

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,

The Lord Will Comfort Us in Our Trials

To you who are used to reading Colleen's "love letters" to you, her many friends, this may come as a shock. This month's "Dearest Friends" is not being written by Colleen. I wish it were. If she were writing this, it would mean that she would be at home, but she is not. She is on a trip to visit loved ones on the East Coast. So it is left to me, her husband, to write this for her.

I am not embarrassed to admit that I miss her, and that has nothing to do with the assignment that has come to me to write this article. I miss her because I love her. She is my best friend, my companion, my sweetheart. But there is one thing that she is not—my sponsor.

Let me explain. For those of us who struggle with addiction, it may be quite a test if our loved one goes away for a time. Will we be able to keep our abstinence without the support of our spouse? Colleen and I have been married for almost 6 years now. And even before we were married, she taught me that I'd better not rely on her to keep me abstinent. Not that she wouldn't be a support to me, but I'd better not rely on her for the strength. There is only one source for that, and that is the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Because of what Colleen has taught me, I have learned to turn to my Savior for healing and rescue from temptation, and by now it is a pretty well established habit. So when it became clear that Colleen was going to be gone for three weeks, and I would be completely alone in our home, I had some things to think about, but I was not really afraid of being alone.

What about our Twelve Step slogan we abbreviate with "HALT?" "Don't get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired?" Am I able to avoid being lonely? I'll tell you the truth: as I write this, we are not yet halfway through the three weeks of

The Lord Will Comfort Us

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being apart. Yesterday morning was really hard for me. I was in tears. I miss my wife and I admit I am lonely. But am I too lonely?

Yesterday I knelt by the bed and pleaded with the Lord to be with me, to help me not feel too alone. I was tempted for a minute to question how faithful I was being. If I was really relying on the Lord, why was I feeling so lonely? I was reminded that while the Lord will lighten our burdens so they are bearable, it is not in the plan that He always take them away entirely.

Like the example of the people who followed Alma the Elder and found themselves in bondage to the Lamanites:

And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit

The same Lord who is comforting me in my temporary affliction will comfort all who come to Him.

cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:15).

I suppose the explanation that they did “submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” is a pretty important key, too. So while I was, in fact, lonely, I realized that as long as I rely on the Lord, I don’t ever have to be too lonely.

What a significant reminder to trust the Lord in whatever circumstance we may be in! I have to admit here that my little trial of having my wife gone for three weeks is nothing compared with some of the trials my friends in Heart t’ Heart are struggling to bear. I hear the stories of my brothers

and sisters whose marriages are barely surviving, sometimes ending, due to addiction. I hear the pleas of worried parents whose children are wandering in dangerous paths.

But I know that the same Lord who is comforting me in my temporary affliction will comfort all who come to Him, and reassure them that their affliction is also temporary.

“But a small moment” (D&C 121:7) is the phrase the Lord used in comforting the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail. Joseph obtained some relief when he was released from prison, but it was another 5 years before he was given his final release from the persecutions and afflictions of his life.

I pray that we can all be faithful and turn to the Lord with whatever our burdens are. I know He is good. I know He loves us all, without exception. And His grace is indeed sufficient.

—Phil H. □

H.A.L.T.—

Are you Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired?

Trusting God, Even in the Hardest Circumstances

...and they did treat me with much harshness; nevertheless, the Lord did suffer it that he might show forth his power. (1 Nephi 18:11)

This verse reminds me of the incident in the New Testament where the Savior's disciples quizzed Him about the man who had been blind from birth—whether his affliction was a punishment because of his parents or his own wrongdoing. The Savior's answer was, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: [in other words, this blindness is not a punishment] but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9:2)

Both of these verses imply that apparently God allows much hardship and affliction to go on in this world in order to eventually relieve it and thereby try to teach men of His existence and His power. In the case of the man who had been blind from birth, he was called upon to face this challenge from the very beginning.

But the afflictions of Nephi were not the result of a birth defect. They were the result of the dysfunctional behavior of his family members! Nevertheless, Heavenly Father allowed these things to go on for the same reason that He had sanctioned the blind man's trial and suffering—so that in His own time, when He knew it had gone on sufficiently long

God is keeping track of all this [suffering], allowing only as much evil as it takes to "get the job done."

enough, He could, through His power, make it right and thus entreat and hopefully influence His children to recognize and desire His love and way of life.

What can we learn from all this? That God knows what is going on in our lives and that He is not allowing it to happen because He enjoys watching us suffer or because He wants to punish us. He is allowing the situation to "ripen" until the time when He knows it has served its purpose.

It is an especially difficult situation to bear when the innocent suffer so that the guilty can learn. We want to cry out, to rage about the unfairness of it. But to do that denies the character of God. It is to say that we know better than God. Obviously, that is not the case.

