

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

May 2008

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 18 – 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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BEHOLD THE CONDESCENSION OF GOD!

This evening, as I went to bed, I felt reluctant to kneel, and I expressed that reluctance to the Lord, rather than hiding it (and myself) from Him. I immediately felt His reassurance that He still loved me and was willing to receive my prayers, no matter what posture I took. As that witness filled my mind, my heart was broken wide open in love for Him, in awe of His goodness and His longsuffering, His patience—His infinite capacity and willingness to love and show mercy. I went to my knees, unable to suppress the spontaneous desire and need to express my feelings.

The words of 1 John 4:19 come to my mind: *We love him, because he first loved us*, and with them comes a renewal of the witness that He does not wait for us to love Him before His heart is drawn out in love for us. It is *pride* that waits to see if it is loved before it will show any love. God is devoid of pride. God is filled with Love—pure love for me, and does not wait for me to prove anything to Him to earn His favor. It is His nature to love me, no matter what.

I am reminded of the Christmas story of the simple-minded young man who was cast in a school play in the part of the inn-keeper. Everyone thought that it was the perfect part for him, feeble-minded as he was. All he had to do was crack the door open and say one simple sentence that someone could stand right by him, hidden from view by the scenery and prompt him. Besides, he had practiced the six words over and over: “Go away! There’s no room here.”

But when the moment in the play arrived, and the weary figures of Joseph and Mary knocked at the door, . . . well you know the rest of the story. The simple-minded, feeble-minded boy began to cry as he threw open the door and cried out, “Come in! Come in! You can have my bed.”

That, says the Spirit of Truth, the witness of God, to my soul, . . .

(“Behold the Condescension...” cont. from p. 1)

That is the way God loves us!

Think about it. Did He not do an act of equivalent simpleness? He has thrown open the door to each and all of us, and said, “Come in! Come in! You can have my life! My name! My reputation! Never mind your weakness; I will clothe you in my strength. Never mind your sins; I will wash them away in my righteousness. Never mind Satan’s lies and the darkness they have caused you to live in, to participate in. I will fill you with my light.

Behold the condescension (humility) of God!

And I am humbled by His humility. Made simple by His simplicity. Taught to love by His love for me, and my knees become “feeble” and must bend. And I am left in tears to pray, “O Lord, my God! How great Thou art!”

Colleen H. ☐



WITH GOD, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED

There are many true principles that are essential to my serenity. One truth it blesses me so much to remember is that mistakes will happen and that at times I am going to slip back into my old behaviors or emotions. When this happens I am tempted to berate myself; but what I've learned is that is a time for self-care, rather than self-condemnation. If I am churning myself up with worry (usually about what others think), I must be feeling disconnected from my inner source of guidance and the flow of love that comes from my Savior. I need to regroup and reconnect more than I need to get on some bandwagon and try, try, try, to be better. I need to let go and let God. I am really grateful for that reminder, to care what God thinks

more than what others think, and to put my dialogue with Him first in my mind.

I also love the reminder that recovery–learning, recognizing the great lessons that come from trial and error–is a lifelong process. Living the 12 Steps is a way of life that happens more automatically the longer I do it. However, my need for God and my reliance on his light and love does not wane in the least. Nor does my need to challenge the voices of my "natural man" self.

This is a lifelong process. Living the 12 Steps is a way of life that happens more automatically the longer I do it. However, my need for God and my reliance on his light and love does not wane in the least. Nor does my need to challenge the voices of my "natural man" self.

I had a neat experience this past week. It was a lesson taught to me by the example of another addict. He wasn't trying to teach me anything; he was just working his program. This man is a friend and employee who has been sober from alcohol for about 3 years. His ex-wife came to visit him. He has not seen her for several years, but still loved her and was hopeful that now he was sober, they could start a new relationship. Unfortunately, his hopes were dashed when he discovered that she was miserable and entrenched in addictive behaviors. She lashed out at him and blamed him for all her problems. Years of grief and disappointment surfaced for him and he sunk into a place of confusion and self-loathing. He called me because he knew if he didn't talk to someone, he was going to start drinking to numb his pain.

I was so touched by his humility; it is not easy for our pride to allow us to reach out for help. That phone call was the difference between sobriety and falling off the wagon. I listened to him and reminded him of a few our 12-step pearls of wisdom. I didn't give advice; just reminded him of

what he already knew. I asked my family to pray for him; my oldest daughter and her children made some goodies and made a short, supportive visit.

I saw him a few days later and asked how he was doing. He looked great. His eyes were bright and he looked happy. He said he had his head back on straight again. I asked him if he had gone to a counselor, or been back to rehab for an outpatient visit. He said, "No, I just decided to pray for my ex-wife and after I did that, all my feelings of grief and resentment were gone." It was just that simple.

I was humbled. With God, it doesn't have to be complicated. I am reminded about "the simpleness of the way" as described in 1 Nephi 17:41. I am reminded that we really do have a Power greater than ourselves. When this Power is my first priority, things fall into place, even my imperfections.

