

The Most Powerful Motivating Force

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Our motives and thoughts ultimately influence our actions. Let me share a personal experience from my own youth about the power of righteous motives.

After the turmoil of the Second World War, my family ended up in Russian-occupied East Germany. When I attended fourth grade, I had to learn Russian as my first foreign language in school. I found this quite difficult because of the Cyrillic alphabet, but as time went on I seemed to do all right.

When I turned 11, we had to leave East Germany overnight because of the political orientation of my father. Now I was going to school in West Germany, which was American-occupied at that time. There in school all children were required to learn English. To learn Russian had been difficult, but English was impossible for me. I thought my mouth was not made for speaking English. My teachers struggled. My parents suffered. And I knew English was definitely not my language.

But then something changed in my young life. Almost daily I rode my bicycle to the airport and watched airplanes take off and land. I read, studied, and learned everything I could find about aviation. It was my greatest desire to become a pilot. I could already picture myself in the cockpit of an airliner or in a military fighter plane. I felt deep in my heart that this was my thing!

Then I learned that to become a pilot I needed to speak English. Overnight, to the total surprise of everybody, it appeared as if my mouth had changed. I was



President Uchtdorf teaches about righteous motivating forces in our lives.

able to learn English. It still took a lot of work, persistence, and patience, but I was able to learn English!

Why? Because of a righteous and strong motive!

The testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is the most powerful motivating force in our lives. Jesus repeatedly emphasized the power of good thoughts and proper motives: “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (D&C 6:36).

The testimony of Jesus Christ and the restored gospel will help us in our lives to learn of God’s specific plan for us and then to act accordingly. It gives us assurance of the reality, truth, and goodness of God, of the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and of the divine calling of latter-day prophets. Our testimony motivates us to live righteously, and righteous living will cause our testimony to grow stronger. ●

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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- 1. After President Uchtdorf found out that he had to learn English to be a pilot, was it easy for him to learn the language? What changed so that he was able to learn it?**
- 2. What do you think makes a desire righteous or unrighteous? How was President Uchtdorf’s desire to learn English righteous?**
- 3. What can testimonies motivate us to do? How can you make your testimony the most powerful motivating force in your life?**

