



“Remember who you are,” parents encourage children.  
By these words Latter-day Saint parents invite their children to rise to their divine heritage.

# God’s Motivational Interview with Moses

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Remember who you are,” parents encourage each time children leave the safety and protection of home. These words are simple, yet their true import is profound and awe-inspiring. By these and other everyday exhortations, Latter-day Saint parents across the world invite their children to remember and rise to their divine heritage. Witnessing eternal truth and eternal potential with this phrase, parents pray that their children will comprehend, remember, and be strengthened by a divine vision of themselves. Such expressions, common in many Latter-day Saint homes, reach for the power of compelling vision and show the extent to which ennobling vision is a cornerstone of our faith and a touchstone of our spiritual motivation. Looking to the vision of Moses recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, we can comprehend the depth of that phrase “remember who you are” and the power an ennobling vision can have in our lives.

Latter-day Saint youth and young adults wrestle with temptation in a world flooded with enticements, and many seek to strengthen their desire for righteous living. Parents wonder what they can do to help strengthen righteous desires in their children. Leaders wonder how they can help instill in

youth and young adults a steadfast, unwavering desire and determination for a righteous life. We all seek to gain a resolute desire and determination to repent and overcome our weaknesses. Mortality is a time of testing, and as we face temptations we must gain the strength to refuse them, even as Christ refused temptation (see Hebrews 4:15–16, 12:1–2). In our day, scientific research supports Restoration scripture as a template to strengthen ourselves and others against temptation.

### Motivational Interviewing—Building Intrinsic Desire for Change

Motivational interviewing is an intervention technique that has demonstrated considerable success in drawing forth and strengthening *intrinsic* desire for change, leading to positive changes in problem behavior. It has been used especially in the treatment of addictions,<sup>1</sup> including with youth.<sup>2</sup> Motivational interviewing taps into latent or dormant positive vision, desires, and hopes God’s children inherit for a noble life. Motivational interviewing is juxtaposed both conceptually and in empirical research with other perspectives that employ confrontation, punishment, and shame in the attempt to motivate change. Research shows that building positive, intrinsic motivation for change is superior to confrontational approaches, which at best tend to produce only transitory, fleeting change driven primarily by external forces. In contrasting motivational versus confrontational approaches, the originators of motivational interviewing offer this telling observation:

A certain folk belief seems to be embedded in some cultures and subcultures: [namely, that] change is motivated primarily by the avoidance of [pain]. If you can just make people feel bad enough, they will change. [So you] punish undesired behavior. . . . [The belief is that] people would be motivated to change . . . [if they felt] enough discomfort, shame, guilt, loss, threat, anxiety, or humiliation. . . . In this view, people don’t change because they haven’t yet suffered enough. . . .

Instead, constructive behavior change [comes] . . . *when the person connects [change]. . . with something of intrinsic value, . . . something cherished. Intrinsic motivation for change arises in an accepting, empowering atmosphere that makes it safe for the person to explore the . . . painful present in relation to what is [deeply] wanted and valued.*<sup>3</sup>

“Humiliation, shame, guilt, and angst are not . . . primary engines of change.”<sup>4</sup> Painful emotions and punishing experiences *can* be corrective *when measured carefully* (see Alma 42:29), but when over-dosed, pain and punishment risk actually eroding motivation and undermining change. In excess, painful and negative emotions and punishing experiences can become more



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Moses' vision is seen as a revealed archetype for building and strengthening change motivation, one that is confirmed by modern-day science and practice.

predictive of *relapse* than *recovery* (or repentance).<sup>5</sup> Excessive guilt can weigh a person down, and intemperate chastening can beat them down, leaving them even more vulnerable to their weaknesses.

In a very striking way, these differences between positive versus punishing approaches not only distinguish motivational interviewing from confrontational approaches, but also touch upon the motivational essence of Moses'

vision and God's similarly higher way (see Isaiah 55:8–9), as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price.

In this paper, we denote basic elements of motivational interviewing and then uncover parallels evident in the scriptural account of Moses' vision of God. Moses' vision is seen as a revealed archetype for building and strengthening change motivation, one that is supported by modern-day social science and best clinical practice. These two witnesses converge in revealing that the best way to facilitate enduring, intrinsic change in youth struggling with addictions (or any temptations) is to foster an ennobling vision of their divine nature and divine potential: a vision that sparks divine desire and internal change motivation.

