

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

March 2009

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 19 – Issue 3

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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THE PARABLE OF THE ASHTRAY

When something on the outside bothers me...there is something wrong on the inside of me.

This has been one of those eye-opening spiritual principles taught to me through my wonderful Sponsor, Aron. I am forever grateful for this mentor. He helped unfold to my mind, and heart, many basic principles of the Twelve Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous, which eventually transformed my life.

“What do you mean there is something wrong on the inside,” I would snap back! “You’re nuts,” I exclaimed! Aron would gently smile and patiently share his ‘Parable of the Ashtray’ story. Here is how it usually went...

One day, after arriving home from a hard days work, I find an ashtray in the middle of the living room floor. As I walk into the room, I am angered that someone has left this thing right in the middle of the room. What could they be thinking? Who is so lazy that they left this thing right here? What an idiot, don't they know that ashtrays belong on the coffee table or end table, not the floor! Of course, all of this takes place within my mind, and as I cross my cat's path, I am so angered I am half tempted to kick her across the room...the story continues...

On another day, after arriving home from a good day at work, I find an ashtray in the middle of the living room. I trot over to the object, pick it up, place it upon the coffee table, and immediately proceed into the kitchen and the day goes on...end of story.

What has changed? The ashtray? The living room? The culprit that left it here? Actually, none of the above. The only variable here is my spiritual condition of the moment. How many times have I reacted to people, places, and things in this exact manner? Have I been short with someone, because of an internal anger or pain, which had nothing to do with him or her? When I inventory daily, I am able to reflect on my thoughts, behavior, and attitudes that affect my serenity, sobriety, and those around me too!

Through many trials now, I can say that I truly understand how to measure my spiritual condition, and what I must do to return to God's serenity. I know this to be true, ‘when I am disturbed by something outside of me, I

(The Parable of the Ashtray...--cont. from p. 1)

am disturbed inside'. Only conscious contact with God can relieve me...of me! It has been the tools of the program that have assisted me in turning this type of thinking around. Phone calls, reading, serving to get out of myself, and most importantly, praying to my Lord God.

I could not relieve my own compulsion to drink, the Lord did! I cannot relieve my own anger, frustrations, or any of the negative emotions that creep up, or even outright attack me daily. True serenity for me comes when I submit to the Lord, daily. Sometimes hourly, and sometimes, even by the minute. "I surrender all" is the only thing that brings happiness, contentment and well-being to my soul.

So the next time the idiot driver ahead of me, and that could be any one of you (☺), irritates my serenity, I must remember to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only He can carry me in, and through, my obstacles...which usually is me anyway. Praise the Lord for His deliverance, because He really does work, which means getting out of His way.

Tom S. ☐



CAPTURING FROM ALMA 2

Sometimes I question my worth. Yesterday was one of those days, but I was reminded of the intense price the Savior has paid for me. Why would He do that if I was of no worth?

I believe the Lord replaced my sadness yesterday with anger, today. That may sound strange—the Lord filling me with anger—but I believe it to be true. When I am stuck in sadness, I feel despair and unmotivated to do anything about my life. This morning He changed those feelings and helped me understand that I am really angry—angry about so many ways that I am being a victim in my life, angry that I am allowing the abuses that I am allowing, angry that I allow my family to treat me how they do, angry that I am so unkind and unforgiving to myself, angry that I am always making the financial sacrifices to try to make our family stable.

A couple of days ago, I had an experience that brought to light such obvious victim behavior in myself and filled me with such intense anger that I am more than ready to start fighting for myself again!

I was frustrated about my scripture study and told the Lord that being humble and repenting is great and all and is helping me in some ways, but where are the scriptures that I need about getting out of this victim mess???? The Lord gently spoke to me in my mind and reminded me of some scriptures I had recently read. These are some of the insights I felt the Lord explaining to me this morning about these scriptures:

Alma 2:21-31

Lord, Thou art so amazing! I can feel Thy love and care for me pouring into my soul today. I can feel Thy wisdom and comfort. I can feel Thee telling me of my worth and value. I can feel Thee loving me, and it feels amazing. I can feel Thee wanting me to do whatever it takes to latch onto freedom. I can feel Thee filling my soul with new energy and passion for delivering myself from abuse with Thy loving help.

First Alma sent spies to find out about the enemy camp and their plans. I feel Thee guiding me to find out everything I can about the ways I am allowing and choosing to be a victim in my life.

Then the spies return and they are filled with fear at seeing the Amlicites join with the Lamanites as the enemy now seems absolutely overwhelming and unconquerable. That is how I have felt, Lord. My challenges seem too huge, my life too much of a mess to find relief.

