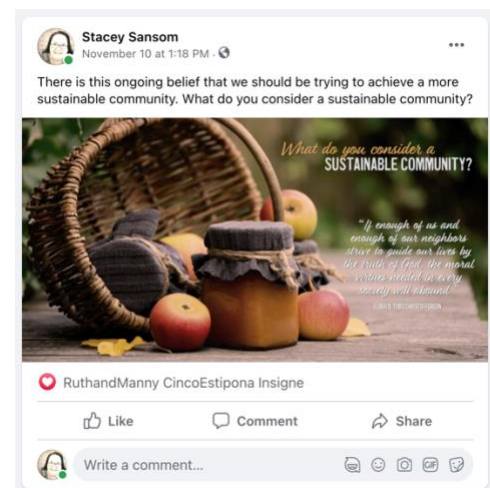


9.5 Reaching Your Audience

One thing that was driven home to me when I was taking the self-reliance courses offered by the church, especially the Starting and Growing My Business class, was the principle, “Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal” (Doctrine and Covenants 29:34). This concept that all things are spiritual to the Lord has in many ways shaped the way that I present myself to the world on social media. I am not perfect, but I am sincere.

I really had to think about how to seem natural in my approach and not change the types of posts I make for the sake of an assignment. As we go into the holiday season and with Thanksgiving quickly approaching, it seemed natural that I would approach it from a gardening and self-reliance point of view. It is a way of embracing gratitude, the gospel, and engaging with my natural followers without being out of the ordinary. The quote I used for this post was taken from an October 2020 General Conference talk entitled, “Sustainable Communities” by D. Todd Christofferson. I found the sentiment fell in line with my everyday posting, so it is authentic.



I must preface the rest of this by stating outright that I try to stay neutral on my posts because I use Facebook to stay in touch with my extended family. That is very important for me. Many of them are not practicing members of the church and some are very anti-church so I choose to keep

within personally set boundaries to not offend or set off another anti-attack that will leave me silencing family.

It isn't necessary to break outside your norm to include touches of religion or principles if you live your life in accordance with the teachings. I prefer to find the common ground and embrace it. If we look hard enough, it is there. We must be willing to walk that line everywhere. For me, that is family, self-reliance, traditions, and talents. I share them most often. They garnish the most engagement as meager as it may be.

My goal is not to become viral. It is to be happy and to share the things that make me happy. The same goes for marketing my business. I don't need 100,000 followers to know that I am individually improving lives.

I was surprised that this post garnished almost no interaction whatsoever – a single like. When you contrast this to the less forced and more natural posts below, it seems that living the gospel principles daily is far more expedient in showing your efforts to become a disciple of Christ.

Daily discipleship living, is not hard.

I share my talents with my following. Or in this case, with my niece who was married in early October. I made her wedding cake, but I took the opportunity to express gratitude to my husband that makes sure those talents can happen. He did not miss a beat when my mixer died. Higher engagement both in likes and comments.



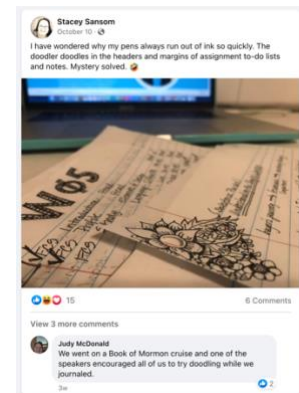
In the case of this post where my proudly showed off my boys at my niece's wedding. It garnished 71 likes and 12 comments. No, it is not a lot, but they are authentic interactions. People want to see happy families in real settings. I had to get my boys to behave for just one picture. The next post was the picture where they were all goofy faced.



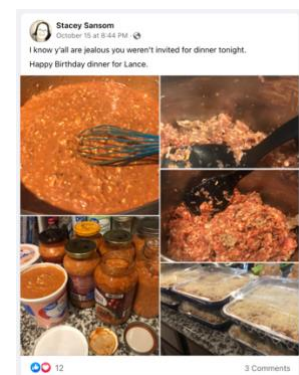
I shared our family tradition for General Conference. With everything that was going on at the time, it almost did not happen this year. I asked the boys if they wanted to. They relish in mom flipping those crepes without a spatula. This post brought in more likes and comments, especially from people who also have a tradition of crepes for General Conference.



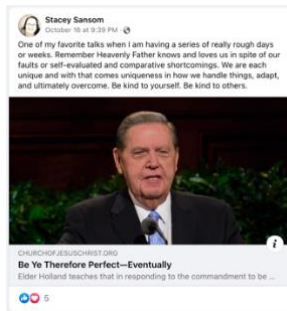
I have not been shy about my return to school. Education is a commandment and I have always been a lifelong learner even without my degree. We don't have to preach education to set the example or illustrate how much we value education as a disciple of Christ. It is a part of our everyday lives even when notes look like doodle pads.



A post about cooking pulled in more interaction than a strictly religious post. Self-reliance is about cooking and preparing. In this case, I used the opportunity to prepare my son's requested birthday dinner in large quantities and froze the excess. This week we used one because I have been too sick to cook.



It is not uncommon for me to share a conference talk to stands out to me in a time of need.



It was this recent post that triggered the surprise that my post for this assignment did not gather any engagement. Frequently, these conference talk shares are for my own personal reminder about the struggles and how I overcame them when Facebook reminds me about them. They still gather a little engagement even if they are not watching the videos.



This garden update from a few days ago gathered more engagement from my regular followers than a forced post. Garden posts like this one frequently get lots of likes and comments asking questions.

It was my frequent garden posts that made me believe that people would engage more with a post that asks about sustainability. They go hand in hand.

If we are living our life in accordance with the gospel principles and we are sharing things that fall in line with these teachings, our posts are more widely accepted. We are not perfect human beings, but we are ones who know and understand what it means to live a Christ-like life. If we are making efforts to become that and we post about it including the high and low points, our posts may not be viral, but they are authentic. Our followers accept us as normal people and they learn to trust our content. While I can sprinkle more gospel quotes within my normal posting, I do not think that it will bring more engagement. I can share and express my gratitude more, but I am not where I am today because of how I preach the gospel, I am here because of how I live it.