

# A Dynamic Partnership

Blending Third Wave Behavioral Psychotherapies  
with Spiritually-Based Problem-Solving



# Behavioral Psychology

## The First Wave

Ivan Pavlov, John Watson, B.F. Skinner, Edward Thorndike, Clark Hull

All behaviors are acquired through conditioning. Behavior should be studied in a systematic and observable manner with no consideration of internal mental states. Only observable behaviors should be considered since internal states such as cognitions, emotions, and moods are too subjective.

# Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

## The Second Wave

Aaron Beck, Albert Ellis

Thoughts, images, beliefs and attitudes have a significant influence on mood and behavior. It is not events themselves that upset us, but the meanings we give them. Altering irrational thoughts and maladaptive beliefs can elicit change.

# Third Wave Behavioral Therapies

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) **Jon Kabat-Zinn**

Mindfulness involves the practice of formal meditation as well as focusing on being aware and non-judgmental in the present moment.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) **Marsha Linehan**

DBT balances acceptance strategies such as mindfulness and distress tolerance with change methods for interpersonal effectiveness and mood regulation.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) **Stephen Hayes**

ACT advocates living by one's values and accepting and "defusing" negative thoughts as they arise.

Positive psychology **Martin Seligman**

Positive psychology bypasses direct problem-solving and focuses instead on the cultivation of positive emotions, positive traits, and positive institutions.

# Assorted Tools Associated with Third Wave Behavioral Therapies

## DBT, MBSR, ACT, Positive Psychology

- Positive activities
- Meditation and mindfulness
- Accepting negative thoughts and emotions versus avoiding or engaging with them.
- Defusion of negative thoughts (changing the relationship)
- Generating positive emotions such as compassion and gratitude
- Living according to your values
- Listening to the wise mind
- Committed action
- Developing a social network
- Compassionate service

# Research ACT

In a meta-analysis of 18 randomized, controlled studies of ACT, Powers, Vording, and Emmelkamp (*Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 2009) concluded that ACT shows evidence of efficacy compared to control conditions (waiting list, treatment as usual, and psychological placebo) for a variety of presenting problems.

They also noted that although there was no evidence that ACT is superior to established treatments, no established treatment has yet demonstrated clear superiority over any other either.

# Research DBT

Although DBT is commonly identified as an effective treatment for the reduction of self-harm and suicide, studies have shown significant improvements in mood and function amongst patients who were not previously at risk (Koons et al., *Behavior Therapy*, 2001; Lynch T.R. & Cheavens, J.S., et al., *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 2007).

Harley and colleagues found significantly greater improvement in depression scores at the end of treatment for the DBT group compared to wait-list controls (Harley et al., *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 2008).

# Research Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

“Mindfulness, the process of attending to present moment sensations and experiences with a nonjudgmental stance, has been consistently associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety and greater wellbeing. Mindfulness skills are assumed to constitute a set of foundational or *core* abilities that promote the use of other cognitive or behavioral skills. Worry and rumination may also be mitigated by the emphasis on the present moment in mindfulness.” (Desrosiers, A., Vine, V., Klemanski, D. & and Nolen-Hoeksema, S., *Depression and Anxiety*, 2013)

A meta-analysis of 15 studies was performed. About one-half (8/15) of the studies reported a statistically significant reduction in anxiety or depression after MBSR. The groups that demonstrated significant change used a waiting list or treatment-as-usual group as control subjects. The two studies that had control groups did not find significant mood changes as a result of mindfulness meditation. (Tony Toneatto, PhD, Linda Nguyen, *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 2007)

# Research Positive Psychology

Common positive exercises that have been tested in randomized controlled interventions include writing letters of gratitude, counting one's blessings, practicing optimism, performing acts of kindness, meditating on positive feelings toward others, and using one's signature strengths. These all have been found to positively alter mood. (Layous K., Chancellor J., & Lyubomirsky S., et al., *The Journal of Alternative and Complimentary Medicine*, 2011)

# Advantages of Third Wave Behavior Therapies

1. They help individuals move toward personal growth and get away from the trap of believing that they must solve all their problems in order to find more happiness.
2. These therapies are empirically-validated. All have been found to bring about modest reductions in depression and /or anxiety. They teach specific skills that are relatively easy to teach and practice and clients can make progress quickly and become more invested in therapy.
3. Clients may feel empowered and hopeful by incorporating these new skills. They can appreciate that they can use them the rest of their lives.



