

## The Twelve 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:

## Becoming a New and Everlasting Newcomer!

I've attended a variety of Twelve Step meetings over the years. O.A., A.A., N.A., CoDA, A.C.O.A.,... And in every one of them I've watched people be restored to "sanity," or in other words, to thinking straight. I've watched them come around, sooner or later, to living the highest level of truth they can honestly understand. Time after time, I've seen it put people's feet back on the road to sanity and freedom from addiction.

I've seen people in those groups recover, having nothing more than the fellowship of the recovering members in their group as a "higher power." Why? How could they do that? Why would God allow them to do that? The answers I would hear in my heart were always the same. Because they are living up to the highest truth they sincerely understand *at this time*. There's the generosity and patience—the *humility* of the God I've come to know.

But, there was a problem for me. Living up to the highest truth these other good people were living up to was not bringing me the recovery I saw them achieving. Even by following the examples of those who believed in a personal God, or those who believed in Christ, I could not find the power to lose my desire for my addiction. There was something missing.

It took nearly a decade of "coming back" to those various meetings, and countless hours of talking to other latter-day Saints involved in the same discontented wrestle I was in, to discover what that missing item was. I couldn't find full recovery in the group, or even in a generic Christian God, because I wasn't living up to *my* highest level of truth—or in other words, the ultimate expression of God that I, as a Latter-day Saint, was blessed to understand. I wasn't acknowledging the God of the Book of Mormon. I wasn't using the blessing and privilege I'd been offered by joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—that of studying *the* book that the Prophet Joseph had testified would get me

## Dearest Friends

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closer to God, help me understand and know God's true character, faster than any other book ever written.

That's when I turned to the Book of Mormon with a personal fervency I had never had before. That's when the testimony it contains, that the Lord Jesus Christ is *the* highest expression of the Father's mercy and grace (power unto salvation), began to dawn in my heart. *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage* grew out of that study and the mighty change the Book of Mormon made in my life. *Heart t' Heart* was the next wave of result. The LDS Family Services SARS program eventually adopted this testimony of the Savior as the ultimate Higher Power, sent by the Father to be the *Savior*. While all honor and glory and gratitude belongs to the Father who sent the Savior, it is the Savior who is our Friend in the trenches of this life.

May I bear testimony to all who may read these words:

As Latter-day Saints, the highest truth we know is the availability and personal involvement of God in our individual lives, through revelation spoken directly to our own hearts and minds. That is the testimony of every prophet in our religious tradition since the beginning.

That is the testimony of Joseph Smith, and from ancient times, it was the testimony of Abraham. Abraham came out of the idolatrous traditions his father had embraced, declaring to a paganistic world filled with "many gods," that the God of his understanding was the One God who would walk and talk

with each and every single human being as if they were the best of friends. Abraham, his name even means "Friend of God."

**As Latter-day Saints, the highest truth we know is the availability and personal involvement of God in our individual lives, through revelation spoken directly to our own hearts and minds.**

Somehow, I had missed that testimony, though I'd been a member of the Church for 20 years. Maybe it was because I was influenced by the example of my parents who did not think of God as a friend. Whatever the reason, I am so grateful for the understanding of God that the Twelve Steps and the original AA members' example and testimony modeled for me when I read *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the "Big Book"). God is still a friendly God, a God who cares about one person at a time—even one very foolish and naughty person at a time, even if he or she had gone "so far" as to become an alcoholic.

