

# MY DAUGHTERS DESERVE BETTER: GIVING AND GETTING

by Michael Barker | Dec 31, 2015 | Featured, Feminism, Individuality | 31 comments



Yesterday was one of those rare days where my wife, Cathy, and I were able to meet for lunch. When we sat down, she said, "Mike, take a look at this. It's from the *New Era* <sup>1</sup>." She showed me the above picture which she had on her phone. I could tell she was irritated. I looked at the cartoon drawing and told her to, "Give me a minute to think about it." I needed time to process what Cathy saw as the possible problems with the drawing. It didn't immediately come to me - I'll be honest. Cathy then began to point out all the problems with the message that this picture is giving to teenage Mormon girls. We have two daughters - a fourteen year old and a soon-to-be ten year old - so we keep a close eye on these types of things. The following questions, which are addressed to

the editors of *The New Era*, come from my conversation with my wife yesterday. For ease of reading, I will call the young woman on the left, wearing the red shirt, "Getter." The young woman on the right, wearing the white shirt, I will call, "Giver."

Dear *New Era* editors,

1. What message is trying to be conveyed by having **Getter's** shoulders squared with confidence, while the **Giver's** are rounded and less self-assured?
2. What message is trying to be conveyed by having the **Giver** holding an obvious scripture case while the **Getter** is not?
3. What message is trying to be conveyed by having the **Giver** wearing a Young Women's medallion while the **Getter** is not?
4. What message is trying to be conveyed by having the **Giver** smiling and the **Getter** is not?
5. What message is trying to be conveyed by having the **Getter's** skirt just below the knees and wearing a short-sleeve shirt, while the **Giver's** skirt is almost to the ankles and wearing a long-sleeved shirt?
6. What message is trying to be conveyed by having the **Getter** appear more mature while the **Giver** appears to be infantilized?
7. What message is trying to be conveyed by having the **Giver's** toes pointed inward, appearing to lack confidence, in a more submissive-type posture, while the **Getter's** feet are well-planted and self-assured?
8. What message is trying to be conveyed by having two young women depicted and not two young men?
9. What message is trying to be conveyed by implying that a young woman's self-worth is achieved only through giving and sacrificing for others and not by doing things to improve herself?
10. Is the message that is trying to be conveyed that the Church wants women who lack confidence so they will kowtow to men?

After Cathy and I chatted, we decided we would show the picture to our fourteen year old daughter. We discussed how we wanted to ask our daughter her thoughts in a way that wouldn't give away our issues with the message being given – we wanted to hear her thoughts, not what she thought we wanted to hear. So during dinner last night we asked her an open ended question, being careful of our tone. "Look at this picture and tell us what you think about it." She looked. "Well, the one on the left is talking about doing stuff to improve herself. The one of the right is talking about stuff that will help others." Then it happened. And this is the eleventh and the last question I will ask. It is the question our fourteen year old asked Cathy and me:

11. **"Why can't she be both?"**

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## Notes

1. To read the article in its entirety, [click here](#).

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#### Heather Lawver Sewell · Founder and President at NewsEase

I've been so disappointed by the overall direction of the church lately. I've always tried really hard to separate Mormon "culture" from Mormon "doctrine". As the saying goes, "The church is true, but the people aren't." But it's incredibly disheartening and frustrating to see this kind of stuff infiltrating stuff published directly by the church. It just feels like they're moving more and more toward fundamentalist type stuff and it really bothers me. What I always appreciated about the doctrine was that women were