

## 12 Steps of Heart t' Heart

- 1 We admitted we were powerless over compulsive addictive behaviors\* – that our lives had become unmanageable. (Mosiah 4:5; Alma 26:12)
- 2 Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. (Mosiah 4:9; Alma 26:12)
- 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. (2 Ne. 10:24; Omni 1:26; Mosiah 3:19; 2 Nephi 4:34)
- 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (Alma 15:17; Mosiah 4:2; Jacob 4:6–7; Ether 12:27)
- 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. (Mosiah 26:29; Alma 22:18)
- 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. (Helaman 3:35; 2 Nephi 31:19; Mosiah 2:20–21)
- 7 Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. (Alma 36:18; Alma 38:8; Moroni 10:32; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 34:15–16)
- 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. (3 Nephi 12:9; 3 Nephi 12:24; 3 Nephi 12:44–45)
- 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others. (Mosiah 27:35; 3 Nephi 12:25; Mosiah 26:30)
- 10 Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. (2 Nephi 4:18; 2 Nephi 10:20; Mosiah 26:30)
- 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. (2 Nephi 32:3; Alma 37:37; Helaman 10:4)
- 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others still suffering from the effects of compulsive behaviors and to practice these principles in all our affairs. (Alma 5:7; Mosiah 27:36–37; Moroni 7:3)

\*Any problem may be inserted here, in place of "compulsive addictive behaviors." Permission to use the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by A.A. World Services, Inc.

Dearest Friends:

## Carrying the Message

I have had so many opportunities to carry the message this past year, I feel like I am as favored of the Lord as I could ever desire to be. Nothing in all the world brings me greater joy than to share the truth my addiction compelled me to come to experience and *know*—the truth that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior—the same today as yesterday—*my* Savior... and that *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is all it claims to be*. I bear testimony to you that the Church is true. Joseph Smith really did have those experiences that brought about the restoration of the real "First Century Christian Church" that the Oxford Groups were emulating and trying to pattern their beliefs after when Bill W. learned these principles. That's why the principles in the Twelve Steps and the principles of the Restored Gospel go so perfectly together.

Something I've become aware of in talking to others tempts me to sadness, though. It seems that there's a feeling among some of us who have found recovery in the Twelve Steps, either before the LDS Twelve Step movement began in earnest (with Heart t' Heart and LDS Family Service SARS meetings) or since, to feel reluctant to participate in the fellowship and activities of our home wards and branches. Apparently, there are some who feel that the level of awareness and appreciation for the Atonement isn't as great among the general membership of the church as it is in recovery meetings and so are reluctant to attend them.

Brothers and Sisters, if you're struggling with this feeling, can I personally appeal to you to prayerfully consider the thoughts of my heart that I long to share, heart to heart, with you. I pray that you will feel the tender feelings I have that motivate my addressing this situation. I love all of you as fellow survivors of what, for most of us, felt exactly like "near-death experiences." And you know, that's truly what it feels like to be snatched back (Alma's word) from the jaws of self-destruction, whether its from alcohol, drugs, overeating, sexual addiction or any other sanity consuming behavior pattern.

And just like those people who have had near-(physical) death experiences, we too come back changed. How can we not be changed? We have lived to *know* the supernatural and miraculous power of God—that God does live and that He is really there for each of us—as soon as we

# Watching Recovery Happen: Depression Derailed!

It's about two hours later, this morning, than I usually get up. I'm just barely getting started at my day. I slept in, more or less deliberately. I guess I could truthfully say that I needed the extra sleep. But, the whole truth would also have to include the fact that I was struggling with some depressed feelings. Why? Because I have things in my life to feel depressed about, if I chose to dwell on them.

There's the sniper-thing in Washington, DC....There's my oldest daughter getting married but not wanting to have *any* interaction with me-thing...and that one can snowball forever. It brings up the children-thing, and that brings up the failed first marriage-thing, and that brings up, and that brings up... And that brings up my own childhood feelings of not being appreciated and recognized for being a child with so much love to give and creativity to be enjoyed.

See what I mean? The thoughts could go on and on. And earlier, this morning, they did. And I didn't want to get out of bed. And even after I did, when I was sitting there on the side of the bed pulling on my clothes, I was thinking, "I don't want to get dressed. Today's just full of all kinds of interactions with other people. I just want to be left alone." Hmm. Isolation starting to present itself.

