00:19:53 Yeah. And I'm trying to do that as God. I'm trying to raise the next generation of gods and empower my children with all that I have, which is a crazy idea that Mormons have, you know, that is members of the church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints that we have, that is not shared broadly in the world that we live in, but that's who we think God is, is someone who gives power away. Wow. Not someone who hoards it and assesses it and uses it for his own purposes and his own self-aggrandizement. But someone who is eager to give it away to his children and to empower them with all that he has to make us joint heirs with Jesus Christ, who is the only one who is actually qualified to be that heir by his own behavior and his own, his own virtues. But he is willing to make us joint heirs with Christ of all that he is, all that he does, all that he has. And he is in the business of teaching us the virtues and the power and the skills and the spiritual gifts that we need in order to accomplish that as men and as women. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:20:56 Oh, that's profound. And, and so helpful and, and just a whole, a different perspective to look at it, that he's so willing to give that power and not just to men, right. I mean to women as well. Right, right. And, and I appreciate this statement that you, that I just read that's at the beginning of your book because you're not writing a book. Say, I figured it out. Wendy Ulrich has figured it out. She's understand the, the calculus that we understand to see

the equality then in men in women's roles in the church. That the reality is, is at times it seems like some perspectives and roles are inflated. Absolutely. And I think back to the time, you know, I have the youngest of four, I have two brothers, all three of the boys served as bishop at the same time. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, my sister was a primary president.

Speaker 1 00:21:35 I mean, just as valiant. And, and I know she's listening to this, bless her heart, that there were times where, yeah, we, even myself, my family, we get caught up in the culture of inflating, you know, let's all go to, you know, Scott's church, let's all go to Yeah. Priest of me together or all, let's all show up at a church when this, when you know, brother has gotten a new calling because he is the bishop now. Right. But we don't, we don't hurry off to her ward because she's the primary president. Right. And so I think it's just a good opportunity to step back and sort of look at just like, uh, you know, the, the dynamic you talked about with Christ, what cultural things in our experience are inflating some things that shouldn't be inflated. Yeah. You know, and how can we deflate those a little bit so that we don't get carried away with power and authority and what it really means. Right. Right.

Speaker 2 00:22:18 Something that I think we have to be really careful and thoughtful about, and that as we are careful and thoughtful about it, women will have less of that experience of feeling dismissed. And men will have more of a feeling too, of I'm not just one of the bad guys, you know, I'm not just this misogynist person who's hurting women. We are all in this together. And, and the roles and the perspectives of women are very important to me, for me to understand if I'm gonna be effective in what I'm doing, just as the roles of men and the perspectives of men are very important for women to understand if we're going to be effective.

Speaker 1 00:22:51 Yeah. So powerful. So I love the book. I read every, every word, and I was going through and I was marking and circling and highlighting, and then I got to chapter eight and I fell in love. Right. So this is where I geeked out. So chapter eight is Governing with power and Compassion. And this is, you're relating to the office of high priest and, and bishop. And you go into, this is where I love some research studies about teams and councils, and specifically mentioning the, the book called The Power Paradox. Yeah. It's right here in front of me. So written by, uh, Dasher Ketner,

Speaker 2 00:23:21 I think it might be Docker.

Speaker 1 00:23:22 Ketner Docker, yeah. That makes more sense. Alright. In his book, the Power Paradox, Ketner cites research indicating that people who rise to power in many settings generally do so because they are enthusiastic and bold, kind and appreciative, focused and articulate about the task at hand, calm during times of stress, open to others' perspectives. Assertive but humble and focus on advancing the greater good. The highest performing business teams have leaders who are compassionate, ask questions, actively listen and emphasize tactfully or use silence to make space for others to speak, avoid interrupting, inviting the less powerful to express opinions and consciously and frequently express gratitude. I wish we all had that leader, you know, volumes in these councils. So what led you to this, to Keltner's research? What, what led you there? Well,

Speaker 2 00:24:11 What fascinated me about his research was that he cites that kind of information that tells us this is how people get into powerful positions. And this is what powerful effective teams, this is how they're led, that their leaders tend to fall into these kind, have these kinds of traits, have these kinds of skills. But he goes on to say that once people get into power, even though these are the, the skills that help people rise to power, once they get into power, things kind of shift for both men and women. That's so true, <laugh>. That that the, that the people that he studied, he and other, he cites a lot of other research that's been done besides his own. Once they got into power, began to become more self-serving, become less empathic with the people around them, began telling more stories about their own deserving and their own rise to fame and less stories about other people's needs or other people's accomplishments.

Speaker 2 00:25:05 They began to be less polite, less concerned about listening to others. They were less able to even read other people's emotional states. Just simple things like if you draw an E on your forehead so that other people can read it accurately, how do you do that? They couldn't do it as well as the people who didn't have the power, they would get it backwards. They had a harder time seeing the world from someone else's point of view. Wow. So the very traits that get us to power in the first place, which by the way are often traits that women excel at. And he found that women, the more women were on teams, the more highly effective they tended to be. Precisely because women tend to be good at some of those skills like empathy and compassion and humility and gratitude and listening. And all of those things are traits that powerless people in general in our society often get better at.

