

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

October 2007

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 17 – Issue 9

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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Light Switches

There is an account from the end of World War II that has me thinking this morning... As the German forces in the Eastern Front were falling back in defeat, the Soviet army sent into the eastern parts of Germany special troops that came from areas of Russia close to Mongolia. The reasons for this consisted of the fact that these troops were culturally and ethnically alien to the German people. This caused a great deal of terror and fear among the populous and also enabled the troops to act more fiercely.

An unintended consequence; however, was that these special troops had come from rather primitive circumstances. Many had never seen any modern convenience in their lives. Reports quickly surfaced about the Russian troops, not only looting valuables, but also tearing out light and plumbing fixtures from people's homes thinking that the fixtures themselves contained magic and that they could take these remarkable devices with them to use later, not understanding their function.

My own journey as an addict has had similar elements. I find that at certain times in my recovery, I begin to ascribe my sense of well-being and even abstinence to the tools I have discovered (writing, scripture study, prayer, meetings, etc.) that connect me to the Spirit and to the Savior. I begin to act in a way that is not too different from those Mongol troops, thinking that by just taking these tools with me and doing them, I will somehow continue the magic and bring myself continued peace and success. In essence, I rip them from their Source and forget their function and purpose.

Some of this comes from my spiritually primitive condition, or I should say conditioning. So much of my training has ingrained the notion of self-effort, self-reliance, self-respect, self-satisfaction, self-loathing... How can anything else come into focus with all these "selves" running around mucking up the view?

Quote:

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life [self] for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:39)

(Light Switches, continued from p. 1)

As an addicted, mortal, fallible being, my fatal error, is when I forget what makes everything work, the source of the “magic,” as it were. Without Jesus Christ, all these tools are just empty fixtures leading to more hopelessness. With Him connected and engaged the magic happens.

My other realization...

You don't have to be a plumber or electrician for these things to work. I don't have to understand the wonders of pressure and temperature and pipe fittings and flow to be able to use my sink; or, understand the physics behind electrical currents and connectivity to use and benefit from a light switch. Sure, understanding the how and why is valuable and adds to the richness of my experience and can even increase the marvel of it all; but I also run the risk of beginning to think I understand how it all fits together and might even begin to lose sight of, or take for granted, its unending miracle.

Without Jesus Christ, all these tools are just empty fixtures leading to more hopelessness. With Him connected and engaged the magic happens.

So likewise, my self-discovery and understanding the how and why of my addictive past, present and future can add immensely to my appreciation of the long road of the Lord's hand in my life. I feel these discoveries are in great measure the hidden treasures the Lord is speaking of in His promises with respect to the Word of Wisdom. But I don't necessarily need this knowledge for the miracles of recovery to work in my heart and soul and life.

I do believe, as Joseph Smith states, that a man can only be saved as quickly as he gains knowledge; because that knowledge gives us defenses against being misled and spiritually cheated. However, Jesus can begin to work his mighty change even in my primitive spiritual state as long as I am willing to just walk over and turn on the Way, the Truth and the

Light. Just let the Savior into my life and watch in amazement at the transformation, the increased clarity and majesty of my surroundings as they come into focus and behold the beauties of His creation (even me).

What a miracle life is! What “magic” works are His grace and mercy!

I say let's keep the light switch on and stay connected to its Source.

Brooks ☐

ADDICTION RECOVERY: WHAT IF IT'S ONLY A FIFTEEN MINUTE REMISSION AT A TIME

Often, especially when we are just getting into recovery, we are tempted by the adversary to feel bad because we find ourselves being tempted by our addiction over and over again—maybe several times a day or even several times an hour. Even when you are an “old-timer” in recovery, there are occasional days when the need to turn to the Lord comes several times in close succession. Recently, when I had a day like that, I was pondering about it and at the following thoughts come to my mind:

Think about it this way, Colleen. What if you had an illness or dysfunction of your physical body that needed treatment every 15 minutes or you would die? What if every 15 minutes, you had to turn on an oxygen pump or some other mechanism, to stay alive. You'd be willing to do that, wouldn't you?

