The Official Newsletter of Heart t' Heart

April 2003

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 12 • Issue 4

# The Twelve Steps of Heart t' Heart

- We admitted we were powerless over compulsive addictive behaviors\* that our lives had become unmanageable. (Mosiah 4:5; Alma 26:12)
- Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. (Mosiah 4:9; Alma 26:12)
- 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)
- Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (Alma 15:17; Mosiah 4:2; Jacob 4:6–7; Ether 12:27)
- Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. (Mosiah 26:29; Alma 22:18)
- Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. (Helaman 3:35; 2 Nephi 31:19; Mosiah 2:20–21)
- Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. (Alma 36:18; Alma 38:8; Moroni 10:32; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 34:15–16)
- 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)
- 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)
- Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. (2 Nephi 4:18; 2 Nephi 10:20; Mosiah 26:30)
- 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)
- 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)

## Dearest Friends:

## **Rising Above the Scary Stuff**

Spring—the time of new beginnings and fresh starts: watching the flight of a newly born butterfly wing across my front lawn; inhaling the scent of daffodils and tulips pushing their way up from the cold, black dirt; waking up to a new day heralded by the chirping of returning robins; filling my lungs with the fresh, cool air that promises health and growth. But as I sit here thinking of spring, I find myself unable to focus on these positive feelings and messages spring usually brings to my heart. Instead, I am tempted to be frightened by the current events in nature, in the world, and in my community and to reach for one of my addictions to comfort (numb and distract) me.

This is how my thinking is jerked and twisted and tempted to go:

- The war in Iraq has begun. "Homeland Security" is tightening. This could blow up in our own backyard at any time. I guess I better go overeat or overspend or (fill in the blank for yourself)...
- They found Elizabeth Smart! What great and unexpected joy that she is alive and returned safely to her family. Let's rejoice and eat, spend...
- But she was abused in every possible way. How sad, I need to eat. Go buy something...
- Don't forget the regional and local challenges. Utah's snow pack is low; we'll be rationing water before spring is over. Maybe I should go eat, and then buy water...
- And on top of all of this, there are my own personal challenges—my missionary to pay for, my daughter's college education, dental bills, taxes. I can't handle it. I need to eat.

How irrational and without God my thoughts can be.

<sup>\*</sup>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**

Continued from page 1

Then someone says, "You just need to work your program harder." And I think, "Yeah! That's right! I do. I do. I'd better work my program harder. Read more scriptures, attend more meetings..." But even there I find no lasting peace. As soon as I leave the meeting, as soon as I get off the phone, as soon as I put down the scriptures...bam! It's still spring, 2003, this spring, this very challenging spring.

So what's with that? I know addictions don't work, but what does it mean when using the tools (working my program) isn't helping much either? Gradually, I've come to realize that I can use the tools in a way that makes them just another coping device—better than doing my addiction, of course—but still just a "half-measure." The only way "working my program" helps is if I do it for one purpose—to seek for evidence (the examples and testimonies of others) and assurance (the witness of the Spirit directly to my own heart) that God has a benevolent purpose in all things.

Conscious contact with that overarching, all-encompassing truth is the rock of revelation to which I can and must anchor myself as the winds and tides of the last days sweep through my life and across the planet. If we don't use the tools to this end, for this purpose to seek conscious contact with the truth and with the Spirit of Truth—they will only help up to a point. They don't have the power in themselves to be our salvation.

Believe me, in my twenty-two years of *practicing* these tools, I've tried it all—a half dozen addictions *and* working a super-dedicated

program: more meetings, more writing, more literature study, more sponsor calls. And while all those things are good as far as they go, it

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is that conscious contact, that counseling with the Lord in all my doings—in the use of the tools, as well as in my eating choices, my spending choices, —that is the only real answer.

Acknowledging that the good that comes to me from attending a meeting or talking to my sponsor is actually coming from the Lord is so important. If I don't acknowledge that it is the Lord who is administering to me through the gift of a willing sponsor, I am in danger of putting my sponsor in a role that he or she cannot fill. If I don't see Him as the *source*, if I forget that the tools of the program are actually *His* tools, if I think that more meetings or a different sponsor might do the trick, if I forget that the only One with power to recover and redeem me is my Savior, Jesus Christ, then I leave myself open to certain failure and a loss of abstinence.