Speaker 2 00:25:58 Right. Yeah. 'cause they have to. And yet when we get to power, both men and women are susceptible to sort of reversing that trend and getting to another place where we, we start to think we're better than other people and we start to take advantage of others and be less compassionate and less empathic. So I read that and thought, this is section 1 21 of the doctrine of covenant in Bates. Yeah. Saying that when we get a little power or authority, as we suppose, we begin immediately to lose some of these great skills of genuine priesthood power that are described in that section. Things like gentleness and kindness and, and love and empathy and concern for other people, sort of start to go out the door when we get a little power as we think we, we might have it. So women often become sort of the spokespeople for the underdog, the spokespeople for the people who are the spokesperson, for the people who are lacking in official power. Because they, they often have more empathy because they've been in their roles a little more. But women are just as susceptible as men are to losing those skills when they get into positions of power. So this is a cautionary tale for all of us as we move into those positions.

Speaker 1 00:27:10 Yeah. I mean, that, that creates pause. And I think in any leader who you may think, you know what, basically what got you here could possibly have gone dormant. Right. 'cause of your, you're called the leadership. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:27:20 Even just putting people in an artificial position of power, you know, you've got six people in a group and put

Speaker 1 00:27:26 The lab coat on

Speaker 2 00:27:27 And Yeah. You, you say for the purposes of this experiment, Hmm, let's see you, you get to be the leader, they will grab the last cookie on the plate. They will interrupt people more, they will be more likely to say that it's okay to cheat on your taxes even while they condemn others for doing so. It's interesting, uh, that one of the statistics he quoted, which was fascinating to me, was that the rich are more likely to shoplift than the poor people who have a sense of entitlement because of the status or the wealth that they've, that they've acquired and the power that comes with that are more likely to, to run a four-way, stop to ignore people in a crosswalk if they're driving a, a fancier, more expensive car than the person who's driving the clunker. You know, all these little accumulated research studies that sort of suggest we start to feel entitled when we are in a position of power in ways that we don't when we're not.

Speaker 1 00:28:23 Yeah. And to me, I kinda shift to, uh, you know, another angle or aspect to look at is that helps me create some empathy for, uh, leaders. 'cause it's easy to be the guy that says, well, if I was in charge, I'd do it differently. Well, if you were in charge, you may completely shift my That's right. And, and you may be what you <laugh> Exactly. Despise in a leader. That's right. Because you're suddenly in that leadership position. That's right.

Speaker 2 00:28:41 Seems to come with the

Speaker 1 00:28:42 T. And so be patient with that leader, know that they're figuring it out and they're maybe still discovering some of these flaws and they're nationally responding to their situation. Absolutely.

Speaker 2 00:28:50 Very good point.

Speaker 1 00:28:51 So you talk about, you talk about, and we'll jump around here as far as the different principles in the context of councils that you discuss and teams working together. But you, you break it down to four different areas. You say that the confidence in the power of councils increases when we have one skills to participate effectively in councils. Two, confidence in the value of diversity in councils. Three, confidence in the contributions to councils, and four, confidence in the, the Lord's willingness to inspire councils. And then you break that down. So the first one, skills to participate effectively in councils. And I think obviously in the context of this book, you're coming at it from the, the, the female perspective that this is how a woman in, in a council meeting can maybe improve at some of these skills. Right. So as far as skills to participate effectively in a council, what encouragement would you give in that context?

Speaker 2 00:29:40 I think think it's something that women need to spend some time thinking about. And I think it's something that men need to spend some time thinking about. Sure. As well, it's not an, an obvious thing. We haven't necessarily seen a lot of council settings as we've grown up in the church. We may have been exposed to councils and we may not have in the councils we've been exposed to may or may not be effective. So there are some things that we can begin to think about. I really like Elder and Sister Renlund's book on the priesthood.

Yeah, that's great. And their section on councils was very helpful to me. They gave us a long list of some of the skills that we can begin to develop in working in councils. I think one of the skills for women in particular is recognizing that it's more common, especially if you're the only woman in a group or you're a minority of what, they're a minority of women, which

Speaker 1 00:30:31 Typically happens in a word council, happens

Speaker 2 00:30:33 In a word council for women to feel, as we discussed earlier, sort of dismissed. Because if the men's conversational style is sort of predominating, it's very easy for women to feel like, whoa, nobody's paying attention to me. Everybody's interrupting me. Nobody cares what I think. When in fact that's just kind of the way men tend to work together. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:30:53 They're not trying to be over domineering. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:30:55 Yeah. So I remember a council that I participated in once where I was the only woman in the group. And I just would give up. I would come home and just feel like I have nothing to contribute here. And nobody cares what I think. They talk right over me when I try to participate. They wanna argue with what I have to say. I don't know why I'm even bothering to be here. And I had to go back to some of this research by Deborah Tannin actually is the woman's name. She was a linguist who looked at men's and women's conversational styles and found these subtle differences and sort of remind myself, wait a minute, they're doing this to each other. They're not just doing it to me. You know, but I've gotta learn to, I've gotta learn to play in this game. I can't just assume that because I'm really good at volleyball, means I'm gonna be really good at football. Yeah. This is football and I've gotta change my style if I'm going to be heard here. And that was really helpful for me to kind of look at. So I've gotta be more willing to say, wait a minute, I'm talking, you know, and put the