# Disadvantages of Third Wave Behavior Therapies

1. Some negative thoughts are so persistent that it becomes tiresome to have to continually work on accepting them.
2. One can get out of touch with the relative importance of different thoughts and feelings.
3. It is possible to miss opportunities to work on the root causes of major problems.
4. These therapies espouse value-driven behavior, but do not elaborate on how to build motivation to accomplish them.

# The Challenge

How can we combine third wave behavioral therapies with other approaches?

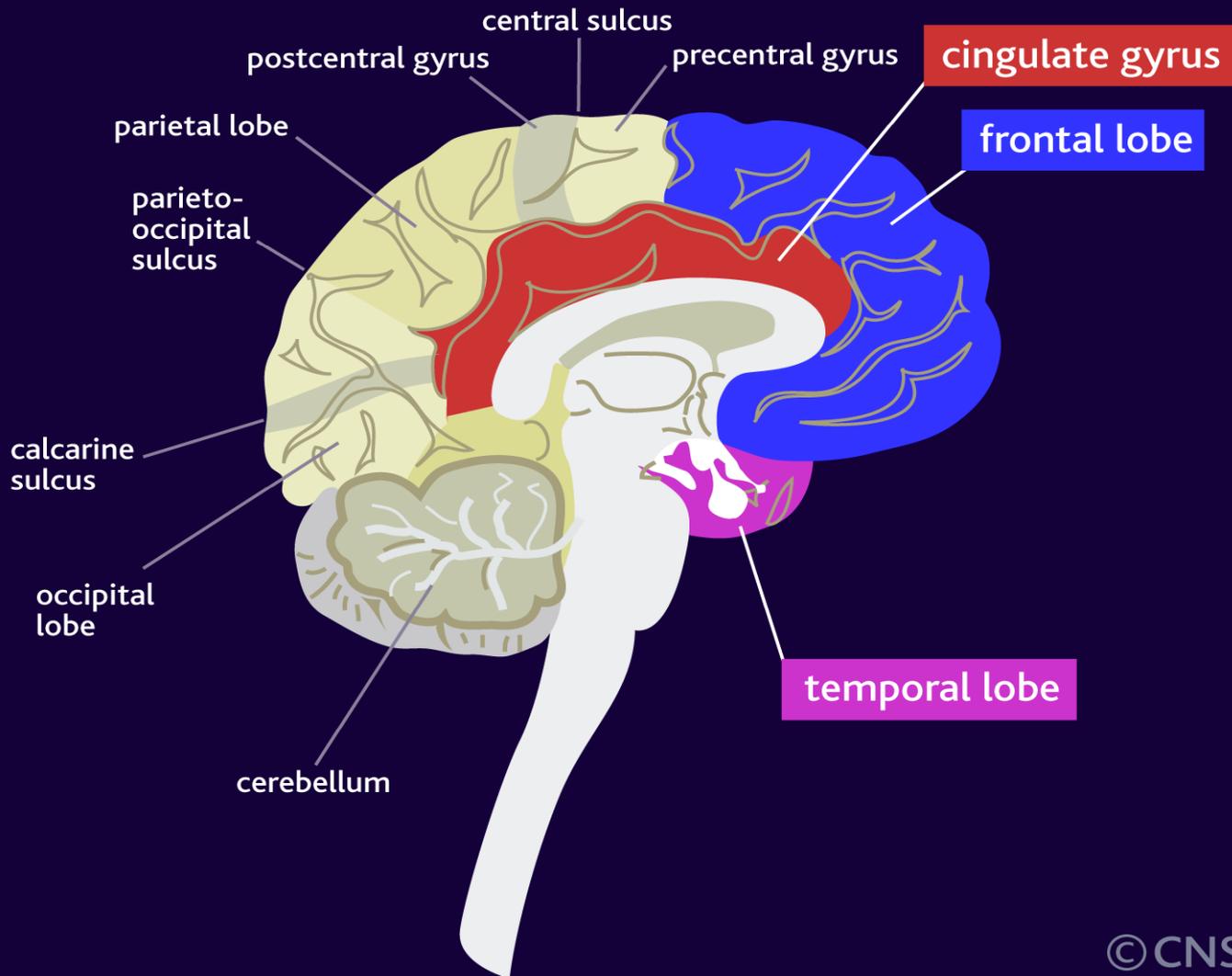
Premise: Spiritually-based problem-solving strategies can augment third wave behavioral therapies without putting an undue emphasis on fixing all the problems.

