

Allowing Your Kids to Choose Their Own Adventure

Barbara Ritter

D&C 58:26 For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

Agency is a core principle of the gospel. Our Father in Heaven gives it to all of us...even to our children. You used your agency to become who you are today. How do we develop the faith to allow our children to really use their agency in their lives? We don't allow a two year old to decide to play in the street, but at some point you do, as a parent, give more and more decisions over to your children and youth. Which decisions? When? How do you still that fear in your heart that *this* decision they make will ruin their lives, and you will be responsible? Let's explore that together.

John Taylor, the third President of the Church, reported: "Some years ago, in Nauvoo, a gentleman in my hearing, a member of the Legislature, asked Joseph Smith how it was that he was enabled to govern so many people, and to preserve such perfect order; remarking at the same time that it was impossible for them to do it anywhere else. Mr. Smith remarked that it was very easy to do that. 'How?' responded the gentleman; 'to us it is very difficult.' Mr. Smith replied, 'I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.'"

Books that I found very helpful in the journey to trusting the process of agency:

"Teach the Children" An Agency Approach to Education by Neil Flinders. Out of print, but available used on Amazon.com. Brother Flinders was a BYU Professor at the time of the writing. What makes this book so valuable is the unabashed mix of LDS doctrine and education theory to explain the importance of agency, it's place in our lives, and how to use it in education.

"A Thomas Jefferson Education" by Oliver DeMille. Available lots of places, but at tjed.org you can find this book and many other resources to help you understand the role of agency in education and life. (I personally find just about everything they have published valuable)

Other resources:

There are many books that can help you. There is also a plethora of resources and talks on LDS.org. President Uchtdorfs' "Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear" from April 2017 conference is full of gems.