

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

May 2007

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 17 – Issue 5

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,

Earlier, this morning, I received a letter asking me for my thoughts on whether it would be wise to address a loved one's mental illness as a spiritual problem. I felt impressed to share these thoughts with you through *Heartbeats*. Take what works for you, what the Spirit brings home as helpful to you, and please forgive what doesn't work. I'm not sharing as an expert—only from my own experience.

Dear Sister,

Addiction, compulsion and obsessions all qualify as forms of "insanity," in a way--because they are all expressions of being out of control of one's own thoughts and actions--and thinking and/or doing things to such excess (even things that in moderation are sane) that they become "insane."

THE SPIRITUAL IS ALWAYS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART

The understanding that has felt true to my mind and heart is that our existence is on a continuum from pure reality to pure physical reality, and that what affects one part of the whole, affects the whole. At the same time, I have felt the *Truth* borne witness to my mind and understanding that the spiritual portion is the first, the deepest, the primary influence, and that we should never act as if it is not part of what needs to be healed---and often the most important part.

It's like the spiritual reality (eternal reality) is the deepest and is like the root of a plant that produces more observable parts (stem, leaves, flowers) in the form of emotional and physical symptoms, feelings and actions. In other words, what we do grows out of our beliefs. Sometimes when that physical part is showing a great deal of disturbance, it is good to mow it down with a chemical intervention, (that could be equated with mowing down the dandelions in your lawn), but the fact that it is in the spiritual depths of the soul that the roots of many outward physical and emotional symptoms lie, should not be dismissed or go unaddressed. THAT is what calling on the power of the

(Dearest Friends, continued from p. 1)

Lord Jesus Christ can do for us. That could be compared to a person not just mowing the dandelions, but applying a cure that goes all the way to their roots and eliminates the reason the leaves and flowers keep coming back.

THE POWER OF THE SPIRITUAL REALITY OFTEN MANIFESTS ITSELF IN ILLNESS--MENTAL AND PHYSICAL

There were so very many cases of schizophrenic-like symptoms and other types of maladies brought to the Savior, and He did address them as if there was a spiritual root to their outward symptoms. In fact, I am being reminded of the time he said to the one stricken man, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," (thus addressing the spiritual depths of the man's soul and existence), but then other people complained and criticized that He would "forgive sins" and only then did He address the physical. Could it have been that He knew that this particular man's illness was more from a spiritual source than a physical one? Sort of like Zeezrom in Alma 15.

5 And it came to pass that they [Alma and Amulek] went immediately, obeying the message which he had sent unto them; and they went in unto the house unto Zeezrom; and they found him upon his bed, sick, being very low with a burning fever; and his mind also was exceedingly sore because of his iniquities; and when he saw them he stretched forth his hand, and besought them that they would heal him.

6 And it came to pass that Alma said unto him, taking him by the hand: Believest thou in the power of Christ unto salvation?

7 And he answered and said: Yea, I believe all the words that thou hast taught.

8 And Alma said: If thou believest in the redemption of Christ thou canst be healed.

9 And he said: Yea, I believe according to thy words.

10 And then Alma cried unto the Lord, saying: O Lord our God, have mercy on this man, and heal him according to his faith which is in Christ.

11 And when Alma had said these words, Zeezrom leaped upon his feet, and began to walk; and this was done to the great astonishment of all the people;

As I read through these verses, I feel impressed to bring them forward into our modern circumstances by paraphrasing or likening them to myself:

5 And it came to pass that they found Colleen obsessed about her weight and about her shame and her guilt and her many responsibilities that she had failed at over and over. They found her depressed and weighed down with all the excess lies she believed and ate over.

6 And it came to pass that Alma (in imagination and spirit) took Colleen by the hand and said to her: "Colleen, believest thou in the power of Christ unto salvation? Unto YOUR OWN salvation? Believest thou, Colleen, that He is greater to forgive and to redeem and to save than you are to mess up in your life? In fact than the whole human race is able to mess up?

7. And finally (after so many years of being caught in a terrible place of thinking herself beyond hope of salvation,) Colleen looked up and said "Yes, Alma, I believe your words. I am willing to let go of my "pride from beneath," and believe you as you reach out to me across the ages. I am willing to believe Christ can heal me--free me from my obsessions and compulsive behaviors and addictions."

8. And Alma said to Colleen (through the mediation of the Holy Spirit): "If thou believest in the redemption of Christ FOR YOUR SAKE, Colleen, thou canst be healed. Set free. Rescued. Relieved. Recovered. Made whole by becoming as one with truth through Christ--the Truth, the Life and the Way."