Then I was reminded of an article I recently saw about a man who doesn't have an artificial heart, exactly. But what he does have is an artificial pump mounted in his chest outside of his heart. And that pump runs on batteries that he has to switch out and recharge every few hours. If he forgets (which he does occasionally), he “passes out.” When that happens, his family or friends have 3 minutes to get the battery switched out before he dies. *And this man has to live like that for the rest of his mortal life or until they find him a heart-donor.* And his loved ones have to live with him having that kind of constant need for the

time and attention (and tension) that comes from living on one short installment of life at a time.

It's taken me a long time, but I'm finally beginning to realize that these kind of dynamics are what I have to face to keep functioning in a sane and NOT addictive way. I have to do what I have to do—and if that means taking the time and effort to reconnect consciously with the hope I have in Christ—then that's what it takes. Even if I have to do it several times a day, or even (on really stressful days) many times a day.

We do what we have to in order to stay alive—that is if we really want to choose life rather than the living death of addiction.

So, my personal inventory question becomes: How much do I want to be honest and sane and functional? As much as I want to keep breathing? Then I'll do what I have to do. Even if that means I have to wear a heart pump or an oxygen pump in my pocket called the Book of Mormon, and I have to get it out and inject a dose of it into my soul several times a day.

We do what we have to in order to stay alive—that is if we really want to choose life rather than the living death of addiction.

Colleen H ☐



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HIS PROMISE OF BEING THE TRUTH

Such was the content of my prayer this morning to my God after having some struggles:

1) Trust cannot be generated, no matter how much I personally talk about how loving and patient You are with me. Acknowledging Your goodness to me is not the same thing as actually trusting You to run my life.

2) At some point during my life, (I think in my early teens), I made a critical decision to not turn to You for comfort and peace. I made a decision to sort of hold a grudge against You. I twisted my carnal desire for sin into You having let ME down, (instead of the opposite). In some way shape or form, this thinking has persisted into adulthood.

3) Consequently, I don't trust You and I don't believe You have the power nor do I have the patience to wait for the comfort and peace You desire to give me.

4) Thus, I crave, am addicted to, the few moments of pleasure my acting-out brings me and I prefer it, especially my carnal self prefers it, over whatever You have to offer as an alternative.

As crazy as it may sound, at the end of my prayer, I felt His forgiveness and a hug for my honesty. I can't stress enough how important honesty is. Just be honest.

For so long I have been so focused on maintaining appearances (even privately) that I have never sought God's righteousness, nor taken the time to come to know Him, learn to obey Him, or find joy in serving others. I've totally been consumed with self.

This admission comes after several years in recovery, tons of capturing and writing, working with a Sponsor, reading, praying, you name it. The beauty of the phrase "Keep coming back" is that doing so helps people like me to finally see the futility of trying to be a branch separate from the vine. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches..." He says - and how true it is.

None of these "things" [the tools] work -- none of them help -- until you actually desire to submit to Him on His terms. They are tools - emphasis on the word "tool." - They are helps, but they do not replace the Source. You still have to be willing to come to Jesus Christ, The Person Of.

I said they don't help, but that's not entirely accurate. I think it would be better said to say they don't help in the deep way they were intended until we become willing, *until I become willing*, to come unto Him with full purpose of heart while using the tools. The only help they have provided me so far is to show me how empty these tools are without hungering and thirsting for Him as I employ the tools. The power of the tools is unlocked when they are coupled with a desire to know Him.

It's not fair to say I don't know Him. In all of my writing on these forums so far -- much of it has been done in praise of His goodness. I guess what He has helped me realize is that rejoicing in His deliverance is only one aspect of knowing Him. Another aspect of knowing Him is admitting just how much I still need to know Him and trust Him.

The power of the tools is unlocked when they are coupled with a desire to know Him.

