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Boundaries: The Line of Yes and No

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My dear brothers and sisters, aloha! I want to begin by calling an alarming fact to your attention, and that's the clear and present danger of carrots. Did you know that nearly all sick people have eaten carrots? Obviously, the effects are cumulative. An estimated 99.9 percent of people who die from cancer and heart disease have eaten carrots. Of all people involved in car crashes, 99.9 percent ate carrots within sixty days of their accidents. Also, 93.1 percent of juvenile delinquents come from homes where carrots are served regularly. Among the people born in 1839 who later ate carrots there has been a 100 percent mortality rate (*Hope Healthletter*, 1992, p. 1)

Now, those of you who ate carrots last night for dinner should be feeling pretty uneasy, except for one fact. The relationship between carrots and death is coincidental, not causal. As practitioners related to the mental health sciences, you are keenly aware of both the strengths and the limitations of statistics in giving you accurate information about a population group.

As I thought about how to approach you and looked at the mass

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of material I've been accumulating for months about the problems of LDS women that might be helpful for LDS practitioners to know, I came to a realization that many people who have occupied this position before me have probably already come to: if I attempt to tell you how to do your job, I think I'll waste your time and mine as well. You're the experts in therapy, and you're the experts in the populations you serve. The statistics and studies available to me are probably both fewer and less helpful than those available to you through your own professional journals and in-service training. As I prayed to know how I could make a contribution to you today, it became clear to me that I probably cannot put specific tools into your hands, but perhaps I can address the heart behind the hands for a few moments.

I'd like to make three specific points today as we explore together the subject of boundaries. First, I'd like to look at how boundaries operate, both in healthy and unhealthy ways. Second, I'd like to suggest a possible model of priesthood partnership that may be helpful to you in attempting to help couples, families, and individuals find a way to understand priesthood principles. Third, I'd like to suggest that you can help women revise their lives by revisioning their lives. What I say has some application to men, as well, of course, but I work primarily with women, so I'm trusting you to make the necessary transfer.

Boundaries

When I was a child, growing up on the Big Island of Hawaii, the sea was an extension of our front yards and we learned to swim as soon as we could toddle. My father maintained what we called a beginner's pool, an area sheltered by a breakwater of large stones so that the water, though deep enough to swim in and occasionally rough enough to give us waves, never was so deep or so rough as to sweep us away. We always had a place to retreat to when we were feeling dubious about the sea, a place of safety from which we could venture forth when we were feeling braver.

Swimming across the pool was a major marker of our competence. After we did that, then we felt ready to tackle the ocean outside the breakwater; and I think that we children were always surprised that it

was really just more of the same water that we'd already mastered inside but with conditions that were sufficiently challenging that our skills were also challenged. That's how we grew as swimmers, learning to match our strength and skill against the new goal of reaching the nearby wharf, and then the buoy that marked the channel for the fishermen's boats.

But even when we considered ourselves to be completely competent swimmers, the beginner's pool was a place to which we could retreat if we wanted to just play instead of to swim seriously. And a large flat rock that absorbed the rays of the sun always waited to welcome us and rewarm us when we returned from a particularly chilly adventure in the deeper water.

This summer, I went back to Hawaii with my older son. I took him to Mahukona, showed him the beginner's pool with many of its rocks still in place, and the sunning stone where we used to creep shivering, then relax as we felt the grateful warmth soak into our bones.

I think you can all see the point I'm aiming toward on the subject of boundaries. Knowing where our boundaries were in the beginners' pool—and having real boundaries—made it possible for us to swim in safety and made all of our later ocean-bound explorations possible. A boundary is a place where yes and no come together, with “yes” on one side and “no” on the other. A beach is a boundary. There are other terms for personal boundaries. We talk about our “comfort zones” or our “personal space.” All of these terms suggest geography as well as psychology, a zone of transition, a zone of change.

When I looked for scriptures having to do with boundaries, one of the most interesting was a passage from the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord explained to Joseph Smith:

And there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom.

