

The Power of a Good Compliment

When I was a missionary in Bolivia I was serving in the office when Elder Theodore A. Tuttle came to tour the mission. Consequently I had the opportunity to go to about every meeting he held. It was a spiritual feast. In addition to the meetings he held interviews with each missionary. It was quite a treat to visit one on one with a General Authority.

At the end of my interview with Elder Tuttle I will never forget him standing right in front of me and while he straightened my tie and my suit lapels, he paid me one of the greatest compliments I have ever had. He said (paraphrasing), "Elder, you remind me of someone I have a great deal of respect for. You remind me of President Harold B. Lee". I could hardly believe my ears. President Lee was such a great, spiritual giant in my mind. Did I hear him correctly?

On one occasion during my college years I can remember visiting with my mother. We were simply talking about the family. In the course of our conversation she said something to the effect, "Chris, you can sell anything. You could sell the London Bridge if you wanted". What? Little shy and timid Chris Stevenson sell anything? Did she know what she was saying?

Mom and I had the privilege of serving as "family parents" on a pioneer trek with the youth of the Arvada Stake. It had been a very long day walking and pulling the handcarts. We were all under one big tarp with stakes and poles to form a tent. It was raining and we had just finished reading in the scriptures. At that point it was prearranged to hand out letters to each of the kids in our group from their parents. To my surprise I was given a set of letters my own children had written to me. I could hardly contain myself as I read such wonderful and complimentary letters. I am not sure I deserved such praise, but wow, it made me feel so good and so loved. It was one of those unforgettable experiences.

I would like to believe that these compliments and others along the way have made a real difference in my life. Compliments help us form a healthy image of ourselves and a desire to continue on doing good things. Sincere compliments make the recipient and the giver of the compliment feel good. It helps to create greater love and harmony in our relationships. We focus our thoughts and words on the positive things in life instead of being negative and critical.

I am afraid that too many times we take the loved ones around us for granted and we do not take the time to acknowledge how truly wonderful they are. We seem to think that they already know it and we don't have to say anything. Take my word for it, they need to HEAR it.

I challenge all of us to be more complimentary in our lives. Let's make it a habit, a daily habit. I believe it makes a big difference in the lives of our families and those around us.