Motivational interviewing uncovers and capitalizes upon a person's own desires for "the better life" in order to build and strengthen intrinsic motivation for change. Thus motivational interviewing is a therapy intervention fundamentally anchored to an implicit assumption of what Latter-day Saints understand to be the Light of Christ in each of us—innate human resonance with and desire for the virtuous life. Tapping into that divine vision and desire planted deep within each of us is at the heart of motivational interviewing, and also clearly evident in Moses' vision. For our instruction, though, it can be helpful first to briefly consider the opposite of motivational counseling.

### **Punishing and Shaming Responses—the Contrast to Motivational Interviewing**

Developmentally, youth and young adults are at a phase in their lives where they are trying to make sense of who they are.<sup>6</sup> As our youth encounter maturationally emergent and persistent temptations and sometimes succumb, they may doubt their divine nature and their capacity to change. When they stumble, sometimes they and others who care for them and mourn for their missteps may resort primarily and excessively to shame and suffering (e.g. shaming expressions of disappointment, incredulity, berating, etc.), assuming it will motivate change.

Motivational interviewing arose in juxtaposition to traditional confrontation. Confrontation and condemnation are understood to be external influences upon behavior, ones that fail precisely because change is pressured from the outside, rather than being cultivated in and arising from the heart.

In practice, confrontational approaches have been shown to precipitate immediate, reactive reduction in addictive behavior, only to be followed by

a return to baseline levels of addiction at a twelve-month follow-up.<sup>7</sup> Other studies have similarly demonstrated the poor outcomes associated with “confronting,” “challenging,” or condemning.<sup>8</sup> The tragic irony is that, rather than promoting recovery, excessive punishment often leads the person right back to the narcotic escape of addiction.

Dr. James Harper draws an essential distinction between guilt and shame that points to the very different influence and effects of each: guilt is about recognizing that a certain behavior falls below one's standards and therefore needs to be corrected (“I did a bad thing and need to fix it”), while shame goes beyond behavior to include rejection of core personhood (“I did a bad thing; therefore I am bad”).<sup>9</sup> Elder Neal A. Maxwell also taught this distinction and the importance of avoiding the trap of shame when he said:

[We need to] distinguish more clearly between divine discontent [or guilt] and the devil's dissonance [or shame], between dissatisfaction with self and disdain for self. . . . We can contemplate how far we have already come in the climb along the pathway to perfection; it is usually much further than we acknowledge, and such reflections restore resolve. . . . We can allow for the reality that God is still more concerned with growth than with geography. . . . This is a gospel of grand expectations, but God's grace is sufficient for each of us if we remember that there are no instant Christians.<sup>10</sup>

While guilt, suffering, and chastisement often play a meaningful early role in personal change, these as well as their toxic counterfeits of shame, punishment, condemnation, and humiliation are not the primary drivers of change over time<sup>11</sup> and in fact have been shown to undermine change.<sup>12</sup> Guilt, suffering, and chastisement, measured for repentance, not punishment (see Alma 42:29), help promote a behavioral “U-turn”; nevertheless, it is positive motivation that sustains repentance striving and forward momentum over the long haul, leading to spiritual transformation (see Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:14).

Toxic shame, punishment, condemnation, and humiliation as change strategies stand in stark contrast to the motivational influence of a compelling vision of mankind's true nature, origins, and destiny as is demonstrated in Moses' vision. Shaming strategies cloud God's declarations that all his creations were “very good” (Genesis 1:31) and that the worth of *all* human souls is “great in the sight of God” (D&C 18:10). In fact, shaming is much more indicative of Satan's declaration that we are nothing more than a “son of man” (Moses 1:12)—a base, earthly, animal creation. Perhaps the experience of shame and its negative outcomes are what Elder Maxwell had in mind when he counseled us not to yield to the “devil's dissonance.”

Unfortunately, sometimes parents or leaders rebuke and reprove their youth without adequately testifying of and reconnecting them with their divine nature, potential, and purpose. Yet, as parents and leaders, we are likely to know much about our youths' strengths, their motivations, and what is really important to them. By helping our youth to perceive, confirm, and remember their spiritual desires and aspirations, we help build internal motivation for change and for resisting temptation. Like Moses' vision, motivational interviewing—while heightening an awareness of *discrepancy*—avoids confrontation and condemnation, instead focusing on uncovering core yearning for “the better life,” and then focusing on *collaborating* to correct discrepancy between an individual's vision and their present behavior. Research confirms what we learn in Moses' vision: people change when they see what their life *could* be, not by emphasizing what their life is not. Parental, priesthood, and professional counseling should form around the foundation of maintaining change motivation through instilling a compelling vision of our divine nature and affirmation of our capacity in Christ to achieve it.