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; mercy hath compassion on mercy and claimeth her own; justice continueth its course and claimeth

its own; judgment goeth before the face of him who sitteth upon the throne and governeth and executeth all things.

He comprehendeth all things, and all things are before him, and all things are round about him; and he is above all things, and in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things; and all things are by him, and of him, even God, forever and ever. (D&C 88:37-41)

This scripture has two important applications to our topic of boundaries today, I believe. The first is that not only mortality but eternity and cosmology consist of a series of overlapping kingdoms, or spheres of influence, each with its boundaries. We're here today because of the overlap of two "kingdoms," if you will. One is the professional "kingdom" of being counselors and psychotherapists, skilled professionals in the art of understanding and helping others. The second kingdom is that of the gospel, which also has a high investment in understanding and helping others but which operates from a different set of premises and postulates a somewhat different way of gaining knowledge and skills.

You know a lot about the boundaries between those two kingdoms. Perhaps you've found a way to integrate the two kingdoms so that there is no sense of a boundary as you act in your professional capacity, but I suspect that most of you do maintain some sort of boundary between the two worlds. As an educator, I hope that I always behaved as a Christian, but I was still aware that my professional duties and responsibilities, while providing no license for unchristian behavior, meant that I related to students, parents, and other teachers, not primarily on the basis of our eternal identities as children of God, but primarily on the shared task of learning. I brought to that task as part of my tools my Christian convictions and my Christian love for people—but that wasn't where the focus lay. Is it somewhat the same for you?

The second important principle this scripture contains is the principle of growth: "For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth," and "virtue loveth virtue." The scripture also talks about mercy, justice, and judgment. We have the impression of each of these noble and ennobling traits drawing increased power to itself from those who recognize something desir-

able in what they see. And what is the end of this growth? It is God himself, sitting in the midst of his creations. “Cleaveth,” “receiveth,” “embraceth,” and “loveth” are strong and attractive verbs. They are not verbs of enforced obedience or grudging duty. They are verbs of spontaneous adherence, voluntary loyalties, attraction, even charm. They have a happy, healthy sound of progress, of growth, and of development.

I have always had a strong and healthy sense of myself. This sense of myself manifests itself in a sense of confidence. I know who I am. My values are clear. When I don't understand something, I have no problem asking for a repetition, an amplification, a clarification. When an ethical dilemma presents itself, I can think through it, asking myself how to make a decision that will accord with my highest values. I have, I believe, strong boundaries. Because I know who I am and *whose* I am, it is easy for me to reach across the boundaries to other people—to meet a need, to share a joy, to perform a service, to understand a sorrow. I can be with someone in a problem without feeling that I have adopted the problem or have to take away with me the sorrow of that person. I am not saying this to boast, but to give you some background about myself that provides perspective for what I am going to say next.

I think that many Mormon women do not have clear boundaries for themselves. They feel a sense of confusion about who they are, because many competing voices lay claim to them and they try to accommodate them all. For example, when I became a member of the Relief Society general presidency, I was appalled at how many women were tormented by guilt about their responsibilities as mothers. They seemed unable to see a boundary between themselves and their children. If a child deviated from what was expected, it became a burden that the mother bore. It has taken a long time for me to understand this; and although many of you have had far more clinical experience than I and understand this phenomenon in greater detail, I think you will agree with me that many Mormon women do not know how to recognize and maintain personal boundaries. They are not able to say, “Here is a kingdom of my child, who has such-and-such rules for himself. Here is my kingdom, and I have very different rules for some of

these matters. If I step over the boundary into my child's kingdom, then I need to recognize the differences in those rules."

It is a strength for women to be able to cross their own boundaries easily when they are meeting the needs of their children and serving others, but it is a great disadvantage when they feel every call for service as an imperative which they are obligated to meet. Remember, a boundary has "yes" on one side and "no" on the other. A woman who never feels that she can say "no" is lacking an important element of personal identity and, hence, personal safety. A woman who also feels that she can never say "yes" has an equally serious problem in her inability to move beyond her own boundaries.