I need to remember that this spring brings another Easter season, another invitation to remember the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He is the Creator of this earth and all that dwell therein.

It is Jesus Christ who paid the price to obtain the power to release Elizabeth Smart from the effects of her perpetrators' sins. It is also Jesus Christ who paid the price for the perpetrators' chance to go through a repentance and amends process (of some Divinely appointed length) that could—if they will accept it—cleanse them as white as snow.

It is Jesus Christ who can guide us through the dark days of war, whatever those days may bring. Peace may be taken from the earth, and I may be tempted to lose my peace, but always, when I turn to Him, His Spirit whispers peace. Only in His Spirit can I find the solace and serenity I need to refrain from running and hiding in my addictive behaviors.

I have only one thing to think of this spring, despite all the scary stuff happening around me: loving the Lord God with all my heart, might, mind and strength and seeking His counsel and comfort.

The days that are the very best for me are the ones where I say, "Lord, I give myself to Thee—my whole soul. Make me an instrument of Thy mind and will." My best days are when I look to God and live, not to what's happening anywhere on this earth. This is an application of the scripture that teaches us that to be "carnally minded" is death, but to be spiritually minded (take the eternal perspective) is life eternal—and gives us a portion, a taste of that life, even now. I pray we can all "work our program" with more dedication—not more dedication to our program, but more dedication to obtaining and retaining conscious contact with God. Happy Easter! Always!

—Colleen H.

## Working the Steps: Climbing the Step Nine Mountain

This summer I travelled to the west coast of Canada for a family get-together. My sister, who lives there, rented two cabins on a tiny lake—Magic Lake. It was quite beautiful. Unfortunately, the two cabins my sister rented were on opposite sides of the lake—one at the top of what I would call a mountain, and one at the bottom. I am from the middle of Canada. where the land is flat. My sister must have forgotten that people from the prairies don't climb mountains, especially when they are quite overweight.

I didn't want to cause a fuss, so I kept my mouth shut, gritted my teeth, and decided I would stay in the cabin at the bottom of the mountain for the entire week. This meant only one trek down the mountain at the beginning of the week, and then one trek up the mountain at the end of the week.

It soon became clear this would not be feasible, as I wouldn't be able to visit with everyone in the cabin at the top of the mountain, or go for walks, sight seeing, shopping or anything. Somehow I would have to climb that crazy mountain at least once a day, if not more.

Each time I had to climb the mountain, I would stand at the bottom, look up to the top, mumble under my breath words of a very negative nature towards my sister, grind my teeth, clench my fists, and begin the trek up. It felt almost impossible to me. By the time I got to the top, I was reeling, dizzy, huffing and puffing, and even more ticked than I was before I started.

After a couple of times going up and down, I began to pray that the

Lord would help me get up there and not die in the process. I still did the clenching of fists, gritting of teeth, and negative mumbling.

Then, one day before I started up that crazy mountain, and after I said my prayer, the Spirit whispered to me, "Don't look up." What? "Don't

When I turned to God, He showed me how to climb (step by step, line upon line, one day at a time) to the top with His help, His peace, and His power.

look up." Don't look up? "Don't look up." Okay?!

I started my trek up the mountain that day just looking at my feet and what was around my feet. I felt a sense of calmness and sureness. Step by step, I developed a rhythm in my stride, and before I knew it I was at the top. WOW! All because I didn't look up?!

The mountain climbing experience at Magic Lake has come to my mind several times since. There are many types of mountains in life, for example, Step Nine. I have dreaded this step. How could I ever face it?

As I approached Step Nine last month, and with the same sense of dread as usual, the words came to my mind again, "Don't look up, Mary. Just deal with what you have before you, go one amend at a time, and you will be there in no time."

Was the mountain at Magic Lake a coincidence? Is it possible

that way back then, Heavenly Father was preparing me for the challenge of Step Nine and for other challenges ahead?

I knew how high that mountain was. I knew it was going to be tough. When I gritted my teeth and clenched my fists and tried to do it on my own, I was left reeling, dizzy and numb when I reached the top. But when I turned to God, He showed me how to climb (step by step, line upon line, one day at a time) to the top with His help, His peace, and His power.

By the end of the week that mountain didn't seem so high. My legs were stronger, and I, a girl from the Prairies, had developed mountain climbing muscles!

