

HOW TO BE A REAL LOSER

Nobody is a born loser. But with practice, we can get better at it over time.

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“Loser!” I’ll never forget the sting I felt the first time someone called me that. It was in junior high school. It hurt.

“You’re such a loser!”

It made me feel excluded, unappreciated, and unable. And it was easy to find ways to reinforce the image. I wasn’t good at sports. *Loser*. I wasn’t good at talking to girls. *Loser*. I didn’t have a lot of friends. *Loser*. (In reality, these don’t make someone a loser, but it was hard to see that at the time.)

Then one day in ninth-grade seminary it dawned on me that I *could* be good at something: Losing!

Let me explain. That day we read in the Book of Mormon about King Lamoni’s father, who prayed: “O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee” (Alma 22:18).

I could be a good loser by losing my sins! I could give away and lose bad habits, bad feelings, lying,

cheating, stealing . . . you get the idea. Not that I was having huge problems with major sins, but here was a way to quickly turn losing into winning. Or so I thought.

I knew I could lose the big, bad, awful things. The very first day, for example, I lost murder and armed robbery right off the bat. It wasn’t hard to give up things I’d never even been tempted to do. Some of the little sins were easy to lose too. Like teasing my sister. Yeah, I’d have to work at it, but I could lose it in a reasonable amount of time.

But *all* of my sins? I soon found that there were enough potential transgressions, sins of commission, and sins of omission that I could spend my lifetime trying to eliminate them. Maybe I wasn’t such a great loser after all!

Then we read another scripture in seminary, and something else dawned on me. “I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken

unto my precepts” (2 Nephi 28:30). “*Here a little and there a little.*” Maybe one by one I could lose my sins . . . but where to start?

Later, in a priesthood quorum lesson, we read this counsel from a prophet: “The most important of all the commandments of God is that one that you are having the most difficulty keeping today. . . . Put that aright and then you start on the next one that is most difficult for you to keep. That’s the way to sanctify yourself” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 30.)

Here was my answer! I’d give away my toughest sin first. And this has become a pattern in my life. It hasn’t always been easy, and I’m still working on it. I’ve found that some sins challenge me over and over again, and they may for the rest of my life. But that doesn’t mean I’ve failed—as long as I keep trying. I now find comfort in these words:

“The Lord blesses those who *want* to improve, who accept the need for commandments and *try* to keep



them, who cherish Christlike virtues and *strive* to the best of their ability to acquire them. If you stumble in that pursuit, so does everyone; the Savior is there to help you keep going. . . . He will help you get back up. He will help you repent, repair, fix whatever you have to fix, and keep going. . . . His divine love and unfailing help will be with us even when we struggle—no, will be with us *especially* when

we struggle” (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2016 general conference).

I’ve also found that as I work on losing my sins, I experience a great reinforcement. It’s described in the Book of Mormon, when the people responded to King Benjamin: “The Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent . . . has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more

disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2).

Who wants to be a loser? You will, when you understand the joy of losing sins. I’ve found that the more I lose them, the more they’re replaced by the desire to do good. And that’s become the goal I strive for because “inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward” (D&C 58:28). NE