PeggyM ☐



2008 Heart t' Heart Annual Conference

**"Come Boldly Unto the
Throne of Grace"**

(From Hebrews 4:16)

August 15 & 16, 2008

at

UVU, in Drem, Utah

Registration has begun! Please plan to come!

MY REAL ADDICTIONS

When I want to eat to escape, I can always tell it, because there are certain foods I want. I tell myself I just want a little bit of them, but the truth is I want to fall into them, and into distraction by eating them. First I want to be comforted by eating them, and then I want to be distracted by regretting them and wallowing in self-pity and self-loathing.

You see, the truth is, I'm not addicted to what I do. I'm addicted to what I feel. I'm addicted to self-pity and self-loathing. That's the "bottom-line." Not my eating.

I'm dependent on falling back into self-pity and self-loathing to keep me from knowing and maybe doing something that, in my pride and resistance to truth, I don't want to face. So, my self-will (I don't want life this way), is often what sets me up to use.

Self-pity can set me up too. Like, poor, pity me, I have had this past or present not-right, not-just, very bad, awful thing happen to me. Bingo. My flags are flying and I need to use.

Anyway, my point is: It's the character weaknesses, inclinations to self-will (I don't want life this way), or self-pity (I don't like life this way), or self-righteousness (I don't deserve life this way)—that are my real addictions. I start indulging in them and my ache act out my addiction is just a flag signaling that I've started getting drunk on one or more of them.

I actually have several flags or ways of acting out. Unhealthy eating is just the one that causes me the most obvious trouble. I also get into overworking, over-fearing, over-care taking, overspending. Flags, all of them. But the eating is the one I wallow the most in regret and self-pity over, because it is the one that others can see and judge me for.

Now, there's another truth I need to inventory: I'm not sorry I'm doing it, I just regret it because you can see it, and since I'm also dependent for my

self-worth on what you think of me, (yet another idolatry/addiction) . . . so off I go, again, on the self-will, self-pity, self-right-ness binge. And the "Ground Hog Day" begins again. (As in the movie).

I have found absolutely no once-and-for-all fix for this sickening, sinking spiral--not even in God. I have to keep coming back to God just exactly like I would have to keep taking insulin if I were diabetic, or submitting myself to several hours of dialysis several times a week if my kidneys stopped working.

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I have to take my thoughts of self-will (God, I don't want life to be this way), and my thoughts of self-pity (I don't LIKE this, Lord), and my thoughts of self-right-ness (I don't need or deserve this, Lord) to the Lord and dump my "stuff" (which is just a polite word for "crap," which is a polite word for . . .) on Him. Really, I don't mean to get crude here, but then asking someone to take your garbage (and worse) out---isn't exactly a polite thing to do. But, when you're totally powerless, there's really nothing else you can do.

Anonymous ☐

Now would be a great time to register for the Annual HtH Conference, scheduled for August 15 & 16, 2008, at UVU in Drem, Utah!

LIVING WITH THE LORD

This walk with the Lord that we have been invited to in recovery is the most amazing thing to me.

Sometimes, I forget the Lord. Sometimes I ignore Him. Sometimes I mistake my voice for His, not recognizing it is He who is talking to me, but mostly, I am greatly blessed to feel His presence and live in such a great sense of His love!

I had a kind of funny experience with *not* recognizing Him a few weeks ago.

I was taking a bath, and set my phone down by the tub on the ledge. "I" thought: "The phone could fall in the water, there." Well, I argued about it. "It's okay. I'll be careful."

My feet were sore from standing on a gym floor for a couple of hours at my dad's 80th birthday party, and so I thought I'd massage them with the jets of my tub. As the water soothed my feet, I felt something slip into the tub

Yikes! I fished my phone out, took it apart, tried to dry it out and let it air out overnight. I was giggling about it, telling the Lord I should have listened to Him, but I didn't recognize His voice.

In the morning, it still wouldn't turn on, but He then said, "WHY DON'T YOU PLUG IT IN AND CHARGE THE BATTERY?"

Wow! It worked, and I don't have to buy a new phone. Now, where in the scriptures would I find instructions on drying out my phone, or a warning of where to not put it in the first place? In Alma 26:

35 Now have we not reason to rejoice? Yea, I say unto you, there never were men that had so great reason to rejoice as we, since the world began; yea, and my joy is carried away, even unto boasting in my God; *for he has all power, all wisdom, and all understanding*; he comprehendeth all things, and he is a merciful Being, even

unto salvation, to those who will repent and believe on his name.

36 Now if this is boasting, even so will I boast; for this is my life and my light, my joy and my salvation, and my redemption from everlasting wo. Yea, blessed is the name of my God, who has been mindful of this people, who are a branch of the tree of Israel, and has been lost from its body in a strange land; yea, I say, blessed be the name of my God, who has been mindful of us, wanderers in a strange land.

