

# Building Emotional Strength in the Lord/ Healthy Thinking Patterns

## My Foundation: Our Divine Identity

**PONDER:** What is the worth of my soul to God?

**READ:** “Be careful how you characterize yourself. Don’t characterize or define yourself by some temporary quality. The only single quality that should characterize us is that we are a son or daughter of God.” (Dallin H. Oaks)

**DISCUSS:** Why is remembering our true identity and potential so important?

### ACTIVITY

**READ:** Heavenly Father wants us to value ourselves the way He sees us and not as the world judges. Satan uses discouragement to cause us to doubt God’s love for us and our divine nature and purpose.

**Step 1:** With a partner, read the differences between *worth* and *worthiness* in the table below

WORTH	WORTHINESS
Our worth to God <b>never</b> changes	Our worthiness does change
Our worth was determined before we ever came to earth. We are everything to God	Our worthiness is achieved through obedience
God’s love for us is infinite and eternal. We don’t have to “earn” it	If we sin, we are less worthy but never worthless to God – We still matter to Him
God wants us to see ourselves and others as He sees us	God wants us to continue to repent so we can be worthy of all the blessings He wants to give us

**Step 2:** Discuss with your partner why Satan would want us to believe our worth and worthiness are the same. How does thinking poorly about ourselves hold us back?

**READ:** “We cannot gauge the worth of another soul any more than we can measure the span of the universe. Every person we meet is a VIP to our Heavenly Father. Once we understand that, we can begin to understand how we should treat our fellowmen” (Dieter F. Uchtdorf)

**DISCUSS:** Why is it important to see others as God sees them? How can we do that?

**COMMIT:** I will identify one way to remember my divine identity others divine identity.

# LEARN: Building Emotional Strength in the Lord

## 1. What Is Emotional Resilience?

**READ:** To become like the Savior, everyone will need to face challenges and hardships during this life. Dealing with life's challenges successfully requires faith in Jesus Christ and emotional resilience. Emotional resilience is:

- The ability to adapt to emotional challenges with courage and faith centered in Jesus Christ.
- Helping yourself and others the best you can. Reach out for help when needed.

**PONDER:** Ask yourself, why do you want to be more emotionally resilient? Write your answer below.

## 2. Accepting Challenges as Part of God's Plan for Us

**READ:** As the Father of our spirits, God is perfect, has all power, and knows all things. He loves each of us, and our progress is His work and glory. His plan for us is to grow and change until we become like Him. He allows us to be challenged, and if we respond in faith, the Lord will strengthen us and help us grow to become more like him. Being emotionally resilient helps us to be patient and grow from these challenges.

**Watch:** "He is Building a Palace"

**DISCUSS:** How have challenging experiences helped you grow in your life?

## 3. Using Agency to Act Responsibly

**READ:** Even when bad things happen around us, we still get to choose how we respond. Taking responsibility for how we react, even when facing challenges, brings peace and power.

"As sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father, we have been blessed with the gift of moral agency, the capacity for independent action and choice. Endowed with agency, you and I are agents, and we primarily are to act and not just be acted upon. To believe that someone or something can *make* us feel offended, angry, hurt, or bitter diminishes our moral agency and transforms us into objects to be acted upon. As agents, however, you and I have the power to act and to choose how we will respond" (David A. Bednar)

**Challenges or unexpected changes may seem unfair. We may be tempted to respond in ways that are unproductive and not Christlike:**

- |                 |              |                      |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|
| • Blame others  | Make excuses | Rebel                |
| • Get angry     | Self-justify | Indulge in self-pity |
| • Complain      | Find fault   | Allow fear to rule   |
| • Procrastinate | Give up      | Doubt                |

**Becoming emotionally resilient involves recognizing these responses in ourselves and using our agency to choose a more appropriate response.**

**ACTIVITY** With a partner, review each situation below. Using the list in the previous paragraph, think of some of the unproductive responses that would apply to each situation. Discuss how we are tempted to respond and ways we can “act for [ourselves] and not to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26).

SITUATION	UNPRODUCTIVE RESPONSE	WAYS TO ACT RESPONSIBLY
<i>Example:</i>  <i>You weren't selected for a job you really wanted.</i>	<i>Get angry and blame others.</i>  <i>Doubt your abilities.</i>  <i>Lose hope you'll find a good job and quit trying.</i>	<i>Ask for feedback from others.</i>  <i>Find new skills you can learn or things that would give you more experience.</i>  <i>Apply for other jobs.</i>
You were misjudged or embarrassed by someone you care about.		
You made a mistake that hurt another individual.		

**DISCUSS:** How can faith in Jesus Christ help us endure challenges well?

## 4. The Blessings of Change

**READ:** The Lord assures us that if we humble ourselves before Him, He can help us change for the better. “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

**ACTIVITY** Each month we will learn new skills to help us “act for [ourselves] and not to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26). Consider something you want to improve. If you have a change in mind, use the space below to record your ideas and impressions.

- Something I want to change:
- How could my life be different when I make this change?

## 5. Expressing Gratitude Daily

**READ:** During these group meetings, one of your commitments each month will include writing down at least one thing you are grateful for each day. Expressing gratitude doesn’t mean that you deny or ignore feelings of pain or discouragement. It does mean that you acknowledge the blessings Heavenly Father has given you.

**DISCUSS:** How can expressing daily gratitude help you have more joy in your life?

### LEARN: Healthy thinking patterns

#### 1. Our Thoughts Influence Our Emotions

**READ:** Your thoughts are important. How you talk about yourself and how you think about things impact how you feel and how resilient you can be. Your thoughts also play a great role in how you interact with others and perceive the world around you. The scriptures teach, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

Knowing how much power your thoughts have over your emotions, both the Savior and the adversary seek to influence your thoughts. The Savior asks us to “look unto [Him] in every thought” with faith, without doubt or fear (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36).