And that's the message God blessed me to convey through *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*—that God is a *friendly* God; that Jesus Christ has the tenderest eyes and the kindest features we could ever imagine; that He has the most ready smile, and the most loving—even adoring of us—expression for us. After all, He died for us! And He didn't die frowning and resentful of us. Even in His last moments of agony for our sake, for the sake of

the "church fathers" who had rejected Him, for the Roman officials that had condemned Him, for the Roman soldiers that had beaten Him to the point where any other mortal man would have died and then nailed cruel nails through His hands and feet and wrists,... even then He thought of us, not Himself: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Yes, it is true that God is "tough," but He is kind. It is true that God must see that justice is served, but He is the one who serves justice and fulfills its demands. He is the one who is willing to sacrifice—and it is by His last and great sacrifice that we are saved. The Father sacrificed His own comfort and love of His dear Son, Jehovah (later to be known as Jesus Christ). The Savior sacrificed His perfect "track record," and took all the sins and sorrows and foolish, even hideous choices of all of us onto His own soul.

This is the God of the Book of Mormon's message—He has been there all along. This is the God in Joseph Smith's testimony—a God that "giveth to *all* liberally" and "abraideth not." That means He's generous and kind, like the Father in the prodigal son story (Luke 15). That means that He cares more for me getting home to Him, safe, than He does for how many pigs I've slopped or eaten swill with.

This is the God that breaks my heart with gratitude! This is the God that wins my heart with His never-wavering love for me.

Stern? No. He's tough. Tough against sin. He can't be any other way. He got to be where He is the same way we're growing to be where He is: by learning that there's

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## Dearest Friends

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no other way or means or name under heaven except the way and means the name “Christ” stands for. He can’t back down from the true principles that He did not create. He can’t change the game plan. He became exalted by using these true principles Himself.

We’re the ones who get mad at Him. We’re the ones who stomp up and down the sidelines of our lives, ticked off and refusing to participate in the game, because He won’t

change the game plan or the rules. That’s what I do when I use my addiction. From self-pity or self-will, or in a fit of self-rightness (I’m right! I am!), I check out of life on life’s terms and pout or rage (which, in my case, looks like breaking off my friendship with my Dearest Friend, and overeating, overspending, and just plain under-participating in life).

The moment I turn back to the Savior, He saves. “Oh, Jesus, Thou Son of God, have mercy on me. I believed the Liar, the enemy of all truth, the enemy of my soul, again.

Please, restore me to sanity.”

And He whispers to me, through the still, small voice of the Spirit—so small I think it’s me talking to myself, except where do I think I would get this kind of wisdom?—“Colleen, the way to retain this moment of deliverance is to never leave this moment of needing me this much. In other words, remain, always, a new and everlasting newcomer.” A new and everlasting newcomer?!! Now, that sounds like a title. And I am back where I began.

—With love, Colleen □

## Capturing: Keeping the Sponge Moist

*He that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full. And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.* —Alma 12:10-11

Consider a dry sponge. It has the *potential* to soak up and absorb water, but it is not *prepared* to do so. Pour a drop of water on it and it will just sit upon the surface for a long time. Try to wipe up a spill with it and it will just push the water around on the counter. However, plunge it into a bucket of water or hold it under a faucet and squeeze out the excess and the sponge is prepared to soak up any water it comes into contact with. But if it is allowed to dry out completely again, it returns to its unprepared state: dry, hard and even brittle; containing little or no water and unable to absorb that which it is exposed to.

My heart is like the sponge. If I allow my heart to dry out completely—squeezing out the last drop of living water and not replenishing it—then, when a drop comes my way, I cannot absorb it. I just push it around, unable to drink it in and be nurtured by it. I receive “the lesser portion of the word until [I] know nothing con-

cerning his mysteries; and then [I can be] taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction.”

How does this happen? It happens when I give until I have no more to give, trying to please everyone, failing to take care of myself by doing the things that keep me close to the Lord, and when I refuse to allow others to nurture me. When I allow self-will and self-sufficiency (thinking I can do it all, by myself) to replace love and humility in my heart, it can become dry, hard, and brittle.