Speaker 1 00:31:52 Hand up,

Speaker 2 00:31:53 Put my hand and sort of say, you know, don't interrupt me. Women interrupt too, by the way. Sure. But women interrupt to sort of say, oh, I like that idea. Oh, I agree with that. Oh, that's really good. Whereas men interrupt to say, no, this is what's wrong with, that's a stupid idea. You know, they tend to kind of point out flaws. Whereas women toward sort of tend to point out how we're all the same, we're all alike, we're all in common. We all agree both of those are needed. It's not that what men are doing is wrong. We need both to find commonalities and common ground, and we need to figure out what's wrong with what we're thinking and how we need to change our ideas and how we need to approach things or in a different way. Or we need to at least consider other points of view. Both of those styles are really, really important in effective groups. If you have one without the other, you've got a problem. But if one style predominates at the expense of the other, then the people who are using that, you know, underrepresented style can start to feel like nobody's listening to me or nobody's getting that we're all heading, you know, running down a wrong path together without realizing this is not gonna work. You know, both of those have to be considered. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:33:03 Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:33:03 So we need to kind of look at those differences and sort of say, okay, I need, I'm gonna have to work a little harder at this if I am the minority in the group, whether I'm a man or a woman in order to be effective here. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:33:15 And just being aware of that. People participate in a council setting differently and just being aware of that and you bring that awareness to the meeting, you're going to be hopefully stimulate more participation because you know that, oh, I guess I do kind of talk over people. I had, I actually had a, a someone on one of my word councils that he would interrupt a lot and I finally pulled him aside and said, Hey, love you brother. I'm just here to help you. I wanted you to excel, but you interrupt a lot of people. Yeah. And he really appreciated it. And he said, wow, I had no idea. I don't wanna be that guy. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know, and so sometimes just a simple one-to-one, uh, sure. Conversation to help him be aware that, you know, we need to be a little more aware of, of our own traits and how we approach these things. So yeah.

Speaker 2 00:33:57 So some of the other skills while we're at Oh yeah. That, you know, that that can be helpful for women to sort of, you know, practice in addition to just sort of noticing what's going on and being willing to be a little more forceful sometimes. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> expressing their opinion is to also realize that they need to be succinct about it. We need to not go on and on and on and on. And sometimes when women do get the microphone or do get our voice heard, we can get kind of whiny. We can kind of think that, well, I finally, I finally being listened to here, and by darn you're gonna listen to me. We need to learn to be succinct. We need to learn to be clear about what we're saying. We need to learn to second what other people are saying as well.

Speaker 2 00:34:35 I love some of the research that sort of says when it's an idea, doesn't really take hold until someone says, you know, I really agree with that. Here's another example. Tell me more about that. It's when someone else gets on board with an idea that's presented, that that idea tends to move forward. And if nobody's willing to do that, good ideas sit on the table and, and flounder and die. So that's another skill that we can look for the opportunity to ask more questions to second what somebody else has said, to agree with an idea that we like and probe it a little further. I give another example of it. Those are just some, you know, brief examples of the kinds of skills that men and women can learn to be more effective in

Speaker 1 00:35:14 Councils. Yeah. And I love that, that sometimes we assume if I just, if I don't raise a, a debate about that idea, that means I agree with it. So I'll just stay silent and everybody will assume that I agree with it. But one way to participate is proactively saying, I agree with that idea. I like it. Let's move forward. Mm-Hmm, <affirmative>, I like it. Right?

Speaker 2 00:35:28 Yeah. Or here's an, here's a question I have about that, or, let me understand that better. Or just something that puts that moves that idea along instead of just letting it sit there. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:35:37 The next one, as far as confidence in the value of diversity in councils, you're right. I especially appreciate the value of diverse voices in a council. When I'm, one of the

diversities quote, I hope will be included, but when I'm the leader, it can feel simpler to keep my, my own council. I was therefore very interested in the social science experiment when a team was given a complex problem. So maybe ex this I found fascinating. This Yeah. This, uh, this research study as far as two

Speaker 2 00:36:03 Teams. Yeah. I loved the study. It came out about 10 years ago now. They put teams of four people together to work on a really complex problem. And the two kinds of teams that they put together, one was a team of four friends. They knew each other pretty well. And they said, okay, here's this complex problem that we want you to work on. The other group was a group of three friends who knew each other quite well, and a stranger to all of them who was included in that group. And they looked at the effectiveness of those two groups to see how did they do at solving this complex problem. It was not particularly surprising to anybody that the group of four friends working together liked the experience better. They had more fun doing it. They felt more confident of their results. And in fact, they got the right answer about 50% of the time, which is pretty good.

Speaker 2 00:36:52 You know, I, it was a complex, difficult problem. The second group didn't have as much fun. It was a more stressful experience throwing that stranger into the group, kind of was a, you know, a wet rag on what they were trying to do. But they got the right answer 75% of the time. That's a 50% increase in correct answers in good problem solving simply by having somebody in the group that was not known. That's so incredible. Yeah. And what was interesting was that they found that it wasn't that the person who had the different perspective actually brought new information to the group, which was the obvious thing. Oh, well, they know something that the group of friends doesn't know. That wasn't it, it's just that when they had somebody else in the group who they thought might be sort of not on board, they were a little more careful about their assumptions.

Speaker 2 00:37:39 They questioned themselves more. They, they tried harder to get outside of the box and it improved their problem solving in the long run. So diversity is not necessarily comfortable, it's not necessarily easy, but it produces better problem solving in the long run, at least in this experiment, which has been replicated from what I understand in other settings as well. So sometimes it's important for us to realize, just because it's not easy, just because we don't like it doesn't mean it's the wrong way to go. It may not be as much fun when we don't all just know and love each other. Yeah. When we're not all the same, when we're not all Republicans, or we're not all BYU fans, or we're not all the same race, or Yeah. We're not all, you know, long-term pioneer members of the church or whatever it might be. But the, the solutions we come to can actually be stronger, better, improved solutions just by the fact that we're trying to listen to voices that are not our own.