I know that Thou will answer my prayers and deliver me, just as Thou did the Nephites. I know Thou will give me the strength and wisdom I need to stand up for myself and to see things clearly.

And yet, the Nephites were strengthened by Thee after praying mightily to thee that Thou would deliver them. I have prayed also mightily for deliverance from my serious afflictions. I know that Thou will answer my prayers and deliver me, just as Thou did the Nephites. I know Thou will give me the strength and wisdom I need

to stand up for myself and to see things clearly.

Then for verse 29, the scripture that Thou has impressed most upon my heart—

Alma, himself, fought Amlici. He didn't send anyone else to do it. He fought the most vicious adversary himself. He faced the leader. He chose to fight the biggest fear. He went forth and did it, knowing full well that Thou would be there to get him through it, because he was led by Thee beforehand and knew that this was the right direction for his life. I, too, Lord, feel Thee cheering me on to face my biggest fears, to tackle them and to stop putting things off that I know will put me on the correct course for my life. I am recognizing more than ever that Thou has given me my own personal Liahona (the Holy Ghost) to teach me how to live happily and I need to practice quieting the voices in my head and connecting with Thy Spirit and wisdom in my heart.

Verse 30—Alma cried out in faith to Thee in the midst of crisis and asked that he be preserved to help save his people. I don't know why Lord, but I feel Thee telling me that if the only soul I manage to bring to Thee were myself, that Thou would be okay with it. I feel Thee telling me that if all I manage in this life is getting my own oxygen mask on, then I will have made a major accomplishment and that is okay. I don't know why my struggle to do this is so intense that I never seem to be able to get mine on so I am then freely available to help others, but I truly feel Thee telling me to let all the guilt about everything else go and intensely focus on myself.

And then, I heard the Lord, encouraging me:

HOORAY! TODAY IS A GREAT DAY FOR YOU! I AM SO HAPPY THAT YOU WERE SENSITIVE TO HEARING MY VOICE WHISPER OF MY LOVE FOR YOU. I AM SO HAPPY THAT YOU FEEL ALIVE AND READY TO FIGHT FOR YOUR FREEDOM TODAY. I AM SO HAPPY ABOUT THE WISDOM THAT YOU GLEANED FROM THOSE SCRIPTURES. YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK. YOU ARE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

BELOVED, SOME PEOPLE COME HERE TO EARTH WITH THEIR OXYGEN MASKS SECURELY FITTED ALREADY. THESE PEOPLE ARE OBVIOUSLY MORE AVAILABLE TO SPEND THEIR TIME IN OTHER HELPFUL PURSUITS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE OTHERS OF YOU THAT ARE FIGHTING EVERYDAY TO FIND AIR TO

BREATHE AND ARE DESPERATELY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT JUST HOW TO FIND AND PUT THE MASKS ON.

DON'T FEEL GUILTY ABOUT NEEDING TO BREATHE!!!!!!!!!!

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH, YOU MAY NOT BE IN THIS SPOT FOREVER, BUT IT'S WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW, AND THAT IS OKAY. FIGHT FOR YOURSELF, BELOVED. INVEST TIME AND MONEY INTO YOURSELF. BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE SO WORTHWHILE AND PRECIOUS—BECAUSE YOU ARE. YOU ARE OF INFINITE WORTH TO ME. GO GET 'EM, TIGER! YOU WEREN'T MADE TO LIVE LIFE IN DEPRESSION AND DESPAIR. GO GET SOME AIR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Anonymous ☐



TRUST AND HOPE IN CHRIST

Philippians 4:13 reads: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me". Although I may not appreciate them at the time they are causing me the most struggle, I am learning to be grateful for my challenges and weaknesses. Fear is probably my biggest weakness or addiction. Hope in Christ is the direct opposite of that fear for me. If it weren't for my challenges and weaknesses would I have been able to come to appreciate hope in Christ as I do now?

One of the biggest fears I developed over the years, as I tried over and over to overcome my weaknesses on my own, was that I would never overcome them. That fear turned into impatience with everything I thought I did "wrong". As I began to accept Christ's love for me as I am, the Lord began to explain to me His truths in this matter. He said: "Penny, I have so much more I want to tell you. Sometimes your impatience with yourself gets in the way. You are on the path, right where you need to be in this moment. Let yourself be where you are. Just turn to me. BE. It is okay for you to allow yourself to feel the joy and peace that I give unto you. You are progressing. Let it be. Your progress will not stop if you stop pushing yourself so hard. Soon enough you will be Home with me. Yet, you can feel a piece of that Home each time you turn to Me while you are still on

earth. Each day, remember that I am asking you to fast your impatience. You get to make a new commitment each day. It need not be overwhelming. I am here to carry you."