. . . 10. And Colleen turned to the Lord and cried unto Him (even as Alma's son, Alma, would one day need to do), "Oh Jesus, Thou Son of God, have mercy on me." and behold she was healed according to her faith in Christ.

11. And she leaped upon her feet and began to walk for the first time in years. She began to think sanely about food and she began to see herself making healthy decisions. She found the lies (temptations) to eat poorly were much fainter and that she could actually hear or feel the temptations (voices telling her lies), and forgive and ignore them instead of letting them lead her away to act out. (Like John Nash in *Beautiful Mind*.)

So, can it be done? It can. Is it a spiritual malady? For me, my physical symptoms definitely had a spiritual component, which of course science would never admit. Thus they kept throwing medications, counseling and other physical "help" at me.

But, when I addressed the spiritual depths with the power of Christ and turned my first and highest effort to faith in Him, I have been made whole. And when I've looked away from that depth and gone back to thinking I needed to focus more on the physical answers or emotional, even--my wellness has slackened. I know these things are true. I have lived them, and am being restored to this degree of sanity (truth) again.

Thanks for your fellowship and your love of our Father and His Beloved Son Jesus.

– Colleen H. ☐



2007 HEART T' HEART CONFERENCE REGISTRATION IS UNDER WAY

If Conference is anything like it was the last two years, you won't want to miss it! Here are some impressions one person shared of past HtH Conferences:

My heart is so full. It will take me days to sift through all my thoughts from Conference. I'm so very grateful there is a Heart t' Heart. How amazing, to hear so many share their personal struggles to come to Christ. I felt at home!

I have been greatly blessed to see the faces and recognize the spirits of the dear Saints I've known through the online meetings all this time. And then infinitely blessed to feel the Spirit so strong through the testimonies borne and through the Lord's love, woven around about and through all of our fellowship. What a feeling that was! I didn't want it to end.

How touching the music program was after dinner on Friday night.

I am very grateful for everything I experienced. It was wonderful, feeling the Spirit so strongly in everyone's interactions with each other and in the speakers' words.

There was too much going on all at once. It was so difficult to choose between the three workshops that were held at the same time each hour. I missed so much that I know was wonderful. Thankfully, Conference is taped.

It was fabulous! It left me with so much hope that I really can draw closer to my dear Savior.

We hope to see you at the HtH Conference this year!

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

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 form is included. Please plan to come!

SEEKING SOME SPECIFIC ANSWERS ABOUT DEALING WITH FOOD ADDICTION

Recently, the following letter (summarized here) was posted on the Food Addiction Forum of the HtH Website:

I feel frustrated. Quite often in my recovery from other challenges in my life, I have been able to post a question here on the forum and have had specific answers posted by others. As I've read through those answers, I've been able to discern which information may apply to me and which information may not. It has been very helpful to my recovery and I believe the Lord often works through people to help each other.

I totally believe that with any addiction there is a deeper seated problem and that it lies in not being reliant upon the Lord. I know this deeply. As my relationship with Him has increased, I have seen wonderful things happen in my life in the area of my other issues. Right now, though, I'm struggling with compulsive eating and have just started looking at it in the last year. It's the same beast as my other addiction and also a different one. I'm having a hard time understanding how to deal with it.

I'd really like to see more discussion on the overeating forum that includes specifics. Being told to simply follow the Lord can feel really confusing to a newcomer. Even though I was born and raised in the church, I am still just learning how to turn to Him.

Just some thoughts.

Respectfully,
C.

Two replies were later posted that give two perspectives--both equally true:

Dear C.,

Thanks for your "cry in the wilderness"! Don't ever be shy about posting here. There's a couple of threads of thought I'd like to reflect on, if I might. I tend to be long-winded and wordy, so please don't take the length of this personally. It's just me. Ever since I learned to type fast, I've become "dangerous."

First, the reason we try to go easy, in the HtH Food Addiction forum about "WHAT" we're doing--as in what kind of food plan or eating approach we're using--it becomes a great temptation to desperate newcomers to interpret specifics as what is working for us. The truth is most of us have tried lots of plans or approaches or diets--whatever we want to call a set, pre-planned, pre-written (and usually published) way of managing our eating behavior. And one or maybe even several of those ways have worked for us in the past--at least for a while. But sooner or later, something happens that sabotaged our efforts--usually stress and pressure from other factors in our lives--and we fell off the wagon and then just laid there in the dust and ate "worms" (preferably the gummy kind) for days, weeks, even months.