Speaker 1 00:38:32 Yeah. And sometimes we can try and be diverse just for diversity's sake, right. That it's just the thing to do and Oh, you're supposed to be diverse, so let's be diverse. But, you know, I, it makes me think back to some bishop Ricks I was in where we loved each other and it was like we were brothers and we, we got a lot done. We loved working together. And now I think wow, you know, that could have been limiting us a little bit to some of the ideas or the succinctness of certain meetings that we are in, because there was a comfort

there. There's, we all enjoyed it. We loved being there, talking through problems, but maybe we were missing something. Yeah. So any, I mean, what's a, what's a Bishop break or award council to do to stimulate more diversity? Because I think especially in some more established areas, you may have the same ward people on Ward Council for a couple years, and we get comfortable with each other and it is what it is. So any thoughts on maybe how to better when diversity isn't there as much? I mean, do, do we need to be more intentional about creating that?

Speaker 2 00:39:25 I think it does help to be more intentional about it are the major groups in our ward, or in our branch being represented in the leadership of the ward. I remember as a Stake Relief Society president once upon a time calling a woman as a counselor who was from Africa. She was a different race. She was a convert to the church of not very long. She was very skilled. I wasn't calling her. It was, this was not a pity assignment. Yeah. I knew she was, she was very capable. She was a good speaker and she had a strong sense of personal spirituality. She was a willing learner. She was a PhD student in nursing at the University of Michigan. This was not a, you know, a a as I say, a not a pity assignment by any means, but she would show up at, you know, she didn't know the culture of the church.

Speaker 2 00:40:09 She would show up at meetings in sweatpants at a Stake Relief society meeting, which was not the norm. She would have opinions about things that were not necessarily shared by others in the group. But there was such value in the perspective that we gained by including her in our deliberations, in understanding better the needs of the, the diverse culture that we, that we did have in that area. And that we were trying to foster, you know, we were trying to make the church a welcoming place for people of color where we were trying to make the church more accessible, more useful to all of the people in the community that we were a part of. And we weren't doing a very good job of it. And it was interesting to me that very quickly, the ward that I lived in, the Relief Society president in that ward chose as a counselor, another woman in a similar position.

Speaker 2 00:40:54 We all learned and grew from those women. And I still am so grateful for that relationship. I still count that sister among my dear friends. And I learned so much from her perspective on spirituality and on how the Lord worked in her life and from her faith and her confidence in God. Yeah. So, you know, there are some simple things like that, that we can do to just say, let me look around and not just go to my friends. I see a lot of bishops and relief society presidents and other leaders in the, in the church beginning to do that with a much more conscious effort. Yeah. And I, I think it, it's really valuable when we do.

Speaker 1 00:41:32 Yeah. And I think it is just a fabulous question to bring to a Bishop Rick meeting to award council is saying, you know what, how can we be more diverse here? Yeah. You know, how can we bring more opinions in the room? Any ideas? Yeah. And, and let the revelation stimulate Yeah. Be fantastic. Anything else that comes to mind that we'd be worth mentioning in this interview about, uh, confidence in the value of diversity in councils?

Speaker 2 00:41:52 Well, I, I think it is important to remember that we are not trying to just represent the people that are most comfortable for us. We are trying to make a place where we

are trying to build Zion. We are trying to build a place where there are no, or among us. We think of that often as meaning. Nobody doesn't have enough to eat. And that's certainly important. But when I think about what does it mean to be poor, I think it means not to have any excess, not to have any, anything to share with others because you are just barely putting food on the table. Zion is a place where there's no one with nothing to give. There's no one who doesn't have something to contribute to the whole. And that doesn't just mean everybody's, everybody's healthy and rich. It also means under any circumstance, everyone has something of value to contribute and to share. It may be empathy for people who are in trouble. It may be, you know, people who are in need who teach us how to serve it, you know? But, but we need to be looking for the ways to value the perspectives and the contributions of everyone if we're gonna build Zion.

Speaker 1 00:42:58 And it's so natural to sort of, you know, unintentionally segregate people as the haves and the have nots and the haves me to, in the leadership position and talking about how can we help the have-nots where Right. It's much more, um, integrated. Yeah. And, and it should be. Yeah. And each side has, has something to give, something to receive. Yeah. Right.

Speaker 2 00:43:14 And there are times in my life when, you know, I don't wanna be in a position of leadership because I'm, I'm sick, you know, and I've got Yeah. Or, you know, I'm, I've got my hands way over full and I can't do anymore. It's not that we just need to go, you know, force those things on people that are like, are you kidding me? Right. No, I can't do another thing. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:43:34 It's still mortal <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:43:35 Yeah. I, I, but, but we can force those things on people who can't do another thing because they're so skilled and so busy. They, they've got all they can handle, but we can also force them on people who are struggling so much in life at this particular moment in time that they're just like, they're barely keeping their heads above water. So it's tricky, but we need to be really open to the spirit, I think, in trying to figure out how do we bring in the perspective of other people? And if we're not going to call someone to leadership just because we recognize they, they're already drowning, that makes sense. But we may at least want to bring them in for their consultation on a particular issue. Help us understand how we can serve you better, how we can help you more, how we can help others in your same circumstances. Help us understand what we're missing about this.

Speaker 1 00:44:23 The third, uh, one you mentioned is confidence in our contribution to councils. And you said in the book, researchers conclude that one way of increasing women's voices is to insist on unanimity rather than majority rule. Increasingly, this is the implicit standard in church councils starting with the highest councils of the first presidency in the quorum of the 12 apostles, uh, quoting Dr. Cummins 1 0 7. And every decision made by either of these quos must be by a unanimous voice of the same. That is every member in each quo must be agreed to its decisions in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with the other. So what, what are your thoughts as far as unanimity? Yeah, I

Speaker 2 00:45:03 Thought it was really interesting that this was one thing that, that Dr. Keltner and others have pointed out. There's a great book called *The Silent Sex* by a BYU professor and a Princeton, uh, professor who studied women and how they participate in business settings in *Wow*. In councils. And they found that women tended to be, you know, invisible a lot of times. And the, one of the things that they said helped was when people had to be unanimous in their decisions because that sort of required that women's voices be heard. That is to say they required women's to be women's voices to be heard if women were willing to express disagreement or willing to say when they had a different perspective. So I thought it was interesting to compare that with this church standard that is, is the standard for the highest councils of the church, that we are not expected to start out in agreement.

