

Snow
JUMPING



By Gale Sears

*I didn't understand the need for rules and commandments—
until I broke one.*

I grew up in the high mountain town of Lake Tahoe, California, USA. As kids, we spent magical winters navigating through four to six feet of snow, digging tunnels, and engineering impressive ice caves. Winter was a wonderland of fun and adventure.

In our neighborhood there were many cabins that people used only in the summertime, and another breathtaking snow sport, indulged in by some of the older kids, was climbing up onto the low roofs or porches of these empty cottages and jumping into the snow drifts far below. This roof-jumping excitement was a big no-no for me; a mom and dad rule that I found very restrictive.

The temptation grew to be too much. One day, at the age of nine, I climbed up a woodpile, monkeyed over an old ivy trellis, and scrambled onto the roof of the neighbor's house. I sat triumphant for several minutes, surveying my domain. I felt free, and confident. It was glorious up here! I was absolutely sure my mom and dad didn't know what they were talking about.

I remember so clearly that first jiggle of doubt as I moved to the edge of the roof and looked down at the snow. It seemed a long way down. "Aw, come on," I chided myself. "You've seen the other kids do it, and they come out laughing, so it must be tons of fun."

Temptation took hold of me, and I launched myself off the roof. Actually, everything seemed wonderful for the two seconds until my feet hit the snow. Then I remembered something important. The big kids always put their arms out, like bird wings, so that they'd only sink into the snow up to their armpits.

My thin little arms were straight down at my sides. The result of this was that I entered the snow like a rocket—sleek, smooth—and I got stuck. The snow pressed around me. I was in about 4 feet 4 inches (1.32 m) deep, and since I was only 4 feet 2 inches (1.27 m) tall, I was in trouble. I was wedged in tight, and it was a terrible feeling. I was not free anymore.

I shoved my head back, looked up into the brilliant blue sky, and yelled. I knew my mom was just inside our house. Sure that she would hear me and come running, I yelled again. No answer. The snow was absorbing my voice like cotton.

Five minutes went by; then 10. I was getting cold and very panicked. I tried to wiggle my way up. No good. I tried to kick my legs. I lost a boot. Fifteen minutes went by. I started to cry. I was so afraid I'd be stuck here forever.

Then I heard my mom's voice calling. It sounded far away, but it was unmistakably her voice, and it was yelling my name.

I yelled out, "Mom, mom, I'm over here! I'm in the snow!"

It took some time, but eventually she found me. She dug me out and took me in to thaw by the fire. I'd been stuck only about 20 minutes, but it seemed like days. I was so glad to be free.

Mom didn't say anything about jumping off roofs, or the loss of my boot. I guess she could tell by the look on my face that I was pondering the big issues of life: rules, foolish acts, and consequences.

Later that day my dad came to my room to have a little talk with me.

"Gale."

"Yes, Dad."

"Your mom and I love you."

I felt tears coming. "Yes, Dad."

"We give you rules because we love you, and we want you to be safe. You may not always understand why there's a rule, but you have to trust us."

"Yes, Dad."

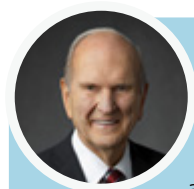
That was it. He must have known that I'd already learned a big lesson from my snowbound mistake. He stopped at the door to smile at me, and I knew without a doubt I was precious to him. I also knew that he would be so sad if I did anything that brought pain into my life. I remember promising myself that I would try to be a better girl.

Junior high and high school brought their share of boundary pushing and challenges. There were times when I put my toes right on the edge of the roof and peered over. It was hard not to jump when so many of the other kids were rebelling. Whenever I thought about jumping, the memory of being stuck in the snow would come to me, and I'd feel again that fear, and cold, and loss of freedom. I'd remember my father's voice of love and concern.

I know that Heavenly Father gives us rules to keep us safe. He does this out of love. I also know that He's very sad when we make choices that bring pain into our lives.

The world may think they're free as they go about breaking or flouting God's laws, but true freedom, safety, and peace come by being obedient to the rules of a loving Heavenly Father. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.



REACH FOR THE LORD'S POWER

"When you reach up for the Lord's power in your life with the same intensity that a drowning person has when grasping and gasping for air, power from Jesus Christ will be yours. When the Savior knows you truly want to reach up to Him—when He can feel that the greatest desire of your heart is to draw His power into your life—you will be led by the Holy Ghost to know exactly what you should do."

President Russell M. Nelson, Apr. 2017 general conference.