Then my youngest daughter (a senior in high school) walked in and sat down on the bed by me. I had already picked up some paperwork my husband had handed me that represented one of my areas of depression. I was pouring over it,

when I heard my daughter say, "Mom, pay attention to me." Her voice wasn't demanding. It was sincerely pleading with me for some attention. Somewhat reluctantly, I put down the paper and with a tiny bit of "snap" in my voice, I said, "There, I'm paying attention to you. Now what?" In her precious, child-like nature, she didn't take notice or

**She prayed in the face of gnawing depression for the gift of gratitude. The next morning "out of nowhere" she kept having grateful thoughts, as if Someone had entered into her mind and adjusted her focus or direction.**

offense at my snappy tone. Instead, she humbly leaned against me and put her head on my shoulder.

"I'm feeling so sad," she said. "I don't want to go to school."

Instead of probing for some reason, for something to fix or to lecture her about, I heard myself just say, "I know. This is being a pretty challenging year for you, isn't it."

She just nodded and snuggled against my shoulder—all actions that I see, as I write about them, are symbolic of feeling safe and understood.

Then, into my mind came the true and wise thoughts I had heard last evening at a 12 Step recovery

meeting. A sister had shared some of her story and how she had prayed in the face of gnawing depression for the *gift* of gratitude. She said she had awakened the next morning and within an hour of tackling her day's work, realized that "out of nowhere" she kept having grateful thoughts, as if Someone had entered into her mind and adjusted her focus or direction.

Sitting next to my daughter, that memory came into my mind (can I say that I remembered it, or should I acknowledge Someone brought it to my remembrance?), and I told my daughter, "You know, just last night a lady at HtH was sharing this idea..." and I went on to tell my daughter a brief glimpse of that story. Then I bore my own testimony of how powerful focusing on the positives in our life—no matter how small—can give us a definite lift in our mood. "So, can you think of something you could feel grateful for?" She wiggled her toes in her sandals. "I have toes," she said.

I picked up her cue, so silly, but so symbolic of the fact that she was willing to be taken down this path of thought. I laughed and replied, "There, you see! And you have feet, and all your body parts are working correctly." I knew she had spent hours preparing a game to use in her peer-tutoring class where she helps special needs kids. I knew that focusing on her lack of any handicaps would be especially poignant to her.

Just as she left my room, not necessarily all "fixed," but definitely lifted up from the mood she

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# From Step Ten Back to Step One: Keep Coming Back...As Often As Necessary

It's 3:50 a.m. I have been awake since I'm not sure when. Daylight Savings Time began this weekend, so my body thinks it's an hour later than the clock says. So, at 2:30 on the clock (3:30 in my body), I was awake.

The whole truth must also include the fact that I overate carbs yesterday so badly that I have some pretty uncomfortable conditions in my digestive tract. I am trying to be willing to receive the comforting thought that having this kind of experience is down to about once a year, instead of once a month, or even once a week, which is how often I used to choose this fearful way of life.

And I am trying to accept the truth that in a probably very necessary way, having an experience like this keeps me in remembrance of what it means to be an addict. To be so bent on running away, on seeking escape from one's hard issues, of accepting life on Life's (God's) terms, that one would do major detrimental behaviors. I am grateful that I am a compulsive overeater. Overeating is something that can be bridled a little easier than the other chemical addictions. The shakes and headaches from carbs is not nearly as horrible to endure as the detox effects of alcohol or another more potent drug. And yet...and yet there is enough of a physical effect, enough of physical bondage that there is some fair degree of suffering needed to escape it each time one slips into it again.

I have slipped into it again. It takes about three days of over indulgence in carbs to set up this chemical change in me. Still, one day is too many. It's not that I can "get away" with the first day I overindulge. The first day it wears away at my resolve. The first day opens up the "excuse making freeway" in my neuropathways. "Slippery slope" is what the phenomenon is called in most recovery fellowships. The first drink fallacy. I can get away with just a little indulgence. Just one drink. Just one bite of "trigger foods"—whatever they might be for me. They're the equivalent of my "drug of choice"—my alcohol or weed or cocaine. There's a chemical in them that grips me.

Depression. Terrible depression. Terrible because it is so subtle when it starts. It feels so much like me having rational, totally understandable, justifiable negative thoughts. Suddenly my attention is drawn to the sad things. This time it was the sniper in the Washington DC area, and the situation with several of my children and...And then *that* snowballs and starts to feed my inclination to go back to the chemical a second time, then a third... And after the third time, whether in one day or three days, I have become insanely dependent, filled with craving (lust) for my drug of choice my trigger food.

