

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,

Recovery Is Not Just for Addicts

As the world reels (literally) from the quake and the tsunami of December 26, 2004, and as people all across America deal with extreme weather conditions, and as violence mounts in every nation, it is plain that "recovery" is not just a concern of alcoholics or food addicts or sex addicts.

There are many who would say that the tectonic plates that moved on December 26 were nothing more or less than a natural phenomenon. They would say that the extreme weather is just part of a 40 or 70 or 100 year cycle. They would say that the violence is the result of man's "animal nature" exerting itself. They would laugh at those who sense something more happening—something deeper—something in the spiritual and emotional fabric of the world stretched to the breaking point.

Yet the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, received and declared by the Prophet Joseph Smith leaves no doubt of the spirit (or as some might say, the attitude or energy) that is falling over the earth.

For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground and shall not be able to stand. And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunderings, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds. And all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people. (D&C 88: 89–91)

One thing that cannot be denied is that never, never before in the history of the world have so many troubling, heart-breaking, gut-wrenching realities been consciously poured out upon such a large percentage of the earth's people due to the "eye-witness" technology so many have access to. The accumulative and collective anguish washes through our hearts and minds, our

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homes, and tears at the moorings of what semblance of security and sanity many of us are still trying desperately to maintain. It eats away at the heart of the younger generation, leaving them more and more destitute of any reason to hope for or believe in anything. The shadows of the Saturday evening of time lengthen and turn to a darkness that no earthly source of light can penetrate. Addiction to anything looms ever more appealing. Anything to ease the terrible stress of these days, where all things—and particularly all sad, tragic, terrifying things—are before our faces at once.

Where in all of this can we turn for peace? Whether the latest trauma we face is a tsunami that has swept 200,000 people to their death, or we have just discovered a loved one is addicted to porn. Where can we turn for hope when we try so hard to avoid falling into the despair of our own addictions—and yet another day passes without total abstinence?

The answer comes back with chilling finality: *nowhere*. The children of men and the entire planet we inhabit are moving steadily toward that state of total bankruptcy that addicts know only too well. The whole planet, along with all the souls of mankind residing upon it, is headed for what addicts call a bottom.

And I only know One who has the Power to bring that bottom up to meet a person (or

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a planet) who's plunging headlong into the insanity of self-destruction. It is my witness that there is one voice, in particular, that He waits to hear speak His Name with adoration and trust, who He waits to hear invite Him as her Beloved—and that one is *us*, the members of His Church, His Bride.

And angels shall fly through the midst of heaven, crying with a loud voice, sounding the trump of God, saying: Prepare ye, prepare ye, O inhabitants of the earth; for the judgment of our God is come. Behold, and lo, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. (D&C 88:92)

I admit I'm not much competition for the angels, but I cannot resist the joy that I feel to be able to testify to you that these very same principles of recovery that you are learning and applying in your personal lives are exactly the same

principles upon which each individual heart prepares to go out to meet our Beloved Savior. When we have allowed these truths to lead us through the process of coming unto Christ in our private lives and hearts, we have built ourselves upon the rock of His personal revelation to us—and we can stand filled with His Light for the sake of all who may yet choose to anchor themselves in His peace.

And now, my [Dearest Friends], remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall. (Helaman 5:12)

This is my testimony, my answer, to the difficult times we see and experience around us. It is in and through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that we can find peace. And once we find Him, that peace is abundant. It is enough to answer any trial.

—Colleen □

Embracing Pain

It's now 4 years for me on this path of recovery of my relationship with Jesus Christ. So many things have happened, there are no words to do them justice. I opened my heart to God one day four years ago, and life has been one wonderful adventure after another since.

About a year ago, the Lord invited me to bless every morsel of food I put into my mouth. By this I mean, I bless each meal and each snack before beginning to eat. This may not sound all that monumental to some, but it has helped me to realize how much food I was putting into my mouth without thinking, how many "little" mouthfuls of food I "unconsciously" ate during the day. It is no longer an effort for me to do this, but there are still times I forget.

A couple of weeks ago, I was preparing to have my morning snack. I had just finished my abdominal exercises, and I could feel my abs kind of aching. I remembered the pain these exercises sometimes cause while I am doing them, and then the

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conscious awareness I have of my abs for about half an hour afterward.

I began to bless my snack, and felt this change within me as I was saying words I have said far too many times in this circumstance. I felt the Spirit inviting me a little deeper into this prayer, and then heard these words (not from my mind) come from my mouth: "Father, I thank Thee for the exercises I have done, for the fact that I can do them, and for the pain that comes from them. I thank Thee for the pain, because I know it brings me to a better place." I sat up straight. Did I really say that? Well, the words came from my mouth, but they were given as a gift from the Spirit. There is no way I would ever have thought to thank the Lord for PAIN!!!!

As only the Lord can do, He taught me in two seconds what five hours of study couldn't have taught. I came to understand that *all* pain, including the physical pain that sometimes comes from exercise, is valuable and brings me to a better place. He gave me an appreciation for those things in my life that seemed so terrible and painful at the time, but, through Him, have brought me to a better place.

