

But I Was Inspired to Call Her

I had felt so strongly about calling Jessica. Why hadn't our conversation gone differently?

By Tiffany M. Leary

I smiled and waved goodbye as the group of youth left the Independence Visitors' Center in Missouri, USA. Henry, the young man who had given me a referral card, smiled back as he went through the revolving doors with his friends. The referral card said: "Jessica, my older sister, hasn't been coming to church." I imagined that Jessica was my age since Henry reminded me of one of my teenage brothers.

Whoa. I felt connected to them and wanted to help. Referrals are always important to missionaries, but this felt especially important to me.

Reaching Out

The next couple of days, I prayed for Jessica and Henry while my companion and I went out, taught investigators, and gave lessons at the visitors' center. When Henry got home from youth conference, I was finally able to call him. Henry was sad that Jessica had not been going to church and had made wrong decisions. Henry had given me the referral card because he wanted his sister to feel the Spirit like he had at the visitors' center.

Henry handed the phone to his mom. Her voice sparkled as she talked about Jessica's hobbies, her new job, her close relationship with Henry, and her respect for others. But her mom's voice dropped as she told me that Jessica's questions and frustrations about the Church led her to quit listening to gospel discussions.

Love for Jessica

Once I hung up the phone, I felt overwhelmed by emotion. I was deeply touched by how much Henry and his mom loved Jessica. I felt sympathy for Jessica as I imagined her struggling with difficult questions. As I thought of the good things Jessica's family had told me about her, I felt love for her.

If her family and I felt this much love for Jessica, then how does Jesus Christ feel about her? I teared up as I contemplated Jesus Christ's everlasting love for each of us. He loves each of us more than we can comprehend. He loves us with a full understanding of our weaknesses, our strengths, our struggles, and our desires. More than anything else, He wants us to follow Him so we will be happy.

The Call

I dialed the number. The phone rang, and I was nervous. I had contacted referrals before, but I wanted this one to go especially well.

"Hello?"

My heart jumped into my throat. "Hi Jessica. This is Sister Moulton from the Independence Visitors' Center."

Jessica was polite but quick to end the conversation. "I'm sorry. The Church just isn't my thing. I love my family, but I am not ready to do anything with the Church."

And then she hung up.

I set the phone down and sat unmoving. I was stunned. I had imagined asking her questions about herself and sharing my testimony. I wanted her to feel the Spirit and accept an invitation to do something, anything, to feel the love Christ has for her. Now I didn't know what to do.

I had felt so strongly about calling her. Why hadn't the phone call gone differently? Had I failed? Why hadn't anything changed?



Giving Love Regardless of Reaction

I called Henry and his mom and told them what happened. I felt bad that I didn't have much to report, but they were grateful I had tried. Henry was even hopeful that Jessica would eventually come back.

Over the next few days, I thought about the phone call and my questions. Then it came to me. I hadn't failed. I had tried. And something had changed! I understood better the love that Jesus Christ has for each of us. He loves us so much that He performed the Atonement for everyone, whether we accept it or not. And that love is always there.

I thought about the love I felt instead of my disappointment, and then I didn't feel discouraged. I felt a new desire that others learn the gospel so that they could feel the love that Christ has for them. I can't make others accept Christ's love or the gospel, but I can give them an opportunity. I can reach out even though the results may not be like I expect. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.