# A New Perspective

Neuroscience, the scriptures, and prophets tell us that we have a dual mind system. This concept is fairly new to the social science community and limited research has been done.

The hypothesis is that impulses, desires, schema, and most negative thinking patterns arise within the emotional system of the brain. Therefore, changes in the conscious, logical processes associated with the prefrontal cortex may have a limited impact on altering mood and behavior.

# The Brain



# The Bicameral Brain

The emotional system allows us to act fairly spontaneously using pre-established automatic subroutines (quick and energy efficient). These areas of the brain are associated with desires, emotions, nonlinear thinking, and wisdom.

The rational (conscious) system allows us to make sense of set behavioral patterns, interrupt them, and establish new, more effective patterns.



*Incognito* David Eagleman

*The Happiness Hypothesis*  
Jonathan Haidt

# The Heart According to the Scriptures

Purify your hearts, ye double minded. (James 4:8)

Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. (D&C 8:2)

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. (Matthew 12:35)

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts. (D&C 137:9)

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: (Proverbs 23:7)

And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. (D&C 88:15)

# Spirit and Body

## **President David O. McKay**

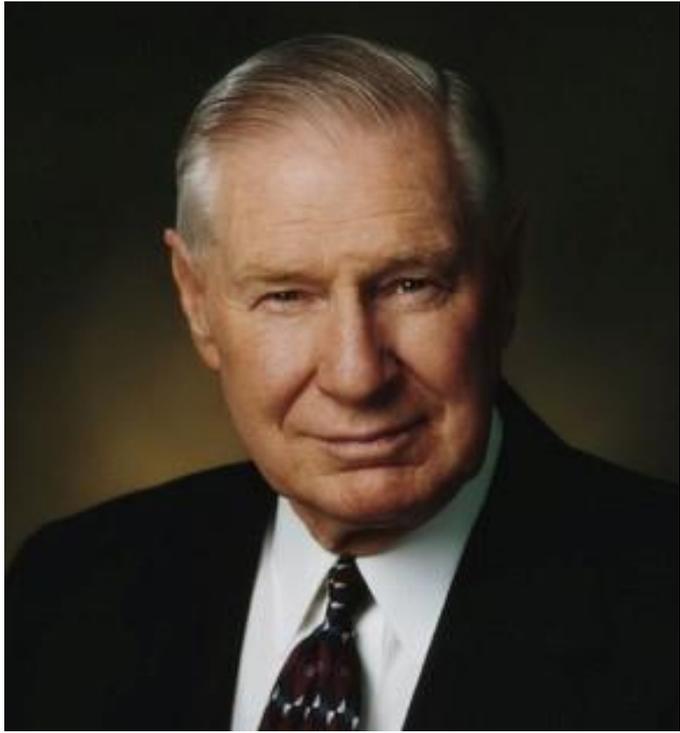
The spirit in man controls this physical body just as the driver of an auto may control that machine.

## **President David O. McKay**

The highest purpose of man is to develop the spirit within him.



# The Inner Self



President James E. Faust  
February 2003 *Ensign*  
“The basic program of the  
Church today is to  
strengthen the inner self.”