So much of my life has been spent trying to avoid pain. I have eaten, gossiped, shopped, taken drugs, numbed out any way I could, just to avoid pain. But in that moment, the Lord taught me to embrace it. Not to go looking for it, but when difficult times come, to try and remember that they will bring me to a better place.

How AWESOME is that! God sure is GREAT! Thanks for listening.

—Mary S. □

Power Tools or Hand Tools—Which Will It Be?

We have nine tools in the Heart t' Heart program. But, they're not "hand" tools. They're not tools you can get to work effectively using your own arm of flesh. These tools are power tools—and if they're not charged with God's power, they're virtually useless. The tools of Heart t' Heart won't work for you any better than any other tools offered through any other source—even the Church—if they aren't connected to God, and if they don't connect you to God.

—Colleen □

Alma 5: Heart Surgery

Recently in the scriptures, I have been doing some research on “heart surgery,” studying how to be an earnestly willing patient, with the Savior as the only approved providing Physician. In **Alma 5**, Alma rehearses the deliverance of Limhi and his people from bondage to the Lamanites by the power of the word of God:

Behold, he changed their hearts; yea, he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God. Behold, they were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word;... “And...the bands of death...were loosed, and their souls did expand, and they did sing redeeming love. And I say unto you that they are saved. (v. 7, 9)

Notice, it is *God* who changed their hearts. He is the only One with the power to do that.

Alma goes on to tell how each one of us can receive this mighty change of heart:

And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? (v 14).

We must consider Christ as our Father and go to Him, and be “willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us], even as a

child doth submit to his father.” (Mosiah 3:19)

Have ye received his image in your countenances? (v. 14)

We receive His image in our countenances by becoming His children in the sense of allowing Him to counsel with us, to parent us through our life’s experiences, and by doing His will.

Do ye exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you? (v. 15)

To exercise faith doesn’t merely mean to believe that Jesus is the Christ. Exercise is active. Exercise is getting involved, even sweating. But the kind of sweating we must do is to bring our sins and weaknesses to Christ and humble ourselves before Him. I don’t know about you, but bringing my sins before Him makes my palms perspire and my heart thump in fear.

Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins? (v. 27)

Keeping ourselves blameless before God sounds overwhelm-

ingly difficult! But I learned it does not mean we have to be perfect. In D & C 4:2, we read:

Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.

To stand blameless before God, we must love Him, and seek only to do His will. That’s what Christ did. He loved our Father absolutely, and always did our Father’s will.

The scriptures do not say we must wait to come to Jesus until we are cleaned of our filthiness, rather we are to come to Him after all we can do. We are not the Savior! Christ redeems us from our sins. We are to come to Him in our filthiness, and humbly allow Him to wash us white with His blood, shed personally for each one of us in the Garden of Gethsemane.

At the beginning of this year, I realized how great the Savior’s love for me is, as I remembered two photographs from my childhood. One photo was of all us children, the girls dressed in frilly new white Easter dresses and white shoes, the boys in white shirts and bow ties—clean, innocent, precious—ready to go to church. The other photo was taken after church. My sister was feeding my youngest brother a glass full of mud! First my father took the photo,

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laughing at the contrast only an hour later; then my mother put them in the bathtub, as they were dirty beyond what a mere washcloth could remedy.

I can imagine the Savior when we finally come to Him, all dirty from this life, helpless to remove all that mud ourselves. Perhaps He chuckles a bit at our humanness, at our common mistakes. He gently wipes the mud off our faces, sometimes putting us in the bathtub to get us clean. Then He changes our clothes and hugs us tenderly.

“Don’t worry,” He might say. “It will be all right. This is nothing a little soap and water (the blood of my atonement) can’t clean up.”

And so, we learn not to drink mud anymore, and to turn to our Jesus in love.

It is interesting that Alma is talking to the members of the Church here, to those who know the ways of righteousness, but who will not hearken to the voice of the Savior.

In verses 34 & 35, the Savior pleads with us to come to Him. He invites us, with arms of mercy extended, to come to Him by repenting. He promises not only to receive us, but to love us and to fill our lives freely with all the gifts that come from Him,

for He is the bread and the water of life. Jesus calls to each of us, to come unto Him. We must hearken unto His voice, learn to recognize it, know Him intimately through personal revelation (see v. 45–46), as He knows us.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, “What [receiving personal revelation] means to us is that we need religious experience, we need to become personally involved with God...What counts in the field of religion is to become a personal participant in it.” (Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *How to Get Personal Revelation*, *New Era*, June 1980, 50.)

Becoming personally involved with the Savior means coming to Him, giving away all our sins to know Him, trusting our sins to His mercy and allowing His grace, or power, to not only cleanse us from our sins, but to perform heart surgery on us—to literally change our hearts so that we no longer desire to do evil, and only seek to do His will. This is the kind of complete conversion to the Gospel that will cause us to sing the song of redeeming love and enable us to sit at the Savior’s table, calling Him our Jesus—our Friend

—Peggy □

Abstinence

...and because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish. (1 Nephi 1:14)

I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance. (1 Nephi 1:20)

Abstinence is the result of being “[made] mighty even unto the power of deliverance.” Abstinence is not a result of anything I/we do. It is a result of the Lord making me powerful even unto deliverance, due to my faith in Him.