When I find myself in this state I must find a bucket of living water, or a faucet, and plunge myself in—immerse myself in the love of God and the gospel. Where can I find this bucket, this faucet of living water? At Church, in the temple, in my Heart t’ Heart meetings, in program literature, in the love of my children, in the scriptures, in prayer and meditation—anywhere the Spirit dwells. Then, I need to “squeeze out the excess” by sharing what I have learned with others. I must never allow myself to become totally dry again. Where do I get the daily “misting” that will keep me prepared to receive; that will keep my heart soft and humble? By daily use of the tools of the program! Especially abstinence, literature and music (including scriptures), meetings, prayer and meditation, sponsoring, telephoning, writing and yes, even service, as defined in *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*.

—Mira C. □

# Open Sharing: Walking with the Lord

I would like to share with you the changes that have come into my life in recent months in my attempts to free myself from addiction to pornography. It has all been the Lord's doing. I took the steps to become closer to the Lord through scripture study, prayer, and working through *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*. I feel I am really striving to find and do the Lord's will, but I still am so weak and forget the Lord at times. I am certain that if I turned from the Lord that all of the progress He has blessed me with would be gone and I would be back where I was, or probably even worse.

As I reflect back to what was different this time than the thousands of previous times I "quit", this is what worked to get me where I am today:

The first step was to get it out in the open. I joined an online support group, confessed to my bishop and to my wife all in the same week. I felt completely ashamed and embarrassed but I was willing to suffer any embarrassment or shame to rid my life of this spiritual cancer.

The second step was to get in a structured recovery program. The invitation to "read the scriptures and pray" or "come unto Christ" was just too general for someone in a spiritual coma, like myself. I still didn't feel worthy of a relationship with the Lord, so I didn't feel worthy to pray (one of Satan's big lies), or at least to be blessed with anything. I had really no clue how to get to where I wanted to be. I started working in *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage* every day and

really praying constantly for a change of heart and for strength to resist the temptations and urges.

During this second step I focused on cutting out any worldly influence in my life. No TV, movies,

**If I don't get up every day and walk with [the Lord], I will get left behind. If I fall behind, the Lord will help me catch up again, but His course is set. If I hope to end up in the same place as Him, I must walk the same course.**

magazines, newspapers, worldly music. Since "nature abhors a vacuum," I tried to fill my life with good things like the scriptures and constantly listening to the hymns, especially in the car to and from work and anytime I had to be on the computer/internet for my job. I know we still have to live and function in the world, but for the first few weeks this really helped me. I can now "endure" the influences of the world a little better—now that I have made some progress in recovery and have learned about turning temptation over to the Lord.

The third step has been sharing what I have found. Each time I share my experience and testimony of the Savior and the atonement, I feel the Spirit. This has two benefits—I am strengthened, and

those I am sharing with are strengthened. I expect this step to continue for the rest of my life.

The fourth step is to live one day at a time, focusing on the things that keep me close to the Lord. I have been struggling with this lately and can feel the effects. Right now I feel peace in my life. I am humbled frequently by a lustful thought or a remembered image, but I immediately (most of the time) plead with the Lord to help remove them. The concept of walking with the Lord with him saying, "Come follow me," has helped me. If I don't get up every day and walk with Him, I will get left behind. Of course, if (when) I fall behind, the Lord will help me catch up again, but His course is set. If I hope to end up in the same place as Him, I must walk the same course.

They key ingredient has been the Savior, Jesus Christ. Do the things that keep you close to Christ and don't do the things that turn you from Him. The gospel is so easy to understand, but having faith and doing it every day is hard (for me at least). Please remember that I am mortal too and still make so many mistakes. I get charged up when I write and share my testimony of the Savior, but I hope nobody thinks that I am more than a reforming sinner who struggles every day.

I hope and pray for all of you brothers and sisters (and myself) that we can find and keep the Lord's peace in our lives and have the great burden of sin and addiction removed.

—Dennis in San Jose, CA □

# The Big Picture of Healing and Victimization

I've been thinking about healing and miracles lately, after reading the article in January's Heartbeats about victimization and also studying the healing miracles from the New Testament in Gospel Doctrine class. I suppose that inherent in every study of the healing miracles of Jesus Christ is the question, how can I or someone I love, be healed? And what does it mean when we're not?