### Revelation and Science Converging on the Truth

Research on motivational interviewing runs parallel to Moses' archetypal vision in confirming the importance of relying not on “sobering punishment” but on compelling vision to build change motivation and strength.

One of the grand truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that each and every youth with which we work has a divine nature, destiny, purpose, and identity as a child of God.<sup>13</sup> Regardless of situational concerns such as present worthiness, amount or severity of sins committed, amount of good deeds done, or comparative progression in Christlike attributes, every youth is *always* and *forever* a divine child of God. As Elder Maxwell taught, “Our individual worth is already divinely established as ‘great’; it does not fluctuate like the stock market.”<sup>14</sup>

When youth labor under crippling shame that makes it hard for them to see their divine nature, that toxic shame undermines—not strengthens—both desire and drive for change.<sup>15</sup> President Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught a similar principle when he said: “It can be discouraging at times to know what it means to be a [child] of God and yet come up short. The adversary likes to take advantage of these feelings. Satan would rather you define yourself by your sins instead of your divine potential. . . . Don't listen to

him.”<sup>16</sup> Feelings of discrepancy (guilt) are helpful; feelings of inherent badness (shame) are toxic.

The authors of motivational interviewing—therapists and scientists—realized from decades of clinical experience that their ability to effect positive change in people’s lives required first that they adopt a different outlook on their clients. The words of President Thomas S. Monson accurately capture the conclusion of these scholars after many years of clinical practice and research: “We must develop the capacity to see men not as they are at present but as they may become.”<sup>17</sup> They too must see themselves not as they are at present but as they may become. Both those who struggle and those who help must hold fast to this vision in order to build and sustain motivation for change.

These same therapists and scientists also learned that people must believe that change is possible; they must have a sense of efficacy. With desire and efficacy both in place, awareness of discrepancy between where we are now and where we want to go is met with faith and commitment to action.

Thus parents and siblings, Church leaders, and others must remember and help our youth to remember their divine nature—which includes an abiding witness of their divine potential and faith in their power to change. Only as our youth hold companion beliefs in their divine potential and power for change—through the Atonement of Christ and exercise of will (personal and spiritual efficacy)—will they be inspired to reach for repentance and redemption. The “all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23) striving that is sometimes required of us can only be sustained by such vision and faith. Day upon day, that vision and faith can fortify us against the temptations naturally accompanying our fallen natures, this fallen world, and the workings of the adversary.

We turn now to Moses’ vision recorded in the Pearl of Great Price to discover a powerful Restoration revelation of these fundamental principles of motivational counseling. Moses’ vision is unique in contrasting God’s strengthening endowment of ennobling vision and efficacy with Satan’s demeaning lies.

### **The Ennobling Vision of Moses: A Powerful Example**

The vision of Moses recorded in the Pearl of Great Price is a powerful revelation of a “motivational interview” and a pattern for gaining strength to resist temptation. The truths Moses was taught by the Lord offered an ennobling vision that inspired and strengthened him to live true to his divine heritage.

Moses was empowered by eternal truth (see Alma 3:15). Parents, leaders, and youth can learn from Moses' experience how to increase desire and strength to resist temptation and live true to our divine nature.

### *Endowed with Divine Vision*

During the time that Moses was in preparation to receive his foreordained calling to lead the exodus of Israel from Egypt to the promised land, he was given a vision—a sort of patriarchal blessing—to help him meet the challenges he would face.

Moses was “caught up into an exceedingly high mountain” (Moses 1:1). Anciently, when temples were not available, the Lord revealed himself to his prophet-servants in the sacred seclusion of “temple mountains.” The vision God gave Moses is like unto the endowment of vision in the holy temple today.

Moses saw God “face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses” (Moses 1:2). God revealed himself to Moses, and Moses was able to look upon God and comprehend his perfection and glory. God declared and Moses clearly comprehended that God is “the Lord God Almighty” (Moses 1:3). Moses beheld the “workmanship of [God’s] hands,” and the glory of God’s being and grandeur of his works led Moses to declare, “Now . . . I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed” (Moses 1:10).