Therefore, what can we do in the face of suffering? Change what we can and accept what we can't. And have the faith and trust in our Heavenly Father that there is a reason for the difference—there is a reason why we cannot change everything we would like to change.

Both times, in the blind man's birth defect and in

Nephi's inflicted suffering, God assures us that there was a good reason for what was happening. We can find peace in this assurance. God allows evil and suffering in order to accomplish righteous purposes. If we can, let us strive to change the evil or the causes of suffering in this world. We need not sit back silently and allow it to continue when we can stand forth to stop it. However, at the same time, let us trust that whatever He will not allow us to change exists for a good cause and He will make it all right in His own due time.

Nevertheless, I did look unto my God, and I did praise him all the day long; and I did not murmur against the Lord because of mine afflictions. (1 Nephi 18:16)

Nephi, as in so many other things, sets the example for us of the correct attitude. He did not whine and cry. He did not "curse God and die"—or even wish to. He "looked unto" God. In other words he *trusted* God. Even more than that, he took it a step further and *praised* God! He exercised his freedom to choose how he would feel and act by choosing to be positive and faithful, even in the face of undeserved persecution from his brothers. This is our challenge while suffering, to praise God and murmur not in

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Heavenly Father—Our True Power

the face of that which we cannot alleviate immediately.

How many times in our lives have we used the undeserved wrongful treatment of us by others as justification to turn away from God. “It’s not fair!” seems to be our universal reaction. Righteous anger—“I have a right to be angry. What did I do to deserve this!” And thus, in our lack of trust and lack of faith in Heavenly Father’s purposes, we do not “look unto” Him, but rather away from Him, all the while justifying our choices to ourselves.

I have come to realize that I must learn to accept things I can not change as being just the way they need to be. I have come to believe that there is a benevolent, personal, wise and loving God who is keeping track of all this, allowing only as much evil as it takes to “get the job done.” Remember, the “job” that He is obligated to get “done” is the teaching and preparing of His children for Godhood—and the single biggest preparation needed is that their inner characters be purified of defects; of self-will, self-pity, and self-righteousness.

Let us trust in God. Let us love Him. Let us, with Nephi, grow in faith in His wisdom and kindness that we may even come to a desire to praise Him.

—Colleen □

This morning I was writing about the fact that so often I don’t feel plugged in to the Spirit. I must be a visual learner, that seems to be how the spirit teaches me. The image came to me of a giant power cord that goes from my body, or spirit, to a big outlet where I receive power. The outlet is Heavenly Father, but I am the one who takes hold of the cord and pushes in the plug. Sometimes it can be heavy and awkward, and I am weak and lose my grip.

Once I am plugged in, I receive the power necessary to combat the problems that come my way. I sometimes convince myself that *my* trials are not so important and that I should not “hog” the power when others need it so much more desperately than I do. For example, someone struggling with the death of a loved one or a debilitating illness is so much more important than my inability to not eat chocolate!

Sometimes I am ashamed to ask for help. I look around for a smaller power cord, one that promises to give me help and seems easy for me to handle on my own without bothering the Lord. I know it sounds dumb as I write it, but that is how I feel at times.

Anyway I was really have a field day with these thoughts and was trying to convince myself that the Lord thinks my problems are important too when I had an interesting insight. What if Heavenly Father

and the Savior don’t judge our use of or need for their power? What if one need is just the same as another? Like the power company, when you plug in you get the power, whether you need it to run a heart monitor or a hair dryer.

Heavenly Father puts His power out there, all the time, full force. My use of His power it doesn’t take power from anyone else. There is plenty and some to spare—no worry of a brown-out or power shortage. The only way I can lose out is if I choose not to plug in.

Now I need to spend some time pondering the things that prevent me from reaching for that plug and pushing it in, or what it is that I do to make it come loose. Praying, scriptures, writing, temple attendance, exercise, eating healthy, pondering—all help to get plugged in and stay that way. Looking for an easier way, getting distracted, complaining, and eating poorly are ways that unplug me. In this view, eating healthy is not about food or losing weight, it’s about staying plugged in to the Lord’s power.

I know this is a simple analogy, but it helps me to understand the power of the Lord. And I know that He is patient and teaches me in ways that I can understand. I just need to slow down long enough to appreciate Him and reach for His outstretched hand.

—Penny □

From the Forum: How Do You Keep Recovery On the Front Burner?

Recovery takes time, and a lot of it. Colleen says, “We must be willing to change our level of effort—we must become willing to go to any length. If we’re not willing, there is nothing God can do for us.” (*He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*, p. 11)

What do you do when life’s demands seem to be piling up on all sides? How do you keep your recovery and healing uppermost in your day and in your mind? How do you put the Lord first in your life during those times when others need all of you?

—Wendy R

My involvement in my recovery *is* my life. It *is* my life line, and it *is* my every breath. My addiction is terminal—I WILL DIE if I DO NOT place my personal relationship with Jesus Christ FIRST.

