

We Believe in You

TERRY R. SEAMONS

President and Sister Uchtdorf, Elder Cardon, President and Sister Samuelson, all of the other distinguished Brethren from Salt Lake, all of the faculty and staff, students, friends, and family: There are some of you who will remember the classic children's story *Winnie-the-Pooh*. As you recall, Pooh had a very unique way of going down stairs. He would go bump, bump, bump, bump down the stairs on the back of his head.

According to one interpretation of the story, one day Christopher Robin asked Pooh why he always went down stairs on the back of his head when it must really hurt.

Pooh's response was classic. He said that he didn't know why and that he had been going down stairs that way for so long that he didn't know there was any other way to do it. (See The Positive Project, "Bump, bump, bump . . ." thinkpositivetoday.wordpress.com/2014/04/28/bump-bump-bump; see also chapter 1, A. A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh* [1926].)

Once Pooh realizes that he can make the decision to do it another way, he will find that he can go down stairs like everyone else. How many of us are like Pooh Bear? We get so

stuck in a rut with the things we do and the decisions we make that we don't realize that there are other alternatives from which we can choose. This is how some of our habits form.

Most decisions we make are simple day-to-day decisions (e.g., what time we are going to get up, where we are going to go today, what entrée we are going to order from the menu). Other decisions get a little bit more complicated (e.g., what courses I will take, what job I will take, where I will live). And other decisions really require a lot of thought (e.g., whom I shall marry, what I need to do to retain the Spirit in my life, how I will demonstrate my love for the Savior). We are making these decisions every day of our lives, and we will yet make thousands more.

You have made one of the key decisions of your life: to work hard enough to graduate from one of the world's great institutions. Do you realize what that will mean to you? It doesn't mean that you simply survived. You

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have actually succeeded in accomplishing that for which you will be forever grateful. It doesn't matter whether you go on to work in the Church, at home, in your community, or in the workplace. You have made decisions and have taken the responsibility to succeed at something only a handful of people have ever done. In every deed you have prepared yourself for a life of service and continued learning by finding added meaning in your life through those experiences you have had here at BYU. The significance of that will unfold as the years pass.

Whatever your decisions, what I hope for you and what I pray for is that you will make the Lord a key part of those decisions, whether they are great or small. I also hope you will remember a little saying that has guided me for years. It goes something like this:

*You are what you do;
You do what you choose.
If you don't like what you are,
Then change what you do.*

It has always amazed me that by combining the powers of heaven and the power of personal responsibility, all things are possible—even going down stairs one step at a time.

Do you remember the last song from that great musical *The Wiz*? The Lion, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Man had joined Dorothy. They each wanted something that they didn't feel they had. As they traveled to the Emerald City, they had experiences that allowed them to arrive at thinking somewhat differently. By the end of the show, the Lion had realized his courage, the Tin Man had recognized his heart, and the Scarecrow had recognized his brains. Dorothy, however, was still unsure about how she was going to get back to Kansas. It was Glinda the Good who came to her and gave her the answer. She said, "Believe

in yourself as I believe in you" ("Believe in Yourself," *The Wiz* [1978]).

My dear friends, we believe in you!

As president of the BYU Alumni Association, I hereby confer upon each of you lifetime membership in the Brigham Young University Alumni Association. We offer our congratulations and welcome you into this great association of more than 370,000 other alums. You will have many opportunities to join your fellow alumni over the years in meaningful activities associated with the university.

You are now a part of a great cadre of very talented people just like yourself. I hope that you will give back to BYU with your time, with your talents, and with your treasure. We need your time and talents to help others transition their lives from school to remarkable work lives.

We want to stay connected with you. We have chapters of alumni in various geographic locations throughout the country. We have employers who have significant alumni working in their corporations. You may also have the opportunity to provide some career mentoring. You will be contacted by LDS Philanthropies and invited to contribute of your treasure. Please accept those invitations and become fully involved with some of the greatest people you will ever meet. Please come back to visit and celebrate with us your successes and reinvigorate yourself with the Spirit of the Y. The world needs you, the Church needs you, your families need you, and we, as alumni, need you. Welcome!

I want to leave with you my testimony. I know that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. I know that the work in which we are engaged is the work of the Lord. I know that His hand guides this great institution. God bless you in all that you do, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.