

# THE PREACHER, THE LABOR LEADER, THE HOMOSEXUAL, AND THE JEW: THE TEMPLATE FOR ACHIEVING GREAT GOALS

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Individually we can be strong and accomplish wonderful things. Together, united, we can be unstoppable and accomplish great things that are community-changing, world-enhancing, life-uplifting. Our differences, whatever they are from religion to lifestyle to culture to ethnicity to education to personal likes of food and entertainment and dress, all brought together are what make a beautifully life-enhancing, life-enriching experience. And when accepted, they enable us to see the strength in each individual.

Differences are only negative when we choose to see them as negative. We choose how we see one another and we choose the labels we place upon one another. We want to be seen in the best light and have our strength not our weakness acknowledged. And we don't want labels placed upon us. Therefore, we should try to do the same for others.

Persons who achieve great things understand this and understand that whatever they achieved they did so not alone but because they were united with other strong people who had skills they lacked.

In the March on Washington, DC, Martin Luther King Jr., the preacher with the gift of speech, united with A. Philip Randolph, the man who had the idea of the march on Washington; Bayard Rustin, a homosexual man with the gift of organizing; and Rachelle Horowitz, the white Jewish woman who, despite knowing nothing about transportation or

organizing, was, as Bayard Rustin described her, “compulsive . . . [and] wouldn’t lose a bus or a person.” When we stand back and look at this one scene out of billions that have taken place in our country’s history, we see many perspectives.

They were people who had varying differences.

A preacher, a labor leader, a homosexual, and a Jew—the makings of a joke.

But what they achieved together was no joke. It was an event that has become one of the greatest moments in our nation’s history. It worked because these leaders saw their differences not as weaknesses but as tools to achieving their united goal: A man who could give a good sermon; a man who wanted to organize the Pullman Porters to protest for better wages; a man rejected by society for being homosexual; and a woman who didn’t fit because of her religion. These people should not have been able to work together. The odds were against them. Their own group was against them. And yet they became the leaders of the most important pieces of the March: an idea to march, transportation to get the people to Washington, a man to speak, and organization to pull it all together.

This is the template of every great achievement. If we are wanting a great achievement today, if we use this same template, focusing as they did on what our united goal is, our differences become not a barrier to achievement but our greatest tools to achieving that goal.

I have seen that this rings true in our country, in our state, in my county, in my city, in my neighborhood, and in my life. I have witnessed and learned from other married couples that differences are a downfall *only* when people decide they are. I have watched very different people have very successful and happy marriages while listening to others remark: “They’re so different!” “What does he see in her?” “What does she possibly see in him?”

In my own life, my husband Robert and I are different in many ways, one being that he has attention deficit disorder and I have obsessive compulsive disorder, but because we focus on our differences

as *strengths* rather than as weaknesses we are successful together, and together we are achieving great and wonderful things. I have learned in the six years that I have been married that this is what “being one” means in its truest form: taking our differences and uniting them to achieve the good we both envision.

We have watched the success of this in our work in the Utah community. His highly intelligent and highly creative ability born from his ADD brain coupled with my skills of organization and planning and preparation born from my OCD brain have proven that what people typically see as weaknesses are in actuality great strengths, that what people typically refer to as disorders when combined are an order of a higher kind. When we work together neither my OCD nor his ADD are disorders; they are a combination to achieving success.

When we look at what were considered the weaknesses of those involved in the March on Washington, we see the same thing. Apart they had weaknesses. Together they became the tools necessary for success.

When we think of “being one” we ask ourselves “How can so many people who are so different from one another be united as one?” We fail to see that the answer is contained within the question itself. Through our differences we can achieve our common goal of raising the LDS Church from the sins of racism and separation. Each of us has a difference that can become the tool another person does not have. By bringing *all* the tools together, we have what is needed to achieve success.

The Apostle Paul states it this way: “Now there are *diversities* of gifts but the same Spirit. And there are *differences* of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are *diversities* of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all” (1 Corinthians 12:4–6). If we all had the same gift or ability in exactly the same way, we would not be blessed. (Note that “blessed” means to have God’s favor bestowed upon.)

In case we miss what is being said here, Paul states the same lesson in another manner: by using our own body as an example of the necessity of differences being strengths not weaknesses (1 Corinthians 12:14–21).

If every part of our body were an ear, how would we see? If every part of our body were a foot how would we sit? If every part of our body were an arm, would we eat and survive? Indeed, *all* parts are necessary.

Today our achievement as a Church depends upon each one of us. So today we must each choose what we will focus on: differences as weaknesses which will lead to our united downfall or differences as strengths which will lead to our united success.