

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

July 2008

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 18 – Issue 6

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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WHY I AM GRATEFUL FOR HEART t' HEART

Although I grew up in the Church and had a great desire to live the commandments, in my twenties I fell into the trap of pornography, and it became a lifelong struggle to try and resist its lure. After struggling with this "bad habit" for more than two decades, I reached a point where I had finally concluded I would never win the struggle, and was ready to give up all hope of ever returning to my Father in Heaven. I even quit trying to keep the commandments. At that point of despair, I was led to Heart-t-Heart.

When I attended my first Heart-t-Heart online meeting, the Lord blessed me with an Alma-like experience, in which he wrapped me in his arms – I knew he was with me in the room, even though I could not see him -- and changed my heart in an instant. I had grown up viewing God as authoritarian and judgmental, but on that miraculous morning, I felt no criticism or judgment, only pure, overwhelming love.

All desire for evil left me. All selfishness left me. In 49 years of trying to live the gospel I had never imagined it possible to feel such a measure of love! I wanted to remain in that love forever, and have everyone I know experience it also. I desired to do anything the Lord asked of me, simply because of the love I felt in his presence.

Not everyone who attends Heart-t-Heart meetings has that same kind of sudden miraculous change of heart, but all I have known who have attended Heart-t-Heart meetings and who have honestly attempted to work the 12 principles of recovery find the Promises coming true.

In many 12 Step groups they read what are called The Promises. These are:

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of

(Why I Am Grateful for HtH..., cont. from p. 1)

economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.” (AA Big Book. Pages 83-84.)

As I continued attending Heart-t-Heart meetings and striving to live the principles, I felt a sense of fellowship, of unconditional acceptance, from my fellow addicts in the meetings, that encouraged me and reminded me of the love I felt from my Savior in that first meeting.

I felt a similar spirit of unconditional acceptance when I attended AA meetings with my daughter who was struggling with alcohol and drug addictions. Here was a group of ordinary men and women whose lives had been devastated by an addiction to alcohol or other substances, but who had found peace in their lives by turning their lives over to a higher power, and doing the best they could to live those same 12 principles. How did they achieve that peace? They laid the answer out in twelve simple statements of their experience—the Twelve Steps.

The 12 steps of Heart-t-Heart, while modeled on the AA 12 steps, express more fully the principles of repentance as taught in the Book of Mormon. The Heart-t-Heart 12 steps, like the AA 12 steps, are a powerful testimony of the miracle the Lord has worked and continues to work in my heart.

One of the things I have been encouraged to do through Heart-t-Heart is to write out scripture passages I am studying, write out my thoughts about them, and write out the promptings that come to me from the Spirit as I study the scriptures and as I pray. This has been a great blessing to me.

As I prepared a Sunday School lesson one day, and counseled with the Lord in writing, I asked him what he wanted me to say to the Gospel Doctrine class that week. His reply, as I recorded it in my journal, was “Tell my children I love them, and long to have them with me, to fold them in my arms and give them the same joy that Alma experienced. Tell them that the Savior is not only the source of their salvation, but the source of their daily joy, and their daily triumph over the

carnal desires of the natural man, if they will turn to him and invite him into their hearts each day, each hour, each moment.”

The Savior has indeed become the source of my daily joy and my daily triumph over the natural man, provided I turn to him each morning by attending the Heart-t-Heart online meeting and acknowledging my dependence on Him, and asking Him once again to apply His atoning blood and to change my heart, and take out of it all desire for evil.

Heart-t-Heart has helped me learn of my utter dependence on the Lord, and the joy that relying on Him brings, and has helped me immeasurably in my efforts to walk hand in hand with Him daily.

I thank my Father in Heaven for his great mercies to me. I am far from perfect in applying the steps, and there are still times that I feel to exclaim with Nephi “O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.” (2 Nephi 4:17).

Heart-t-Heart has helped me learn of my utter dependence on the Lord, and the joy that relying on Him brings, and has helped me immeasurably in my efforts to walk hand in hand with Him daily.

Yet, with Nephi, I too can say: “I know in whom I have trusted. My God hath been my support He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh.” (2 Nephi 4: 19-21)

I thank my great God that he led me to Heart-t-Heart and there taught me a way to apply the principles of repentance, that one day, I too might be encircled about in the robes of His righteousness, to go no more out.

That all who struggle with compulsions and addictions and desire to be freed from that bondage might find that same peace I have found by turning to the Lord through the 12 steps of Heart-t-Heart is my humble prayer, in the name of my Savior, Redeemer, and Friend, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

Keith H. □

CATCH 22?