Understanding Priesthood Principles

This discussion of boundaries brings me to my second point: understanding priesthood principles. I think that Mormon women's boundaries are crossed far more frequently than those of men, and that some of the most damaging invasions are also conducted by men.

There are many scenarios in which border negotiations occur, if we can use that term, but I have become keenly aware that sexual abuse is one of the most dangerous and damaging of invasions across personal boundaries. Although I am far from being any kind of expert on sexual abuse, in the last year, many women have honored me with confidences about abusive situations in their past. Almost without exception, their personal space has been invaded and their sense of self has been challenged by a man who did not acknowledge, let alone respect, their boundaries. Very often the abuse occurs so early that a child grows up without even knowing that she can have boundaries. As a result, she has no way to create protections for herself and her boundaries are crossed again and again, creating patterns of revictimization.

I was horrified when I attended the Virginia Cutler annual lecture last year and heard Ann Horton of Brigham Young University describe one mother of six, in her thirties, who had sex with her father every time he came to town because she literally lacked any sense of self besides the helpless child who had been forced to submit to incest

years earlier. I learned recently of a woman who had survived a very abusive childhood, married, and had children, but whose sense of self was equally precarious. She desired righteous standards, but her ability to live righteous standards had been seriously impaired by the abuse. A bishopric, seeing her behavior but unable to understand some of the causes behind it, imposed severe discipline on her in a bishop's court. She talked of the choking terror that came upon her as she faced these three accusing men, feeling herself become again a helpless child. She struggles now, not only with maintaining boundaries behind which she can feel safe within herself, but also with generalized feelings of fear about all men in authority. She sees all too clearly how priesthood principles operate to give men authority over her, but she is confused when she tries to understand how priesthood can be a blessing to her. I'm sure she is not alone in her bewilderment and confusion.

If I may, I would like to explore with you a simple image of priesthood that perhaps may be helpful in situations of similar confusion. In April, my stake president asked me to address a combined meeting of priesthood executives and auxiliary heads on the topic of honoring the priesthood. I thought about this topic for several weeks as I prepared to address them. I reviewed in my mind many memories of my husband, Ed, performing priesthood functions with humility and great charity, always grateful for the opportunity to serve others.

I think we use the term "priesthood" in three ways, all of which can confuse both men and women. First, priesthood is church government. It's that orderly list of offices from deacon to high priest, and it's also all of the separate callings that can come with each of those priesthood offices, such as missionary, elder, bishop, or stake president. Second, it's the individual priesthood power that a righteous man, young or old, has by virtue of living worthy to represent God. And third, it is an eternal principle that exists separately from both a person and from an office. We're not sure if there will be deacons in the next world, but we're sure there will be priesthood.

I'm going to use the same analogy here that I did in my own stake, since it seemed helpful to that audience. I have here a Japanese umbrella. You can see that it's a little different from an American

umbrella because it's flatter and doesn't have a spring-bow shape to the ribs, but the principle is the same. It's a sort of portable roof to keep off the rain. It makes a little house that we can carry around with us when we need to.

Let's say that this umbrella represents priesthood power. First, let's think of priesthood as an eternal principle. We know that there have been times when the priesthood has been withdrawn from the earth during periods of apostasy, so those have been times, let's say, when the priesthood has been rolled up and lying on a shelf, just as this umbrella is rolled up and lying here on the podium. This isn't a perfect analogy, of course, but it gives us the idea of priesthood as a principle of eternal power. Whether we know about it or not, whether we're members of the Church or not, whether priesthood is upon the earth or not, whether it's operating in our lives in a way we understand or not, it exists and is part of the divine plan of our Heavenly Father. So the priesthood can exist, separate from an office and separate from an office-holder, just as this umbrella can exist, even if it's only sitting in the closet for twenty years.