Speaker 2 00:45:59 We're not expected to just be yes. People who affirm everything that somebody says, just because he's the prophet. It's expected that you will bring your ex, your experience, your perspective, your assumptions, your expertise to bear on the decisions that are made. And then that we will keep talking until we see a path forward that we can all feel comfortable with. And I participated in church councils where that's been the case, and where someone keeps bringing up a position that the majority is not agreeing with, it's incumbent on the leader to sort of say, okay, how are we going to respond to this disagreement? In my case, the, the disagreement happened to be raised more by the men in the room who were in the minority in the particular council, I'm, I'm thinking about. And the leader had to kind of come in and say, okay, how are we handling this disagreement?

Speaker 2 00:46:47 What do we do to, to get to agreement on this? And ultimately to say, brethren, are you willing to back off on this? Have we dealt with your concern enough that you're willing to say, okay, I'm, I'm all right now. And when they were, we, we went forward. But it's not, it's not just automatic that we're going to all agree on something and just saying, well, let's take a vote isn't necessarily the most effective way of getting to good decisions. So I was interested that even in secular settings, this was one way that women's voices or minority voices or the voice of whoever's the least powerless or the most powerless in the group can get heard and be used constructively.

Speaker 1 00:47:27 Yeah. Yeah. And, and the research is there as well. And, and, and I think of a typical word council, not to generalize it, but you know, there may be one or two people, especially if they're women that, that don't, uh, maybe have a different viewpoint or want to go in a different direction. Well, suddenly enough people say, well, I just think we should do go with plan A. Yeah, me too. Yeah, me too. And then that person just folds and we move on with the meeting where I think the leader or somebody presiding that council can really say no. Like, we need to reconcile. Yes. What's going on here? That's what unanimity means. It doesn't mean they fold. Okay, good. Now we have unanimity. Right. Like, there's something that we need to process here. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:48:03 Because if we don't, what tends to happen happen, that individual who doesn't feel heard, who doesn't feel like their opinion has been taken seriously, goes out and starts undermining the process. Yeah. Uh, too, you know, often that's what's going to

Speaker 1 00:48:16 Happen or disengages from their call

Speaker 2 00:48:18 Disengages Exactly. Or, um, starts, you know, sort of gossiping about what happened in a way that isn't constructive. So yes, we need to not just sort of overrule the voice that we don't like, we need to listen to it long enough that we need to, that, that the person feels heard. That doesn't mean that we always agree. We can get to a place where we can say, you know, this is what we're doing. I know it doesn't fully incorporate everything that you've brought up here. Do you feel like we're close enough that we can go forward with the unanimous voice? Do you feel like, you know, we're there? That may take a long time. Yeah. It, it makes church council slower. It makes church decision making slower when we do that, but it gets us to a better decision in the long run.

Speaker 1 00:49:00 Yeah. And just recognize that sometimes that means you have to table a topic for the next meeting. Absolutely. And be okay with that. 'cause we sort of get in a meeting, right. Let's let's settle some, right. Some issues or some topics and we wanna, you know, slam dunk 'em and, and then leave. But sometimes we have to say, you know what, why don't we take a week or a few days? Yeah. We'll table this and come back to it. And it's amazing what the spirit can do for each individual.

Speaker 2 00:49:20 That's such a good point, Kurt. Yeah. And I think that's absolutely true. I think there are decisions that are of lesser importance where I've seen good leaders simply say, you know, what's the decision we need to be made that needs to be made here? Good. Whose decision is it? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. If it's my decision, if it's the relief society president's decision, if it's the, you know, the, the Sunday school president's decision, if whose decision is it? And sometimes we can say to them, do you feel like you have enough information to make a decision? Good. What's your decision? Are we all okay with that? Can we live with that? And that's okay sometimes, but not every decision is of such merit that it needs to be, you know, we don't need to spend two hours getting to unanimity about who should hand out the handbooks, but we, there are decisions we can move forward with more quickly. But when it's a decision of importance, when feelings are, are tender about those decisions, especially when it seems to someone like valuable perspectives of not really been heard or, or real important needs have not been met or empathized with, then we need to slow down. Yeah. Yes. I like your idea. Table it for a while. Come back to it. Let's try again next week. It's

Speaker 1 00:50:27 Really, and I love the fact that you, like, when people are really passionate about a topic, that means that maybe there's a level of importance to them that maybe you're not seeing and it's worth processing and hearing their voice. So Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:50:38 And sometimes that can be done One-on-one. Yeah. If somebody feels like, you know, oh, we're really touching on a hot topic. Yeah. For somebody, sometimes the leader can say, tell me more about your experience with this. Well, how did this get so important to you? And do that in a private setting where the person may be willing to share a little, at a little more personal level in a way that helps the leader understand and helps the individual understand how this got so hot for them.

