

What I have learned (that I wish I had known)

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Confidence or Trust in Personal Revelation

- As I contemplated this assignment one topic kept coming back to me as the thing of most worth I could share
- I call this topic “**Confidence in Personal Revelation**”
- This topic has several aspects I would like to share
- Let me start out by relating an experience

Paralyzing the Bishopric

As a brand new bishop I remember distinctly, in our first bishopric meeting looking around the room after the opening prayer and seeing 4 pairs of eyes looking at me, with both expectation and trust. It was then I think that the full weight of the calling hit me. As we then embarked on the work of the bishopric over the next several weeks I realized things gradually were grinding to a halt. I had paralyzed the bishopric because I was becoming paralyzed. As we contemplated callings I remember thinking "What we decide is going to have a huge impact upon this person". Then the fear of making a mistake or the fear of effecting people's lives in the wrong way would cause me not to act. As I realized what was happening I remembered what President Dalton had told me as a new bishop. "Bishop, almost all the revelation you receive will be in the form of feelings. You have to learn to trust your feelings and act upon them." As I thought of this I decided to act upon how I felt and trust in the Lord to guide me. I did and as a bishopric we began to move forward.

Revelation Mostly Comes as Feelings

- 1 Nephi 17:45
“... he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past *feeling*, that ye could not *feel* his words”
- Boyd K Packer
"I have come to know that inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound." (A Watchman on the Tower , pg 279)
- President Spencer W Kimball
"Some have no ear for spiritual messages...when they come in common dress...Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the *constant* flow of revealed communication "(Teachings of Spencer W Kimball, p. 457)
- I have learned:
 - I have learned that the constant flow revelation mentioned by President Kimball is there if I but look for it
 - I have learned that our feelings are the “common dress” of revelation that President Kimball mentioned
 - I have learned to recognize and to trust those feelings

We are expected to use our own judgment and experience

- Often we are left to our own devices so to speak
- When we are it is because our experiences, knowledge and understanding are sufficient
 - If it is important or we are about to make a wrong choice then the Spirit will let us know – most often through our feelings
- GPS - liken to guidance by the Spirit
 - “make a U-Turn immediately”
 - “proceed to the highlighted route”
 - But nothing beyond that until you make a decision and begin to move
 - If you are stopped there is no direction given by the GPS
- Just like with the GPS to receive this constant flow of revelation spoken of by President Kimball we need to be moving
- We should make choices using our judgment and experience but should be constantly be "listening to our feelings" so the Spirit may
 - Give us guidance if needed
 - Assure us we are on the right path

How do I know what feelings I trust?

- My best descriptions are
 - If things are right by the Spirit I feel “settled” or in harmony like a beautiful piece of music
 - If I need to “make a U-turn immediately”
 - By the Spirit I feel “unsettled” or my stomach feels like someone took a blender to it or things feel out of tune like someone hit the wrong note on the piano

"Did I not speak peace to your mind?"

- Sometimes as we learn to trust our feelings we might second guess ourselves
 - Did I really receive direction to say or do that?
 - Most often we second guess ourselves because things did not turn out as we expect
 - Sometimes events take an unexpected turn
- Oliver Cowdery had begun work as scribe and had received a “divine witness” regarding the Prophet Joseph Smith’s testimony regarding the Gold Plates
 - Evidently later he either questioned or desired further reassurance from the Lord regarding this – the Lord said:
 - D&C 6:22-23
“Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.
Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?”
- I have learned:
"If it was right then – it was right then and it is *still* right then"
 - Just because things did not turn out as I expected does not mean it wasn’t the right thing to do or say at the time
 - In reference to Hugh B Brown and the current bush – The Lord is the gardener here

Speak the thoughts I shall put in your hearts

- A different aspect of Confidence in Personal Revelation
- As a new bishop I found myself falling into a pattern with regards to interviews and counseling – one perhaps you can relate to...
 1. **“The Rehearsal”**. Rehearse ahead of time conversations in my head on how I might counsel the person or what I might say – if he/she says this then I will say that and so forth
 2. **“The Deviation”**. Invariably and almost immediately the conversation would go differently than I had rehearsed
 3. **“The fervent prayer”**. I would then find myself as I was listening to the person praying hard thinking “what will I say or how will I answer this?” Knowing the person was going to look to me to speak for the Lord
- Let me share and experience
- In the first couple months I was bishop I was counseling a person who had committed moral sin
- I found myself at times without the answers and what guidance I gave I feel was inadequate
- I was sincere in my effort, I had love toward this person, I had trust in the Lord that I would be guided but somehow I felt that I had fallen short
 - I felt unsettled about my counseling
- In the end the person turned away and was fully repented – that is because it is the Lord’s church
 - Yet I felt like I had let the person down somehow
- In looking for answers I had an experience that changed completely the way I looked at how the Lord would put into my heart the words I should speak
- I was reading in the Faith Proceeds the Miracle a chapter about repentance called “Be Ye Clean” looking for answers to how I could serve someone who desired to repent better
 - He related an experience with a couple committed moral sin
 - Every question President Kimball answered with a scripture!
 - Hit like a bolt of lightning
 - This is what I wanted and should do
 - Developed a burning desire to emulate President Kimball
- In this desire three scriptures tied it all together for me

- John 14:26
But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and *bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*
 - This said to me I needed to study the words and doctrines of Christ so that they could be brought to remembrance by the Spirit when I needed them
 - I thought “How could The Spirit bring to remembrance something I didn’t know?”
 - “How could I counsel someone on applying the atonement in their life if I didn’t know the doctrines of the atonement?”
- D&C 84:85
Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but *treasure up in your minds continually the words of life*, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man
 - This said to me I didn’t have to have a perfect knowledge and understanding of all the doctrines but if I did study them up and treasure them the Spirit would give to me what I needed to remember or know or say when I needed it
- D&C 100:5-8
5)Therefore, verily I say unto you, lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men;
6)For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say.
7)But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things.
8) And I give unto you this promise, *that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say.*
 - This said to me that if I did it this way then the Spirit would witness that I was speaking the Lord’s words and not Mike Baird’s
 - My preparation changed from worrying about what I was going to say or do to the study of the doctrines of Christ
 - Over time several profound things happened

- Alma 31:5
"now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, *it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword*, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God"
- I learned that teaching and counseling from the scriptures had a greater and "more powerful effect" than my own words – great as I thought they might be!
- I found as I was teaching and counseling out of the scriptures I was focusing on doctrines instead of focusing on behaviors
- I found that if I for some reason I didn't know exactly at the moment what to say the Spirit was usually prompting me that this was a matter that required either further study, pondering or counseling with my priesthood leader
- I wish I had learned this earlier to have applied it as a father in counseling my children, as an Elder's Quorum President and as a young men's leader
- My testimony is the Lord will uphold us in the moment if we are prepared trust him
- My testimony is we can "wax strong" in our confidence in personal revelation