**DISCUSS:** How can “look[ing] unto [the Savior] in every thought” remind you that **you are good enough**?

#### 2. Recognizing Inaccurate Thinking Patterns

**READ:** We might frequently find ourselves focusing our thoughts on what is wrong or negative. Inaccurate thinking patterns may lead us to see the worst possible outcomes to a situation. These distorted thoughts cause us to feel bad about ourselves and others. We all experience negative thoughts, but sometimes we get stuck in them and don’t see the inaccurate thinking pattern and how it is hurting our emotional health. Read the list “Common Inaccurate Thinking Patterns,” and then discuss the question that follows the list. Consider identifying one or two of these thinking patterns that you use most.

## Common Inaccurate Thinking Patterns

Thinking Patterns	Explanation	Example
All or Nothing	Seeing something or someone as all good or all bad. Look for phrases with words like <i>always</i> and <i>never</i> .	"I <i>always</i> say the wrong thing."
Mislabeling	Taking something that happened and making a broad or incorrect statement.	"The relationship ended, <i>so I'm not good enough.</i> "
Jumping to Conclusions	Interpreting others' thoughts or assuming the worst possible outcome.	"I bet <i>everyone</i> is laughing at me."
Personalizing	Blaming yourself or someone else for a situation that in reality involved many factors.	"They didn't call me back, so <i>they must be mad at me.</i> "
Emotional Reasoning	Judging a situation based on how you feel.	"I feel guilty. I <i>must have</i> done something bad."
Overgeneralization	Applying one experience and generalizing it to all experiences.	"I did poorly on this assignment, so why should I stay in the class?"
Negative Mental Filter	Focusing on a negative detail and dwelling on it.	"It feels like <b>nothing</b> went well today. It was just failure after failure."
Discounting the Positive	Rejecting all positive experiences because you don't feel like they count.	" <b>It doesn't matter</b> that I scored well on my Math test because I didn't make the volleyball team."
Magnification	Exaggerating your weaknesses or comparing them to others' strengths.	"I barely exercise once a week and I know that doesn't compare to how often my friends exercise."
"Should" Statements	Telling yourself how things should or should not be.	"I <i>shouldn't</i> have messed up like that."

**DISCUSS:** Why do we sometimes think these ways?

### 3. Responding to Triggers

**READ:** A trigger is something that causes an automatic reaction in our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Triggers may include things you see, think, feel, and experience. They can be impacted by your mood, the time of day, energy level, relationships, places, events, or other situations. When your automatic reaction to a trigger is inappropriate, you can learn better ways to respond.

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**ACTIVITY – \*\*\*complete on your own at home and discuss it with a family member or friend** **Step 1: AT HOME:** We have defined what triggers are and how and when you might experience them. Answer the following questions on your own; they will help you identify where, when, and with whom your triggers may happen. Then list a few triggers that occur repeatedly in your life.

- What mood(s) do I struggle with the most?
- What days of the week or times of day are hardest for me?
- What types of people are difficult for me to be around?
- What situations or events are most difficult for me?
- **What are a few triggers that occur repeatedly in my life?**

**Step 2: AT HOME,** review some common triggers. Read the example and then fill out the other two triggers. First, identify how the trigger might make you feel. Then fill out common responses and healthier alternatives.

**TRIGGER AND RESPONSE CHART**

TRIGGER	How Do I Feel Because of the TRIGGER?	How Did I React?	How Can I Respond?
<b>Example:</b> <i>Going to a party where you don't know anyone</i>	Overwhelmed and judged – stressed by so many people around me -Pressured to be someone they want me to be	Hid in another room and isolated myself. Avoided conversation Stayed by the food Browsed on my phone	Invite a friend to go with me Focus on gratitude Tell myself that I am good enough
Being around someone you don't get along with			
Hearing or seeing a negative message about me/someone I love			

**Step 3: AT HOME:** On your own, select one of the triggers you wrote down in step 1. Write down how you feel because of the trigger. Then fill out common responses you have and healthier alternatives.

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## 4. Creating More Accurate Thinking Patterns

**READ:** After you identify your inaccurate thinking patterns, the next step is to try and change them to more accurate, truthful thoughts. You can invite the Savior's influence by challenging your thoughts and asking whether they are true (see John 8:32). **Here are some questions you can use to challenge your inaccurate thoughts:**

- Considering all the evidence, is the thought I'm having 100 percent accurate?
- Is this something the Savior would want me to think or feel?
- Is this thought all or nothing—all good or all bad, win or lose, true or false?
- Does thinking this way help me or hurt me?
- How do I feel when I have this thought?
- What do I know about myself and others that tells me this is not true?
- What would I tell my best friend or someone I respected if they thought these things?

**DISCUSS:** Why is it important to challenge thinking errors and create more accurate thoughts? What can we do to challenge and replace our inaccurate thinking patterns with more accurate thoughts?

### Ponder:

- **What are the most meaningful things I learned today?**
- **What is one thing I will do as a result of what I learned today? (This could be your personal commitment for the month.**

### MY COMMITMENTS

**A** I will act on one way to strengthen my faith in Jesus Christ.

**B** I will write down one thing I am grateful for each day and thank God for it.

**C** I will work on my personal commitments from the "Ponder" sections.

**D** I will identify one way to remember my divine identity this week.

**E** I will share what I've learned with my family or friends.

*My signature* \_\_\_\_\_

FAITH

SHARE

GRATITUDE

COMMITMENTS

DIVINE  
IDENTITY