I recently heard someone refer to recovery as a "Catch 22" situation, saying we can't get well without the Lord's help, but we can't get the Lord's help without living righteously. I took strong exception to that idea, for it not only blocks our recovery, it just isn't true. We do not need to be righteous to receive the Lord's help. Otherwise none of us would ever get well. I could never have gotten clean if the Lord had not done it for me. This thought, that we need to be at a certain level of righteousness in order to receive the Lord's help, is one of Satan's devices to keep us away from the Lord. The Lord, on the other hand, says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Do we think the Lord was only talking about people who worked hard in the field, behind a plow? The Lord was concerned with sin and the effects of sin far more than anything else. Sure, He cares about our burdens that have to do with sorrow and grief and trials, but what gives us more sorrow and grief than our sins? This is why the Lord came, to lift the burden of sin. There are no prerequisites to coming to Him to have that burden lifted, save the need to be humble and put ourselves in His hands. That is the most amazing thing I have experienced in recovery--the Lord's willingness to take me just as I am, and work with me from there. I am so grateful for His kindness and humility, for without it, I, and all of us, would be lost.

Phil H. □

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

Registrations are still being accepted. Please plan to come!

PATTERNS OF HEALING

In the booklet "*Patterns of Light: Step 6*," there is a writing exercise that begins:

There is this chilling statement made about addiction: "We are like men who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones." (*AA Big Book*, p.30) In other words, there is no hope but to turn to God. No hope. None.... Write a short story or scene in first person... as someone with a terrible disease who has refused to come to the Savior to be healed. What is the disease? Leprosy Paralysis? Bindness? In this scene, have your character finally become ready to approach the Lord.

The following story was written in response to this exercise:

Hello, my name is Saba. I live in a leper colony just outside of Judea somewhat near Samaria. I am not really a leper, but was brought here after the birth of my last child. The labor was intense and I lost a lot of blood. I passed out from the efforts of childbirth. When I awoke I was in a feverous state. I remained that way for several weeks. Women in my village cared for me, but my husband was disgusted that I could not care for our child and the child was given to another to nurse. I never even got to hold him.

Near the end of my fever, a rash formed all over my skin. It was like nothing that had been seen in our village before. Fear of leprosy was very high. My husband assumed that my rash must be the beginning stages of leprosy or he found that it was a convenient excuse to dispose of me. I'm not sure which. I'll probably never know. He wrapped my limbs in rags and took me to the edge of the nearest leper colony. He was afraid to actually enter so he just laid me down on a mat and left without even saying goodbye. I knew that I was now left to fend for myself alone. I prepared myself to just lay there and die.

I remained there on my mat for several hours, unable to walk to shelter because my body was so weak. I was found by some members of the colony who had come out to gather firewood. They took me in and cared for me. Although we did not know the name of the disease I had contracted that caused the rash to appear all over my body, it has become clear that it wasn't leprosy. I have begun to heal physically, but I cannot fully heal in my heart. The anger I hold onto is too great.

I am angry at my husband for abandoning me without any seeming concern for my well being. I have received word that he divorced me because of the shame of leprosy – a disease I don't even have. I may be able to go to the priest to be declared clean, but where would I go then? Going back to my father's home would bring shame on him and he would be angry. I haven't seen them in a few years since my husband moved our family to another village anyway. Besides, the lepers in the colony treat me well, and I do my best to care for them, too as much as I have strength to do.

My anger doesn't stop with my husband, either: I am angry at my father for choosing this man for me to marry. I am angry with my God for taking my child from me – all of my children really. I can no longer see any of them. I don't even know what my baby looks like. I want to hold my son, to see him at least once. The pain of my circumstances is more than I can bear.

Yet, there must be hope somewhere. I've seen a few children in this colony. Is there one who could benefit from the milk swelling in my breasts? I will search for one. I need to hold a little one. I hope my little ones are being well cared for. I hope they know that I love them even though I can't tell them. My God, I am angry at thee for the pain I feel deep within. Still, I plead with thee that thou wilt watch over my children.



I found a little one today. His mother is very ill and unable to care for him as she wants to. He is about a year old and has some signs of leprosy, but is still healthy and active. He often cries by his mother's bedside because he is hungry, but she is too weak to feed him. I have moved into the shelter with this mother. I could not simply take her child from her as mine were stripped from me. He nurses with fervor. I am beginning to feel some peace. The mother is beginning to improve somewhat. My presence has eased her despair.



So far, I haven't contracted leprosy from being here. My physical wounds have nearly all healed. I gain more physical energy each day, but still, the anger festers deep inside me – especially when I am alone. Though it is lighter, the bleeding from childbirth continues. It should have stopped by now. I feel like I will never be clean. Thank God, at least the unclean are accepted here.

