

## **The Power of ‘Why?’**

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**There is great importance in asking questions** – take the example of the 2-yr-old. They are in a critical formative stage and they want to know about everything. They are not complacent with accepting things the way they are. They want to know why? You know the drill. “Why do I have to get up? Why do I have to eat that? Why does the cereal crunch? Why is the milk white? Why do I have to get dressed? Why do my socks have to match? Why do I have to go to church? Or school? Or the store? Why is the grass green and the sky blue and your hair red?”

Entrepreneurs ask questions – and we get wonderful inventions that save lives, or make us safer, or let us enjoy life more and communicate instantaneously around the world.

Scientists ask questions and we get vaccines and moon landings and an understanding of the world around us.

Leaders ask questions and we get leaner, smarter, more economical, more efficient, and more focused companies.

Individuals ask questions and they can make decisions about their future, gain testimonies and receive the guidance of the spirit.

All of these questions are dependent on asking the right questions and then finding the answers in the right way. It is absolutely essential to ask questions – and especially the hard ones. It’s the only way you’ll get answers and greater knowledge and understanding.

Let’s look at the power of the question “Why” as it relates to the BYU Management Society. To do so, I think we have to start at the top – the highest overarching level – and then drill down to the individual level.

This is an important, even critical, time in the life of the BYUMS and I hope that we are asking the right questions so we can get answers that will really help us as we move forward.

### **First of all – Why BYU and what is the power of the BYU name and brand?**

I was first introduced to cattle brands when I married my husband. Lonnie grew up on a cattle ranch in the Uintah Basin; to him, brands and branding were a part of life. On the other hand, I was a city girl and didn’t know much more than movies had taught me. I soon learned to help in the corrals during branding, and herd the cattle.

That first summer I helped move their cattle to the summer range up in the High Uintahs. It seems that many of the local ranchers pooled their cattle and herded them together to the high grazing in the mountains. As we drove and then rode horses, Lonnie pointed out the brands on the cattle and told me about them. “That one is the Smiths or the Jones, or the Browns. They are . . .” and he would go on about the ranch and the cowboys and who they were and what they were like and if they ran their ranch well and were honest, etc. He always pointed out his dad’s with pride. The big RO on the right ribs of the cattle. Some years later, we owned our own herd and registered the brand the Rocking O. We are proud of that brand and I have helped brand many calves over the years. It is the name of our property and is even on letterhead.

“Riding for the Brand” is an expression that the western author Louis L’Amour uses to explain the importance of a brand to the cattlemen in the days of the American Old West.

**Let me show you. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZDzOlsfhPc>)  
Minute 3.10**

His cowboys were loyal and true to the brand of the ranch they worked for. It had a meaning beyond that of ownership of the cattle or horses – a much deeper meaning.

A brand is a ranch’s trademark. It is a mark by which the owner, the ranch, and all that belongs to it are identified. When you ride for the brand, you sign on to the mission, commit to the team.

Listen to the words that describe your relationship to the brand.

There is a sense of pride, duty, stewardship, loyalty, dedication and camaraderie. Riding for the brand represents the values of responsibility, pride, trust, integrity and teamwork. It means putting the welfare of the group/entity above your personal gain.

Now I understand there is a difference between a brand and the brand name or mark that represents the brand. But bear with me, as I don’t want to lose the point in semantics.

### **Let’s ask the question – what brands do you ride for?**

Family          company          church (LDS or Mormon)          schools          teams

The BYU Management Society started with strong ties to BYU. You will hear more about that tonight from its founder Merrill Bateman. The first letter he wrote to alumni telling of its creation says that “the administration of the university has approved the creation of the Brigham Young University Management Society. The society has been jointly established by the Brigham Young University alumni association and the college/GSM.”

We were linked tightly to the school. Over decades, that bond got looser and many chapters started calling themselves other things; AMS (Arizona Management Society), Sacramento LDS Business Professional Association, South County Management Society, etc. When Joel Deceuster was chair of the steering committee, he helped us to see that there was great wisdom and strength in focusing on those ties. That is when we began insisting that chapters call themselves “BYU Management Society, \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter.”

