

Get On with Our Lives

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By listening to the prophets, keeping an eternal perspective, having faith, and being of good cheer, we can face life's unexpected challenges.



During the very early years of her life, our niece Lachelle spent the mornings with her grandmother. The two shared a special bond from these hours together. Lachelle soon turned five years old and was preparing to begin school. On their last morning together, Grandma Squire read her granddaughter a story and rocked her in the big rocking chair. “We have had so much fun together, Lachelle,” she told her, “and now it is time for you to go to school. I love you so much; what will I ever do without you?”

With wisdom beyond her five years, Lachelle looked up at her

grandmother with big brown eyes. “Grandma,” she said, “I love you too, but it is time I got on with my life.”

That is good counsel for all of us. We too need to “get on with our lives.” Most of us do not seek or even welcome dramatic changes. But change is an essential part of life’s experiences.

Many of these changes come as we naturally make our way through our earthly journey. Our lives change as we progress from childhood through youth and on into adulthood and finally old age. Schooling, missions, marriage, employment, and retirement are all examples of milestones of change.

Too often we are reluctant to enter the next stage, begin the next challenge. Maybe we are too comfortable, fearful, or lacking in faith. Grandmother’s lap is often more comfortable than the trials of kindergarten. Our parents’ basement, with unlimited video games, may be more appealing than college, marriage, or a career.

How can we then best prepare for the changes we must inevitably face as we progress through life?

First, follow the prophets. Listen to and abide by the counsel of the Brethren. Prophets often raise a voice

of warning but also provide steady, pragmatic counsel to help us weather the storms of life. In the opening section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord reminds us, “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38). Prophets help us confront the changes and challenges we constantly face. The popular Primary song “Follow the Prophet” reminds us of this important principle: “We can get direction all along our way, if we heed the prophets—follow what they say” (*Children’s Songbook*, 111).

Second, keep an eternal perspective. Understand that change and challenges are part of God’s plan. By design this mortal existence is a time of testing or a time “to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25). In order to test our use of our God-given agency, we as mortals undergo a series of changes, challenges, trials, and temptations as we proceed through life. Only then are we properly tested.

In 2 Nephi we read: “For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad” (2 Nephi 2:11).

Life’s challenges and changes provide opportunities for us to grow as we exercise our agency in making righteous decisions.

Third, have faith. President Gordon B. Hinckley always encouraged members of the Church to move forward with faith (see “God Hath Not Given Us the Spirit of Fear,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1984, 4). As we daily confront a world full of negativity, doubt, fear, and even dread can creep into our hearts. President Thomas S. Monson has counseled us that “faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other” (“Come unto Him in Prayer



and Faith,” *Liabona*, Mar. 2009, 4; *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 6). In Moroni we read that “without faith there cannot be any hope” (Moroni 7:42). We must exercise faith to take on life’s challenges and changes. It is how we learn and progress.

Fourth, be of good cheer. Many of our members across the globe are facing challenges, economic and otherwise. At such times it is easy to feel despondent and forgotten. During the early, difficult days of the Church, the Lord counseled the Saints to be happy: “Be of good cheer, little children; for I am in your midst, and I have not forsaken you” (D&C 61:36).

In his last conference talk, six months ago, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught how to respond to adversity. Part of his counsel included: “The next time you’re tempted to groan, you might try to laugh instead. It will extend your life and make the lives of all those around you more enjoyable”

(“Come What May, and Love It,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 27). Laughter and a good sense of humor can soften the bumps along life’s journey.

It would be nice if we could anticipate all the changes that would occur in a lifetime. Some changes we see coming. Certainly all Latter-day Saint young men are taught to prepare for a full-time mission, a life-changing experience. Every worthy young single adult understands the importance of choosing a spouse and being sealed in the holy temple. We know these changes are coming, and we can plan for them. But what about the changes which are thrust upon us rather unexpectedly? These are changes over which we seemingly have no control. Economic downturn, unemployment, debilitating sickness or injury, divorce, and death are examples of change we do not expect, anticipate, or welcome. How do we

deal with such unexpected setbacks in life’s journey?

The answer is the same. By listening to the prophets, keeping an eternal perspective, having faith, and being of good cheer, we can face life’s unexpected challenges and “get on with our lives.”

The lives of the early pioneers are excellent examples of how we should accept change and overcome challenges and difficulties.

Robert Gardner Jr. was baptized into the Church in January of 1845 in a frozen pond in the backwoods of eastern Canada. Faithful and industrious, he made his way with his family to Nauvoo and, after much hardship, arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in October of 1847. After entering the valley, they camped at a place called Old Fort, located a few blocks from this Conference Center. In his handwritten history, he recorded, “I unyoked my oxen and sat down on my broken wagon tongue, and said I could not go another day’s journey” (“Robert Gardner Jr. Self History and Journal,” Church History Library, 23).

Starting with nothing, Robert began to create a new life for himself and his family. The first years were hard, but gradually things improved as he and his brother Archibald began to develop mills on Mill Creek and the Jordan River. A few years later he suffered a reversal of fortune. The water powering his mill was taken upstream, leaving his portion of the stream dry. An attempt to build a six-mile (10-km) canal to the mill failed.

Again from his history: “The canal kept breaking until it proved a failure. The failure caused me to lose all my crops and my mill would not run. My stock was all gone and I was flat broke” (“Robert Gardner Jr. Self History and Journal,” 26).

If that was not test enough, his next entry in his history informs us he has been called on a mission to Canada. A few months later he left his

family and with a contingent of missionaries traveled by handcart, steamboat, and railroad to his field of labor.

He completed this mission, returned to his family, and through hard work and diligence once again established himself and began to prosper.

Just a few years later Brother Gardner was entertaining some friends at his farm in Millcreek in the Salt Lake Valley. One remarked, "I am glad to see you so well recovered from being broke. You are nearly as well off as you were before you lost your property and went on your mission."

Robert's history records: "My reply was; 'Yes I was well off once and it all went off, and I am almost afraid of another [mission] call.' Sure enough, a few hours later some of my neighbors, who had been to a meeting in Salt Lake City called in and told me that my name was amongst a number of names who were called today to go south on a mission to make a new settlement and raise cotton. We were to start right away."

He records, "*I looked and spit, took off my hat and scratched [my head] and thought and said; 'All right'*" ("Robert Gardner Jr. Self History and Journal," 35; emphasis added).

Robert Gardner knew what it meant to deal with change in his life. He followed the counsel of the Brethren, accepting calls to serve when it was not convenient. He had a great love for the Lord and demonstrated strong, unbending faith with amazing good humor and grace. Robert Gardner Jr. went on to become a leading pioneer in the colonization effort of southern Utah. It is he and countless pioneers like him who give us inspiration to carry on and confront fearlessly the many changes and challenges which come into our lives. As we move forward and "get on with our lives," may we be obedient, faithful, and cheerful is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■