I have begun to hear stories about a man named Jesus.

They say he is in this area and that he has the power of God in him. He has healed many who are ill. I don't know why I even have interest in the story. He would never come here to the colony. We only get news that we overhear from travelers when we are out gathering firewood or food anyway. Colony members aren't allowed to talk to them or get too near them, so we listen to their conversations from a safe distance. This Jesus wouldn't even know where our leper colony is. Even if he did find it, he wouldn't come in for fear of the disease. Still, I keep hoping that he would come here and help these people. They are good people.

I, myself, though, am unworthy of being in the presence of anyone who has the power of God. The anger that festers within me makes me more unclean than the lepers I live with are. I only feel peace when I am serving them. This Jesus we have heard about would never be willing to be in my presence. I am not worthy. I am too filthy. My heart is diseased with my anger. It is the worst kind of disease possible. Besides, a woman who is bleeding as I am cannot approach a man. Why do I dare to even imagine it?

Since hearing about this Jesus many have ventured out of our colony in hopes of hearing more talk of him. Who is this man that has created so much excitement among the people? Those in this colony are so desperate for hope. It has created a big change among the people. Might there also be hope for me? Do I dare hope for hope? Something is changing within me that I don't understand. I have heard hearsay before and never felt it change me like this. What is happening? Maybe this Jesus is someone to pay attention to.

I'm hearing more and more stories about this Jesus. Colony members are venturing out increasingly in hopes of catching any talk of the man. They say that Jesus has healed the blind and the lame. He may have even healed some lepers. Imagine that! I don't think I believe the part about the lepers. Men won't even come near lepers, so why would this Jesus? Yet, now they say he has raised a child from the dead. Is this really possible? Logic tells me these stories can't be true, but my heart is beginning to have hope.



Today, I no longer need to hope that the stories are true. I see Jesus with my own eyes. *He has come to us!* He really came to us, outcasts as we are. Most men hate us, but Jesus is here, holding the children, treating us as men and women of worth. It's so hard to fathom, yet I am seeing it with my own eyes. I want to come to Him

and be healed as others are. Physically I need to stop bleeding or I will begin to lose strength, but that is not what keeps me away. I believe this Jesus can heal my body. I am watching him heal my comrades. However, my heart is still filled with so much anger. How can I approach someone who is filled with so much love and power? I am too filthy.



Jesus is coming toward me. I want to run and hide but I cannot break away from his gaze. I am entranced by the love I feel from him. How is it that he can love me? He reached out his hand. My bleeding has stopped. I knew he would heal me physically. I am still so troubled. He sees it on my face. Jesus is looking into my eyes and asking why I am so troubled. I don't know how to put my pain and shame into words. Yet, he seems to understand the feelings of my heart better than I do. I can't hide anything from his gaze. My hope has increased once more. I never knew he might be able to heal my heart. Oh Jesus, please heal my heart. I cannot hold his gaze any longer. I am afraid. Jesus gently lifts my chin and asks me what I want. I am finally able to blurt out that I desire for him to heal my pain and shame. I am willing to believe that he can now. Yet, my faith is too weak. "Jesus", I say, "please increase my faith". I want to believe. I want to heal. I don't feel able to do so. I feel so weak and vulnerable.

Jesus' gaze penetrates me for some time. Finally he asks me if I am willing to have him heal my heart. I hadn't thought about it that way before. Am I holding on to this anger because I want to? I am willing, but am I willing to give him all of my fears and anger and joy. Once again I am afraid. What will I be without these things I have clung to for so long? "Jesus, I am willing, but I am afraid" I finally reply. He takes me into his arms and holds me. I have never felt so whole in my life. I have never felt so loved. As I feel the love of his embrace the pain, anger, fear, and shame in my heart begin to melt. Who am I to be loved like this? No one has ever loved me like this before. Oh, I understand now. My anger is at those who have refused to love me even though I tried so hard to be lovable and kind and compassionate. I just wanted others to treat me as I treated them. The pain is almost unbearable, but I am strengthened by his embrace. I had no idea there was so much pain in my heart.

Jesus is still with me. It has seemed like an eternity has passed in only a few moments. Others are watching what is taking place. They are watching my face. I am smiling. I haven't smiled like this in years. Who is this

man who could change me like this? I ask him and he tells me he is the son of God. Now I know that it has been God's arms wrapped around me. He sent his son for me, for all of us.

Jesus has moved on, healing others in the colony. I feel empty now that I am not in his embrace, but I will never forget. I wonder how I can take this experience and use it to shape my life. I don't have to feel empty. He loves me even when I am not in his physical embrace. I know it. I can feel it. If he is the literal son of God as he says he is then I can pray for this peace and comfort to return. My hope is so strong now even though I miss his physical presence. I will cling to this hope in challenging times.



