

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,

Weaving Threads of Fellowship

If you haven't been to the Heart t' Heart online forum pages yet, you're missing some of the most amazing energy of recovery available in our fellowship. There are posts from newcomers looking for hope and the power to overcome their challenges, and there are posts from those who have been in recovery for a few days, weeks, months, and yes, even years.

Over the last few days a "thread" (an ongoing conversation) has emerged between several of the brethren who post regularly on the forum. Their exchange of moral and spiritual support—as they share their sincere insights and feelings with each other—remind me of the Sons of Mosiah who, having repented of their lost and fallen ways, reached out to strengthen their brethren. I hope the following correspondence between recovering brethren will warm your heart and open the way for you to know miracles are happening in our midst.

The thread began with this post on October 17, 2005, which the author called "The Honeymoon."

Yesterday I went back and read the posts I had made from last November and December. I also read many of my entries in my own recovery journal (which were very few and far between for the last five months or so). I saw something in what I read that I wonder if others have experienced as well.

For me, there was a "honeymoon period" when I first became acquainted with the Twelve Steps and started truly seeking for Jesus to change my heart. For a period of about three months or so the change was dramatic. It was exhilarating. It almost seemed too easy, too simple. I wondered how anyone could ever slip after feeling such a change of heart. Everything was going so well. My relationship with my wife was better than it had been in years. I felt on top of the world.

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I think the Lord was blessing me (and my wife) with a honeymoon period to help me see what was possible—to give me hope. He gave me a taste of what it could be like so when things got tough I would have something to hang onto; I wouldn't just give up like I had in the past.

It's almost like the stages of love. The infatuation stage is wonderful, but eventually reality sets in. The infatuation fades and gives way to something less flashy, but truer and deeper, if we nurture it properly. If we don't nurture it properly it can fade into nothing.

Well, with me the infatuation stage lasted about two or three months. Then reality set in. Family problems became extremely stressful. My business took a nosedive and became very stressful. My wife and I became distant again, in some ways even worse than before I began recovery.

I continued attending Heart t' Heart regularly and praying regularly, but my prayers lacked passion and faith. I neglected my morning devotionals, journaling, capturing, working the Steps. I began to fall into the same trap of blaming my wife for my troubles (I kept those thoughts to myself. Why didn't I take those feelings to the Lord?)

So, although I have still maintained sobriety better than I have in years, I recognize that I have begun to try to do it myself again. I haven't been honest

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It's that simple.**

with the Lord with my thoughts of inadequacy, of frustration, of impatience, of weariness.

After a slip in May and again in August, I am reviewing the last 11 months and trying to find my way back to the peace that I felt when I posted back in December: "I had begun to think that I would never be able to testify that I knew that Christ was my Savior. Now I want to shout it from the housetops."

I so want to have those passionate feelings for my Jesus again!

As I quit using the quality of my relationship with my wife as a measure, so-to-speak, of how I am doing personally; as I continue trying to humble myself and let Jesus take control; as I pray for patience to seek recovery on the Lord's timetable, not mine; as I seek recovery for myself, not for anyone else; as I seek recovery, even if it doesn't improve my relationship with my wife; as I sincerely seek to know the

Lord's will for me and try to carry that out—I have hope that I can find peace again. The peace that I once felt. The peace that only He can give.

—JF

Shortly after this posting, PH posted this reply to JF:

Boy do I relate to your comments about a Honeymoon period in early recovery work. I experienced it and I have seen it in many others as well.

I don't think it's really a matter of the Lord giving us a taste of something and then taking it away. I think many of us misunderstand the word "work" in the phrase "work the program." There is work involved. It is the work we do to keep us close to the Lord. I find if I don't stay close to Him, I lose the blessing of His power in my life to keep me abstinent and at peace. But it wasn't Him who moved, it was me.

It's one thing to find the program and see the miracles that can happen in one's life, and it's another thing to settle in and make these things a part of every day life. I had a weight loss of about 40 pounds after I turned my food addiction over to the Lord—but then I took it back and the weight with it. I am grateful that the Lord has given me the willingness to try again and things are starting to change.

Another thing that happens, I think, is that we see results from doing Steps 1–3 and we

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Weaving Threads of Fellowship

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think we have finished the program. But the acting out is only the symptom. The real disease isn't addressed until Steps 6 & 7 when we surrender our character defects to the Lord. That is where the real change of heart happens for most of us. We enjoy blessings at the first, but don't realize how much more there is to be had.

—PH

JF then replied to PH:

Thanks, PH. You are right. I realize it is me who has moved away from God (although I still feel closer to Jesus now than at any time in my life before I began sincerely seeking recovery).

But you are right. It is hard work to "work" the program. It sounds so easy on the surface to just "let go and let God." But in reality, it is very hard work to relinquish my pride, my resentments, and my ego to the Lord. Having reviewed the last 11 months, I realize that the feelings of closeness I have with Jesus correspond closely to the

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amount of time I put into nurturing that relationship.