Both faith and the power to heal are vital parts to healing miracles. Without both, the miracle will not occur. But confusingly, the converse, does not always hold true. Sometimes we have both faith and the power to heal, but we or those we love do not heal. The "miracle"—as we see and define it—is withheld.

As I struggled with this and the very real pain that "victims" of abuse experience, I concluded that if the gospel is true (and I believe it is) then there is a way within the gospel to come to terms with one of the hardest things to understand in this life—why hurt and pain come to the innocent and to good and faithful people.

There are no easy answers, no one-size-fits-all cure for pain or grief. But as we study the healing miracles—those performed by Christ during His ministry, those described in the other scriptures, those from early Church history, and those that happen around us every day—we can eventually come to a place of peace, and if not total understanding, at least enough understanding that the storms of grief and confusion can be quieted and we can go on with a calm and

peaceful heart.

I have found myself on both ends of the "healing spectrum." My son—who at the age of 3 weeks slipped into a coma and stopped

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breathing, going without oxygen for 12 to 15 minutes. His heart stopped before he arrived at the hospital, but they were able to revive him. At the time of his release from the hospital 10 days later, he was given the prognosis "cerebral palsy is the best you can hope for." This son is alive and well today due to the healing power of Jesus Christ, accessed through the faith and prayers of many good people, and applied through a priesthood blessing. He has his struggles—leftovers of the trauma his little body and brain suffered then—but most people would find it difficult to notice them without spending considerable time with him.

My son's cousin, however—who was born with physical ailments that can be remedied through relatively common-place surgery,

whose prognosis was very positive, who received the same faith and prayers of many of same good people in his behalf, and who also had powerful priesthood blessings given in part by the same men as gave my son's—this little boy was not healed as we desired, and died at 6 months of age.

There are no easy explanations for this. I know that these two outcomes had nothing to do with the goodness, or spirituality, or the lack of such, in either of these two children, their parents, or those who prayed for and administered to them. It remains an unresolved question in my heart.

I've also had my share of experiences where healing and divine intervention seems not to have happened. I've had five pregnancies, but only four children. I've had multiple bouts of kidney stones bringing me to a first name basis with emergency room personnel. I know what it is like to be an innocent victim of another person's rage and abuse and the difficulty in healing from those types of attacks. I know what it is like to suffer from recurring, chronic, illness.

I share these things, not to gain sympathy, because I've come to a place of peace—most of the time—with these challenges. I share them so you will know that I understand what it's like to be in a place where healing does not happen the way we would wish it to; where prayers and faith and priesthood blessings seem to have gone unanswered.

From personal necessity—the need to survive physically, emotionally, and spiritually—I've spent

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## Big Picture of Healing

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many hours in prayer, fasting, and study upon this subject of healing and victimization. This is how I resolve these issues:

Imagine you're looking at a movie on freeze frame. The frozen scene depicts a large, burly teenage boy wearing a baseball hat turned backwards, an oversized t-shirt with a marijuana leaf on the front, and baggy pants with a heavy chain linked to his belt loop. This boy has a fierce, determined, almost angry expression on his face and, with both arms extended and the full force of his body weight behind him, he is pushing a little 5-year-old girl. We see him just as his hands make contact with her body.

How dare he? we cry. Our blood pressure rises and we find ourselves wanting to rush to the girl's rescue. This is so unfair, so unkind. How can we stand by and watch as this young man terrorizes this sweet, innocent young child?

But then the camera moves back a little and we see the rest of the picture, which includes a car barreling down on the girl and the young man—and we realize he is trying to save her. He is trying with all his might to move this girl out of harm's way, most likely at the expense of his own life.

The original picture is still as true as it was when we first saw it. What has changed is our perspective, our point of view.