Now, let's think about the other two meanings of priesthood. First is the concept of priesthood as government. I need two volunteers. Brother Westover, would you come up here and stand where everyone can see you? For the purposes of this little demonstration, let's say that Brother Westover is not ordained to the priesthood. See, his hands are empty. If it rains, he's going to get wet. No umbrella. Let's say that he desires the priesthood, that's he is interviewed and found worthy and that he's ordained to the priesthood. And let's say that Brother Smith here is his stake president. Would you come up, please? Now, Brother Smith, would you take the umbrella from this eternal shelf where it's been waiting for Brother Westover to get ready and would you give it to him? This transfer of the umbrella from Brother Smith to Brother Westover is ordination. Brother Westover now has the priesthood. (You all saw his temporary stake president, Brother Smith, give him the umbrella.) Brother Westover, you are now a priesthood *holder*. (Keep a good grip on that umbrella, now.)

So we've taken the eternal principle off the eternal shelf and brought it into a mortal context. We've also found someone worthy to

hold it. The third principle, that of Church government, means that a priesthood holder needs to act in a specific function or calling. Brother Westover, would you open the umbrella, please? Let's have that represent your calling. For example, if Brother Westover is ordained an elder, he's also called to be a missionary. Or he may be ordained to be a high priest and a bishop. Of course, ordinations remain in force even if the callings change. Let's demonstrate that by having Brother Westover called to different positions. Brother Westover, let's say that you're called to a position by the organ. Will you go over there? Okay, now you're called to a position on the second step of the stairs leading down to the main floor. Will you go over there? We can even call Brother Westover to go out to the parking lot, but we won't. Lots of different positions, but the priesthood goes with him to every one. That's an analogy for priesthood as church government—ordinations plus callings.

And now let's consider the third aspect of priesthood: personal exercise of priesthood. Brother Westover, would you close the umbrella and just hold it again? Okay, here is this good priesthood *holder*—no office, no calling. But does holding the priesthood mean that he's using the priesthood? Is he blessing the lives of other people with it? Is it doing him or anybody else much good right now? No, because he's not exercising power in the priesthood. If it were raining in here, he would be getting wet. So let's take the next step. Brother Westover, will you open the umbrella, please?

Now the umbrella is sheltering him. If it were raining in here, he wouldn't be getting wet. So the umbrella now represents personal priesthood power. He's holding the priesthood and it's saving him from getting wet. Even if he never does anything else with the umbrella, it's still performing that function. As long as he honors his priesthood—or in other words, takes care of this umbrella—he will be protected by its power. But he can't punch holes in it, or turn it upside down and store footballs in it, or lean it against the wall and walk away from it. If he does any of these things, it will cease to function in his life and he'll start getting wet again.

But he can use his personal priesthood to bless the lives of others, with or without a calling. Let's say without a calling, just to keep

things simpler. Let's say that Brother Jones is in the hospital waiting for an operation the next day. At Brother Jones's invitation, Brother Westover can go to the hospital with another priesthood holder and give him a blessing. That's an exercise of priesthood power through an ordinance that's not attached to a calling.

Brother Westover can also exercise priesthood power just as a follower of Christ, doing the kinds of things that Christ did on the earth without a specific assignment. Brother Westover, for example, will you go hold your umbrella over Sister Miller. Let's say that Sister Miller is out cutting her lawn and her mower runs out of gas. Brother Westover brings over a gallon of gas and fills her tank. This isn't an ordinance, it's not a calling; it's just being a good neighbor and a kind Christian. But that's also one of the powers of Brother Westover's personal priesthood—which is the third definition of priesthood power.

One of the most important exercises of priesthood power occurs in the home. Brother Westover, will you invite your wife to come under the umbrella with you? And Sister Westover, will you just slip your arm through his, the way you would if you were walking in the rain together? Brother Westover is holding the umbrella over both of you. Both of you are being protected from the rain. And Sister Westover, by linking her arm with his, is sustaining him in upholding the umbrella, helping him hold it steady. If Brother Westover were using this umbrella as a walking stick, to prop himself up, or as a scepter to make himself look majestic and important, or as a stick to threaten or hit Sister Westover, it could not shelter either one of them. These would be improper uses of priesthood power.