I'm developing Step Nine muscles now. As I progress through my amends, I feel closer to God than ever before. I see my role in many of the experiences I felt were inflicted upon me. I recognize many lies that I have believed for much of my life which have given me a skewed impression of life. I see that I have passed along some of the sins of my "fathers." I feel a compassion for my parents and family as never before, and a love of others beyond anything that lives within my natural (wo)man. I may even thank my sister for renting the cabins where she did, on Magic Lake, last summer.

God is so good! The steps really work. The gospel really is true. I am learning to love life, and gaining a faint vision of who I am when I follow Him, when I listen, and when I obey.

—Mary S.

Heartbeats, April 2003

## Step Study: Correlating the Steps with Gospel Principles

My personal life was falling apart. I was pouring my heart out to my Heavenly Father on a daily basis and studying the scriptures regularly. I had spoken with my bishop. Counseling wasn't helping. I didn't know what else to do. In desperation, I asked my counselor if he could recommend any other approaches, something new. He asked if I had ever tried a 12-Step program. I had not. I was in so much pain, I was willing to try anything that might help. I attended my first 12-Step meeting soon thereafter.

Despite my desperation, I went with some trepidation. I knew only that 12-Step programs were spiritually based, and I was not willing to participate in anything that was not in harmony with the gospel. I was afraid that the 12-Step program might not be fully consistent with gospel principles. Nevertheless, I found some meetings near me that were appropriate to my situation and chose one to try. As I read the wording of the 12 Steps from a poster on the wall, I began to relax. Nothing appeared to conflict with the gospel.

I tried several different meetings, chose one where I felt comfortable to attend weekly, and began to "work" the Steps. As I applied what I was learning, I came to see that the 12 Steps are completely in harmony with the gospel. Deep down inside I had been afraid that if it wasn't a program sponsored by the Church, it couldn't be true or right. One day in Relief Society I learned an important principle that enabled me to let go of

that fear:

We believe in all good. If you can find a truth in heaven, earth or hell, it belongs to our doctrine. We believe it; it is ours; we claim it. (*Teachings of Brigham Young*, p.16)

With the help of the 12 Steps and the wonderful, loving people who work them daily, I have found a more structured way to live consistently with God's will for me.

As I studied the Steps and began to apply them in my life, I came to see the truths they contain. I found a remarkable correlation between the principles of the gospel and those of the 12-Step program. In fact, the Steps are really just a set of practical instructions for living the principles of the gospel on a daily basis:

Gospel Principle	<u>Steps</u>
Faith	1, 2, 3
Repentance	4, 5, 6, 7,
-	8, 9, 10
Holy Ghost	11
Missionary work	12

The gospel helps me to know and understand Heavenly Father's plan. It helps me to set eternal goals. The scriptures offer me sage and valuable direction and guidance on how to live the gospel. Prayer is a wonderful tool for learning Heavenly Father's will for me and coming to understand his love for me. A loving bishop can provide invaluable guidance and direction. Nevertheless, these tools alone were not enough to enable me to live my life in harmony with God's plan for me.

With the help of the 12 Steps and the wonderful, loving people who work them daily, I have found a more structured way to live consistently with God's will for me. Through the kind of humble prayer I learned in practicing Step 11, I have developed a closer and more loving relationship with my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I have a sponsor who I talk to regularly who helps me to be honest with myself and encourages me to continue my growth and recovery. I sponsor others who have less experience in the program than I have, showing them a path of recovery through reliance on "a power greater than themselves" and by "working" the Steps and applying the principles they embody daily. By working the Steps on a daily basis, I have found the serenity and peace that come from living the gospel—not just believing in it.

When I attended my first 12-Step meeting a decade ago, I had no idea I was embarking upon a spiritual journey that would help me find a way to walk with the Lord each day. I am so grateful that the Lord helped me to find what I needed to draw near to Him in a very real and incredibly rewarding way.