At those times when reality seems unfair, when innocent victims suffer and God seems to allow it, I have to remind myself that I don't see the whole picture. My perspective is limited—but God's is not. And then I have to choose, I have to

decide—do I believe in a kind and loving God who has our best interest at heart, or not? If I do, then I must accept that although I do not

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see the whole picture, there is a reason—a *kind* and *loving* reason—that God allows people to suffer. I must trust that He takes care of me and those I love in the best way possible; that He is actively working to bring to pass the best possible outcome for all of us. The resolution of healings and not being healed, the true view of victimization, lies in seeking the big picture.

I liked the quote from C.S. Lewis in February's Heartbeats: "When we seek for comfort, we experience misery and pain. If we first seek for truth and understanding, we will eventually find comfort." I would like to change that just a bit, though, because in addition to the times I've sought comfort and not found it, I've also had many experiences when I've sought comfort and found it in abundance.

I believe that when we seek *only* for comfort—to be comfortable, to have comfortable experiences—we will naturally be drawn to notice those times when we experience misery and pain. If our *only* goal is comfort, we can't help but be disappointed—and within that

disappointment, find ourselves bereft of the very comfort and peace we so desperately seek.

But if, during those times of misery and pain, we seek not just for relief, but for truth and understanding, I promise you—with all the power and strength of my own experience—that we will find them, and with that truth and understanding, we will indeed find comfort. The comfort and solace of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

This is what I know:  
—that Jesus Christ lived, and during his ministry He performed many miraculous healings through the power and authority of His priesthood.  
—that we have available to us this same power and authority of the priesthood, to act in behalf of God to perform many miracles, including healings—and this priesthood is indeed strong enough to heal *every* sickness, *every* disease, *every* heartbreak.

—that God is kind and loving and generous; and therefore, He will not permit us or those we love to hurt one moment longer than is absolutely necessary for our own good and learning and to fulfill His eternal purposes.

I know that I do not always—in fact, I rarely—see the big picture. But quite often, I can see enough of it—through prayer, fasting, scripture study, priesthood blessings, talking with others who've resolved similar experiences, sharing their experience, strength and hope—through doing these things, I can often see enough of the big picture to heal my heart, and bring peace to my soul.

—KB □

# Step Study on Step 12: Carrying the Message— No Apologies Necessary!

This morning, my older son who is married, called at 10:05 and asked to speak to his little brother. I took the portable phone with me as I went in to wake my 14 year old to receive his big brother's call. As I began the task of waking the sleeping, stretched out, man-child, my son on the phone could hear the process and cried, "Oh , Mom! Don't wake him up! You're not waking him up are you?"

I replied, "You know, it's okay if he gets up. It is 10:00 in the morning!" I proceeded to wake my son so that he could receive a message from his brother.

I think that as we proceed with the work of carrying the message of the of spiritual healing and growth through gospel principles to be found in this LDS 12 Step recovery program, we are going to feel a little bad about waking others up. Being spiritually awake can have its challenges.

I remember back to times when I was asleep, when I was not challenged daily with coming to know the will of God and accessing His power to accomplish it. But you know, the truth is, it's late in the morning of the dispensation of the fullness of times, and it's time. It's time for us all to wake up as a people and start living the way we need to in order to establish Zion and build up the Kingdom of God in ourselves, in our homes, and in our communities.

The message we bring is not our own. It is a message from our Older Brother and we should not feel sorry about waking up our heavenly siblings. We are waking them up to Someone and for something very wonderful. No apologies necessary!

—Nannette W.

## New Meetings

Please send meeting information changes to:

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## Heartbeats

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## What’s inside this issue of Heartbeats...

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- **The Big Picture of Healing and Victimization:** How do we find peace when healing miracles don’t happen? A sister shares with us her resolution—understanding healing and/or victimization lies in perspective.
- **Step Study on Step 12: Carrying the Message—No Apologies Necessary!:** It’s time to help wake up our heavenly siblings to the message of our elder brother, Jesus Christ.

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