First, God endowed Moses with vision and understanding of who he (God) was, and his works, and Moses was drawn to worship him. Consider how it must have astonished Moses when, after seeing who God was, God declared, “Behold, thou art my son” (Moses 1:4). God repeated this witness of divine heritage, again calling him “my son” and joining it with a further witness that confirmed Moses’ divine potential. God declared, “Moses, my son; . . . thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten . . . is full of grace and truth” (1:6). Thus the second truth God endowed Moses with was an ennobling vision of who he (Moses) was.

Moses saw *who God is* and *who he was*. He knew he was a son of God, created in the image of God (not in the image of any earthly thing; see Genesis 1:27; Alma 18:34) and in the similitude of the Only Begotten Son, whom Moses saw was like unto God! Thus God revealed and declared, and Moses now knew that he, like the Son, could grow in godliness and become like God. What an awe-inspiring vision Moses received: a vision of God and an

ennobling vision of himself as a spirit son of God (see Acts 17:29; Romans 8:16; Hosea 1:10; Psalms 82:6; D&C 76:24).

Finally, God's endowment of vision to Moses concluded with God's charge, "I have a work for thee, Moses, my son" (Moses 1:6). The Almighty God, creator of "worlds without number" (Moses 1:33), endowed Moses with the vision of who God was, who we are, and what work and purpose God has for us. The courts of Pharaoh must have paled in comparison. Thus Moses reflected, "Now . . . I know that man"—with all his self-made glory—"is nothing" (1:10). How could Moses be anything but overwhelmed and nearly stagger under the endowment of vision he received? Experiencing the presence and glory of God, Moses was weak, and he "fell unto the earth" (1:9), and "it was for the space of many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength like unto man" (1:10). Yet, as we shall see, Moses was not only weakened in the knees by his experience, but also *strengthened* in the Spirit by it.

### *Experiencing and Resisting Temptation*

Now, with the "presence of God [withdrawn] from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses, . . . Moses was left unto himself" (Moses 1:9). Now Satan came to tempt Moses, and here we learn how true understanding of who we are, who God is, and what our life's work is can empower us to resist temptation. We can observe in Moses' experience the same kind of results evident from successful motivational counseling; finally, the likeness of Moses' experience facing and resisting temptation can be perceived in the temple too.

Left unto himself for a time to be tried and proved, Moses was confronted by Satan, saying, "Moses, son of man, worship me" (Moses 1:12). Note Satan's first line of attack: "Moses, son of *man*" (Moses 1:12; emphasis added). Satan sought to drag Moses' view of himself "down to earth," saying, as it were, "You are nothing more than a human animal, a carnal creature. Your origins and destiny begin and end here! Your design and purpose is to follow your instinct, so follow your base appetites and impulses, and worship the flesh and me" (see Romans 1:25).

Satan wanted to make Moses more susceptible to temptation, and to do this Satan led an attack on Moses' understanding of his true identity, which God had endowed him with. Moses, though, remembered what he knew pre-mortally and now had seen again in vision (Moses 1:11), and looking upon Satan he rejected the false and corrosive "son of man" claim by responding,

“Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee? For behold, I could not look upon God, except His glory should come upon me, and I were transfigured before him. But I can look upon thee in the natural man. Is it not so, surely?” (Moses 1:13–14).

Clearly, Moses had gained an inspiring understanding of who God is and who he (Moses) was and who he could become as a son of God. He learned too that the Almighty God had a purpose and a work for him.

Moses’ vision fires his soul. Having seen in vision the glory of godliness, Moses sets his sights on it and will not turn aside (see Moses 1:18).

In contrast, Moses sees that there is no glory in what Satan has to offer—“it is darkness unto [him]” (Moses 1:15), truly pathetic by comparison. Thus, in the verses that follow, we see Moses declaring what he has seen and knows, and we see him empowered by his vision to refuse Satan’s *repeated* temptations.

Furthermore, in facing temptation, Moses states that the Spirit of God “hath not altogether withdrawn from me” (Moses 1:15). A loving Father in Heaven allows us to be tempted, but he has supplied us with vision, and he does not leave us alone to face temptation. We are given vision *and* the Spirit to help us discern and choose between good and evil. Moses is strengthened by the Spirit (see Moses 1:15–21), and he declares, “Where is thy glory, for it is darkness unto me? And I can judge between thee and God” (Moses 1:15). The Holy Spirit “bring[s] all things to [our] remembrance” (John 14:26), linking us to the knowledge we had premortally, confirming it to our hearts, and thereby inspiring us to strive for righteousness.

