

# Tension between the Individual-Growth and Totalistic mindsets

see [The three-fold nature of the LDS Church: corporate, totalistic, and individual-growth](#)

Individual Growth		Totalistic	
<i>Principle</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Principle</i>	<i>Example</i>
<b>Do what is right</b>	"Pray for the courage to do what you know is right, and then do it." ( <a href="#">1990 New Era</a> ; Also lds.org <a href="#">search "do what you know is right"</a> )	<b>Follow the prophet even if wrong</b>	"My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it." ( <a href="#">Aaronic Priesthood Manual 3</a> )
<b>Discuss religion</b>	"We generally avoid controversial topics (such as politics, money or religion) at the dinner table. But this can be problematic because if believers aren't talking faith with family and friends — especially with those who aren't religious — we leave the door of misunderstanding wide open....Part of preserving and strengthening religion's critical role in society is to cultivate an atmosphere where reasonable and civil religious discussion is commonplace." (May 2016, Mormon Newsroom, <a href="#">Why We Need to Talk About Faith, Reasonably</a> )	<b>Avoid faith-killers</b>	"We should disconnect, immediately and completely, from listening to the proselytizing efforts of those who have lost their faith and instead reconnect promptly with the Holy Spirit." (April 2016 BYU Commencement Address, L. Whitney Clayton, <a href="#">Getting and Staying Connected</a> )  "Avoid those who would teardown your faith. Faith-killers are to be shunned. The seeds which they plant in the minds and hearts of men grow like cancer and eat away the Spirit." (Oct 1981 GC, Carlos E. Asay, <a href="#">Opposition to the Work of God</a> )
<b>Let truth come from whence it may</b>	"One of the grand fundamental principles of Mormonism is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may." (Joseph Smith, <a href="#">taught in many sources</a> )  "We seek for truth wherever we might find it." (2013 CES Devotional, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, <a href="#">What is Truth?</a> )  "Only error needs to fear freedom of expression. Seek truth in all fields..." (1958 BYU, Hugh B. Brown, <a href="#">Man and What He May Become</a> )	<b>Only safe to ask the right questions of the right sources</b>	"As seekers of truth, our safety lies in asking the right questions, in faith, and of the right sources—meaning those who only speak truth: such as the scriptures, prophets, and the Lord through the Holy Ghost." (BYU Idaho Devotional, Sheri Dew, <a href="#">Will You Engage in the Wrestle?</a> )
<b>Moderation and balance</b>	"To preserve the temporal balance of our lives, we may need to say no to those activities for which we do not have time, resources, or energy. We need not feel guilty or selfish in periodically pulling back to regroup, for there is a strength that comes from sometimes just being home with loved ones." (April 2005 Ensign, Brent L. Top, <a href="#">A Balanced Life</a> )	<b>Sacrifice all things to religion</b>	"... a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation." ( <a href="#">lds gospel topics: sacrifice</a> )  Members are often taught to " <a href="#">never turn down a calling</a> ." "Never say 'No' to an opportunity to serve in the Church." (Sep 1979 Liahona, Boyd K. Packer, <a href="#">Follow the Brethren</a> )

## Individual Growth

### Grow from mistakes

“... we should embrace the opportunity to learn from our mistakes, analyze where we could have done better, and make plans to improve.” (Feb 2007 Ensign, Robert D. Hales, [Ten Axioms to Guide Your Life](#))

### Spend time with family

“In family relationships love is really spelled t-i-m-e, time.” (Oct 2010 GC, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, [Of Things That Matter Most](#))

### Respect seekers of truth, even if they leave Church

“One might ask, ‘If the gospel is so wonderful, why would anyone leave?’ Sometimes we assume it is because they have been offended or lazy or sinful. Actually, it is not that simple. In fact, there is not just one reason that applies to the variety of situations. Some of our dear members struggle for years with the question whether they should separate themselves from the Church. In this Church that honors personal agency so strongly, that was restored by a young man who asked questions and sought answers, we respect those who honestly search for truth.” (Oct 2013 GC, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, [Come, Join with Us](#))

