

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

April 2007

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 17 — Issue 4

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 the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. (*2 Ne. 10:24; Omni 1:36; 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, 24, 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. (*Mosiah 27:36-37; Alma 5:7; Moroni 7:3*)

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Dearest Friends,

Recently, on the online forums John posted some lyrics from a song by Kenneth Cope. By the time I had finished John's post, I knew it was the time and place to share one of the most powerful testimonies I had ever received from the Lord. Here's the response I wrote.

John,

Thank you so much for your post of Kenneth Cope's song. In particular, these words pierce my heart and bring me to tears instantly.

My poor Jesus,
I'm so sorry to make you die.
But please, for me Jesus, die.

Their impact is so immediate and so piercing because they remind me of a "vision" (in my mind's eye, in the eyes of my understanding) the Lord gave me once, many years ago. I was sitting at my desk, pondering over the testimony of King Benjamin in Mosiah 5, that I must become a child of Christ, and suddenly I was remembering the imagery portrayed in Mosiah 15:10-12. As I turned to it quickly to reread it, I "heard" it in this manner:

10 And now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? (His offspring, his children.) Behold, I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed. And now what say ye? And who shall be his seed?

11 Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard (with their hearts, not just their ears) the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people (including themselves despite their sins), and have looked forward to that day (the day of his coming into their lives one-on-one, personally) for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God.

(Dearest Friends, continued from p. 1)

12 For these are they whose sins he has borne (because they let Him bear them); these are they for whom he has died (because they asked Him to, pleaded with Him to), to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed?

As the words went through my mind a "picture" began to appear in my mind, in "the eyes of my understanding," as President Joseph F. Smith put it in D&C 138:11. It was like a snippet of a video clip in my imagination in which I saw myself, standing in at the back of the crowd—the mob, really— who were crying out "Crucify him!" over and over. At first, I cowered and cringed against the wall at my back. Tears were streaming down my face. And then, in shock, I realized that I was whispering the very same words the crowd was shouting, but with one huge difference. I wasn't addressing my words to Pontius Pilate. I was addressing my words to our Heavenly Father. My words were not borne from a heart filled with rejection and misunderstanding of who Jesus was, but with complete comprehension that if I did not agree to the plan that required Him to be offered as a sacrifice for my sins, I would remain forever in my fallen state and never be able to return to my Home in heaven.

As this instant of vision and of personal, lived understanding seared through me, I put my head down on my desk and sobbed as I realized that this was the prayer I had to offer up to the Father, so that I might become His (the Savior's child, His "seed"), . . . so that I could return to Heaven through His Name and Power (as Benjamin taught in Mosiah 5), so that I could go home to my original Father in Heaven (and my Eternal Family.)

Even at this moment, as I share these words and personal realities, I am reduced to tears. I cannot come near this sacred truth--shocking as it still feels to my soul--without being crushed with reverence for "my Jesus," and for our (mutual) Father Who sent Him to do this very deed for me.

When this kind of conversion sinks into one's heart, the living of the outward performances (the law) is swallowed up in the Spirit of Love--overwhelming love that brings you to your knees not in duty to God, but in knee-buckling awe and adoration for Them

both--Father and Son (and of course, the precious Holy Spirit that quickens our minds and lifts our imaginations as on eagle's wings.)

I am grateful beyond adequate words for the rolling forth of the LDS 12 Step recovery movement. It is the Lord's own testimony to me that these 12 principles enhanced and empowered by the Restored Gospel, have the power to cleanse us all, one heart at a time, and establish Zion (the pure Love of Christ) in each heart---and bring to pass the adoration of the Bride (the members of the Church) for "her" Bridegroom.

I guess this is my attempt to sing "the Song of Redeeming Love" at this Easter Season.

I hope, John, that you and anyone else who reads this sharing, will know that they can take what feels good and true to them, what ignites love for God and for Jesus Christ in their hearts, and leave the rest.

Your Sister in Christ,
– Colleen H. ☐

2007 Heart t' Heart Annual Conference
"Continue in My Love"

(From John 15:9)

July 13 & 14, 2007

at

UVSC, in Or em Utah

Registration will begin soon. Please plan to come!