"Stinking thinking" is another saying in old-time addiction recovery circles. That's a perfect name for what this feels like. And it starts so stealthily, so small and

pitiful,...just a tiny little thought of self-indulgence due to self-pity or self-will. Never would I come out and rage against anyone or anything or against life or Life (God.) No, my style is to just allow the smallest, most pitifully weak

**I'm back again at Day One...Step One. I'm living my latest reminder that we all only have one day of recovery—this day.**

little thought of comforting myself, of rescuing myself from the self-pity (poor me) or self-will (I don't *want* this to be this way) thoughts. Just this one indulgence. Just this one "drink," "drag," "sniff," won't do any harm. Just this one bite of (fill in a trigger food...for me it's anything with high glycemic carbs).

And so, I am back again at Day One and Step One. I've checked again and found out that nothing's changed. I'm still a carb addict. They say, in recovery circles that "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, hoping for a different result." Maybe, *this* time, the chemistry won't affect me. Maybe *this* time, I can get away with it. Like the AA Big Book says (pgs 30-31), I am like a person who has lost my legs, but keeps trying every form of experimentation to

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## Depression Derailed

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came in with, the phone rang. I was trying to finish dressing, and still feeling resistant towards starting my own day, I ignored the phone. I was still being tempted to isolate. I didn't want to "go to school" (get into my own day) either.

After I came in my office, I looked at my caller-ID and saw that it was a friend in HtH who was calling, as she did most mornings, to spend 15-20 minutes reading the *Book of Mormon* together. We don't just read for quantity. We read for depth and often only get through one or two verses in a 20 minute session.

I was tempted to not call her. Isolation. But then I found myself with the willingness and the power to act on it. I dialed her number. We opened our books to where we'd

left off the day before: **2 Nephi 9:14**. Just another verse in a series of verses on the subject of death and resurrection—both physical and spiritual death and resurrection. Suddenly the second half of the verse "jumped out" at me:

**and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness.**

Someone in my mind, turned the order of those concepts around and I heard, "And being able to choose rightly [righteousness] comes in large part from being willing to focus on your enjoyment [positive things, things that bring you joy, things you're grateful for]."

I stopped my friend after only that one verse and said, "I know this is a stretch and a mystery that I might see or hear this message out

of this verse, but let me tell you about this morning." Then I shared my story of the sister's thoughts at the meeting, and of my own feelings, the thoughts I'd been given to share with my daughter. "And here it is again!! Right here in this verse. The correlation or connection between dwelling on what we feel positive about and the ability to avoid depression and its power to pull me into un-right behaviors (my addictions.)

Is this too much of a "stretch"? Too much of a "mystery" to share with others? Was this insight only for me? I thought I'd "pass it on." I hope it is a blessing. No more isolation for me. It's going to be an okay day, after all. I'm going to focus on the positive, focus on those things that there are to *enjoy* in my circumstance, those things there are to be grateful for.

—Colleen H.

## Step Ten Back to Step One

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prove that I can still walk like a normal person and when that doesn't work, I try every from of self-deception to pretend I can walk.

I can always tell when I'm not accepting life on Life's terms in either semi-conscious or outright unconscious areas of my life—areas I'm running from and hiding from myself—because I stop accepting life on Life's terms in regard to my addiction, to my drug of choice. I start being tempted to use again, to indulge again...even when I've had weeks, months, *even years* of abstinence. I start thinking in a stinking (self-deceiving and deceived) way.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change—and today, one of those things is that I'm living my latest reminder that we all only have *one day* of recovery—*this* day. (Another old saying from old-time recovery circles.) I will always be a newcomer. I will always be only one bite away from a binge. Why? Because I'm mortal, and as long as I'm mortal, as long as I'm subject to the relentless lies of Satan, the adversary of my soul, I must accept that there is no hope for me unless and until I accept life on Life's (God's) terms and turn to Him, to God, in humility, willing to submit.

Today, "submitting" means to be humble enough to repent yet

again or as Step Ten (scriptural version) says: "being willing to repent as often as needed."

I once heard someone teach this precious truth: It's not how many times you fall down that counts. It's how many time you get up.

I pray that we might all be willing to repent as often as necessary, to never give up, to accept mortality as a time of trial (and error), and accept consistency and endurance as being the only way imperfect beings can hope to emulate God and godliness.

One last saying from the old-timers—*Keep coming back... coming back works*. I can testify to that. My slippery slope days are months

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## Step Ten Back to Step One

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apart, nearly years now, where they used to be every three days.

I recognize that there are addictions that don't allow a person as much lee-way as overeating. Addictions like illicit sex or alcohol or drugs can wreak such destruction—not only one's own life but in the lives of others. They must be avoided completely as soon as possible and as permanently as possible. I can only say that this same standard—complete and permanent abstinence—is my standard as well, and that it is from AA I first learned to believe it could work for me. To that end, I am coming back. Coming back works. □

*If, instead of a gem  
or even a flower,  
we could cast  
the gift  
of a lovely thought  
into the heart  
of a friend,  
that would be giving  
as the angels give.*

— George Macdonald

## Dearest Friends

Continued from page 1

individually realize how desperately we need Him.