“In the kingdom of God, the search for truth is appreciated, encouraged, and in no way repressed or feared.” (April 2014 GC, Marcos A. Aidukaitis, [If Ye Lack Wisdom](#))

### Speak with those holding opposing viewpoints

“It feels uncomfortable to listen to critics call our cherished beliefs into question, and yet we show strength by engaging in sincere conversations with those who oppose our views. After all, we trust that ‘truth will cut its own way’ and love will eventually win out in the contest of ideals.” (Nov 2014, Mormon Newsroom, [The Voice of Religious Conscience](#))

## Totalistic

### Disastrous consequences from sin or breaking covenants

“By sinning we put ourselves in Satan’s power.” (April 1993 GC, M. Russell Ballard, [Keeping Covenants](#))

“Keep your covenants and you will be safe. Break them and you will not.” (Oct 1990 GC, Boyd K. Packer, [Covenants](#))

### Sacrifice time with family for ordinance

A man who spends 6 years away from family to pay for trips to the temple so they can be sealed in temple is held up as an example. (April 2011 GC, Thomas S. Monson, [The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World](#))

### Those who leave are servants of Satan

“One loses his testimony only by listening to the promptings of the evil one, and Satan’s goal is not complete when a person leaves the Church, but when he comes out in open rebellion against it.” (April 1989 GC, Glenn L. Pace, [Follow the Prophet](#))

“The Prophet Joseph Smith made the following statement to a man who wondered why those who had left the Church often fought so fiercely against it: ‘Before you joined this Church you stood on neutral ground. When the gospel was preached good and evil were set before you. You could choose either or neither. There were two opposite masters inviting you to serve them. When you joined this Church you enlisted to serve God. When you did that you left the neutral ground, and you never can get back on to it. Should you forsake the Master you enlisted to serve it will be by the instigation of the evil one, and you will follow his dictation and be his servant.’” (taught repeatedly [in lesson manuals and GC](#))

### Shun those with opposing viewpoints

After OrdainWomen made 5 formal requests to meet with LDS officials, Church officials instead requested to meet with MormonWomenStand, a group of women parroting the LDS stance. A Church spokesperson explained: “We are not planning to meet with activist groups whose demands are inconsistent with church teachings and doctrine.” (May 2014, Salt Lake Tribune, [Mormon women’s group meets with LDS Church PR officials](#))

## Individual Growth

### Dignify religious difference

"How can we have freedom of religion if we are not free to compare honestly, to choose wisely, and to worship according to the dictates of our own conscience? While searching for the truth, we must be free to change our mind—even to change our religion—in response to new information and inspiration... One's religion is not imposed by others. It is not predetermined. It is a very personal and sacred choice, nestled at the very core of human dignity." (May 2004 Religious Freedom: Transition and Globalization Conference, Russell M. Nelson, [Freedom to Do and to Be](#))

### Leader listens to concerns

"What should leaders listen for, in addition to the voices of those they lead?" (2001 Principles of Leadership Teachers Manual Religion 180R, [Introspection](#))

### Leaders share personal opinions

"Not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine. A single statement made by a single leader on a single occasion often represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion, but is not meant to be officially binding for the whole Church." (May 2007, Mormon Newsroom, [Approaching Mormon Doctrine](#))

### Be honest

"We can also intentionally deceive others by a gesture or a look, by silence, or by telling only part of the truth. Whenever we lead people in any way to believe something that is not true, we are not being honest." (Gospel Principles, [Honesty](#))

"...this caution to constrain the use of truth provides no justification for lying. The principles of love, unity, righteousness, and mercy do not condone falsehood." (Feb 1987 Ensign, Dallin H. Oaks, [Criticism](#))