But as long as he upholds the umbrella and as long as Sister Westover sustains his umbrella-holding arm, then there's quite a bit of room under that umbrella for children or friends. Because of the sealing in the temple, in an eternal marriage between a worthy endowed man who holds the eternal principle of the priesthood and a worthy, endowed woman who sustains that same principle, then the priesthood can be a protection to them as individuals, as couples, and as a family. Sometimes couples don't understand that the covenants are parallel—that both man and woman, when clothed in a certain manner, are thereby prepared to stand in a certain relationship to the ordi-

nances of the Melchizedek Priesthood. I'll say no more about that, but it may be a helpful concept in a situation where priesthood power seems to be used as an instrument of coercion.

Let me summarize: priesthood seems to have three forms in which it impacts our lives. First, it is an eternal principle, separate from any earthly function or individual; second, it is the organizational structure and ordering principle of Church government. And third, it is a personal power conferred upon worthy men which they can use to bless the lives of others, not only through formal callings but also as followers of the Savior.

I certainly don't claim to understand perfectly everything that we need to learn in this life or the next about priesthood power. There is much I do not understand. All analogies are limited. But it is possible that thinking about the umbrella and Brother Westover may give you an idea or two for teaching this concept more helpfully to individuals and couples who are struggling with it.

Help Women Revision Their Lives

The third point I want to make is the importance of helping your clients *revise* their lives by *revising* their lives. This is probably not a new concept to you. You all understand the simple, yet profoundly mysterious process of conversion—how a man or woman writes a script for his or her life, or accepts one written by others, and then lives it out as though there are no alternatives and no choices left. Every individual who has been converted to the gospel and has joined the Church is a living, walking testimony to the power of changing a life script. I think that women, more than men, may feel trapped in scripts handed to them by someone else. Even when they accept these scripts willingly, I believe that violence is done if they believe that they *must* accept them because they have no choices. In such circumstances, I think that the power of the Holy Ghost and the power of imagination can combine to suggest alternatives and to give the courage to try on a new role—even for a couple of hours—while the courage builds to make needed changes. Are there ways that you can help with the process of revising, ways that will lead to revising?

I want to approach this topic in a way that seems indirect, perhaps, by telling you a story from my homeland of Hawaii that involves a savior goddess. This has always been a story of great meaning to me, even before I became a Christian, because it shows a female with power over death, undertaking a difficult and dangerous task out of love for other women—the young daughters of a fisherman.

Have any of you visited Maui? My husband, Ed, was born on Maui and, until his death in 1992, we went there together every year to visit his mother, who is still alive. This past July, I went alone and celebrated my mother-in-law's birthday with the rest of the family. I loved spending time on the beaches and in the deep forests of Maui.

You may know that the island of Maui, according to the legends of Hawaii, was named for the son of the goddess Hina. But it is not so well known that Hina also had four daughters. It is significant to me that many of the powers associated with the Savior in the Christian literature are the province of goddesses in Hawaii. (It certainly seems, at least from the legends, that the many male gods are too busy having adventures and fighting wars to undertake what we would consider miracles!) Here is a story that is a distinctively native version of the conquering of death—not quite a resurrection story but a restoration from death. And I think it has a message for women and about women.