What happens if HtH becomes another place to hear about the latest "way" to behave ourselves sanely with food? That's not meant to be a leading question, but a genuine one. Really, is that what HtH forum participants would like to see happen? Maybe it would work if, as Phil suggested, we start a forum for talking about "what" it is that we are doing, so that others can keep searching, sampling, listening, seeking for something that will ring true for them, something that will work for them.

If I told you what I'm doing, you would immediately recognize it as a modified version of the Zone or 40/30/30 distribution of healthy carbs, healthy proteins and healthy fats. Do I weigh and measure my portions? Yes, when its convenient and sane. What do I do when I'm out in public about portion size? I approximate, using the "eye-ball" methods (i.e. the palm of your hand is about the size of a serving of meat, the size of your fist is about the size of a carb source, etc.)

If you ask successful HtH participants where they learned what to do for themselves--what basic approach to use, how to modify it, when to be strict, when to be gentle with themselves, etc., they would tell you, "From counseling with the Lord, trusting He will lead me in my thoughts." Or in other words, from asking the question President Benson testified is the single most important question we can ask, "touching every action": "Lord, what would Thou have me do?" (in this given situation, at this given moment, in my behavior toward food.) Often I have to pray, "Lord, Source of all Truth, give me the willingness to face the truth of what I

need to do about my food today, in this hour."

Okay, now to the reason Heart t' Heart exists--to answer the core question--*how*. How do we keep doing the "what" consistently (not perfectly) day in and day out?

First we get our direction, our guidance from the Lord, as we "study it out in our own mind with prayer, counseling with Him." We ask Him what His will for us is in this day, or in this meal, or with these choices before us. For example, we listen to the truth tell us specifically what to do as we sit down to eat out. We hear the truth come into our mind and whisper counsel. Maybe something like, "Say 'no thank you,' with a smile." Or "Go ahead and eat the protein and the healthier vegetables, and just take a bite of the high calorie, high carb (or high fat) food---or leave it entirely alone"---or whatever He (the Source of all truth--even about food) tells you. No one can tailor your actions with food more sanely and honestly and mercifully at the same time than the Lord can. The power to be sane with food is not in having a rigid plan and it isn't in having no structure at all. The power to be sane around food is in your faith in the Lord--that He will counsel you, inspire you, answer your prayer for guidance and courage to follow through.

This is the miracle of this "way" of doing our behavior and relationship with food, one day, one meal at a time--it becomes a reason to counsel with the Lord far, FAR more frequently than we ever thought we could. We come to realize that He is willing to counsel us in all our "doings"--just as the Book of Mormon testifies. (Alma 37:37), and just as He states in the D&C 6:36, when He invites us: "Look unto me in every thought."

This the same message HtH is trying to share with those who struggle with sexual temptations. We must be humble enough to turn to the Lord as many times a day as we need to. We must be willing to look to Him by looking to the truth. He is the Spirit of Truth. When we're willing to cooperate or surrender to the truth He whispers to us, we'll be ready to accept not only the gift of knowing the truth (from Him), we'll be ready to receive the power (the grace) to maintain the good work of eating healthy. We'll find ourselves delivered from the desire to "act out" with self-abusive eating behaviors. Having a sponsor can be the place to explore specifics--so that you and her can talk it through and

keep that personal, tailored, (and prayerful) focus.

Bottom line, we love you and are so very glad you're willing to jump in and participate on the HtH forum pages and in the HtH fellowship.

Please think of the posts on these pages as being just the equivalent of a great big brain-storming session. Please know you're so free to take what works for you--in other words what the Spirit of the Truth witnesses to your heart is true for you--and leave the rest. Sometimes we (speaking for myself, most especially) come across "preachy." I'm sorry if my sharing sounds like that.

Love,
Colleen

Dear C.,

I thought it might be helpful to share what it is I mean when I say "look to the Lord." I am trying to convey my own feeble version of what I perceive Moroni to have been saying in Ether 12:41 "And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus . . .". When I read this single line in the scriptures, I am filled with a sense of awe . . .

When the book *He Did Deliver Me From Bondage* came into my life, I was morbidly obese, and generally an addicted, compulsive mess. I was dying. I live in a place where the Church is VERY small, there was no LDS Social Services, and no one for me to talk to about recovery.