“Deceive me not,” Moses says, “for God said unto me: Thou art after the similitude of mine Only Begotten” (Moses 1:16). Moses refutes Satan and reaffirms his divine heritage and divine potential that God has witnessed to him: “Don’t tell me I am nobody; don’t tell me my life and purpose begins and ends here. Don’t tell me my weakness is who and all I am.”

Satan is unrelenting, though, and Moses must continue to fight, with the will and strength God’s vision has inspired. As Moses continues to face temptation, he relies repeatedly on the knowledge he has received for resolve and for strength (see Moses 1:15–16, 18, 20). Moses affirms that God’s endowment of ennobling vision has staked claim upon his heart as he declares, “I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him: for his glory has been upon me” (Moses 1:18). The vision God has endowed Moses with has inspired him to learn more about God and strive toward that glory.

Moses desires further light and knowledge and resolutely turns to God for it. Moses has the confidence to approach God with further questions with the assurance that he will be heard and answered. Moses knows this in part because he understands his relationship to God as his father. Moses' heart is drawn to God, and he gains power through his relationship with God.

Though Satan escalates his opposition (see Moses 1:19–20), Moses turns to God for strength and help and is able to prevail as he relies on the Spirit and invokes the name of Christ (see Moses 1:20–21). So we too may need to pray mightily to find the strength we need to prevail against temptations that do not go away immediately as easily. God allows us to be tested, but he will never forsake us.

Moses resists temptation and holds faithful to what he has received, and the blessings of heaven are sent forth in renewed abundance: Satan departs, and further light and knowledge is bestowed. In particular, the work that God has for Moses is specifically revealed, as well as the blessings of the Lord that will rest upon him (see Moses 1:24–26); the glory, purposes, and power of God are further revealed to Moses as well (see Moses 1:27–39).

Thus God reiterates to Moses who God is, who he is and who he may become, reaffirming that God has a work for him. Evidently, there is such significance to this endowment of ennobling vision that repetition is important, just as we are invited today to return to the temple often to renew our own vision.

### **Moses' Vision as a Type and Shadow**

The Lord's endowment of ennobling vision to Moses is a type and shadow of our own experience here in mortality as well as a type and shadow of the endowment of vision in the temple in our day. Thus we can liken Moses' vision unto ourselves, and receive the same vision of our divine potential.

As we are reminded in the family proclamation, "In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted his plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life."<sup>18</sup> Like unto Moses' vision, in the premortal sphere, Heavenly Father's spirit sons and daughters beheld the glory of God, worshipped him, and desired to become like him (see Job 38:7). We knew our Father and His Only Begotten, we knew ourselves to be his children and in the similitude of the Only Begotten, and we understood

God’s purpose and plan for the realization of our divine potential. In our pre-mortal time, each of us had the same vision Moses was given.

Then we came to this mortal sphere and time of testing. Just as “the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses” (Moses 1:9), as we entered mortality God’s immediate presence and glory were withdrawn from us. As it was with Adam and Eve, and as it was with Moses following his vision, we are “left unto [ourselves]” (Moses 1:9), to our “natural strength” (1:10), for a time, that we might be tested and tried and prove ourselves (see Abraham 3:24–25). In this mortal sphere, with the veil drawn over our minds, we no longer enjoy the presence and glory of God and the knowledge and understanding we possessed premortally. Here on earth, we must come anew to the vision that can motivate and strengthen us—we must come anew to the knowledge and witness of who God is, who we are, and that God has a divine purpose and work for us.

Our loving Father in Heaven desires to endow us again with that knowledge and vision to help us here in mortality. Whether upon a high mountain or in the temple, the common, sustaining truth and message woven throughout the revelation of God’s creations and works is his purpose and glory to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). It is humbling, amid the grandeur of God’s creations—“worlds without number” (Moses 1:33)—to realize that the purpose of all our Heavenly Father’s labors is our eternal life and exaltation as his sons and daughters. The words of the Psalmist express well our wonder and amazement at God’s plan and place for us amid the majesty of his creations:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. (Psalm 8:3–5)

While Moses saw that “man is nothing” (Moses 1:10), he also knew that man is everything to God (see D&C 18:10–16). The grandeur of creation only highlighted for Moses how important he was to God. So also our own knowledge of (a) who God is, with his works and glory, (b) who we are and who we are to God, and (c) of his purpose and glory in us and work for us—can combine to form a witness of God’s love so powerful it is like a spiritual gravitational attraction, drawing our souls to God and drawing forth desire

to do his will, live right, and please him. God's endowment of understanding can become a compelling vision, an inspiring desire, and a will that prepares us to face life's tests faithfully and resist the temptations of a baser existence.