Near the city of Hilo is a site that is associated with the goddess Hiiaka. As she was passing along the seashore, she greeted the daughters of a household who willingly offered her food to eat. She could tell they were troubled and asked them the cause of their concern. They told her that their father had not returned from fishing and they were very worried. Through her divine powers, she knew that the father had been drowned and that his spirit, or ghost, as the folktale puts it, was wandering on the shore, distressed about his daughters, unable to leave and unwilling to return. Because of the kindness of the daughters, Hiiaka said she would try to restore the father to life, but they must do their part by not weeping until they knew whether she had succeeded or failed. She commanded the spirit to take her to its body, and it rushed away, trying to avoid her and her power. But she followed it to the foot of a steep precipice where the body lay in the

surf, torn by the rough coral and with its face bitten by eels. I love how realistic and humorous this tale becomes, not at all solemn and serious, but really showing the hard work of performing a miracle. While Hiiaka was washing the body, the ghost tried to run away, and she thrust out her hand and compelled him to return by her divine power.

She drove the ghost to the side of the body and ordered it to enter, but the ghost thought that it would be a brighter and happier life if it could be free among the blossoming trees and fragrant ferns of the forest. It tried again to slip away from the [body] in which it had lived.

Hiiaka slapped the ghost back against the body and told it to go in at the bottom of a foot. She slapped the feet again and again, but it was very hard to push the ghost inside. It tried to come out as fast as Hiiaka pushed it in. Then Hiiaka uttered an incantation while she struck the feet and limbs. The incantation was a call for the gift of life from her friends of the volcano:

O the top of Kilauea!
 O the five ledges of the pit!
 The kapu fire of the woman,
 When the heavens shake,
 When the earth cracks open
 Man is thrown down,
 Lying on the ground...
 E ala e! Wake up!
 The heaven wakes up.
 The earth inland is awake
 The sea is awake.
 Awake you!
 Here am I.

By the time this chant was ended Hiiaka had forced the ghost up to the hips. There was a hard struggle—the ghost trying to go back and yet yielding to the slapping and going further and further into the body.

Then Hiiaka put forth her hand and took fresh water, pouring it over the body, chanting again:

I make you groan, O Kane!
 Hiiaka is the prophet.
 This work is hers.
 She makes the growth.
 Here is the water of life.
 E ala e! Awake! Arise!
 Let life return
 The kapu of death is over

It is lifted,
It has flown away.

All this time, she was slapping and pounding the ghost into the body. It had gone up as far as the chest, then she took more fresh water and poured it over the eyes, dashing it into the face. The ghost leaped up to the mouth and eyes—choking noises were made—the eyes opened faintly and closed again, but the ghost was entirely in the body. Slowly life returned. The lips opened and the breath came back.

The healing power of Hiiaka restored the places wounded by coral ... and ... eels ... then ... putting out her strong hand, Hiiaka lifted him to his feet. (Westervelt, 1987, pp. 79-82)

That's the part I always enjoyed the most—that Hiiaka, not tired from her hard labor of reembodying this spirit, “put out her strong hand” and lifted the restored man to his feet and then, although the story does not tell us, almost certainly restored him to his daughters.

Women need to see themselves as strong, as capable of hard labor for a goal, as deserving of the pleasures of achievement, as worthy of honor. Their sacrifices need to count for something. They need to see how their efforts are acts of salvation, deeds of redemptive love. They need to see that they are important and that they make a difference in the lives of the people they love the most.

Often, they are crippled and burdened because they get exactly the opposite message. The scriptures tell us of a religious ritual of the ancient Hebrews. On the day of atonement, the high priest would bring two goats before the congregation at the tabernacle. Lots would be cast. One goat would be sacrificed for a sin offering, but the other “shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness” (Leviticus. 16:10). So after the high priest had performed the sacrifice and sprinkled the blood seven times upon the mercy seat as an atonement for his own sins, for those of “his household, and for all the congregation of Israel” (v. 17), then he would “lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away ... into the wilderness” (Leviticus 16:21). And thus, the innocent animal would become

guilty and wander away in the wilderness to die of starvation and thirst or to fall prey to wild beasts.