My prayer, this morning, reminded me that He is a God of truth. I am tempted to be embarrassed that after having spent a lifetime in His church, and after having said so many "good things" about Him in the writing I do, I don't know Him better than I do. Even so, I stand by what I have written. I just want to confess that the author is still on a journey -- and no amount of "writing good thoughts" can short-cut the changes that need to happen within me.

I still rejoice -- will continue to rejoice -- in His love and patience. My hope is that perhaps I, too, can receive into my heart the actual trust that would make such rejoicing even better than it has been.

He has proven that He is already willing to bless me, rescue me, love me, wait upon me -- even before I have ANY IDEA who He is....and even while I really,

deep down, don't trust Him completely. And that is okay. It is a beginning. He is a God of new beginnings, a God of "here a little and there a little."

Thanks for listening...

Tom K. □

TOO PROUD TO ACCEPT CHARITY, I CAN'T FEEL THE LORD'S LOVE

Hi, my name's Colleen and I'm a recovering addict by the grace of Christ, one day at a time. I'd like to share something the Lord opened to my understanding, this morning.

October 19, 2007

This morning, as I was prayerfully writing, a pathway of thought opened up to me. I followed it and found myself recording the following thoughts--having no idea the depths of wisdom the path would lead me to:

The truth is addiction represents pride in two forms. It represents either a failure to turn to the Lord (the way I was for the first 40 years of my life) OR a failure to trust the Lord, even after you've turned to Him. (The reason for the relapse I'm just emerging from.) I have to admit I've experienced both.) Some people don't go to Him for comfort and counsel. They turn to other sources, and most of those sources are quick to become addictive--to have a dependency on them develop. Satan sees to that. Whether it be drugs or s~x or food or other people's esteem, or even one's own esteem (pride.)

And then there are people (like me), who for a season turn away from other sources and turn to the Lord, seeking His counsel and comfort, but, upon receiving it, they refuse to believe it. They don't trust it. Or they don't trust themselves to be receiving revelation from Him. In other words, to refer to the scripture (Matt 7:7-11), they think that if they ask God for comfort (bread), He'll let the liar give them a stone (false revelation.)

In other words, they just can't believe the degree of love they feel coming from Him, towards them. They

don't trust His estimation of them. They hold out their own demand for perfection over His humble willingness to love them even if they're less than perfect. They become enticed to believe they're just making up the offer they feel of unconditional love.

They can't hear His counsel, because they can't get past His initial testimony to them about themselves—about how delightful and precious they are to Him. About how much He adores them. About how great and good and "worth-it" He thinks they are. *Just them. Them alone.*

The person can't sit still and believe that such unconditional, infinite, without conditions or boundaries kind of love should be for them. They believe more in their own sins than they believe in the Lord's willingness and eagerness to testify to them that they are clean every whit—not through their perfect efforts (merits) but through HIS perfect efforts.

In other words, *they are too proud to take charity from the Lord.*

Wow! That's amazing! What an amazing insight!

I've got to write that again--because it includes me! They are too proud to take charity, even from the Lord.

Doing this, a person is behaving like Javert at the end of *Les Mis*, when Jean Valjean offers him complete forgiveness--just as the priest, years before had offered it to him. Like Javert, a person full of self-righteousness, cannot accept unconditional love and forgiveness. They cannot accept that their whole life (which they've lived based on striving and suffering to live the law perfectly in order to prove themselves worthy), was not the Way, the Truth and the Life that the Lord had asked them to come to Him to experience. They cannot endure realizing that they've spent their life suffering to be good, when all the good they've been striving to be and do wasn't really earning them anything better than the charity a blundering, empty-handed beggar would be extended.

I've got to write that again--because it includes me!

They are too proud to take charity, even from the Lord.