My impression when I read HDDMFB was that there was no specifics other than working through this work book. I noted that there was no food plan, and in fact, in the introductory chapter, Colleen asks the reader to "stop focusing on the problem you're in a life and death struggle with". I thought she must know what she's taking about, and certainly all of my diets and focusing on the problem had never granted me any permanent relief - so I did what she said. I stopped focusing on food, and began using HDDMFB to help me focus on Christ.

I didn't know how to rely on the Lord. In fact, I didn't think I COULD rely on the Lord until I got myself straightened out. And since I could never get myself straightened out on my own, I couldn't even contemplate relying on the Lord.

I found in HDDMFB a very complete description of HOW to learn to rely on the Lord, and I followed that to the tee. Please remember that I had no one to talk to in recovery. I had no one to get specifics from. I had no idea such a thing as a food plan existed in this program. In fact, I was shocked, when I came to this website, about two years into my recovery and found people talking about specifics other than using HDDMFB to come to Christ. At that point I had lost about 50 pounds through doing nothing other than working through HDDMFB over and over and over and over again. I know that may sound a little compulsive-obsessive, but you see--I was willing to go to ANY lengths to recover.

Through my coming to Christ, my heart has been changed, and He has made me aware of places in my life where I have been doing "evil", either to myself or others--and this has extended far beyond only a food and weight loss focus. While it is true that my unhealthy eating choices were doing one aspect of my "acting out," there was so much more He led me to realize a need to let go of. He has guided me to an understanding that begins deep in my soul, and permeates my whole life - an understanding that when seeking Him is *the most important thing in my life* in each and every day--even more important than losing weight--I WILL be granted the ability to live in a state of honesty. Now, mind you, this hasn't happened over night, even though that's what I lusted to have happen. Why? I know now, that it would have been far too painful, and instead, He has been ever so slow and gentle in delivering me from the bondage of addiction. Not just addiction to food, but to spending and gossiping and controlling and . . . the list goes on and on. Over several years, He has removed from me, increment by increment, the desire for excessive eating and I have lost over 150 lbs *and maintained that loss*. And now, after spending nearly two years allowing my heart and mind to adjust to living in a body that is *half* the size it used to be, He is apparently moving me on. Out of "nowhere," I have begun to have a decreased appetite and without trying I find myself down-sizing my portions. I no longer desire that feeling of fullness that He had allowed me during all these intervening years. Just like He removed my desire to eat the many things I used to crave--things that did such harm to my body--now I find myself (not decide for myself) blessed with no desire for large servings of even healthy food. This is because of HIM, not me.

Very little of my recovery from my food addiction has had to do with food itself. I rarely talk to the Lord about

food, sometimes He will give me an impression about food, but this is also rare. He has taught me that food is not the problem, so why talk about it?

The way, the pattern, the specifics can all be found in HDDMFB. I would commend this book to anyone dealing with addiction in any way. I believe it when Colleen says she didn't write it. I know that Colleen is ever so human, and I know that the Lord spoke through her and into that book. The instructions for tapping into the power of the Lord are all there. There is nothing missing from that book that a beginner might need.. After going through the book several times, I know that. It burns in my heart, and I know it is the Lord that has delivered me.

So, when I say Jesus is the answer, what I mean is that through Him, there is the pathway to all the specifics a person could ever want. That He is the beginning and end of my recovery from several addictions - food being the most obvious - and after several years my life bears witness of His living reality as I look in the mirror and see a woman who has been transformed from a morbidly obese and lost soul, into a vibrant and vital daughter and friend of God.

The miracle is so overwhelming to me I still can't get my mind around it. I STILL stand all amazed each and every time I put on a size 12. It STILL brings me to tears. It STILL mystifies me. It STILL seems too miraculous to have happened to me. But it did. I have gone from a size 28 to a size 12. But this is not the miracle - this is evidence of things unseen - the miracle is the mighty change of heart.

The best part of what has happened to me, is that even though I longed for some PERSON to talk specifics with, there wasn't one - and that's the best thing that could have happened, because I HAD to find my own way with Christ or die. He came to me. He comes to ANYONE who will seek Him. I just had to begin to believe.

I hope this makes sense.

Much Love,

Mary S



April GSB Contributions

Online.....	\$50.00
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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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Individuals can donate to Heart t' Heart at any time! We especially encourage those who participate in the Heart t' Heart forum, e-mail meetings, or other situations where at 7th tradition is not collected to donate on an individual basis. Mail in this form or use the website shopper at: www.heart-t-heart.org

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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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