To me, it is just as serious as if I had a terribly aggressive form of cancer. I *must* do whatever it takes to live, and whatever has to fall by the wayside, just has to fall, because I am in the fight of my life!

For me, this has meant pulling away from many, many things that kept me busy, and preoccupied for years. It has meant toning down my overenthusiastic and prideful dedication to my calling. This has been very humbling for me, and that is good thing. It has

"When we put God first in our lives, everything else falls into place."

—Pres. Ezra Taft Benson

meant saying “no” many, many times, when saying “yes” would have been much easier. It has meant pulling back from several relationships. The bottom line, for me, is that it has meant that I am NOT indispensable, and I need to be more humble.

My battle with addiction is serious, and I have found that others will take it only as seriously as I take it. My “chemotherapy” is spending time with Jesus Christ, and doing what He guides me to do. I need that every day. Addiction is death, no matter how you cut it. How important is life?

—Mary S.

For the past 15 years, I committed every part of me to service in the church and doing everything I was asked to do. I can relate to “being so busy” in church service that I actually distanced myself from building a relationship with our Father in Heaven.

I am a busy mom with 4 children, have a very active church calling and am an addict

that needs recovery! My 16 years of “being busy” did not bring my life peace.

Right now, the children are out of school and my time is limited. However, as I place recovery at the top of the list, I am realizing that the Lord will compensate my commitments and help me build my relationship with Him. I seem to have *more* productive hours in my day. The gloomy hours I wasted in depression, the idle time I spent with my mind racing with negative thoughts, the lies that Satan consumed me with, etc. are now less than before I started the recovery process again.

For practical application, I have been going to the park with my children. During our time there, I have packed my recovery books and journals. It doesn’t work every time, but I can benefit from the 15 minutes or so I have to enjoy watching my children play, leave the chores behind me, and read my scriptures. I don’t expect too much from the experience, but the least bit I can get in has kept my mind moving forward in healthy ways for myself.

—T.J.

I try to connect with the Lord every morning, as Colleen counseled in *He Did Deliver Me*, but I have to admit that some

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Keeping Recovery on the Front Burner

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mornings other needs seem to cut short my time with the Lord and I may not get my scripture time in. In those cases, I still take time to pray and counsel with the Lord, because He is the foundation of my recovery. Without recovery, I am useless—I have nothing to offer others. And without God, I have no recovery. I heard a 12 Step slogan once that said “Abstinence has to be our number one priority.” I struggled with that for awhile, but today I read that as saying exactly the same thing President Benson said: “When we put God first in our lives, everything else falls into place.”

In all fairness, I have to admit my children are grown, and I have more say over my time than I used to, but it is amazing how many things can come up to push personal recovery work aside. I am learning that I have to say “no” to some of those so I can maintain my connection with the Lord, or nothing else really matters.

—Phil

I also struggle with time! I have four children who are all active and busy. I work part time and am a counselor in the RS presidency. I am tapped out. Here’s what I have learned—My recovery needs to come first because through my recovery I am gaining a relationship with

my Savior. Obviously basic needs like food and shelter come before this but as far as my attention and time—it’s recovery first, then my husband and children. They are far better off with a healthy, busy mom than a strung out, trying to serve the whole ward, can’t get it together mom—which is who I used to be. It is hard to feel stretched this thin, but I can testify that when my recovery is put aside—even in the name of serving others—I suffer and my family suffers.

—Amanda

For years, I’ve heard Colleen say, “I put God first in my life, by putting Him first in my day.” After 15+ years, I finally got it. I get up in the mornings and first

thing, I pull out my scriptures and my journal and I start to capture. This puts my recovery on the front burner. Sometimes during the day, it gets pushed back, but first thing the next morning, I consciously move it back to the front.

—KB

New Meetings

Pocatello ID (ID-15)—Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Quail Ridge Assisted Living Cntr, chapel; 797 Hospital Way. Men only. Book Study/Writing: Clean Hands, Pure Heart. Eric (208)233-0191; br1950@cableone.net

14th Annual Heart t’ Heart Conference

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“Now is the time and day of your salvation; and therefore, if ye will harden not your hearts, immediately shall the great plan of salvation be brought about unto you.” —Alma 34:31

July 15 & 16, 2005

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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;
colleenh99@comcast.net

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:
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 (435)245-4744; philh22@comcast.net

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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

Send articles to: Heartbeats
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What’s inside this issue of Heartbeats...

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- **Heavenly Father—Our True Power.** Finding true power in our lives through our Heavenly Father.
- **From the Forum: How Do You Keep Recovery On the Front Burner?** Several answers to this often asked question, taken from the Heart t’ Heart forum.
- **14th Annual Heart t’ Heart Conference: July 15 & 16, 2005 at UVSC, Orem, Utah.**

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