It is my broken heart and my contrite spirit that the Lord has asked for, not for my own perfect obedience. If, in humility, I obey to the best of my ability at that time, it is enough. It is all I can do on my own. I need my Jesus! For me to expect to be able to change myself and overcome my weaknesses on my own without seeking His direction and assistance is to deny the atonement which has taken place.

I began to learn and accept the words found in Alma 24:11 – "It was all we could do to repent sufficiently before God that he would take away our stain." It is my broken heart and my contrite spirit that the Lord has asked for, not for my own perfect obedience. If, in humility, I obey to the best of my ability at that time, it is enough. It is all I can do on my own. I need my Jesus! For me to expect to be able to change myself and overcome my weaknesses on my own without seeking His direction and assistance is to deny the atonement which has taken place.

I then received further inspiration: "Penny, the way is before you. The plan is there. This blueprint of mine is waiting for you to retrieve it. Be patient with yourself in this process. It will not come all at once. Know that I love you and trust the process. Acknowledge our little successes and don't fret over your little failures. The mistakes my children make are not disappointments to me. I love the mistakes for I know of their potential to promote growth. All is in perfect order. Live, love life and grow -- imperfectly (which is, of course, the perfect process in My eyes). You are everything I know you to be in this moment and infinitely. You are in the process of fulfilling your mission in life".

I was looking through my documents and found a version of the serenity prayer that I created from the various versions on a site that tells of its history. I chose phrases from different versions that I liked. It speaks to

me, to the things I need and want to remember. This is what prompted the topic of my article. I wanted to share it with others because it is a blessing to me. This prayer represents hope in Christ to me and seems an appropriate conclusion.

Dearest God, I pray for serenity
That I may accept what cannot be changed,
Courage to change what I'm guided to change,
And the wisdom, through Jesus Christ,
To know the one from the other.
I offer my liberty, my memory,
My understanding, and my will to thee.
All that I have and am, thou hast given me.
Help me to live one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it;
Trusting that thou wilt make all things right
As I surrender to thy will
So that I can be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with thee in the next.

Penny M. ☐

THE LORD SAYS HE WILL FIGHT OUR BATTLES

I look at my 5 years in this program, with never more than 3 months of abstinence the entire time, and part of me wants to despair sometimes. I have nobody to blame but myself, of course, but it is still a bit discouraging.

But I believe that I need to keep coming back. I also have come to believe that my personal recovery from so many years (20+ years) of self abuse with mb, p~rn and l~st -- is measured by more than just abstinence. Recovery is a whole-soul process, not merely about abstinence. If a high jumper only clears 7' 11" instead of 8' – do we chastise him for not jumping high enough? Does it mean he's not trying hard enough? Does it mean that all of his previous efforts are meaningless?

Likewise, in our own way, we get points for trying. Perhaps we continually fall short of the mark, but we ARE making progress in some fashion. The high jumper has many things to work-on besides jumping high enough! He must concentrate on form, timing, mental

preparation, good diet, strength training -- a whole host of activities that when examined individually, may not seem to have much to do with jumping higher.

We also must learn to consistently do the things that allow the Lord to keep us safe. If we are honest with ourselves, when we go 87 days without a slip and then on day 88 have a slip - we chose to have that slip. It may not make us comfortable to be that honest, but from those 87 days we know that we were doing what was needed to allow the Lord to keep us safe...and on that 88th day - for whatever reason (it may not even matter what the reason was) we decided to turn from the Lord. Perhaps we begin to feel so strong and healthy we think "this one time I am strong enough to battle Satan on my own." And that is when the Liar has us.

Satan is too cunning to battle alone and unaided. He's just too clever. The flesh is the geography of our personal "Waterloo" - and Satan knows this territory well. He knows just how to hook us.

I consider this to be one of THE most important lessons of my recovery. That I am not to attempt to battle Satan alone! In fact, I am commanded not to!

I am not sure where we, as a people, ever got the idea that we were supposed to grit our teeth and muster our own strength and FIGHT these battles of the flesh! Clearly the Lord has never commanded this and does not expect it from us! He expects us to RESIST EVIL by relying upon His power!

D&C 105:14 *For behold, I do not require at their hands to fight the battles of Zion; for, as I said in a former commandment, even so will I fulfil—I will fight your battles.*

1 Sam. 8:20 *That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king [CHRIST] may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.*

2 Chr. 20:17 *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle, TOM or ...: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem:*

fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.