I have had a sense that many Mormon mothers are wandering in just such a wilderness, burdened with guilt that they have accepted but of which they are innocent. It is true that much is expected of LDS women in the latter days. Mothers bear a great responsibility. But guilt is a burden they need not pick up. They need not make themselves responsible for the deficiencies of society. They are not responsible for bearing the burdens of both fatherhood and motherhood. It is not for them to bear unmerited guilt for divorce, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, teenage sexuality, theft, and violence. They need to know where they stand in their own eyes and where they stand with the Lord. That precious knowledge is not something they should let someone decide for them.

The chapter in Leviticus before the description of the scapegoat describes women as ritually unclean by very reason of womanhood and maternity and describes how they may be cleansed. Those formulae of cleansing tell women that they are guilty, contaminated, unworthy. The ritual of the scapegoat is part of a religion that Christ replaced with the true atonement. Christ did not preserve those rituals involving women in his gospel either, but rather acknowledged women as his disciples, honored motherhood, and gave the first evidence of the resurrection to a woman. No matter who may condemn women to the scapegoat's guilt, it is not Christ and it should not be anyone in his church who would bind that burden on a woman. Nor should women pick up that burden and bind it on themselves. Christ died and rose again to free us from burdens.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Church has nothing to fear from the strength of women. On the contrary, it desperately needs women—and men, too—who are not trapped in dysfunctional roles that involve playing out scripts that don't really work. Partnership is a mutually supportive relationship that recognizes and honors both the differences and similarities between men and women, that draws deeply on the strengths

of both, that focuses on working toward mutually decided goals, and that celebrates the contributions of both in the home, in the community, and in the church and kingdom of God. Help both men and women to work for partnership and to move away from the limitations of rigid roles.

Remember first the beginner's pool and help your clients, men and women alike, develop safe places in which to practice their skills and gain competencies. Help them find a sunning stone, where they can go when they are shivering and unable to swim any longer, where they can relax and be warmed. Help them understand that a boundary is a line between yes and no and that they get to establish that line, say yes to some things, say no to others, and feel good about choosing either response when it is appropriate to the circumstances.

Remember second the Japanese umbrella and its three-fold application to priesthood: as an eternal principle, as a principle of Church government, and as personal priesthood. Help men understand how to honor their priesthood as an opportunity to serve others. Help women understand what appropriate and inappropriate use of priesthood power may be and how to make a boundary, when necessary, between priesthood as a principle and an individual priesthood holder.

Third, remember the story of Hiiaka and help women find ways to revise their lives by revisioning their lives. Help them to see their own strengths and to appreciate their own ability to slap a reluctant ghost back into a body. Help them develop that strength, if they don't already have it, and to recognize it if they do.

I am sure that you sometimes deal with clients, both men and women, who feel so stressed, depressed, and overwhelmed by circumstances that they barely know how to function, let alone how to take charge of their lives and move forward confidently. Perhaps, if they are LDS, you may have felt prompted to refer them to a scripture of comfort from Joseph Smith's experience in Liberty Jail where the Lord reassures him:

And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heav-

ens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son [or my daughter], that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?

This is a well-known passage of comfort and understanding, but it is the next verse that seems particularly relevant to our discussion of boundaries. The scripture continues: “Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; *for their bounds are set*, they cannot pass. Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever” (D&C 122:7-9). There are limits if we can find them. There are boundaries where a yes, a no, will protect us. Please help your clients to make and maintain those boundaries.

The spirit of the gospel is the spirit of liberty, of flowering, of unfurling, and of growth. It is a pattern of enlarging boundaries, or understanding that enables us to reach across and even dissolve boundaries. Ultimately, as we become increasingly like our Father in Heaven, we will understand why the Doctrine and Covenants describes him as “above all things, and in all things, and [he] is through all things, and is round about all things; and all things are by him, and of him, even God, forever and ever” (D&C 88:41). Mortality is a beginners’ pool for all of us. The limitations that provide safety in this life are temporary. If we try to make them permanent or endow them with eternal significance, we will limit ourselves and stifle our own growth. I pray that we will remember instead the loving and lovely promise “that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light—yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom” (2 Nephi 3:5). I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

References

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