

A BRIGHT IDEA

By Laura Fuchs
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Imagine it's Saturday morning. Your room is a wonderfully comfortable dark cave. You are snoozing peacefully, knowing that your alarm wasn't even set. Even your dream is fantastic. Suddenly, light hits your face. Your blinds are thrown open. The light is turned on, and your little brother yells at you, "Wake up!"

How are you feeling now?

If you are anything like me, you feel like a bear being woken up from a comfy hibernation—grumpy!

FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL

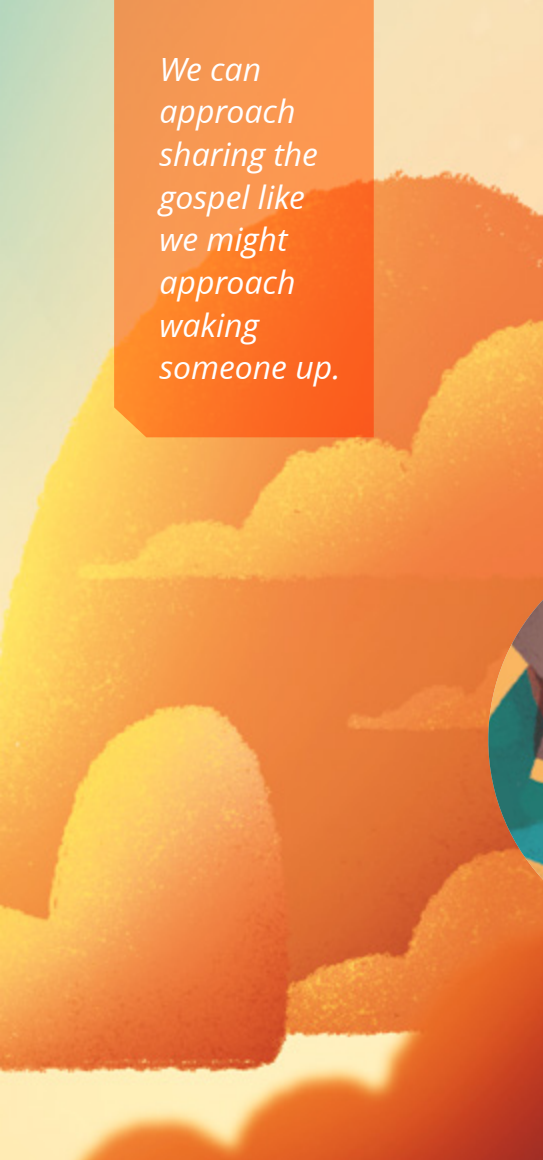
GRADUAL VS. SUDDEN BRIGHTNESS

When I first wake up, it takes me a minute to get adjusted to the light. Sometimes I will even close my eyes as I turn on the light, delaying the inevitable. It's not that I hate the light—it's just that it hurts when it comes all at once! Like going from inside a dark movie theater to outside in the middle of the day or like turning on a light in the middle of the night—it's an uncomfortable adjustment.



That's very different from when there's a gradual change—watching a sunrise for example, or slowly turning up the brightness on a screen. When the light changes slowly, it's much more pleasant.

We can approach sharing the gospel like we might approach waking someone up.



THE SLEEPY FRIEND

Can you think of someone who doesn't live the standards of the Church, has no interest in your beliefs, or is generally negative toward God? It's like this person is sleeping through the morning with the blinds closed, the curtains drawn, and a blanket pulled over their head. They seem not to want any light right now, and they're not prepared for you to come in with the sword of truth blazing! It isn't that your friend is a terrible person; it's that the sudden light would be uncomfortable to them. Being told that a comfy, dark room isn't the best place to be is kind of hard to believe when you're sleeping in on a Saturday morning. If you try and throw as much light as possible on your friend, they may react negatively—maybe find a pillow and throw it at you, ask you to leave, and generally show signs of feeling attacked.

A SOFTER APPROACH

Imagine the morning scene this way: It's Saturday morning and you're comfy in your bed. You hear the door open and smell your favorite breakfast food. Your mom comes in and softly tells you breakfast is ready. It's a bit of a different picture, isn't it? That's a softer approach.

Sometimes a bold, enthusiastic approach works great. There may be other times when a softer approach would be more effective. In such a case, go to your friend, be kind and gentle, learn about them, and make sure that you have something to offer them specifically. Odds are it will be a more pleasant experience for everyone involved. Kindness can do more good (and more missionary work) than you might think possible. Gently letting someone know there is something to wake up for can be much better than shouting about how happy you are in the light.



While there are times when it may be right for us to be bold, direct, and quick to share the gospel, there are other times when in our rush to share the gospel with others, we take the approach of that little brother who comes into the room, throws open the blinds, and yells at you to wake up. Because we see the light and the beauty of the gospel in our lives and we want so much to help others see it, we sometimes don't think about how ready they are to learn about the gospel.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RODRIGO CORDEIRO

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Now, that doesn't mean you have to enter every missionary experience keeping the light of the gospel dim. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1928–2015) explained how we can know what approach to take and when.

"Share principles that help those you love to press forward along the path to eternal life. Remember, we all grow line upon line. You have followed that same pattern in your understanding of the gospel. Keep your sharing of the gospel *simple*" (Apr. 2014 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 34]).

Because every person is unique, every missionary opportunity should be unique too. That's why it's so important to understand where a person is at spiritually and share the amount of light with them that the Spirit directs. Together you will both grow to love and appreciate the light of truth.

THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE SON

If you yourself have been figuratively living in the dark or have been looking for more happiness and truth, know that the light of the gospel is truly beautiful. It might take time to adjust to, but the adjustment is worth it. Don't look at others and see their light and think it's impossible for you to reach that standard. Everyone gets light as they seek it. In time, you will come to bask in the light and love of our Savior, Jesus Christ, even if it seems daunting at first. **NE**



ILLUSTRATION BY BEN SOWARDS



SHARE IN NATURAL AND NORMAL WAYS

"You can be confident, courageous, and humble as you share [the gospel]. Confidence, courage, and humility may seem like contradictory attributes, but they are not. They reflect the Savior's invitation not to hide gospel values and principles under a bushel but to let your light shine, that your good works may glorify your Father in Heaven [see Matthew 5:15–16].

"There are many normal and natural ways to do this, from daily acts of kindness to personal testimonials on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter to simple conversations with people you meet."

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2019 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 17).