

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

October 2009

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 19 — 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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CRYING OUT

As I woke up this morning I heard my new 3-week-old grandson start to fuss. You see, my son and his family are living with us while they decide what kind of house to build. They have four children.

As I heard this little baby fuss it occurred to me how totally dependant he is on his parents, especially his mother. And the only way he can let her know he's uncomfortable is to cry out. What's interesting is that she can't always help him immediately. Sometimes he has to wait. But then mom comes, and all is well. There will be times, too, that he will cry out when he's uncomfortable and find that he has to get used to that feeling and situation. He'll have to rely on himself to be okay.

I'm sure you can see the parallels here. How totally dependant am I on the Lord when I'm uncomfortable? Totally! It's taken me years to recognize this. And the discomfort I feel can go away when I surrender that discomforting feeling, no matter what it is, to Him. We have many examples in the *Bible* and *Book of Mormon* of those who finally turned to God and received help because they were in discomfort. But it's by choice that we receive this relief.

A friend was telling me about his sixteen-year-old son who wouldn't get out of bed to go to school. All he would do was lie in bed and look at his dad. He wouldn't talk. Finally, through a prompting phone call from a girl friend, he got up, dressed and went to school. But when he got there he started to get sick, threw up several times and had to call home. The dad took his son to the doctor and found the boy had food poisoning.

What I found crazy about this is that the sixteen-year-old boy was in discomfort. It just seemed crazy to me that he wouldn't say anything to his dad or mom. But then I thought about myself. How many times did I do that same thing with my addiction? How many times was I hurting but, by choice, wouldn't ask for help? Too many times to count.

I've put myself in many situations when I've needed help but just wouldn't ask. Pride, ego, fear, pain, unworthiness—all held me back.

(Crying Out--continued from p. 1)

Or I let it hold me back. My choice.

I've learned over time that I can make a different choice. I can ask for help and the discomfort can be gone. But not always. Sometimes the Lord wants me to learn something. So, like my grandson, I might have to wait for the relief.

Asking for help, to be heard, I have to cry out to the Lord. Psalms 120:1 says; "In my distress I cried unto the Lord and He heard me. Mosiah 29:20 says, "...because they cried out unto Him He did deliver them out of bondage..." Sometimes we can cry unto the Lord before we are in discomfort. Alma 37:36 says; "Yea, cry unto God for all thy support..."

I've found success in asking, in crying out to the Lord, and through His Son Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, I get the power and strength to stay clean, to not have the discomfort I used to have, and to be very happy.

I've finally started to use this concept in my daily prayers and when I know I'll be in a situation where I'll be challenged because of the environment I have to be in. I've found success in asking, in crying out to the Lord, and through His Son Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, I get the power and strength to stay clean, to not have the discomfort I used to have, and to be very happy.

Because of making the choice to cry out and surrender myself to God, I was able to be in my house, in my bed, and hear my grandson fuss. What a blessing. What joy and happiness. I can't think of much better.

Thank you Lord for this.

Joe M. ☐



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Anonymous, Contributed by Phil H. ☐



SOME THINGS I DON'T STRUGGLE WITH

I was working this last Sunday which makes going to my home branch for church impossible. But, as I usually do, I found a Ward to go to in the city. It was Fast and Testimony meeting.

The principle behind Fast and Testimony meeting is something that really touches my heart. It has for a little while now. Somehow, my religious addiction hasn't tainted this for me, and I am very grateful.

As I sat there and listened to the various testimonies, the wonder that I often feel during Fast and testimony meeting came over me again.

There was a man who came up to share. He had just returned from three months in Afghanistan. He wasn't a member. His wife is, as are his children. He got up and in front of us all, asked the Bishop if he could say something. The Bishop was alright with it.

He shared with us how glad he was to be home, and how much he loved and appreciated his wife and sons. He didn't close in the name of Jesus Christ. (I mention this, not because closing in the name of Jesus Christ is offensive to me, but to point out that he didn't do it exactly "right.")

It was beautiful!

This is one of the beautiful things I hold on to in the Church. I'm not sure where else in the world this kind of thing can happen. Where else your average "Joe" can get up and express thoughts and feelings of love and affection? I am very grateful to be a part of that kind of thing though.

Thanks for listening!

Mary S. ☐



ON CAPTURING

I just came from the early morning online, live-time, HtH meeting and was so blessed for being there. I felt impressed to copy the thoughts that came to me to share in the meeting and post them here. I have no motive or reason or desire, except to grow in the testimony of these things by sharing them as often as I can.