2007 HEART T' HEART CONFERENCE PLANS

Hi Everyone,
Thank you so much for all of your input and thoughts into the upcoming Heart t' Heart conference. We are grateful for every thought and suggestion! Things are moving along with our planning and we want to keep it that way, so keep your thoughts and ideas coming.

We're really feeling an invitation from the Lord to involve Him in our planning and in the actual conference. These are a few of the things we are bringing to the Lord in prayer:

We pray:

1. That all who attend will come prepared for a feast of the Spirit of Recovery - or in other words, a feast of the Spirit of the Lord.
2. That all will feel safe in the spirit of honest sharing that occurs at the conference.
3. That a feeling of trusting the Lord in ALL things will be what dwells in the hearts of those who attend, and that this feeling will extend past the time of the actual conference and into our everyday lives.
4. That a feeling of the Love of Christ will permeate all of the meetings, and that those who attend will go away with a deepened understanding of the incredible love Christ has for us, and a more intense and conscious love for Him.

We ask you to join us in praying for the Lord's guidance, and for a meaningful conference.

Feel free to contact us at mtshaver@mts.net or peggybarrus@gmail.com.

Much Love, in Christ,
--Mary S. & Peg W. ☐



LOOKING BACK, SEEING AHEAD, FINDING REASON TO REJOICE

I have been doing some Family History work, lately, that has caused me to really ponder just what recovery means. You see, my family had a history of abusive behaviors toward each other, though it wasn't seen as such by them. They were just repeating actions that were passed down to them as part of the family "tradition."

As I was doing the temple work for some of these people, I couldn't help but wonder how they would be going about reconciling themselves to each other on the other side of the veil and recovering from all the emotional abuse they had received and given. As I pondered these things, I felt a powerful witness that when we pass beyond the veil, we see each other as

And now, as the true principles in the steps and in the Gospel dawn in my life, I feel to say with Adam and Eve, "Because of my transgression my eyes are opened. I have known good and evil and the joy of my redemption through my Savior. In this life, I HAVE JOY!!!"

we truly are, sons and daughters of God. I saw that forgiveness in that world is much easier, because we relate spirit to spirit, and we see one another's true intentions. I realized that it really is true that most people don't intentionally wound one another; rather, it is a consequence of the mortal condition which causes us to offend and take offence. Then, came an even deeper insight: If it were not for our experiences in mortality where wounds are given and received, we would not be able to understand or utilize the gift given us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. How do you understand what it is to be forgiven, if you haven't had the opportunity to forgive someone else? How could you have the opportunity to forgive someone if you were never offended or hurt in some way by someone else.

Suddenly, I began to understand what she meant when

Mother Eve said, "Were it not for our transgression we never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth to all the obedient." (Moses 5:11)

Were it not for our transgression and the transgressions of others, we wouldn't need the Atonement. We wouldn't want it or use it. The plan would have been frustrated, of no use.

Christ's parable found in Luke 7:41- 43 comes to my mind: "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, "Thou hast rightly judged."

All of us have addictions. Some people call an addiction a "comfort zone". Nephi spoke of being "lulled away into carnal security". (2 Nephi 28:21)

Today is washing day for me. To begin, I sort through the clothes. Some I just put back because they really aren't dirty enough to justify the expense of washing. (The towel only used once, the blue jeans tried on and thrown down rather than put away.) When something is obviously stinky, it's washed. I think we are that way with repentance.

It is when something "really stinks," when our problems are really horrific and bring us to our knees over and over again that we are the most likely to turn to God. That's when we know we can't do it on our own. People in this situation know they need Christ, because only He can rescue them. Those who don't have those kind of problems can just bumble along, thinking they can fix themselves on their own. Thinking they really don't need to repent because they haven't done anything too very stinky. I know, because I used to be that way. I didn't know that I was just as fallen as any other mortal; that no matter what I did, I couldn't perfect myself; that I was actually blessed to have an alcoholic child, who wouldn't be fixed, no matter how hard I tried to fix her.

And then I found HDDMFB.

And now, as the true principles in the steps and in the Gospel dawn in my life, I feel to say with Adam and

Eve, "Because of my transgression (trying to fix my daughter, perfectionism, codependency, complacency, etc. etc.) my eyes are opened. I have known good and evil and the joy of my redemption through my Savior. In this life, I HAVE JOY!!!"