Please Lord, help me to humble myself before Thee, that I might feel Thy love and peace as I did a few months ago. Please help me to feel Thy joy, if not in place of, at least in spite of, my burdens.

—JF

A day or so later, SH added his comments to the thread:

Thank you both for the thoughts in this thread, they have touched my heart. It reminded me of a scripture:

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will

come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Rev. 3:20)

Often, I get involved with "life" and don't want to be interrupted by that knocking. Many times I've grown tired of resisting the knocking, so I have run into the back room, closed the door, turned up my music and delved in my addiction. Somehow, I thought that I could find happiness without Him. If He would just stop knocking, then I wouldn't be bothered. The knocking became harder to hear, being covered by all my distractions, but it was always there, pricking my conscience.

Finally, I've opened the door. Why in the world did I wait? Life with the Lord is better than I could have imagined. Not easy, just better.

Those are my thoughts. Another day of positive sobriety.

—SH

PH then posted again:

In Alcoholics Anonymous they have a saying: "If you want

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When we do the best we are capable of and allow the Lord to guide our lives, apparent setbacks often set us on another course for our own good.

—Elder James M. Dunn

what we have, do what we did.” I have found it very helpful to rephrase that for myself: “If I want what I had (but seem to have lost), I need to do what I did to get it before.”

When I get to a place where I seem to be struggling more than I had been, I invariably find that what I am missing is time with the Lord. It takes time to capture the scriptures, but most importantly, time to converse with Him in my journals, and not with just me talking—but giving Him a chance to counsel me. That means I have to exercise the faith that I really *can* hear His words to me, and that faith is usually evidenced by my willingness to write the Lord’s words to me in my journal. When I do this, it *always* helps, and I find myself closer to Him and the peace returns. Simply put, He is where the peace is, so if I want peace, I have to come where He is. It’s that simple.

This isn’t the end of the thread, or should we say “life-line,” that these good men are extending to each other and to all the rest of us, no matter what our addiction may be. As we listen to them share “heart to heart,” our hearts are strengthened. Thank you, brethren. Your fellowship is a blessing to us all.

—Colleen H. □

**Editor’s Note: Posts were edited for space and content.*

Using the Twelve Steps

So many times we limit the usefulness of the Twelve Steps to addictions or compulsive behaviors. Over the years, I have found that these steps are very useful in many other areas of my life.

Job Loss: Getting laid off is not an event we have much control over and it’s not something we would choose. A thorough inventory can help us to see if we contributed to the job loss. It frees up energy that we can use to find a new job. Through conscious contact, the Lord can guide us to another position.

Dealing with the decline of elderly parents: As their mental abilities decline, our parents definitely become unmanageable. We have no control over their behaviors. Prayerfully taking the steps for this situation can show us where and how we’re adding to the problem and what to do differently. It helps us to see whether our actions are helpful or codependent. Conscious contact helps us make the hard decisions, whether to have them live with us or whether they would be better served in assisted living or a nursing home. (This works with your children too.)

Hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters: I don’t think anyone actually believes they can “manage” the weather, but sometimes I think we believe if we prepare well

When I look at the challenges in my life with a Twelve Step perspective, I am able to find a measure of peace in every situation.

enough, that preparation will somehow prevent us from experiencing the discomfort and stress of the situation. It doesn’t. The steps can help us realize that God loves us. Establishing conscious contact with the Lord assures us that we have done what we need to do to prepare, and that we can trust him to support us through the crisis. It also gives us much needed peace and serenity, making the burden of the situation feel lighter to bear.

Business Decisions: As a business owner or manager, we sometimes feel that we should be able to control the “bottom line.” But no matter how hard we try, we just can’t force people to purchase and use our product or service. The Twelve Steps can teach us how to let go of the ups and downs of the market and to trust the Lord to help us succeed or to sustain us through a “learning” situation.

I have found that if I look at the various challenges and discomforts in my life with a Twelve Step perspective, I am able to apply these principles and find a measure of peace in every situation.

—Name Withheld □

My Safe Deposit Box

I know some of you don't have access to a computer and aren't able to enjoy the wonderful sharing that goes on in the online meetings and on the forum pages. For that reason, I must occasionally share the blessing with you of reading such posts as the one that follows.

The best part of the Savior working in my life is to realize that even on my best days—and those “best” days are but the tiniest foreshadowing of the love He offers—He is capable of giving me so much as I come unto Him and place my burden on His shoulders!!

For most of my life, I have felt that laying my burdens on someone else's shoulders was a major cop out, like I was being lazy or something or trying to get out of doing the work myself somehow!!

But I have come to know in the night watches when it is just me living inside my head, and the temptations come my way (especially when I am tired), that if I cry to the Lord and ask Him to fight the battle for me—those are the words I use—that placing my burden on His shoulders is the only thing He has ever asked me to do. By so doing, I am accomplishing His will for me. I am helping Him bring the plan of salvation to pass in my own life. I am participating in the program as He has revealed it—not my own prideful hybrid.