Some 15 years ago, some of us heard President Henry B. Eyring talk about riding for the BYU brand. He said that when people know you are from BYU or associated with BYU, they automatically have a certain view of your standards, behavior, ethics, leadership, and integrity.

**“The Magic Briefcase”. Arthur Brooks, President of the American Enterprise Institute, gave a devotional in 2009 in which he explains this ( See [https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/arthur-c-brooks\\_giving-matters-2/](https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/arthur-c-brooks_giving-matters-2/)) In his words:**

Let me tell you a quick story about a briefcase. I know it’s a weird subject for a story, but it’s actually a magic briefcase. It’s my magic Brigham Young University briefcase. I visited here in the fall of 2007 for the first time—I’d never been here before. My friend Gary Cornia, who is the dean of the business school, gave me a beautiful briefcase that said “Brigham Young University” on it. I took it home and put it away because I already had a briefcase, and I didn’t think about it.

About a month later my briefcase broke, and I was complaining to my wife, and I said, “The handle’s broken. It’s very inconvenient.”

And she said, “What about that BYU briefcase you brought home? Why don’t you carry that?”

And I said, “Oh. Okay. That’s a good idea.”

So I took all my stuff and put it in the BYU briefcase, and I started carrying it around.

At the time, my research assistant at Syracuse University, Nick Bailey (he’s here—he actually works at BYU now), noticed, and he said, “You’re carrying a BYU briefcase.”

I said, “Yeah, it’s great. It’s an Italian briefcase. It’s very nice.”

I travel a lot, and one of the funny things I noticed is that when you are out in public carrying a briefcase that says something on it, the first thing people you don’t know do is read the briefcase and then look at you. It occurred to me that people were thinking, “He’s a Mormon guy.” And that’s actually sort of false religious advertising because I’m a Roman Catholic. I

take my faith seriously, but no matter how seriously I take my faith, technically that still doesn't make me a Mormon.

So I was walking around saying, basically, "I'm a Mormon," and the funny thing is that it was changing my personality. And the reason it was changing my personality was because I was mortified by the idea that somebody would say, "You know, I was in the airport, and I saw this Mormon guy, and he was being a real jerk." I wanted to live up to someone else's reputation, and it was making me into a better person. It was a magic briefcase.

So what's the implication of this story? Well, obviously it might just be that I'm trying to get a new briefcase right now. (Maybe the greatest kind of evangelization that the LDS Church could undertake would be to buy 300 million briefcases and give them out to all Americans.) But the bigger point here is that carrying the briefcase was actually making my life better. I was happier; things were going really well for me as I was carrying that briefcase. And the reason is that the service for which Mormons have become justifiably famous was infecting my life. It was making me better as a person. It was helping *me*. And I thank you for that.

### **Why BYU? We make a difference.**

That is just the way we live. And being connected to BYU helps others to see that we are different and we do make a difference. The very fact that we bear the name BYU gives people a distinct impression of who we are (or perhaps who we should be.)

### **Why BYU? Because of the power of the brand. Because of who we are (or can become) because we are associated with BYU.**

Let me give you some more examples of why BYU. I think you will enjoy seeing these.

First, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland gave a great talk entitled "Believing in the Dream: BYU" when he was president of BYU in 1987 that explains the spiritual roots of the school, as well as the vision that early leaders had of the school

### **VIDEO of Elder Holland – "Believing in the Dream: BYU"**

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbHv5Bt8yU4&t=14s>)

Now we all know that sports really carry branding and emblems of those brands to an extreme. This, in fact, sometimes backfires on chapters because potential members might say "I don't cheer for the Y. I didn't go there, I went to that red school up the road. I can't be a member of the society."

Please don't mix football with BYUMS.

However, if you watch BYU football, you probably saw some of this during commercials.