– Wendy 1 ☐



REALIZING THAT RECOVERY IS AN ONGOING PROCESS

I just want to express my gratitude to my Jesus for answering a question I had about "surrendering my will to Him" –whether it would happen as an event or would it involve living through a process? After reading the following verse from 2 Nephi 28:30, I began to “connect the dots,” you might say, and I have come to believe it is a process.

30 For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom [gradually]; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have. (emphasis added)

Earlier, today, as I was writing my sponsor regarding the need to inventory, I was thinking how BIG a deal it seems to contemplate a lifetime of surrendering, inventorying—of never being done. It seemed exhausting from where I sat. But, then it hit me, . . . How often does my sponsor talk about daily surrender? Even about *moment-to-moment* surrender?

And suddenly I got it! This is why it's a process. Finally, I see the need for it to be a process—because it has to be to go hand-in-hand with the reality of my addiction, . . . (and here comes the revelation about my character), . . . and with my lack of patience.

You know, I think I can actually trace almost all of my unwanted behavior back to a lack of patience. Of course, Impatience has many “sisters.” Pride, Lust,

Stubbornness of Heart, Laziness, Procrastination. And all of them spring out of an unwillingness to wait for God. "No, God. I don't want to wait. I want to feel good NOW! Now, now, now!!

Satan demonstrated a lack of patience with God, a lack of trust. I can just hear him now: "I don't have the patience to go through the program you are describing, God. I can't stand that kind of uncertainty. I want to KNOW I am going to make it back. I don't have patience for uncertainty or risk. I want the guarantee."

He wasn't willing to endure the process, . . . but I'm finally learning I am.

– Tom K. ☐

THE ATONEMENT IS MORE THAN AN EVENT—IT IS A STATE OF BEING AT ONE

For so many years, I thought of the Atonement as an event, or a "work," the Savior performed at a certain time and in a certain place in my behalf. After studying the principles of recovery, or in other words redemption, for years, I've come to realize that the Atonement is not just a single event. It's an ongoing "event," without boundaries in time or space--and it is going on every single day of my life, in my life--if I will receive the Savior as my Father's greatest gift to me. It is a state of being, it is a condition of coming to Christ and receiving His Spirit into my life, joining up with Him, surrendering to Him—allowing *His way*, truth and life to become *my way*, truth and life.

Today, to me, the Atonement happens for me every hour--every moment, every time--that I am willing to be close to Him, counseling with Him, conversing with Him, walking through my days with Him—even my hard days and my ugly moments—not hiding in shame from Him. Not letting the Liar tell me that the Savior will withdraw from me if I am not perfect every minute.

When I do something wrong He doesn't condone it. He doesn't "go with" me into it, but He doesn't withdraw from me, either. It's like if I want to walk

into a mud puddle or a briar patch, He waits on the sidelines until I've had enough of my experiment with "my own way," and then when I finally turn back to Him and cry out He succors me (comes to me) and takes my stains and my wounds upon Him and carries me back out of the mud, out of the thorns, and we continue on our (my) journey together.

"As oft as my people repent, I will forgive them." (Mosiah 26:32) That isn't a license to intentional do wrong. It's a statement of patience and mercy from the Son of God--who is in perfect similitude of His Father (our Abba.).

In my *heart* of hearts, I am for God. I am a God loving, God hungry person. It is my mind and my might and my strength that Satan has taken captive. That is why being an addict has been so very painful--the tearing apart of my being--my heart from the rest of me. In Christ--through His mercy and His atoning power--He gives me back myself. I know. It is coming to pass again--when I surrendered to the truth recently about my addiction. I am so grateful. . .

– Colleen H. ☐

DEALING WITH TRIGGERS IS SO IMPORTANT IN SA

Every addiction has its triggers, of course. In sexual addiction, where so much is visual, it poses a great challenge as you go about your everyday activities. The following are just a few thoughts that I've tried to put into words to describe what the Lord's counsel has led me to do to deal with triggers.