—Mira C., St. Louis, MO □

## **Twelve Step Programs**

There are many 12-Step programs. Here are some of the more established ones and their official web sites. One website that lists a number of additional sites is:

www.twelvestep.com/page2.html

#### Heart t' Heart

www.heart-t-heart.org An LDS 12-Step addiction recovery group

#### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

www.aa.org For alcoholics

#### Al-Anon/Alateen

www.al-anon-alateen.org For family members of alcoholics

#### **Adult Children of Alcoholics**

www.adultchildren.org
For those who grew up in
alcoholic or otherwise
dysfunctional homes

#### **Codependents Anonymous**

www.codependents.org For developing healthier relationships

#### **Debtors Anonymous**

www.debtorsanonymous.org For those who wish to stop incurring unsecured debt

#### **Emotions Anonymous**

www.emotionsanonymous.org For those experiencing emotional difficulty

#### **Gamblers Anonymous**

www.gamblersanonymous.org For compulsive gamblers

#### Gam-Anon

www.gam-anon.org For the family members, friends and loved ones of compulsive gamblers

#### **Nicotine Anonymous**

www.nicotine-anonymous.org For those who desire to live lives free of nicotine

#### **Overeaters Anonymous**

www.overeatersanonymous.org For recovery from compulsive overeating

#### **Survivors of Incest Anonymous**

www.siawso.org For survivors of incest or sexual

#### **Sexual Compulsives**

Anonymous www.sca-recovery.org For those seeking to end sexual compulsions

## Recovering Couples Anonymous

www.recovering-couples.org For couples who want to regain a sense of commitment and love in their relationship

#### **Hidden Treasures Foundation**

www.mentalhealthlibrary.info Maintains a huge library on general and LDS resources for various addictions and other mental health problems.

\*\*Inclusion on the above list does not mean that Heart t' Heart endorses these groups. This listed is printed for educational purposes only.

### From the Forum

The following comments are excerpted from postings on the Heart t' Heart forum. The forum is a great place to share and find support when you can't get to a meeting. You can find the forum on the internet at:

www.heart-t-heart.org/forum

Getting rid of addiction is a long road, but it is worth it and it is a great journey. There is so much to learn. I am grateful for the hardships in my life. And for my weaknesses. They brought me to a place...where I have had to come to my Savior and stay near Him.

[I am] so grateful for the answers to my prayers, for the tough times and the good. Learning to see, and feel, and know that God can and will consecrate ALL things for my best good. That through Him, enemies can become friends, misunderstandings can be changed into divine truth, and fear turned to faith.

After ruminating unsuccessfully on the problem, I decided to "walk the talk" and turn to the scriptures for guidance. ... The very first randomly picked verse my eyes fell on spoke straight to the topic. I was then led from verse to verse until my heart was filled with peace.

Was I led to an immediate solution to my problem? Not exactly. But I WAS led to a renewed faith in Step Three; peace and serenity in my heart based on confidence that the Lord will indeed guide me to a solution. By turning my life and will over to God, I can rest assured that He will guide me step by step to the answer.

If your prayer is sincere...
you will understand that prayer is an education.

-Seodor Dostoevski

Heartbeats, April 2003

## **Big Book Study: Unselfish Prayer**

Although this brother shares his thoughts comparing sexual addiction to alcoholism, any addiction can be substituted. Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book) is on Heart t' Heart's approved literature list.

or me, it really helps if I compare my sex addiction to alcoholism. This has been such a helpful analogy from the SA White Book, since I can actually "see" alcohol—unlike lust, which is less tangible and harder for me to understand. I think the same path of recovery applies. I saw tendencies in myself that were analogous to those of alcoholics. For example, before starting my recovery program, I used to hide stashes of porn (like bottles of alcohol) just for an emergency. I learned that I had to avoid all of the things and environments where I would lust, just like a recovering alcoholic has to avoid certain parties and bars.

Yesterday, I finally acted on a prompting that I have been having for several weeks now to read *Alcoholics Anonymous* (AA Big Book) as part of my recovery. I was impressed with something I believe has been keeping me from continued SA sobriety. The following is taken from "Bill's story" by Bill W., co-founder of AA (which has grown from the original two founders in 1935 to over two million members today).

I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure. (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, pg. 13)

I was always praying for my recovery for myself, for my own benefit. ...the Spirit testified that I need to pray for my recovery so I can help others, for their benefit.