But, then...then we have to return to "normal life," where lots of people (people just like we were before our own awakening) are still coming along their own tailor-made, individual journey of coming to know the Lord for themselves. And if we are going to "work our program," if we are going to practice these principles in "all our affairs," we must be willing to exercise the same patience, long-suffering, kindness and love unfeigned that our beloved Savior showed us.

In the second discussion in *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*, I briefly portrayed what it was like to be filled with a sure witness of the Lord's reality and availability, and to try to be calm about it. Believe me, I know how hard it is to be calm when you've come to know that He lives and that the Gospel is true, the Atonement is real! You want to laugh and sing and shout for joy. The Spirit is with you like you've never known in your life—even if your addiction was, like mine, one you practiced while still remaining active in the church, holding positions, attending meetings, etc. But for all my activity, I had never known the depth and breadth and height of the Savior's love, like I'd come to know Him in my own recovery experience. He had become as real to me—more real, actually—than any abuse or offense or heartache I'd ever experienced. His reality eclipsed and consumed it all. Never, never in my life, could I ever be the same complacent, casual, unsure member I had been before.

**If you keep working the steps, you'll find...growing in your heart, a willingness to accept each person as being exactly where they need to be and are ready to be (AA Big Book, p. 449).**

But, Brothers and Sisters, dearest, dearest friends in recovery, may I bear my testimony to you that if you will keep working to internalize the principles in the Steps, if you will keep working the steps—writing about them, studying them in all the official Twelve Step literature you can find (AA, SA, NA, OA, Heart 't' Heart, etc.) and especially in the *Book of Mormon* and other scriptures—you'll find a compassion for everyone growing in your heart, a willingness to accept each person as being exactly where they need to be and are ready to be (AA Big Book, p. 449). The love of God will settle into your hearts deeper and deeper and you will be able to bless your ward and branch families with that spirit.

I testify to you that all these things are preparation for our Savior's triumphant return to lead this very church and kingdom of which we are so blessed to be a part. On every front, in every way, the Church is doing all it can to seek out and bind up and bring home those who will rejoice in the voices of modern prophets and in the truth that revelation is still open and free-flowing. I offer this testimony and love to you—each and every one—humbly, in the Beloved Name of Jesus Christ, Amen. □

# LDS Church Buildings No Longer to be Used for Heart t' Heart Meetings

The General Service Board has recently re-evaluated the practice of holding Heart t' Heart meetings in buildings owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In a letter to Heart t' Heart group representatives, the board wrote:

...recent discussions [with Church sources] have indicated that we are not complying with the Church's policy on use of buildings by groups not directly under priesthood supervision.

Heart t' Heart's Tradition Ten states that we support the doctrines and policies of the Church, and that we wish to avoid any controversy. In keeping with this Tradition, the General Service Board of Heart t' Heart has concluded that it is in the best interest of the fellowship if we discontinue the practice of holding Heart t' Heart meetings in buildings owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This would include ward meetinghouses, stake centers, seminary buildings and other educational facilities, such as buildings on the various BYU campuses. We are therefore asking all Heart t' Heart groups who currently use LDS buildings to find a new location to meet in as soon as they can.

More details are included in the letter to group representatives. If you are currently attending a Heart t' Heart group, you may be able to help find a new location for meetings currently being held in Church-owned buildings. Some possible locations include local libraries, hospitals, civic centers, senior citizen centers, public health departments, mental health facilities, business offices, other Twelve Step groups, such as A.A., and so on. We are asking groups to make this move as soon as possible, and to promptly send information on the new location to: Heart t' Heart, P.O. Box 247, Pleasant Grove, UT, 84062.

If the new location requires a charge for use of the meeting room, members should cover that expense through Seventh Tradition donations made to the local Heart t' Heart group. The move to non-Church locations will also enable the collection of donations during Heart t' Heart meetings, which we have not been doing while meeting in Church buildings.

Recognizing that this change may involve some inconvenience for the groups affected, we thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation in making this move.

## You Provide the Willingness, God Provides the Miracle

Recently I have made the commitment to spend one hour of my day in Gospel/12 Step study, and while my heart is willing, my body often isn't. However, I have learned that the Lord can take whatever willingness I can scrape together and provide what is needed to get me the rest of the way.

