

## How has your time in the church affected how you are today?

Sam Harley  
June 25, 2017



Do you deal with people and situations differently?

Are you more able to do certain things?

For me, I find it very easy to meet and get along with people from different cultures. Also, although it doesn't happen very often, it feels completely normal to have 8, 12 or 20 people staying over in our place. In the various jobs that I have had, from booking high-level events in Manhattan to teaching a room full of international students, I've noticed that it's to talk to most everybody I encounter. From years of fundraising, meeting people every day, there's just a sense of how to talk to different kinds of people. So I'm comfortable talking to people from different backgrounds, really wealthy or hardworking humble folks, stoners, rednecks, religious, rebellious, it doesn't matter.

Also, from being picked up, arrested, charged with things like 'disorderly conduct' I know a little of what it's like to be a minority. I know those things do happen when someone feels you don't belong. Not going to claim that I really know, because there's no big identifying mark that says I'm a Moonie, and I can pass for normal if I want to. But I know what it's like to have people look at you like you've got two heads or they're convinced your crazy and there's very little you can say to get through to them. And they don't want you in their store, restaurant, town, sidewalk, etc.

Not giving up easily is another thing I've picked up from my years in the church. Before, while I was stubborn in many things, I would quickly give up if I wanted to do something and it didn't work out right away. From experience now I know to battle through the 'this'll never work' feelings, even many times.

And this sense of winning a spiritual battle applies in many situations. When one of my children was having a very bad time, and I was taking care of them, there came a point where I was getting very tired and irritable. "I can't keep doing this" came to me, and "Boy, if I don't sleep soon, I won't be any good to anybody" and "No, this is just too much." were all banging around my head. I held on and didn't give in, just kept being there for my child. Then, suddenly, all those feelings and thoughts were gone, and my child fell peacefully sound asleep, and got better from that point on.

Not to mention that after 5 years of fundraising, I had a feeling of "What can anyone throw at me that I haven't already been through? I've been tested to the core." Which is still true in many ways, though some recent experiences (going through a divorce) were harder than anything I've ever been through. But it also helped that I'd been in so many situations that seemed impossible or when I felt "I can't go on", but still found a way to keep going. Knowing how to endure, persevere and overcome.

Those are the easy things to talk about.

I also am still a bit shy about telling people my church affiliation. Even though the really hellacious years of persecution are mostly gone, I still flinch inside when it comes time to tell someone I am a Unificationist. Experiencing going from accepted member of society to outcast in seconds, many times over, can do that. I know it is a limitation to be challenged, ideally, but there are times when I want to be just me and not represent anything much larger. Having said that, I also have a sense that whatever I do will influence and affect those around me, whether they recognize it or not.

There are many more things, but I'll stop here.

How has being in the church affected how you are today?