Speaker 1 00:51:01 Yeah. And then that leader or that individual has a, a advocate in their leader in the next council meeting. Right. That's so powerful. I love that. Let's talk about, in the same, uh, area as far as negative feedback. Uh, you said women have a harder time than men rebounding from negative feedback. And even the possibility of negative feedback leads women to avoid opportunities to grow and contribute. What should we consider? I mean, I think in general, everybody hates giving negative feedback, especially in church councils when everybody's a volunteer and we just want to be happy and have a good time and smile and, and move on with, with the, the meeting. And so we avoid negative feedback in general, but it may, we may even avoid that much more when it comes to giving negative feedback to the Relief Society president for, because she may take it harder.

Speaker 2 00:51:43 Yeah. She may, and this is something that both men and women can work on. Women in general, and this is again, you know, from some, some interesting research. This is not just my opinion, but, uh, caddy Kay and Claire Shipman wrote a book called The Confidence Code. These are two powerful, you know, accomplished women who wrote a book a couple of years ago now probably on, on the differences between men and women in terms of how confident they come across, how much anxiety they feel. And they found that women, even women who are really accomplished and really capable, are often working at a bit of a disadvantage that seems to come from kind of how our brains and our hormones are structured in terms of feeling more anxious or feeling less confident. I tell in the book a little story about when I was in high school, so this was, you know, a long time ago, <laugh>, but there was, I, I just really felt like men were just, you know, boys were just full of hot air.

Speaker 2 00:52:41 And I, you know, to prove my point, one day, I, I was talking with some friends and I just said, okay, I'm, I'm, let's see what happens here. Let, I'm gonna try something. There was a wire across a window at the back of our multicultural cafeteria room that was also used for plays and assemblies and other things. It was pretty cheap high school. And, um, there was this wire across this high window at the back of the room, and I started going around to boys that were, you know, not a part of this conversation, just boys I knew in the, in the there at lunch and asking them, you know, can you, what's that wire for across the room? You know, the window back there. And they'd look up at the window and they would look at the wire and they'd say, oh, well, they used that to hang lights on for the school place.

Speaker 2 00:53:22 Oh, okay. Thank you. I'd ask another boy and he'd look at it and, and he'd say, oh, well, there used to be a curtain up there across that window. That's what that wire was for, was staying the curtain. I'd say, okay, thank you. I'd go on to the next guy. Oh, well they used that to put, you know, posters on for the assemblies. For the, for the assemblies. Okay. Every boy I asked knew what that wire was for and was very comfortable telling me what this for. Yeah. So then I started asking girls, what's that wire for? And I asked multiple girls what the wire was for every single one of them said, look at the wire. And they'd say, I have no idea. None of them, I don't think really had any idea, but the boys were willing to take the risk. Yeah. Take a shot of maybe I'm taking a shot at it.

Speaker 2 00:54:03 I was convinced at the time the boys were just full of hot air, as I say, you know, they were just braggarts who were, you know, just mouthing off on that may have

been part asked you, and that may have had some truth to it, but I've since also thought, yeah. And sometimes the girls were unwilling to take the risk. They were unwilling to be wrong. They were nervous about putting out an opinion that they, when they weren't absolutely confident that it was right. And so it's not just boys are more confident or more, you know, willing to say stupid things than girls. There's some differences it seems like, between the way men and women approach things that they don't know anything about. Kay and Shipman come to the conclusion that one of the most devastating things women do to undermine their own, uh, growth and development is to get more busy practicing perfection than practicing resilience.

Speaker 2 00:54:53 They try so hard to get it right to begin with. They dot every I and cross every t and they are determined they are going to rise the way they've been rising all along by being perfect at everything they do. Whereas men are much more willing to just take a shot and take a risk. And, and if they're wrong, they seem to bounce back from it more easily. So there are some differences whether, you know, some of them they sort of promote or are linked to differences in the hormones that we both proliferate with. Uh, testosterone is more common in men and, and, uh, oxytocin is more common for women. And those have different impacts on the human, you know, on the human body and mind. We both have both, and we can grow in both. We can men get more oxytocin as they cuddle babies and, and, uh, and women get more testosterone as they take risks and do, you know, riskier things.

Speaker 2 00:55:48 And testosterone isn't all, you know, a, a positive thing in, in people's lives, but that little, you know, increase of testosterone seems to help a lot of men to feel more confident in some situations than women are likely to feel. I loved, however, the story that, and my, you know, my husband loves it when I tell a sports story, which is not something I do very readily that played a book to women, but there's a, a basketball player named Bill Russell, who was one of the greatest basketball players of all time. He had, I mean, I just, I can't even recount all the awards that he won and all the accomplishments that he, he made and all the things he did in leading his team to success. But I loved hearing the story of Bill Russell that when he was, uh, you know, going to play a big game, uh, well any game, uh, they were all big games to him.

Speaker 2 00:56:35 He would be in the locker room throwing up with anxiety, my goodness, every game. And the only, and it didn't get any better, you know, I, I mean, finally after a long time of playing professional basketball, he stopped throwing up, he stopped the anxiety, got under more control, and he went into this losing streak and it didn't come back. He didn't get out of the losing streak until he got anxious enough that he started throwing up again at the beginning of every game. His teammates loved the sound of Bill Russell throwing up in the, in the locker room because they would, it was gonna be a great game. Women can be so afraid of anxiety. People with anxiety in general can be so afraid of anxiety that we think we have to get the anxiety under control before we can do, before we can perform at our best.