2 Chr. 32:8 *With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.*

D&C 98:37 *And I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children's battles, and their children's children's, until they had avenged themselves on all their enemies, to the third and fourth generation.*

D&C 109:28 *And if they shall smite this people thou wilt smite them; thou wilt fight for thy people as thou didst in the day of battle, that they may be delivered from the hands of all their enemies.*

I am not sure where we, as a people, ever got the idea that we were supposed to grit our teeth and muster our own strength and FIGHT these battles of the flesh! Clearly the Lord has never commanded this and does not expect it from us! He expects us to RESIST EVIL by relying upon His power!

We remember the first part well enough, but forget the crucial importance of the second part!!

Tom K. □

2009 Heart t' Heart Annual Conference
**"He Delivered Me
From All My Fears"**

(From Psalms 34:4)

August 13 & 14, 2008

at

**UVU, in Orem Utah
Details will be forthcoming,**

A TESTIMONY OF HOPE IN CHRIST

I want to offer a little hope. I know it is possible to live without acting out, and it is marvelous. I lived with shame and self-loathing for 30 years before I started attending Heart t' Heart. The difference in how I now feel is like night and day. I no longer hate myself, and kind of like myself now. The Lord is the one who has made the difference. I proved to myself very convincingly that I could not make these changes myself, and trying to do it myself only kept me longer in the addiction.

I know recovery is a slow process. It is not immediate, and no one's path is exactly like someone else's. One thing is pretty universal, though, and that is the battle with pride that we all have to go through, and keep going through. I think the recovery process could be described as level after level of discovering how pride is working in our lives. I know that has been a characteristic of my personal journey. When I started I didn't know I had any pride at all! I have learned that that is just about all I had. I didn't know really what pride was, and how many different forms it can take. I thought it was just thinking you were better than someone (or everyone) else, and I knew that surely didn't apply to me. But so many other expressions of pride did, and some still do. I had to admit that my desire to have things (my life, my relationships, my employment, my Church callings, my finances, etc, etc, etc.) my own way was an expression of deep pride. Every time I have complained at God, I was exercising pride--in essence saying, "I know how my life should be, God, and this isn't it." In other words, I thought I knew how my life should be, and I knew it better than God. He was messing up by not giving me what I thought I knew best about. If that isn't pride, I don't know what is.

The opposite of pride, of course, is humility. Humility takes a lot of different forms, too. Admitting I don't know everything. That I don't know what is best for my life. And that is the beginning of accepting God's will for my life. If I accept God's will for my life, I cannot be angry with Him. Anger is another form of pride. The Lord's spirit gives us peace and submission. Satan's spirit stirs us up to anger. The difference is like night and day.

The most amazing change I have seen in my life is the feeling of peace I have now. I know that things are working out as they should. I know the years I spent in

active addiction were necessary--that I needed to go through that to learn my need for God, and how deep that need was and is. I experience that need daily, as I continue to face temptations, but try to quickly give them to the Lord. And as I continue to do that, I am safe. If I imagine for a moment that I can handle this on my own, even after years of abstinence, I begin to lose that sense of peace, and the temptations start to reach me again. I have a life-long dependency on Christ to save me from the adversary and his temptations. I do not expect that I will ever in this life or the next, be able to stand without the Lord's support. And that's ok. At one time that thought would have bothered me, but not now.

Without God, I can't. Without me, God won't.

One of the biggest trials we face is persevering, even when it seems we don't see any progress. To me, that is a sign that I need deeper humility, or even deeper humbling. At those times I have to approach the Lord with complete openness and ask Him what I need next. And if I am sincere in that question, He will tell me. He can detect any degree of hypocrisy, though, and if I don't really mean it, if I am not really willing to take His direction, He will hold it back until I am fully sincere, until I have let go of my self-pity or self-will. But if I will let go of those forms of pride, He will come to me and lead me on to the next step. It does not depend on His mood or who I am or what I have done. It depends fully on my heart and my willingness to let go of my crutches and have Him take them from me. But He will not grab them away if I am still clutching onto them. As the SA White Book says,

Without God, I can't.
Without me, God won't.

There are no special favors here. There are no "lucky" addicts who get blessed while others have bad luck. It is not a matter of luck. God is no respecter of persons. He will give the same gifts to anyone that He has given to me. He will also give me greater gifts as I humble myself further. That's one of the eternal laws upon which so many blessings are predicated.

I pray that we may all humble ourselves sufficiently that the Lord can bless us with our heart's desires (and make those desires the same as His).

Phil H. □



February GSB Contributions

Online Meeting..... \$40

TOTALS..... \$40

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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>.

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: HODMFB. Open Sharing.

OL-05 - Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA). Food Focus, Book Study: AA Big Book.

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

Phone Meetings

Sunday-4:00 pm, MDT
(See website for details)

OL-04 - Sunday through Friday: Every

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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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