"But we do not believe in honesty merely as a matter of policy. It is far more important than that. Honesty is a principle of salvation in the kingdom of God. Without it there can be no salvation. Just as no man or woman can be saved without baptism, so no one can be saved without honesty." (Oct 1971 GC, Mark E. Petersen, [Honesty, a Principle of Salvation](#))

## Totalistic

### Students expelled if change faith

BYU students who leave the Church or whose disbelief is discovered by an ecclesiastical leader face loss of employment (if working a campus job like many students), loss of housing (if living in BYU approved housing as most students do), and expulsion. (See [Free BYU](#) for further details)

### Leader does not represent people to the prophet

[Quoting a private conversation with Boyd K. Packer] "A Seventy does not represent the people to the prophet but the prophet to the people. Never forget which way you face!" (Oct 2014 GC, Lynn G. Robbins, [Which Way Do You Face?](#))

### When the prophet speaks the debate is over

"Now, as he speaks to us ... it is as if the Lord Jesus Christ himself were addressing us ... Personal opinions vary. Eternal principles never do. When the prophet speaks ... the debate is over" ([Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1](#), quoting Elaine Cannon from GC 1978, [If We Want to Go Up, We Have to Get On](#), and amplified in [a following First Presidency Message](#))

### Lie/mislead to protect Church

The Church and its leaders have misled on occasion to protect or grow the Church. A few examples:

- Joseph Smith ([and other prominent leaders](#)) [frequently misled others about practicing polygamy](#).
- Modern leaders sometimes mislead journalists (e.g., [Holland seems to have misled about temple oaths](#); [Purdy misled about SCMC](#))
- The video "Windows of Heaven" [misled members about the connection between Lorenzo Snow, tithing, and rainfall](#).
- First chapter of Brigham Young manual [presented him as a monogamist](#).
- The Church and its missionaries previously misled to some extent when they said that [the Church has no paid clergy](#) ([General Authorities and full-time seminary/institute teachers are financially compensated](#)).

## Individual Growth

### Institutions should be transparent

"I think in the past there was a tendency to keep a lot of the records closed or at least not give access to information. But the world has changed in the last generation—with the access to information on the Internet, we can't continue that pattern; I think we need to continue to be more open." ([Truth in Church History: Excerpts from the Religious Educator's Q&A with Elder Steven Snow](#))

"The Church is dedicated to transparency and has donated precious resources to provide new insights and offer even more context to the story of the Restoration through the Joseph Smith Papers website and the Gospel Topics essays on LDS.org." (Sep 2015, M. Russell Ballard, [To the Saints in the Utah South Area](#))

### Institutions should apologize

LDS member Lorna Fejo helped Prime Minister Kevin Rudd prepare "a historic apology to indigenous Australians". (April 2008, Mormon Newsroom, [Mormon Grandmother Helps Australian Prime Minister Say 'Sorry'](#))

### Hide what is not faith promoting

### The Church does not apologize

## Totalistic

"There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of Church history to want to tell everything, whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not. Some things that are true are not very useful... The writer or teacher who has an exaggerated loyalty to the theory that everything must be told is laying a foundation for his own judgment... The Lord made it clear that some things are to be taught selectively..." (1981, Boyd K. Packer, [The Mantle is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect](#))

The 1832 account of the First Vision [was suppressed for at least 11 years](#).

"The church doesn't 'seek apologies'," [Dallin H. Oaks] said, 'and we don't give them.'" (Jan 2015, Salt Lake Tribune, [We all can be more civil on LGBT issues, Mormon leader says](#))

According to an Associated Press article which recorded Elder Eyring having expressed "profound regret" over the Mountain Meadows Massacre: "Church leaders were adamant that the statement should not be construed as an apology. 'We don't use the word "apology." We used "profound regret,"' church spokesman Mark Tuttle told The Associated Press." (Sep 2007, USA Today, [Mormon church regrets 1857 massacre](#))