### **Video - “Inspiring Learning at BYU”**

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHN9kw6eHZI> )

Here is another slightly longer version

### **Video -- “The BYU Student Experience - with Stacey Harkey”**

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpDqfj3v30c&t=4s>)

As you can see – there are lots of great answers to the question “Why BYU.” One of the best answer is because that is our sponsor. That is who we ride for.

The changes that Lee and McKay mentioned, are coming about as a result of people asking questions. Questions like the following:

- How can we make the link between BYU and BYUMS stronger?
- What is BYU’s liability financially because of the actions of some chapters?
- How can we get more and better reporting from our chapters?
- If the BYUMS carries the name, what should be the obligation of the chapters?
- How should the BYUMS be administered?

We are still answering many of these questions, and now we hope that you also ask yourself the questions.

The next question we can ask is

### **Why BYU Management Society?**

I probably don’t have to tell you this. You already know – or at least feel – the answer. I am preaching to the choir.

### **You tell me – Why the BYU Management Society?**

The Management Society has a great and noble mission that can change the world; we are about spreading the influence of moral and ethical people. We are about helping develop and grow leaders. Good leadership is critical to the growth of the church and very critical to the peace and happiness of people in every country around the world without regard to faith. That is why we exist: we have seen what a tremendous difference we can make all over the world.

The society has four strong pillars to the purpose – networking, career building, service to community, service to BYU.

We are a professional face to the world. We don't have to preach. We just have to live morally and ethically, and demonstrate the value of our leadership. We don't have to preach because we exhibit Christianity in everything we do. And people see that and want to be like that.

We make a difference!

## **Why your chapter of the BYUMS?**

This is a question we would like you to answer during your time at the conference. Listen to what is being said, listen to what other chapters are doing. Find out more about the society and about other chapters.

One of the best exercises you can do is to get your chapter leadership together and make them ask these important questions:

- Why our chapter?
- What is our purpose?
- What is our mission?
- Why are we meeting – doing what we are doing?
- What is needed in our community?
- What are we doing to strengthen our ties with BYU?
- What are we doing to connect with and invite all BYU alumni in our area?
- What do the professionals in our area want/need?
- What can we do to help the students at BYU?
- How can we make a difference in our local area?

We can tell you about the society and give you suggestions. We will have some definite things that you will need to do as we go forward with the franchise model. However, it will still be up to you to answer these hard questions and determine the focus for your specific chapter.

It is my experience that chapter leaders who ask these questions and settle on answers, and then communicate the answers to their membership, have a strong and focused leadership that results in a strong and successful chapter. If you are only doing things because they have always been done that way – it is time to ask the questions. But first ask “Why BYU” and “Why BYUMS,” and then “Why my chapter.”

## **Finally, why are you involved in the BYU Management Society? What is your personal vision and commitment?**

Do you have a BYUMS elevator speech? Can you explain the BYUMS in 30 seconds to someone who asks “Why” and “What?” And convert them? I know that Troy Romero can.

Why are you involved personally?

- By accident – because of who knows you
- Reluctantly – perhaps because you don’t know the why. Too busy. Not the commitment.
- With enthusiasm because you are motivated and understand the Why.

### **On the steering committee level –**

We ask ourselves every year what are we doing and why are we doing it. What is most needed by the chapters? How can what we do to help the chapter leadership grow and strengthen? What programs should we be focusing on? What are we missing? What service can we do? Who can we partner with?

Out of these questions comes things like the monthly webinars for Women in Business that the BYUMS has been sponsoring. We have talked to and looked a number of different programs that chapters can get involved with – things like Pathway, and SRS, and mentoring programs. You will get to find out about some of these in the breakout sessions tomorrow.

In conclusion, I want to remind you to ask yourselves the hard Why questions. And you will be all the better for doing so.

I want to thank you for all you do to advance BYU, the Marriott School and the BYU Management Society. – and your local chapters. You are dedicated talented people who spend your extra time serving this great organization because you believe in its vision. You know you can make a difference and the BYU Management Society can make a difference. That is why we have been around for 40 years.