Speaker 2 00:57:20 And that's just simply not true. The people who have problems with anxiety often are smart, smarter than the average bear even Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, they are often more accomplished, more prepared, more capable. And if they can learn to tolerate anxiety is something that just goes with the territory, which it does for most of us. When we're

doing hard things and stretching, then they, they make enormous contributions in this life. Yeah. When we try to figure out somehow how to get rid of anxiety before we take on a hard thing, we're gonna be sitting for a long time because anxiety is a normal part of everybody's life. Yeah. To some extent. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:57:54 And, and oftentimes we're like you said, we're trying to avoid it or, and, and obviously there's some levels of anxiety that definitely need, need to get addressed, but Absolutely. But embracing it right, and saying, you know, this is a human, normal human experience Yeah. And, and emotion that I need to, that's gonna help me. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:58:09 That I, I can use. It doesn't mean there's something wrong. It doesn't mean I'm doing something that's really dangerous. It doesn't mean that if I get some negative feedback or I fail at it, yeah. It's the end of the world. It's just an opportunity to learn.

Speaker 1 00:58:20 So, any other thoughts about as far as risks go? Because as often that risk can look like in, you know, in a council setting, that it's risky to raise my hand and disagree. It's risky to raise my hand and give my own perspective or idea any way that, uh, a leader or the other members of the council can facilitate, encourage the women in the room to be more risky and, and raise a hand.

Speaker 2 00:58:39 Well, we can just ask them their opinion. And I've done this, um, with other women and I've done it with men in a group setting, and I don't have to be the leader to do that. I can just say, you know, I'd, I'd love to hear what, so-and-so has to think about this issue. So we can, as, as council members, you know, whether we're in the, whether we've hold the gavel or whether we are just, you know, in the chair of Yeah. Of, of a council participant. We can do those things. We can ask other people's opinions. We can ask more questions. We don't have to just be the one spouting off about something. We can, we can give our opinion and we can also ask for others' opinions and help with that process.

Speaker 1 00:59:13 Awesome. Love it. Before we move on to the last one, uh, anything else as far as, uh, the third one with, uh, how did you just tie out the confidence as far as confidence is concerned in, in contributing in council is anything we've missed?

Speaker 2 00:59:25 Yeah. I really like the work of Carol Dweck who talks about growth mindset versus kind of a fixed mindset. She's got a great book on this topic, and she talks about not just, she's not really talking about men and women, but she's talking about people. She's started with kids in a school setting. Who are the kids who are more likely to keep going when they fail or when they, when things get hard? Versus who are the kids who are likely to give up? And so she gave kids puzzles to solve, and the puzzles got harder as the, you know, as the experiment went on. And she wanted to see what did kids do when things got tough, when they got challenging. And she found that the kids kind of divided into two groups. There were the kids who, when the, when the puzzles got really hard, would sort of lean back, they would start looking around the room, they'd start distracting their friends, they'd start trying to cheat off of somebody else.

Speaker 2 01:00:12 They'd, they'd say things like, you know, our teachers never taught us to solve problems like this. I don't know how to do these puzzles. You know, these are stupid, you know, things like that. That was sort of one group of kids. Then there was another group of kids who when the puzzles got hard, would actually lean in instead of lean back, they would get more engaged instead of less. They would try a new strategy when the strategy that they were working with wasn't working. They would ask a teacher for it. Like, can you give me a little clue? You know, or a little help. They didn't want 'em to give the answer. They just, can you give me a little bit of, what am I missing here? Am I close here? They would use other people, in other words, to kind of get expertise that they didn't have when they were asked.

Speaker 2 01:00:55 You know, all the kids were asked at the end of the day, so would you like to take some of these puzzles home to do? A lot of 'em would say, yeah, those were fun. She'd say, which puzzles do you want? The puzzles we were doing at the first, or the puzzles we were doing at the end, the first group would say the puzzles we were doing at the first, those were fun. Oh yeah. The ones they knew how to do that were easy. The other group would say, oh, what's the point of doing puzzles? You all know, already know how to do? That's just a waste of time. Gimme a new puzzle. Gimme a hard puzzle. Where can my mom buy puzzles like this? I wanna work at these at home. I knew this was gonna be interesting, Uhhuh, I knew I was gonna learn something.

Speaker 2 01:01:26 And she makes the comment, this is a Stanford PhD, Uhhuh, by the way, Uhhuh, she said, I began to realize I was more like the first group than the second group. Wow. And she said, I realized how limiting that approach had been to me in my life. And she said, there's an old saying when the, when the student is ready, the teacher will come. She said, this second group of kids were my teachers. Because I realized when I talked to them, I tried to understand what made them think differently than the first group. They didn't think they were failing. They thought they were learning. Wow. And that's the way they approached life. I'm not failing, I'm learning. That's been a real eye-opener for me as well, because I would have to say with Carol Dweck, I've, I've spent a lot of my time in the first group, not the second. Yeah. And to begin to say, when I reach, when I am failing, when I do get negative feedback, when I don't do as well as I had hoped on a project or a, a book or a, you know, a talk or whatever it might be, to say to myself, okay, what am I learning? Instead of, you know, bemoaning my fate, I'm never gonna do this again. Which is, you know, kind of my tendency for a while anyway, to say, I'm never gonna

Speaker 1 01:02:31 Do this again.

Speaker 2 01:02:32 Yeah. It's terrible at that. I don't like this anymore. Yeah. This is not fun. You know, and I didn't, when people are yawning and I am not feeling like I'm successful at what I'm doing, but to be willing to say, okay, what did I learn? What would I do different the next time? That's the important thing here. By definition, half of everything I do, by definition, half of everything I do will be below my personal average. That's the definition of average. Yeah.

Speaker 1 01:02:57 Yeah.

Speaker 2 01:02:57 It's, and so to get upset about, you know, not being successful at every single thing I do is really kind of stupid, because that's just assuming that somehow I can change the definitions of math and how it functions in the world. Yeah. Wow. But I can learn from the things that don't go as well.