This does not mean that I have faith in Him and then go figure out how to abstain and then I muster up power to abstain correctly.

This means that I have faith in Him—I make my faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, the main focus of my mental attentions and functions. Then *He* will *make* me mighty; then *He* will *give me* the power to abstain from my addictive, self-destructive, potentially defeating behaviors.

—Colleen □

New Meetings

Lethbridge, Alberta, CAN (AB-05 & AB-06)—Tuesday or Thursday, 7:00 p.m. West Side Stake Centre, 560 –Highlands Boulevard West, Room 103. Book Study: He Did Deliver Me. General Focus. Stan (403)320-2474; kadafamily@shaw.ca

Choctaw, OK (OK-01)—Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Poyner Psychological Services, 14453 S. E. 29, Suite B. Book Study; General Focus. Women only. Jeanie (405)245-3587; oklahoma12step@yahoo.com or randallwife@hotmail.com

Powerless Over the Love of Money

Something has to change. I just can't go on like this." I wept behind the safety of a locked door, my children squalling on the other side. This year was going to be different. I would keep track of the finances and pay tithing first. This year I would plan ahead, stay out of debt, spend wisely. No more would I steal money budgeted from one utility to cover the demands of another. This year would definitely be different.

I have made these promises to myself for so many years that I was finally forced to admit it was an addiction. It is hard to call it that. I mean, how could I be addicted to this? Money didn't taste good. Spending didn't kill brain cells. It's only money, so I thought. But for me, the "love of money" truly is the root of all evil. Like alcohol (for the washing of bodies), money has a valid function apart from being abused. But like alcohol, when misused, money can impact your life negatively.

Like all addictions, it started small. My first memories of money, shopping, or debt was wanting to go shopping with my mom as a child. Later my mom gave me money and sent me to the store alone. Sometimes the money she gave me wasn't enough, or I got confused and failed to buy a special sale item. But it was a challenge, and a thrill.

While we always seemed to be poor, I remember with puzzlement the day my mom

opened a notice that a mortgage on one of our properties was paid in full. My parents had money, they just did different things with it than the people I wished to be like. So by the time I was 12, money had already become a "cunning, baffling, powerful" force in my life.

When I was 22, I experienced a hypothyroidic episode, accompanied by a manic phase. I felt the world owed me some financial recompense and comfort. Fortunately, being hospitalized prevented me from acting out too much. It turns out that spending sprees and rash investments are diagnosis criteria of biologically based mental illnesses. When I came to apply this information in my 12 step recovery, it was of great help. Financial problems are often viewed as a moral problem, but can be part of a disease. Either way, however, recognizing it as an addiction and applying the principles of recovery are helpful.

Through most of my adult life I maintained denial of any problem. I thought I was in control. Money, I reasoned, was merely symbolic. It wasn't real. If it wasn't real, I didn't need to address it. However, for this unreal thing, I would juggle, hide and misrepresent (lie) on various documents. And year after year, my offering of money to the church would be paid when I felt I had extra, and not as a sacrifice.

My debting behavior

included using credit to pay other credit payments, and when my credit ran out, borrowing from family. I became combative toward my creditors and fought feelings of resentment toward my benefactors. I came to understand that this predictable hardening of my heart was the result of having betrayed my own sense of right. Trying to find someone to blame, I would turn on those who I had asked to help me.

All the while I maintained an illusion that I was better off than I was—the reverse of what my parents had done. This obsession with being "better off" caused me to judge those who seemed less fortunate than me. I wasn't perfect, but I was no beggar. And so I was startled one day by a verse I had read many times before in Mosiah 4:19: "For behold, are we all not beggars?"

I had always thought this a philosophical question, but this time it went straight to my heart. We *are* all beggars. We owe everything to the Lord. If we owe to other people or institutions, we are setting others in His place. The Prophet has counselled that a mortgage on a home may be necessary, but even in this purchase we are to exercise restraint. It is my hope that as I practice abstinence in this area—through an honest tithe, daily accounting, and not undertaking new debt—that the way out will be shown to me.

—Name Withheld □

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HEART T' HEART

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Online Meetings

To attend one of the online meetings go to:
<http://www.heart-t-heart2.org/chat>.
 (Note: New address.)

All are welcome to attend. If this is your first time, review the information on the regular Heart t' Heart webpage:
<http://www.heart-t-heart.org>.

OL-04—Sunday through Friday:
 Every morning, 6:30 a.m.–7:30 a.m.
 General Focus (MST).

OL-02—Tuesday, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA).
 General Focus. Book Study:
 HDDM. Open Sharing.
 Colleen (435)245-4744;
 rcolleen99@msn.com

OL-01—Thursday, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA).
 General Focus. Book Study:
 HDDM. Open Sharing. Mary S.;
 mtshaver@mts.net

OL-03—Saturday, 7:00-8:30 a.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA).
 General Focus. Book Study:
 HDDM. Open Sharing. Colleen
 (435)245-4744; rcolleen99@msn.com

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- 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

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