Yet, in spite of understanding who God is, who we are, and what purpose God has in mind for us, we are still subject to temptation. Temptation is a necessary part of our learning, growth, and progression toward eternal life and exaltation and an intended part of our mortal experience and probation (see 2 Nephi 2:11; Abraham 3:25–26). God allows us to be tempted and tried, including through the natural appetites and passions of our mortal bodies (see Alma 42:10; Mosiah 16:3). Having “[fallen to] the earth” (Moses 1:10), we find ourselves, like Moses, left to our “natural strength like unto man” (Moses 1:10), a strength insufficient by itself to withstand the onslaught of the adversary. In our fallen, natural condition, Satan comes to tempt us. As with Moses, Satan tempts us first to view ourselves in a diminished way—devoid of our divine nature and divine potential—and then tempts us to sin.

Teaching on this same revelation of Moses, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland noted that it is more or less inevitable that the adversary will seek us out after such revelatory experiences in an attempt to lessen their effect and get us to doubt their truthfulness: “Like Moses in his vision, there may come after the fact some competing doubts and some confusion, but they will pale when you measure them against the real thing. *Remember the real thing.*”<sup>19</sup> Elder Holland's counsel—taken from the writings of the Apostle Paul—is to “cast not away therefore your confidence” (Hebrews 10:35). Or in other words, hold true to the revealed truths obtained in Moses' vision as well as our own revelatory experiences such as patriarchal blessings, and the temple endowment wherein our divine nature is laid out for us. To hold fast to true vision is perhaps the most difficult and the most important when we have stumbled.

In response to the temptations of the natural man, our challenge and the challenge of our youth is to yield our hearts to God and all our appetites to the bounds the Lord has set. As C. S. Lewis said, “No natural feelings are high or low, holy or unholy, in themselves. They are all holy when God's hand is on the rein. They all go bad when they set up on their own and make themselves into false gods.”<sup>20</sup>

We can liken Moses' experience unto ourselves as we seek strength to refuse temptations. Again, Moses' experience sets forth a pattern that is a type and shadow of our own mortal probation. Like Moses, we too face a time of testing and temptation in mortality, a probationary period where God's

immediate presence is removed from us and we are left unto the experience of the natural man, the temptations of a fallen world, and the enticements of Satan. Mortality is a condition of opposition which tests and tries us (see 2 Nephi 2:11; Mosiah 3:19).

Moses' experience teaches us that our endowment of ennobling vision can empower us to resist temptations. As well, we can attest from our own experience that there are times when our own strength alone is not sufficient to beat back the onslaught of temptation, and we must call upon God in the name of Christ for added strength. Elder David A. Bednar testifies that "the enabling and strengthening aspect of the Atonement (see Alma 7:11–13; Hebrews 2:18) helps us to see and to do and to become good in ways that we could never recognize or accomplish with our limited mortal capacity."<sup>21</sup> We can find hope and faith in the knowledge that we are not left alone, but can be strengthened by the Spirit as we call upon God for help. We can find hope and faith in the knowledge that through baptism, we enter a covenant of grace where through the Atonement of Christ and in his name the power of the adversary can be cast from our lives as we strive to live true and faithful to our covenants. God won't postpone helping us, pending our perfection; he reaches out and succors the sincerely repentant and repenting soul. Foremost, we learn that the genesis of will to resist temptation and walk in the paths of virtue is found in part in God's endowment of ennobling vision.

### **How We Can Establish and Confirm Compelling Vision**

With our understanding of the principles of motivational counseling exemplified in Moses' vision and ensuing experience, we search for insight into how to convey compelling vision for our young people to hold fast with.

First, we need to teach and testify of God—his divine attributes, works, and glory—trusting that the goodness of God will resonate with his children and draw their hearts to him. To truly know God is to love God and be inspired to become like him.

Second, we need to teach and testify of our children's divine nature and divine potential as God's spirit sons and daughters. Remember that Satan's first line of attack was to degrade Moses' view of himself: "Moses, *son of man*, worship me" (Moses 1:12; emphasis added). Claims that we are no more than animals whose origins and destiny begin and end here deny our divinity and tempt us to follow our base instincts. Regardless of the origins of our fallen mortal bodies, as eternal spirits we are begotten sons and daughters unto God

(see Acts 17:29; Romans 8:16; Hosea 1:10; Psalm 82:6; D&C 76:24). A spiritual witness of who we are inspires us to live better. As parents and leaders, we should regularly bear the witness of Moses' vision to our children, youth, and young adults.