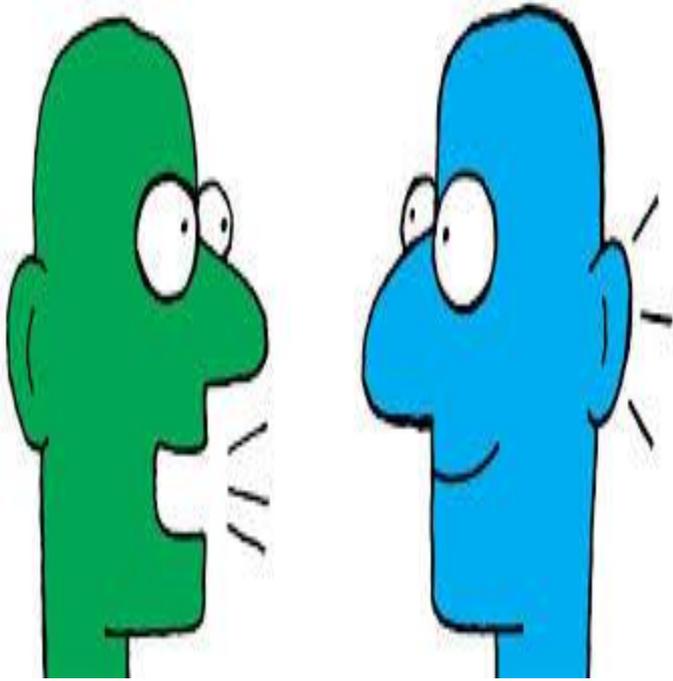
President Brigham Young  
The spirit is the intelligent  
part of man, and it is  
intimately connected with  
the tabernacle.

# Who is Really in Charge?

David Eagleman calls the conscious, rational system and the emotional, subconscious automatic system “the team of rivals.”



# Two Keys to Redirecting the Emotional System



**Persuasive communication**

**Experience**

# Emotional System Management (ESM)

The intent is to assist the emotional system or inner self in finding greater peace, joy, and meaning.

The main tool is communicating reality and truth via the prefrontal cortex, the logical mind. Positive experiences cement in new more adaptive beliefs.

As the emotional system is far stronger than the logical mind, using persuasion is a much more effective strategy than issuing commands or moral imperatives.

# The Education of the Natural Man

To change our thoughts, desires and impulses to righteous ones, we must educate the inner man.

Faith can help us to direct us to more righteous paths so we can experience the good and be converted. The inner self changes in response to new experiences and habits.

Motivation and knowledge are the keys to change.

Effective self-talk strategies: PERSUADE, ENCOURAGE, SUPPORT

The education of the will is the  
object of our existence.  
-William James

# Can We Really Communicate with the Emotional Mind?

Tap into your inner strength



Be a friend to yourself



# Good Self-Care?

“I will take care of myself every day. If I’m constantly meeting the needs of others, I will eventually end up frustrated and burned out. My body also needs sufficient rest and relaxation. I cannot fully love others unless I am taking care of myself too. Additionally, I need to pay attention to my emotions and strive to be happy. Being kind to myself is a good investment. It is not selfish. It is realistic!”



# Exercise 1

## Getting Acquainted

### **Format for the Letter to the Inner Self**

- Greeting - Dear heart of my soul
- Recognize his or her existence
- Empathize with the difficult journey through life
- Point out positive actions and accomplishments
- Apologize for less than perfect parenting
- Suggest a closer working relationship
- Promise to be kinder and more sensitive in the future

# Why Do People Suffer?



Buddha discovered that worldly desires were the main cause of human suffering. We make ourselves miserable mainly by trying to *control* our earthly reality. Negative thoughts come from the reaction of the emotional mind to things not going right. Every reaction has a function.

# How Much Control Do We Really have?

When we obsess on problems, the inner self is usually holding tight to some fantasy about altering reality. However, solving larger problems in a realistic way generally involves hard work, learning, practice, and patience. And, despite our best efforts, success is not guaranteed and misfortune will occur. Once the inner self accepts reality, it largely loses the desire to dwell excessively on any particular problem.



# We All Experience Disappointment

You're Fired!



Stella, come back! Don't leave me for that professional tennis player.



# We Overreact to Events

“The sky is falling! The sky is falling!”



# We Worry about What **Might** Go Wrong

“It is all becoming very clear. I see both good and bad in your future!”



# We Judge Others

Where did he learn  
to drive, what a jerk!



# We Judge Ourselves



Alamy

Oh no, not another mistake! I am a horrible worker.

# Popular Fantasies

If I diligently remind my friends or family members about their faults, they will be sure to change.

Time travel: If I obsess about my past mistakes enough, I can reverse history.

I should be perfect!

Everyone else should live by my standards.

Magic worry: If I think enough about my worries for the future, I can prevent them from happening.

Severely punishing myself for my sins and mistakes actually makes a difference.

Bad things should never happen to me because that would be unfair.

If I stay angry long enough, justice will be served.