Jesus has left our colony now. Most colony members have been healed. A few people chose not to be healed by him, fearing that he wasn't who he said he was. Others had sufficient faith but knew from his gaze that at this time physical healing wasn't to come. They had things to learn from the illness still. Many of those who were healed have chosen to remain in the colony to care for the sick. I am preparing to marry a wonderful man who was healed by Christ. His wife has died and he has three precious young ones. We want to remain where we are. We have decided to build a shelter near the outskirts of the colony and plant some crops to help feed all of the people here. I feel this is what Jesus would want us to do.

We have written the words that Jesus taught us and try to read them every day. There is so much hope in the colony now for those who have chosen to stay – even among those that were not healed. We are stronger and glad to have been able to have Jesus touch our lives. We will never forget this Jesus, our literal Savior. He has changed us from the inside out. Jesus taught us that he can remain with us even when he isn't physically here. We pray for his presence. Life is still challenging and my anger flairs within my heart from time to time, but with my renewed hope I know I will be okay. All is well. Jesus loves me. Jesus loves us.

Now that you have written your story, read it aloud, visualizing yourself as the person you've written about, telling this story as if you are the one finally ready to come to the Lord to be healed. Write about how you felt while reading your story.

I felt the emotions – the abandonment, the fear, the pain, the anger, the emptiness, the hope. I remembered the

feeling of having Christ's arms wrapped around me. My own hope was renewed and my impatience once again put on hold. That deep well of anger still exists within me. I only feel it occasionally, but when I do I recognize it. The anger I feel at those times is much more powerful than the situation warrants. Writing this story has brought renewed awareness of this well of anger and the shame I carry with it. When I have felt it I have wondered how I could still have so much anger within me when I have experienced so much healing from the Lord. I have felt the forgiveness come for others in my life as I have prayed for it. If I have truly forgiven others, why is the anger still so powerful and so deep? This isn't a question of despair at this moment, although it has been in times past. I simply want to understand. Dear Lord, do I truly believe that thou canst heal the pain and anger in my heart. I pray that thou wilt increase my faith.

Penny M. ☐

REFLECTIONS ON STEP 11: SEEKING "CONSCIOUS CONTACT" WITH GOD

I guess someone could think, "Wow! Personal revelation! That's a high and lofty principle to be trying to teach a bunch of addicts!" . . . but you know what? It (a very PERSONAL witness of God's reality and availability) is the only thing that fills the HUGE hole that addicts are trying to fill with their addiction.

Back in the days when I thought that only perfect (or nearly perfect) people (not messed up people like me) could even HOPE to connect with the Lord, I slogged through my days, keeping up the outward appearance of activity in the "doings" of an LDS person, but in my heart I was SO destitute.

A very PERSONAL witness of God's reality and availability is the only thing that fills the HUGE hole that addicts are trying to fill with their addiction.

If someone had to QUALIFY to have the love of God

extended to him (or her), then I was truly and TRULY the LEAST of the Saints. A pretender. Just hanging on, . . .? Why? Because I could not abandon the Church.

I had a testimony of it. I had a testimony of the Restoration and of Joseph Smith and of God reaching out to His children OVER and OVER again (from Old Testament times right up to this very day), but just not to ME. ME? You have to be kidding. I could start listing my secret imperfections (sins) and come up with a list as long as your arm---and that on a DAILY basis. And then (being that my most OBVIOUS addiction was to unhealthy eating), there were my imperfections that showed!

So, what had to happen for a addict like me?

I had to learn, first-hand, that in the Godhead there is one member whose primary mission was, and still is, to come intimately close to lepers and whoremongers and harlots and addicts of all kinds, and be with them in their sin---PLEASE NOTE: I did not say SAVE them in their sin. But "be" with them. Sit with them (at least He did with me), talk with them (through their conscience and through the "words of Christ" that the Holy Spirit spoke to them) (to me), . . . that He would come to a 300 lb woman--socially unacceptable and even disgusting to some (herself) as she was. And to the equivalent in other addicts' lives--whatever THEIR addiction might be.

That He was THE one that the Father sent to rescue me and lead me, one day at a time, OUT of my sins.

I praise God, our Father, continually for the Gift of His Beloved Son Jesus Christ, who has visited me in my afflictions (the worst ones of all being my own foolish choices and consequences)--and who is willing to pick me up--dirty and broken as I am--and carry me, walk with me and most especially TALK with me in my heart and my mind as I recover.

Colleen H. ☐



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

June GSB Contributions

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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-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

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