The other day I was so tired. I wanted to do my study, but my body wasn't cooperating. I began my study time in *He Did Deliver Me*,

pg. 10 (small version), with the scripture Alma 32:27. I then wrote:

*I want to "awake and arouse" my faculties, and try this grand experiment...but I am so tired. I want to just sleep. Father, if I keep my eyes open for the next moment, will You take over and get me the rest of the way? I can do a moment, I just don't know if I can do the rest of the day.*

I pushed myself to read the next two paragraphs, fighting sleep,

forcing my eyes to stay open. A few minutes later, the phone rang. It was a long-time friend, sometimes sponsor. We talked about 12 Step principles and the gospel for over an hour. When we hung up, I felt better, more energetic.

Although I had only read a few paragraphs from the book, I had completed my full hour discussing, writing, and studying these principles. The Lord had indeed taken me the rest of the way. —KB

## New Meetings

Idaho Falls, ID—Wednesday,  
8:00p.m.; call for meeting place.  
Men only. Joe (208) 589-8081 or  
Rob (208) 243-8481.

Ogden, UT—Thursday, 8:00; SAVE  
Office, 2550 Wash Blvd #103;  
Codependency, Book Study.  
Mabel (801) 394-3305.

Reno, NV—Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.;  
call for meeting place. Book study.  
Justin (530) 257-8305

Sylvania, OH—Sunday, 7:00 p.m.;  
call for meeting place. Book study.  
Thomas or Ellen (419) 885-1628.

Georgetown, TX—Saturday,  
9:00 a.m.; call for meeting place.  
Women only; book study.  
Jan (512) 868-8918.

### Meeting Change:

Georgetown, TX—Tuesday,  
6:30 p.m.; call for meeting place.  
Women only; book study.  
Jan (512) 868-8918.

## September's GSB Contributions

*We appreciate the contributions sent in to our main office. These contributions are used to cover expenses, create printed materials, and to send information to those inquiring about Heart t' Heart.*

UT-06 .....\$110.00  
OBA .....\$14.00  
No. Utah Intergroup .....100.00

## Changes in the Heart t' Heart Board

While we emphasize principles over personalities, we do not have to be totally anonymous to each other. In that spirit I want to thank the fellowship for the opportunity I have had over the last 2 1/2 years of serving as president of HtH's General Service Board. It has been a humbling experience for me, as I have had a lot of learning to do. There have been many who have had much more experience in Twelve Step programs than I have, and they have been very kind in helping me learn the ropes (the principles). I have truly seen that this organization works because it follows principles of fellowship (the Twelve Traditions) that keep personalities in the background.

I am deeply grateful to my Savior for the miracle He has wrought in my life, and also for being able to share these truths with others. I am stepping down as president because I am writing an LDS Twelve Step workbook on recovery from pornography addiction. I feel such a pressing need to get this book written that I am letting go of many other responsibilities in order to provide time to write. The board has elected Jim Stubbs to serve as president now, and I know he will do an excellent job. He has many talents that the fellowship needs at this time. I will continue to be involved with the fellowship, and I rejoice over every opportunity to be with you and to see the message being carried on. Thanks again for letting me serve. I love you all.

--Phil Harrison

## Fifth Annual Las Vegas Heart t' Heart Retreat a Great Success

The Fifth Annual Heart t' Heart Retreat/Regional Conference was held in Las Vegas on October 11-13. It was one of the best ever. The retreat leaders were Phil and Colleen H. from Logan, Utah. and Nanette W. from Orem, Utah.

On Friday evening, Karlene B. shared a history of her experiences with Heart t' Heart. On Saturday, Colleen shared some of her workshop materials from her Education Week presentation at BYU-Idaho this past summer, including a workshop on the importance of journaling as a path to recovery and healing. The tradition of separating into men and women's groups and having a discussion and sharing meeting on sexual issues was received well, and many benefited from this workshop. Colleen and Phil started off a Partners in Recovery workshop and surprised Joy and Jim S. from Orem, Utah and Jay and Char L. from Las Vegas by asking them to share their stories as "Recovery Partners" with the group. On Saturday evening, Nannette W. presented a musical fireside, "Songs of Redeeming Love." It left everyone with goose bumps and full of emotions. It was awesome!

Our closing session was a Sunday morning testimony meeting—a very spiritual, emotional time that no one wanted to end because that would mean it was over and everyone would have to go home. The workshops were fun and productive and much healing came from sharing and fellowshiping with one another. Hope to see more of you next year. —Char L.

Please remit in US funds via credit card, check or money order made payable to Heart t' Heart. Do not send cash. Send this form with payment to the address above.

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**Heartbeats**

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**We always look forward to reader contributions to Heartbeats. Please send articles or short thoughts to:**

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