# Learn to Surf the Waves of Negativity



# Light and Truth



Our main leverage with the emotional mind is truth.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things. (D&C 93:28) 36

The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. (D&C 93:36)

Light and truth forsake that evil one. (D&C 93:37)

# Radical Acceptance

- Most negative thoughts and emotions come from lack of acceptance, trying to control things we have little or no control over. Radical acceptance means accepting things as they really are, not our interpretation of how we choose to see things.
- Note that accepting truth is different than accepting the presence of negative thoughts as in ACT or DBT. Accepting truth involves altering our thoughts so as to redirect the inner self.
- *Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come. And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning. (D&C: 93:24-25)*

# Be a Cork in the River

By accepting reality we can graciously manage hardships, anger, self-esteem issues, and uncertainty about the future.



## The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept  
the things I cannot change, the courage  
to change the things I can, and the wisdom  
to know the difference.

# Stay Emotionally Balanced



Notice when you feel depressed, tense, or negative and try to quickly regain your positive focus.

First analyze your inner needs: tired, bored, hungry, lonely?

Next, consider if problem-based negative emotions have crept in: Angry, anxious, depressed, guilty, frustrated, shame.

# What's in Your Heart?

Play detective- discover what thoughts are causing the negative emotions. If unsure, use the magic list method.

## Magic List Method



1. Tell your inner self you would like to know what the issues of concern are.
2. Write on a piece of paper the five greatest possibilities for what could be bothering you. Be creative and try to not censor anything.
3. Slowly read the list to yourself.
4. As you read the list, note which issues bring forth the greatest levels of emotion. (This is how the inner self communicates about its troubles.)

# Third Wave Techniques

Be aware of negative thoughts without engaging with them.  
Let them float by like clouds in the sky.

Get busy with positive activities

Meditate

Generate positive emotions of love and compassion

Use defusion techniques that change the relationship with the thoughts:

- Picture thoughts floating away on leaves on a stream (or on a conveyor belt.)
- Repetition – e.g. lemon, lemon, lemon or milk, milk, milk.
- Thank your mind. “Thank you mind for that interesting thought.”

## Exercise 2

# The Editing Technique

- a) Write out your distressing thoughts about the problem of concern.
- b) Cross out lines containing exaggerating, judging and labeling, denial of reality, or predicting from your self-talk.
- c) Use the Key Thoughts Guide below to correct your thinking:
  - What are some logical and rational statements I can make to help me view this problem more clearly?
  - Am I being positive in my attitude? What are some encouraging declarations I can make? What things are working in my favor?
  - If the worst did come to pass, how could I handle it constructively?
- d) Read the new statement five times.

# Self-Worth Protection Formula



1. Is this criticism 100% accurate, or do I just strongly *feel* that way? What is the evidence that it is not totally true?

2. I can practice humility and accept my weaknesses so the Lord can help me make them strengths.

I am not as effective in \_\_\_\_\_ as I would like to be.  
I could improve by \_\_\_\_\_.

3. I know I have worth. I am a child of God. In his loving eyes, all have equal value and great potential. I can increase in knowledge and continue to progress.

# Transcending Anger with Compassion



1. What rule of mine is this person breaking? Does he have the same standards as I do?
2. Why is the person acting this way—frustrated, insecure, jealous, hurt, threatened, not understanding the situation clearly, different values.
3. Is there any solution or compromise that would resolve this situation, or should I just let it go? What would Jesus do?