Third, we need to know our relationship with God and his expectations for us. To understand God's vision and work for us is to be inspired to live up to the potential he sees in us. President Henry B. Eyring invites parents to convey to their children that "the Lord [has] given them specific gifts for each to use in His service. . . . You will bless them to help them recognize the spiritual gifts with which they were born. . . . With your guidance, those you lead will be able to see, want, and believe they can achieve their full potential for service in God's kingdom."<sup>22</sup>

We are spiritually strengthened to resist temptation as we remember what we knew premortally and now know again. The Spirit's witness of who God is, who we are, and God's purpose and work for us can stake claim upon our hearts too and build compelling motivation for the disciple's life. Our Father in Heaven desires that each of his children come to church, come listen to the prophet's voice, study the word of God, come to the temple, and there in ways and moments small and great glimpse his glory and be endowed with the ennobling vision he shared with Moses. In addition to revealing his glory to us in these places and by these means, he also does so in other ways equally powerful in establishing compelling vision.

### *The Power of a "Glorious" Example*

Our lives can also bear witness of these truths. We can mirror God's goodness and glory in the conduct of our own lives. St. Francis of Assisi exhorted, "Witness for Christ each day, and if necessary use words." Our most important witness is our own example of Christlike lives and virtuous, joyful relationships. As Latter-day Saint parents and leaders live virtuous lives of love and goodness, their lives will "reveal" the glory of God and of the godly life to those whose vision we hope to uplift, edify, and clarify.

Within the walls of our own homes is where our examples are most important and can best reveal the godly life, including the joy and glory of marital love and family life. When parents honor their covenants with complete fidelity, and love and serve one another as Christ loves us (see Ephesians 5:25), then peace, joy, and love will abide in their hearts and homes. Thus by their example they will reveal the vision of godliness to their children. Our

own covenant-keeping marriage can endow our children with vision for their lives, which can set their hearts on righteous living and strengthen them to better resist worldly enticements. As parents and leaders, the most significant thing we accomplish in leading our youth may be planting that divine vision and germinating that divine desire.

By righteous example, parents and leaders become instruments through which God can reveal his glory and inspire others to righteousness. As children, youth, and young adults see the glory of godliness in the everyday lives of parents and leaders, Moses' vision can stake claim upon their hearts, minds, and lives, and lead them to love and seek the godly life. The endowment of the vision of godliness empowers us to resist temptation and more steadfastly hold to the path that leads to life and joy.

### *Moses' Vision Echoes throughout the Church*

As well as in the examples of parents and leaders, the vision and pattern of Moses is echoed throughout the Church, including in our youth programs, manuals, and themes (such as the Young Women theme). Consider, as an example, these words found in the First Presidency Message to the Youth in *For the Strength of Youth*: "We have great confidence in you. You are beloved sons and daughters of God and He is mindful of you. . . . In all that you do, stay focused on the temple. . . . Our Father in Heaven has placed great trust in you. He has a work for you to do."<sup>23</sup>

### *The Cornerstone of Our Faith*

Above all these motivating truths stands our witness of Jesus Christ and his Atonement as the cornerstone of our faith, "in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:20–21). Realization of our divine potential rests upon divine influence, the chief cornerstone of which is Christ. We anchor our faith and works in the Atonement, without which our carnal natures do us all in. However great our confidence, we ultimately come to the despair that our personal efficacy alone is not enough. Like Moses, in that fearful moment we must call upon a power greater than ourselves, even Christ, to save us from temptation and sin.

Thus, lastly, to all the elements of ennobling vision, as parents and leaders, we must add our witness of Christ and the necessity of reliance on the atonement and grace (see 2 Nephi 25:23). Spiritual efficacy through Christ and

God's grace in our lives is the final element for motivation, captured in 12-step programs but missed by secular models such as motivational interviewing.

Along with provisioning us with spiritual *efficacy* or faith, the Atonement also grants our hearts patience in progression—for our children will stumble, as do we (see 2 Nephi 4:16–35; Romans 5–7, especially 5:1–2; 6:1–2; 7:24–25). Ennobling vision, paired with our faith in Christ and reliance on the Atonement, instills the divine motive force for patient and persistent striving to overcome our fallen nature and become all that God envisions for us, and to undertake the journey in hope, peace, and joy. The gospel of Christ is the perfect plan for our progression!