If I had a safe deposit box to protect my knowledge, and I was about to lose the knowledge I have, I would put this truth into that box: We can place our burden upon His shoulders and it is okay.

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In no way, shape or form does this mean we are being lazy, cowardly or weak. (Well, we *are* weak, that is true). We are doing what the Lord wants us to do! We are being strong in the Lord by so doing! On the surface this transference appears to be a paradox, but once you experience it for yourself, it makes total sense!

This is a very personal thing. It is between you and the Lord. You are asking Him directly to remove a burden from you that you cannot carry. When you ask this of Him, it is Him doing it.

I am amazed that the Savior wants to have this kind of personal interaction with me. It

speaks of His deep love for me—a love I never dreamed I could experience or find! But I testify it is real! In His name, amen!

—Tom

When we post on the forum pages, the program doesn't allow for italicizing, so we usually resort to using capitals. Throughout this thought, Tom capitalized many of his words. And you might smile if you counted the number of times Tom uses exclamation points.

Now, don't feel obligated to capitalize words and use exclamation points when you come to the forum. My purpose in mentioning this is a hope that you'll get some feeling for Tom's joy and excitement at finally trying the “grand experiment” of “Letting go and Letting God” and feeling God burst into a huge smile.

“Finally,” He must sigh in gratitude. “Thank you, Tom, for letting Me fulfill my promise to you, made before the world was, to save you.”

I remain ever in awe as I am blessed to watch people come to Christ and receive His grace and awake to the Father's goodness and mercy in and through His Beloved Son. Thanks, Tom, for your testimony.

—Colleen 

**Editor's Note: Post was edited for space and content.*

Catch a Falling Star

Those of you who know me know that I love the scriptures. I don't think that there is anything more fantastic than slowly feasting on the word of the Lord, through the prophets.

I am a slow reader to begin with, so a relaxed, unhurried style suits me just fine. I take time to write and think and counsel with the Lord and allow the Lord to counsel with me through His Spirit, and I am never disappointed. I am always well fed.

I look up words in the dictionary for greater understanding of meaning. In my ward I am known for carrying around my little electronic dictionary with my scriptures. I search cross-references and I record in my journal the word of the Lord, to me, as I study.

This way of coming unto Christ has been a great blessing to me. It has awakened in me a love and appreciation of Jesus Christ that has literally transformed my life and my appreciation for His gospel.

I want to share with you the truth that the latest challenge issued by President Hinckley presented a great challenge for me. Last week I wrote in my journal: "President Hinckley has challenged all members of the Church to read the entire Book of Mormon by the end of the year. To accomplish such a task I have to read six pages a day. I am doing it, but I do not like it at all. I feel like I am being

The Lord [has] reminded me that the quick read is a great opportunity to go "star gazing" in the scriptures. Now, instead of bemoaning the quick trip through God's word, I find myself saying: "There's another one. Wow, that was beautiful!"

asked to eat Thanksgiving dinner in five minutes."

In the last few days I have used my Book of Mormon CDs to help move me along. Today I finished up 2 Nephi, and as I listened and followed along I was amazed at the number of verses I was familiar with in my six pages of reading.

For ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ... Press forward with a steadfastness in Christ...Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ...Feast...The words of Christ will tell you all things what you should do...I glory in plainness...in truth...in my Jesus...

These are verses I have come to love. They have become beautiful to me. As they whizzed by today a new picture came into my mind.

I recalled our late-summer family trip to Yellowstone. After an evening rain, the sky cleared and we were in a privileged position to view a wonderful meteor shower. "Did you see that one? Oh, look! That was a bright one! Wow!" We must have exchanged comments like that for an hour or more before settling into our tents.

Today, just as I began to feel frustrated over not being able to catch a verse "and put it in my pocket" the Lord reminded me that the quick read is a great opportunity to go "star gazing" in the scriptures. Now, instead of bemoaning the quick trip through God's word, I find myself saying: "There's another one. Wow, that was beautiful!"

—Nan □

New Meetings

Birmingham AL (AL-01)—Saturday, 7:30 a.m. LDS Meetinghouse, 2768 Altadena Rd. Book Study: He Did Deliver Me. General Focus. Bell (205) 542-1312; bnw@aju.edu

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HEART T' HEART

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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.

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).
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- 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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- **Using the Twelve Steps.** When I look at the challenges in my life with a Twelve Step perspective, I am able to find a measure of peace in every situation.
- **My Safe Deposit Box.** If I had a safe deposit box to protect my knowledge, and I was about to lose the knowledge I have, I would put this truth into that box: We can place our burden upon His shoulders and it is okay.
- **Catch a Falling Star.** A member shares her initial feelings of frustration about following President Hinckley's Book of Mormon challenge and how the Lord teaches her the blessings of the *quick read*.

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