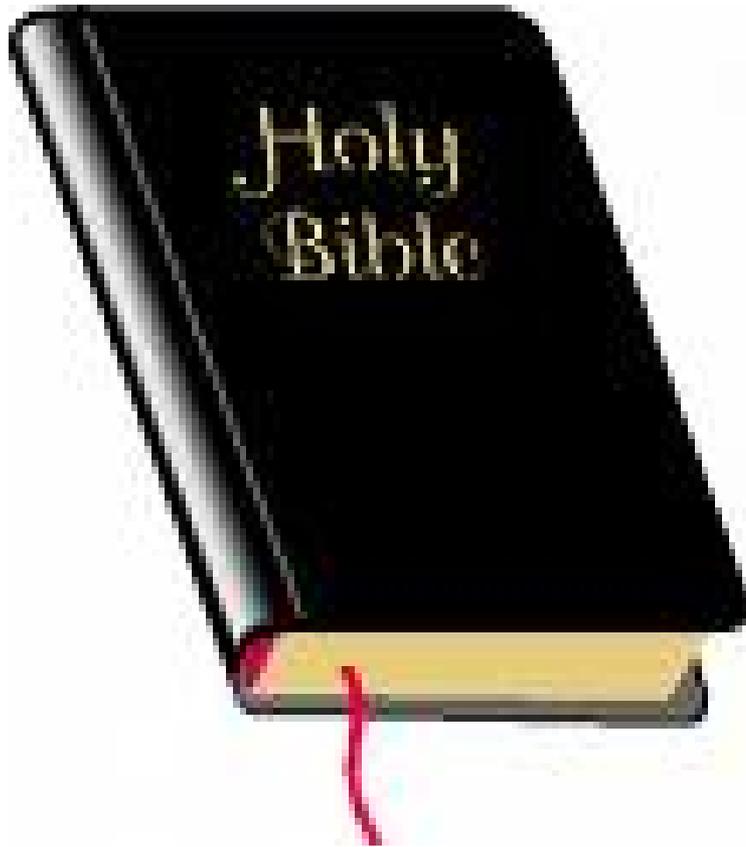
4. If this person is clearly the offender, what are the ramifications of his behavior pattern. How is this behavior damaging his life?
5. Can I adjust my expectations and accept his current level of social/moral functioning in the context of agency and reality?
6. Are there some limits I need to set in a positive manner? Is there any way I can lift him up and teach him a better way?

# The Greatest Decision



*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)*

# Obedience to the Commandments



*And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.  
(D&C 98:11)*

# Being Born Again

*And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. (Mosiah 5:2)*

*Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing. (D&C 19:38)*

# The Second Greatest Decision

## Spirituality versus Worldliness

**President McKay:** Christ has asked us to develop the spiritual within us. Man's earthly existence is but a test as to whether he will concentrate his efforts, his mind, his soul upon things which contribute to the comfort and gratification of his physical nature or whether he will make as his life's purpose the acquisition of spiritual qualities.

**President Benson:** The road lies before us. It is clearly marked. The means to travel it are richly provided. We must follow the path set for us by the Son of God in all that we desire, think, and do.

# Formula for Finding Greater Happiness

## One Day at a Time



Make spirituality your greatest goal (maintain the positive emotions of love, peace, and joy).

Create positive emotions by being engaged in constructive activities and developing rich social relations.

Truth - Accept the things you cannot change and focus on keeping thoughts logical and positive.

Meaning- Be involved in good causes. Be passionate about developing talents.

# The Contemplation Hour

People easily fall into a trap of feeling sad, angry, or guilty about the past and anxious or hopeless about the future. In short, they make themselves miserable by focusing on things they have little control over. We can change our lives by choosing how much time to spend dwelling on problems each day. One hour per day or less is recommended.

*OK that's enough on that problem. I can't do anything about it right now. I need to keep busy and move on. I'll think about it tomorrow.*

# Spiritual Living

Certain activities bring us closer to the light of Christ than others. Some of the more positive activities are service, learning, work, being out in nature, and engaging in the arts. Thoughts that bring about feelings of love, appreciation, or truth are also more spiritual in nature.

*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.  
(Galatians 5:25)*

*And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions.*

*All beings who abide not in those conditions are not justified. For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light. (D&C 88:38-40)*

# Changing the Heart

## The Sanctification Process

*Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts. (Helaman 3:35)*

*But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words... (Alma 32:27)*

*If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32)*

*Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be your constant companion... (D&C 121:45-46)*

# Set Spiritual Goals for Problem-Solving

Practice detachment from outcomes. Focus on process and continual improvement.