Speaker 1 01:03:15 That's so good, so powerful. See, I can do different. Well, as we, uh, wrap up here, the last section, uh, in this chapter that you're talking about is confidence in the Lord's willingness to inspire councils. What brought, what I encourage you to write about this,

Speaker 2 01:03:27 Well, in all of the other chapters I was sort of looking or other, in all of the other sections, uh, of this chapter, I was sort of looking at what's the research tell us about how people function effectively in councils and sort of noticing some places where the Lord's patterns seem to follow that research. But I, I didn't wanna lose the fact that you can do things really well from a, a worldly point of view. And that's not, I'm not using the word worldly in a pejorative sense. Yeah. Yeah. You can pay attention to the research and you can learn from it, and you can get better and you can improve and you can grow and you can create better leadership and better councils by doing so. But one of the things that we have in the church that's really sweet to recognize is not only these true principles to base what we do on, but the influence of the Holy Ghost, which is real and can make us better than even what the research that we are trying to learn from can take us even further than that.

Speaker 2 01:04:26 It can help us have the inspiration of heaven to come up with things we never could come up with on our own, to be inspired, to improve, to grow, to learn. And the Lord wants to make that happen. That doesn't mean it'll always be easy. It won't, you know, we have to learn through the school of hard knocks just like everybody else does. But he can redeem our failures and turn them into good and learning and growth and success. And he can also give us ideas and inspiration that we just don't come up with on our own accord.

Speaker 1 01:04:56 I love that because research is wonderful and, and it's great. We love research into what we can learn from it, but keeping space for it at the end of the day, you know, we can try different things, but just go there with a prayerful heart. Yeah. Being open to the spirit in any way you possibly think of, and it'll all work out. Right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, it'll work out. Well, this, I got one more question for you, but, uh, I wanna make sure people know, where would you send people to check out the book and, uh, if they wanna learn more about it,

Speaker 2 01:05:22 Certainly can buy it on, uh, desert Book at Amazon. Um, you know, any place they're selling books. Nice. Pretty much. They're selling

Speaker 1 01:05:28 This. And is there any way or anywhere people could follow you and, and your work or,

Speaker 2 01:05:32 Uh,

Speaker 1 01:05:33 We just wait till the next book. Yeah. <laugh>, you're not tweeting or anything.

Speaker 2 01:05:37 I'm not doing any that stuff right now as I should

Speaker 1 01:05:39 Be, but, well, that's fine. That's fine. We, we would much rather you be in front of a computer writing your next book, so <laugh> that, that's fine. Well, thanks again, Wendy. And just the last question I have is, as you reflect back in on the, uh, the journey of writing this book and the research and the promptings and everything that that went into it, how has that made you a better disciple of Jesus Christ?

Speaker 2 01:05:58 That is such a good question, Kurt. I hope what it's helped me be, is braver in trying to step up to the opportunities that life is giving me to, to not just feel like I have to do it all by myself, but to know that I have a Zion community that I can both build and receive from, to know that I have access to the power of God, that I have the right to claim that power and to exercise that power, that I'm not just waiting for somebody else to do it on my behalf, but that I have virtually unlimited opportunities in this church to step into roles that matter to me, to be a leader, to be a teacher, to be a thinker, to be a woman who exercises spiritual gifts, to be someone who contributes to the communities that I'm a part of.

Speaker 2 01:06:47 And that I not only have the right to, that the obligation and the opportunities that go with that. I don't just get to sit back and say, well, let the men do it. I am expected to step up and to take my, my place and to do so with humility, with a loving heart, with compassion and empathy for those who are in different roles than I am at a given point in time. But to take that responsibility seriously and prayerfully and to be willing to take the risks of failing, to take the risks of, of feeling inadequate, and that men are expected to take as well, and they're expected to step up and do what's required of them. And so am I. And I'm just really grateful for the confidence that I have acquired as I have studied this topic, that the Lord truly will help us.

Speaker 2 01:07:36 He he loves us. And I've also really learned that I, you know, I don't have any definitive answers on this. I'm hoping that some of the things I've, I've learned and written about will be helpful in opening this door a little bit. But I thoroughly expect that other people will be walking through it in ways that I have not, I don't know what that will look like in the long run for any of us. I think it's entirely possible that the role of women in the church will, will not be fully understood in this life until, until the face of our mother in heaven is revealed, as well as the face of our father in heaven, in ways that it isn't right now. But I have absolute confidence, absolute trust, that the Lord loves us all equally and values us equally, and that, uh, we are all needed and of great worth to him and to her, and to the, to the, the, uh, building of Zion and the, the role of the church in the world.

Speaker 1 01:08:45 That concludes my interview with Windy Ulrich. Uh, bless her heart. I, man, she's such a wonderful person, like just a wonderful person. And I'm not overstay that at all. She's always been so kind, allowing me to interview her. And would you share this with another woman in your life, whether they're a leader or not, whether they're a sister, a cousin, a mother, would you share this with them? And I hope this conversation really helps establish a further faith and belief. 'cause I know there's individuals that sort of struggle with this, with the dynamic of women in this church and, and what it means and how to find purpose. And, and

sometimes our culture inflates some, some parts of authority and inequality that, that are not helpful. But hopefully this interview helps. I'd love to get your feedback, what you thought about it, go to social media or send me an email@leadingsaints.org slash contact and, and tell me what you loved about it. Tell me what you didn't like about it, or leave a comment underneath the show notes as well. Remember, solve the burden of meetings by visiting leading saints.org/fourteen and getting 14 days access to the meetings with Saints Virtual Library.

Speaker 3 01:10:03 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.