Too proud to take charity from the Lord, . . . So when He offers unconditional love to me, I back away from it. I refuse to believe it. Dwelling more on (believing more in) my own lack of worthiness, than His willingness to lend me the robes of His own righteousness. (2 Nephi 4)

Then comes the next layer of truth into my mind: But, you know what? There is no other way to take anything from the Lord. *You have to be willing to take His love unconditionally, or you can't take it at all.* King Benjamin tried to convey this reality to us when he posed his famous question: Are we not all beggars, . . . in other words, do we not all need charity, a hand-out—undeserved and unearned? Those who refuse to admit their need for this kind of hand-out, this kind of love from Christ, will be the only ones that will *not* enter into His kingdom. It will not be Him that turns them away, either. They will turn away, refusing to come in under those conditions—needing charity like a common beggar.

These are they who will not be common, no matter what. They have everything invested in being uncommon, in being special, in being the equivalent of the good son in the prodigal story.

You know, King Benjamin could just as easily have asked, "Are we not all prodigals."

Isaiah wrote the words that Handel put to music: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6.) There's the use of that word we love to ignore: *all*. In this case it testifies that we have all gone astray. Not just the SA husbands, but the wives as well. Not just the exposed addicts, but the unexposed addicts as well. Who are the "unexposed addicts"? They are those who are drunk with anger. Drunk with self will. Drunk with self-pity. Drunk with self-righteousness. And while someone can recover from self-pity and self-will, there is no recovery from self-righteousness, because self-righteousness refuses to lean on anyone else's righteousness—even the Lord's. That's why Javert would rather die than face the truth of his own need to be forgiven. After all, hadn't he invested his whole life in thinking of himself as the righteous

one, chasing down the criminal, Jean Valjean?

I pray this insight will pierce my heart and cause me to let go of every bit of the lie that my merits are even 1 millionth of 1% of why the Lord wants to save me. This miracle of being snatched, of being saved from my addiction has ZERO--NOTHING--to do with my righteousness and EVERYTHING to do with His. Bingo! Snatched and resnatched---every time I remember that. Pride shrinks to 0, deliverance continues.

Thanks for letting me share . . .

Colleen H. ☐



CLOTHES

**I walk uneasy in my coat of skin,
Dressed by fears and torments from within,
A girl child hid in clothes made far too wide,
With hardened heart a shell in which to hide.**

**But if I choose to break my heart today,
And give up lies and hiding as I pray,
Will Spirit calm the fears, with touch so
mild?**

Will light of Son and Father clothe the child?

Betty C. ☐

“KEEPING A JOURNAL IS SAVING A LIFE”

I read that statement in a very wise book lately. How is keeping a journal saving a life? Is that a significant thing to do? Immediately, Jesus’ words in Matthew 16 popped into my mind: “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (verse 25)

If I am not to strive to save my life, in what sense is “saving a life,” good? It’s in the telling of truth that my words become significant, for in saying the truth, instead of trying to protect myself—(to “gain” the respect of the “whole world, and lose ‘my’ own soul” in the process), I glorify God. Then, I am writing the record of this woman, “according to His works” in my life—according to the Truth.

Without Truth, my life has no significance. I think that is why I devalued my life before—because I knew I was a nobody. I sorrowed over that, having great pride in thinking I should matter to someone and a lot of self-pity in knowing I didn’t matter one bit.

It has taken me over fifty years to discover there was treasure in my life, after all. It has taken my letting go of whining and complaining that my life has been unfair, of focusing on my “hard lot” and an honest willingness to look at all the truth in what has happened. In that honest look, I have done the equivalent of taking up my cross and following Him, not worrying what others think more than what He thinks. I have accepted what is, both the good and the evil, and have recognized my worth to the only One who can give life. Through His work in me, I am discovering a field of pearls.

If every tale I tell is full of His work, then what I write is treasure indeed and has significance, for my words then add to the “books that should be written”—that testify of the “many other things which Jesus did.” (John 21:25)

Peg W. ☐

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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.

Phone Meetings

Tuesday-6:00 pm, PST
Wednesday-7:00 pm, MDT
(See website for details)

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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 they 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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