37 Now my brethren, we see that God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth. Now this is my joy, and my great thanksgiving; yea, and I will give thanks unto my God forever. Amen.

Now, have I not as great a reason to rejoice as Ammon? I say unto you, there never was a woman that had so great a reason to rejoice as I, since the world began. My joy is carried away, even unto boasting in my God, for He has all power, all wisdom, and all understanding. He comprehends all things, even the pride in my heart and my less-than-perfect ability to always follow Him and heed His counsel. He is a merciful Being, even unto salvation to those who repent and believe on His name.

It may not sound like much—warning me about my phone and then teaching me how to get it to function again—but if this is boasting, even so I will boast. For this relationship I have is my life and my light.

This life is much more than being saved and walking back into the presence of God when it is all over. It is joy, now. It is redemption into God's presence, now. And it is such a pleasant walk with Him, conversing with me as one Man to even me, for He is mindful of me, a woman, who is one of many who have been lost in a strange land. Blessed be the name of my God, who has been mindful of me, and has sought me in my wanderings and has caused me that I need wander alone no more. He is

Savior, Companion, even Helpmeet and Friend.

His bowels of mercy are over me, for I am only a child in this walk, and am apt to think I know better and can do things my own way. I am frequently distracted by lies or lusts and don't always listen when He calls to me. But even when I fail, He is mindful of my needs. It is His mercy, His love, His grace that redeems me, rather than my own efforts. I can trust in the journey because He never fails me and He never leaves me.

I have this great life right now. I feel like every moment, if I am awake, if I pay attention to the Truth, I am living with the Lord. I really am. You know what, though. We all are!!!

I have this great life right now. I feel like every moment, if I am awake, if I pay attention to the Truth, I am living with the Lord. I really am. You know what, though. We all are!!!

It is the most delightful thing, to sit in a meeting at Church, and converse with the Lord about whether I should bear testimony or not, and to feel His invitations. It is great to feel He loves sharing a walk with me, or some music, or loves talking to me about the scriptures and opening up my understanding to them.

How great and kind and patient and loving and really quite funny He is!

Anyway, I'm happy, and I realize I really can't truthfully say that I live alone.

Peg W. □



BIG BOOK STUDY

"If you have [an addiction] problem, we hope that you may [read this book] and pause . . . and think: (1) 'Yes, that happened to me'; or, more important, (2) 'Yes, I've felt like that'; or, *most important*, (2) 'Yes, I *believe* this program can work for me too.'" (p. xii, 4th edition.)

These three statements were made to represent three possible reactions to reading the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, affectionately known for decades as the "Big Book." Once, as I was reading this material, it appeared to me that there was a significant correlation between these three responses and the fact that our compulsive/addictive behaviors have three levels: PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL and SPIRITUAL.

PHYSICAL

"Yes, that happened to me."

First, and most obvious, is the physical level of effect that our addiction has, what happens to us. We're either overweight or under. We can't ever stop exercising, working, cleaning or sewing. We're either overdrawn at the bank every month or we can't bear to spend a dime. We're either "drunk" again on something, whether it be fear or alcohol or sex, or we're sedated up to our eye-brows on prescription drugs or twinkies. We are either self-medicating on herbs or caffeine cola drinks. And on and on it goes. These physical manifestations of our lack of serenity and peaceful consciousness of God's reality and personal love for us as individual permeate and are destroying our culture.

Unfortunately this is the level where most of us are satisfied to stop our recovery efforts once we have obtained it.

"I'm finally into such and such size clothes."

"I've given my check book to a financial planner to manage for me. I don't have access to it anymore, have to live on an allowance. I'm doing

so much better."

"I've got three months of clean time from porn. The bishop gave me my recommend back."

These are the kind of statements of "success" we're often willing to settle for. But, when we're ready, there's more--so much more waiting for us.

My first reaction to the Big Book was framed in the same terms as this first statement. I read about their "strange mental blank spots," their hiding of what they were doing from others, etc. and I thought "Dear God, THAT has happened to me with my eating!" But it wasn't until I was able to look deeper, at these alcoholics' feelings and make the second of these three statements that I began to see below the surface.

EMOTIONAL

"Yes, I've felt like that."

To me, this statement represents the EMOTIONAL depth of recovery, which involves rigorous honesty with yourself about feelings (or lack of them) and finding out what your feelings are and why you have them, where they originated.

SPIRITUAL

"Yes, I believe this program can work for me, too."

In the word "believe" I hear reference to the deepest and most permanent and effective form of commitment and thus, of change. The act of believing accesses our spiritual depths, our very central core self. If we do not believe "this program" (total trust and surrender to God, and personal integrity of mind and heart, as well as outward action) then it will avail us no more results than any other. God can do nothing in our lives if we do not believe in Him. Remember, He had to leave Nazareth without doing any miracles there, because of their unbelief.

Colleen

April GSB Contributions

Online..... \$70
TOTALS.....\$70

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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

Sunday-4:00 pm, MDT
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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