### Ennobling, Compelling Vision

“Where there is no vision, the people perish,” we are taught in Proverbs 29:18. Elder O. Vincent Havelock of the Seventy, commenting on this verse, affirmed that “if we are to prosper rather than perish, we must gain a vision of ourselves as the Savior sees us.”<sup>24</sup> By the witness of the Holy Spirit in our homes, the temple, and in church, and by the example of parents, family, and good men and women living Christian lives, we can come to the compelling vision expressed in William Wordsworth's poem, and be empowered to resist temptation.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.<sup>25</sup>

We must never lose the ennobling *vision* of who God is, who we are, and what work and glory God has for us. We must never forsake the imperative witness of Christ and the cleansing and enabling *power* of the Atonement. Together this vision and power can enable us to refuse temptation.

The story of one young man offers a final, anecdotal attestation of what Moses' vision teaches us and modern science has confirmed about motivation: “When I no longer believed in myself, my mother still did. Her faith never faltered, and her words were a constant light and beckoning beacon, as she assured me, day after day, ‘I know who you are, Son, and I know you can



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We must never lose the ennobling vision of who God is, who we are, and what work and glory God has for us.

yet be that person and live that life.” A faithful mother’s witness was for this young man a hope he tied his heart to, a belief tied to her faith in Christ and in her son that never could be extinguished, and it invited and encouraged him, sustaining his striving, until he finally made his way back home. Perhaps there are none who need the remembrance of their divine potential more than those whose lives are at present out of touch with the divine.

Ennobling vision is no complete antidote to the natural man. We will continue to be tempted and tried (see 2 Nephi 2:11). Nevertheless, as we resist, temptations will diminish in power and sway in our lives; and God’s endowment of vision can provide a constancy of *desire* and *will* for the virtuous life. Vision joined with faith in Christ and his redeeming power and love<sup>26</sup> can provide a firm foundation of motivation—both righteous desire and faith or hope—that moves us to exercise our will and agency for righteous living. Enduring desire and constant striving, combined with the enabling power of the Atonement and the grace of God, are more than half the battle in the

lifelong process of “overcoming” and becoming all that God envisions for us to be.

## **Learning and Doing Objectives**

### *Primary Objectives for Parents and Leaders*

1. Help parents and leaders understand that the divine pattern of change influence is to *inspire* our children to righteous living with a “compelling” vision of the glory of godliness and their divine potential as sons and daughters of God.
2. Help parents, leaders, and youth to understand that a spiritual witness of (a) who God is, (b) who we are, and (c) what purpose God has for us comprises our ennobling vision that becomes a compelling influence for righteousness and for striving to overcome temptations and our mortal weaknesses.
3. Help parents and leaders understand that as we exemplify the gospel in our own lives and relationships, we become instruments through which God can reveal his glory and the glory of righteous living to our children and youth and inspire their divine desire and striving for repentance and righteousness.

### *Objectives for Youth and Young Adults*

1. Convey to youth and young adults who may have lost their way that they yet have divine potential and can live better than their present choices. Convey that because of and through their relationship with God, and through the Atonement of Christ and God's grace, including the help of the Holy Spirit, *we can all* rise to the stature of our divine nature.
2. Help young adults and youth understand that attempting to punish or shame themselves into repentance is a failed strategy for change. (Indeed, it is more predictive of relapse than recovery.) Help all to see that we are most strengthened and able to resist and overcome temptations—and much more quickly—by gaining the ennobling vision and inspiring testimony of (a) who God is, (b) who we are, and (c) what God's purpose and plan for exalting his children is. We don't punish, suffer, or shame our way to obedience or repentance; we envision it.

### Discussion Ideas for Counselors, Teachers, and Other Professionals

In Moses' vision we see another instance of an "interview" with motivational outcomes—by virtue of Moses' experience he is empowered to resist temptation and to live true to a nobler vision. As you consider Moses' experience, consider the following learning and discussion questions and activity:

- How many of the dimensions of motivational interviewing can you detect?
- What is your sense of when motivational interviewing can be useful?
- What does the discovery of motivational processes in the scriptural account of Moses' "interview" with God offer for your own model of change process?
- Building on these accounts, on your own experiences, and on your understanding of motivational interviewing, offer your own outline of the key elements of building intrinsic motivation for change.

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