I realized there were two key concepts I was missing in my prayers. First, I was always praying for my recovery for myself, for my own benefit. When I read the paragraph above, the Spirit testified that I need to pray for my recovery so I can help others, for *their* benefit. This struck me with such power. I had been asking for a blessing for myself. Then in my mind, I visualized myself, a priesthood holder, laying my hands on my own head and giving myself a blessing—how contrary to God's plan! Selfishness is the basis of Lucifer's plan. I need to ask God for recovery so I may become an instrument in His hands to help my brothers and sisters who also struggle with compulsive and addictive behaviors.

The second key concept I was lacking in my prayers was the

phrase, "as He would have me."
Typically, I have thought I already knew how I could best help others.
Thus, I would try to help others according to my own understanding—without praying to ask God how He would have me help them. I recently came to understand that part of what I was doing to "help" others was actually hurting others instead. My misguided efforts were not only a waste of my time, but were very counterproductive. I had to repent of doing "my" will.

Thus, I felt impressed that I need to first seek recovery for the purpose of helping others (acknowledging that all glory is God's), and secondly, seek God's will for HOW to help others (acknowledging that God has all wisdom). Once again, I see that I should follow Jesus' example of how to pray. I don't think the Lord's prayer was intended to be quoted verbatim, rather I feel He gave us the essential elements that our own personal prayers should contain.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Matt. 6:9-13)

Continued on page 7

#### **Unselfish Prayer**

Continued from page 6

I really think it is significant that the Lord said, "give us this day our daily bread," rather than, "give me this day my daily bread." Again, I don't think that "us" and "our" is praying selfishly. "Thy will be done" is the other element. That is the key. Lastly, the acknowledgement that the "power" and the "glory" are God's forever.

Thanks for listening. I really felt a desire to "share the wealth" that was freely given to me.

—Joe B. □

Of all the liars in the world, sometimes the worst are your own fears.

-Rudyard Ripling

## The Avocado

The other day I was making a salad, and as I was finishing up I decided to put an avocado in it. I cut the avocado in half and took the peel off. I then cut up the side that didn't have the pit in it and put it in the salad. I took the side that still had the pit in it and removed the pit. Sounds okay so far, but then I threw the pit into the salad and the avocado into the garbage.

I thought that this is what is often done with the gifts that the Savior gives to us. He offers us something wonderful that will fill the soul. All we have to do is to keep close to and listen to the Spirit as it instructs us, but instead we choose that which has nothing to offer us but sadness and throw

away the good fruit in favor of the pit.

Maybe that is why so many of us say that "life is the pits."

—CJS

## **New Meetings**

Please send meeting information changes to:

Heart t' Heart
P.O. Box 247
Pleasant Grove, UT 84062
Fax: (801) 796-0923
(888) 790-7040 (toll free)
Mon - Fri • 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (MST)
email: hthorder@hotmail.com

# March's GSB Contributions

Private Donations .....\$55.08

Editor's Note: Please remember, the opinions shared in *Heartbeats* are of the person sharing. We hope and pray that you will read, ponder and pray for direct inspiration and counsel from the Lord. Take what you feel confirmed in your own heart concerning the sharing and toss the rest.

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Heartbeats, April 2003

## We encourage reader contributions to Heartbeats. Ideas for articles:

- In-depth study/analysis of principles found in Steps or Traditions
- Personal experiences with the Steps, Traditions, Tools; how they work in your life
- Capturing from the scriptures, Big Book, He Did Deliver Me
- Open Sharing with positive recovery messages
- Program from the Prophets quotations from modern prophets with a "recovery" message
- Short quotes, thoughts or one-liners

Send articles to: Heartbeats P.O. 247, Pleasant Grove, UT 84062 hthorder@hotmail.com

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

- Dearest Friends: Rising Above the Scary Stuff. Even though this spring may bring challenges, turning to the Lord brings peace.
- Working the Steps: Climbing the Step Nine Mountain. The Lord guides us through difficult challenges, one step at a time and one amends at a time.
- Step Study: Correlating the
   Steps with Gospel Principles.
   The Steps are a set of practical instructions for living the principles of the gospel on a daily basis.

- From the Forum. Short quotes from our internet forum.
- Twelve Step Websites. A listing of some of the more established Twelve Step organizations and their official websites.
- Big Book Study: Unselfish Prayer. Studying Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book) aids recovery from all addictions and compulsive behaviors, not just alcoholism.
- Lifelines: The Avocado. Sometimes we throw away the good stuff and keep the pit.

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