First, I have to honestly face and deal with balancing my need for healthy exercise with my choice of ways to exercise. Many forms of exercise invite participants to wear a lot less clothing than normal—and understandably so. Nevertheless, I have to be rigorously honest with myself concerning my motives. I've had to admit that at some places, such as a swimming pool or a beach, there is a very high probability of being exposed to triggering images. If I find myself wanting to go to these places, I have to ask myself if I am intentionally putting myself in a place where I know I will be tempted/triggered. If, when I turn to the Lord, seeking His truth to me, and He confirms to me that swimming is an expedient choice for

me, I know I would have to go to the pool, swim, and leave promptly—not dawdle and find excuses to indulge any “lust of my eyes,” as the scriptures put it. Personally, I find that other forms of exercise present a lot less chance of exposure to such temptations. For that reason, I prefer racquetball with guy friends or a treadmill or walking alone for exercise.

When I was just beginning to get some abstinence, I found I had to be willing to stay completely away from some locations that had been my favorite “haunts,” where I went to indulge my lust. For example, I had to stop going to several video stores altogether, at first. It was a sacrifice, I admit it, and a little humiliating as well—but I had to do. I had to accept what the SA literature says “We put all triggering material beyond our reach.” If it’s a dangerous place, we can’t go there.

Many times when I have felt especially sensitive and easily triggered or tempted, I find the temptation was usually preceded by some troubling or distressing event that I have tried to ignore and stuff down, instead of taking it to the Lord as soon as it came up. I really think that one application of the truth in Ether 12:27, is that if we will come to the Lord, he will show us our “weakness” by showing us where it was that we first got off track. Maybe it just feels like being restless, unsettled, feeling like something is not quite right, or something is lacking. Just what was the emotional or relationship trigger that set me up for lusting after a “fix” or “hit” from my addiction? Those feelings are important to take to the Lord. He needs to become our “everything.” In AA they say, “Either God is everything to us or He is nothing.” Good thought!

On those times when one is tempted merely by the thought of acting out, when things are otherwise going well and there doesn't seem to be any negative emotion preceding it, I think we have to be on our guard for the first thought of “I could act out,” and reject it (turn it over to the Lord and really ask and *want* Him to take it away.)

SA suggests taking a moment at bedtime to review the day, and see if there are triggering events or sights we have run across during the day that we haven’t fully admitted to ourselves or to the Lord, and then surrender those to the Lord in our nightly prayer. SA recommends this also as a means of avoiding and reducing tempting

dreams. They even suggest having someone you can call in the middle of the night if you have a tempting dream, so you can share the fact of having it (not the details) immediately, as an act of letting go of the dream and the temptation to feel ashamed or guilty. I find when I share the fact that something or other has tempted me, the temptation loses its power and fades away. Some have reported that it helps to reach out, even if there is no immediate answer from the other person, like getting someone's answering machine, or sending an e-mail. Take some action to get out of yourself. Your imagination can be a dangerous place. Don't go there alone!

It is amazing how deeply I have to inventory my motives and true desires. I have found that every time I have acted out, deep in my heart, I really wanted to and set myself up to by toying with “the trigger.” I wanted the rush more than I wanted my Savior and His company. My desires have to be fully renovated, surrendered, reborn.

We also need to seek out decent literature to read. Just avoiding triggering literature isn’t the same as seeking out reading materials that intentionally invites the Spirit into our minds. The same thing goes for music. The lyrics of music are very powerful to trigger either lustful thoughts or righteous thoughts. I am especially grateful for all the great talks I can listen to on CD, nowadays. I find a balance of General Conference and HtH conference talks work really well for me.

Of course, after all these suggestions are said and done, the most important thing we can do to deal with triggering situations is to turn to the Lord and cry out to him in the “moment thereof.” Reaching out to the Lord is the greatest help I know. Some of these things I have listed are simply ways to keep the air (and my mind) clear of the lusts and the lies that cause my conscious contact with Him to fade.

Thanks for letting me share.

– Phil H. ☐



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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: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

OL-01 - Tuesday through Thursday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA). General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

OL-03 - Saturday, 7:00 - 8:30 a.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA). General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

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We encourage reader contributions to Heartbeats. Ideas for articles:

- 1 In-depth study/analysis of principles found in Steps or Traditions
- 2 Personal experiences with the Steps, Traditions, Tools – how the work in your life
- 3 Capturing from the scriptures, *Big Book* or *He Did Deliver Me From Bondage*
- 4 Open sharing with positive recovery messages
- 5 Program from the Prophets – quotations from modern prophets with a “recovery” message
- 6 Short quotes, thoughts or one-liners

Send articles to:

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