## **Spiritual goals are:**

Achievable

In harmony with the gospel

Focus on execution and not only results

Often bless others

Involve living by correct principles

Directed toward self-improvement

# Spiritual Goals Quiz

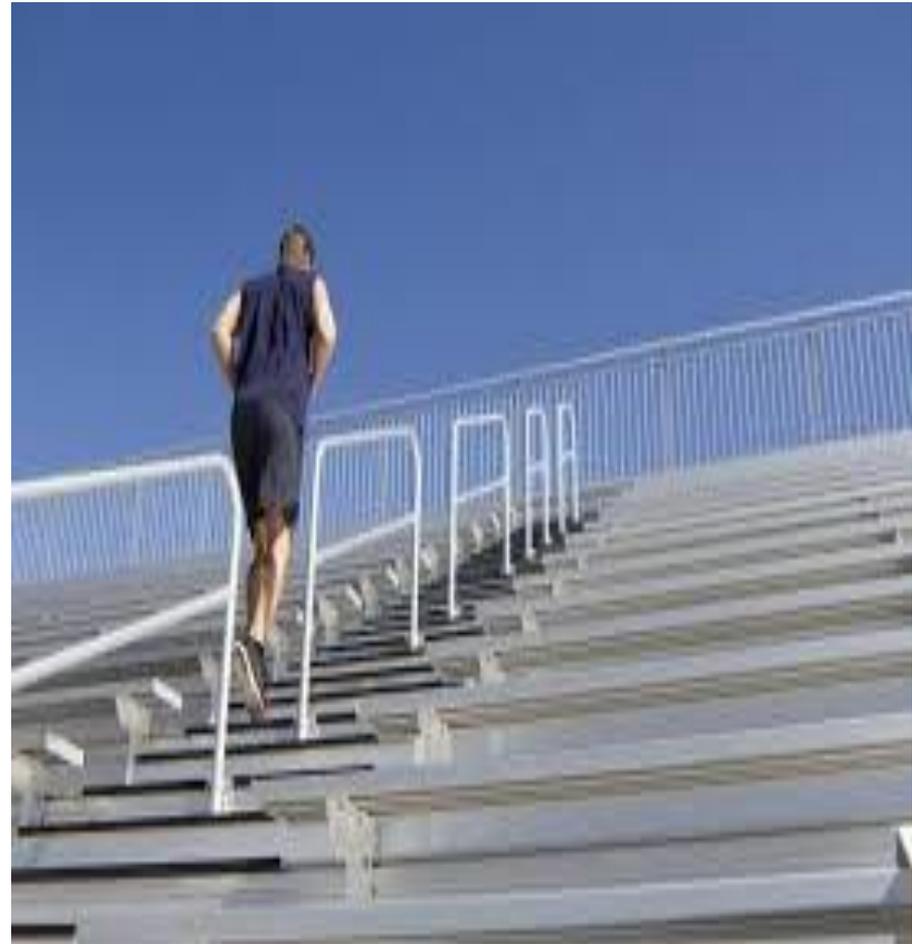


*Practice detachment. Whatever happens happens. Focus on what positive things you can control.*

Taking a college course  
Meeting people at a social event  
Advancing in your career  
Improving your golf score  
Making more sales at your job

# Changing Behavior

People spend substantial amounts of time and energy on their favorite hobbies or pastimes, but often struggle with controlling their habits. *Increasing self-discipline is not a process of using more will power, but of learning to redirect the will.*



# It's All about the Relationship



The conscious mind can direct the heart through logic and persuasion. However, the heart can take over control at any time. *It has to like what you are selling.*

# Building Motivation



**The buy-in.** Ask pointed questions about the consequences of not doing the right thing.

Note the rewards.

Set achievable goals.

Use persuasion to get started. Remind yourself of immediate benefits.

# Start Small, Finish Big

If we push the inner self too hard, it will rebel and take away the power it supplies toward our current and future efforts.

*And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength.  
(Mosiah 4:27)*



# Prepare for Success



Obtain greater knowledge and training so you feel more qualified to handle challenges.

# The Power of Advertising



## The Advertising Cue Card

- Present benefits - how we feel as we perform the behavior
- Intermediate benefits - how we feel afterwards (that same day)
- Long-term benefits - the eventual reward (the big payoff)

# Impulse Control



1. Make a decision.
2. Have firm boundaries.
3. Remain aware of consequences.
4. Overcome thinking errors.
5. Use effective self-talk to sell yourself on following your recovery plan.
6. Change your lifestyle and find positive ways to meet your needs and manage emotions.

Website for the Gospel Tool Kit book  
<http://ldsmentalhealth.blogspot.com>

## **The Gospel Tool Kit**

*Skills for Increasing Happiness*



*Russ Seigenberg, Ph.D.*