I am so grateful for Elder Scott's talk in the Saturday morning session of conference--the one in which he outright describes taking notes in Sunday School and capturing from those notes--taking the notes to the Lord--receiving DIRECT personal revelation "between the lines" of what the teachers are saying.

I have come to realize the Lord will speak DIRECTLY to me in and through any and everything my mind and heart is exposed to--whether it be a spoken text or a written text or even a set of circumstances. Everything becomes a conversation with Him, with God.

That is how I have come to realize the Lord will speak DIRECTLY to me in and through any and everything my mind and heart is exposed to--whether it be a spoken text or a written text or even a set of circumstances. Everything becomes a conversation with Him, with God.

And as I read what others say on ANY subject, I know that I can take thoughts that stand out to me and go to the Lord DIRECTLY for personal application and adaptation of what I have read. I know that in every thought in which I look unto Him, He will direct me for good.

When it comes to food--and what foods trigger me and what don't, there has always been a bit of a blur that I have never been able to figure out on my own. There are some foods that trigger me because of chemistry. God has confirmed that to me

DIRECTLY. And there are others, that the chemistry is not the problem, but they have become "comfort" foods to me--they are the cheap, easy foods that I turned to as a child without supervision or guidance. They became what I turned to when I was terribly lonely, etc.

I can't know the truth that is specifically mine from what I read on this subject without drawing on the revelations of Christ. I can't maintain the good work of avoiding these foods without the GRACE (power to maintain a good work) of Christ, either. Thus, He becomes the "author" and the "finisher" of my faith (ability to act upon the truth He reveals to me). He is Alpha and Omega--the beginning and the end of my redemption from sin and my recovery from every other weakness--from mortality.

I'd like to share this in the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Colleen H. ☐

AN ADDICT'S PRAYER

(Editor's Note: Here is a tender example of how capturing leads us to draw nearer to God)--

D&C 88: 63 Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Lord I want to draw near to You but I am not sure how. What does it mean? I am feeling very bad now. You know this Lord. Do you hear me now or do you not listen when people are not really sincere? Please Lord help me to be sincere. I believe I am sincere in wanting this pain I feel to end.

Jesus do you really love me? Please Lord let me feel Your love. So much of what I read and understand from You does not feel like love. That is-- if I don't reach some level of righteousness in this life, I will be forever excluded from Your presence.

To never have a chance or being able to make it

back, to forever be in a hell of regret that I didn't do what I needed to do to measure up--that does not feel loving to me.

To be confined there for a time until I progress to the point I can come home, with You always working with me, to help me make it--that seems like love to me.

How do I seek you Lord? I am asking Lord that You comfort me. I want to knock Lord but don't know how but Lord please open the door and let me in.

Tim A. ☐

FROM THE FORUM: A DISCUSSION ON COUNTING DAYS OF ABSTINENCE

There have been several posts on this forum recently regarding abstinence and how that plays into our recovery as addicts. I wanted to share my thoughts on the matter as it relates to my own personal journey to find peace from my addiction to pornography, masturbation and lustful thoughts.

For those of you who have been participating on this forum for a while you have heard of my story. I have been involved in recovery from this addiction for almost 6 years now. I discovered this place about the time when I decided that I needed to make some changes in my life. It was here that I realized that my life had truly become unmanageable and that I was "addicted" and needed help.

In the beginning I was acting out almost daily and it seemed that my best efforts only got me a week of abstinence but nothing beyond that. I have struggled with internalizing the steps over the years and have continued to remain in the addictive cycle. I currently was blessed with 63 days of sobriety of which I owe the Lord for His goodness and mercy in my life. I am today on day 4 and have been thinking hard over these 4 days about what more I need to do to "do things differently" this time around.

So why do we count days? What is it about this process that is meaningful to an addict? I have thought long and hard about this principle and I think it has to do with the "return and report" principle that we are taught in the temple.

For years I chose to not be accountable to anyone. I lived a secret life full of lies and deceit and I never took ownership of my actions. The 12 step program teaches transparency in recovery and that secrecy feeds the addiction. When I attend a meeting or post on this forum, it is an opportunity for me to become transparent to all of you. It gives me the chance to "return and report" my efforts to you, but more importantly to our Heavenly Father.

I don't feel that the number of days is as important as the intent behind our recovery. Do I count days to be seen of men or do I look at the number of days as a token of my commitment to God, my willingness to submit to His will and work the program? Each day that I choose to turn to Him rather than my addiction represents one for step forward along the iron rod.

Now does this mean that when I have a slip that I am not moving towards the Lord in my recovery? Absolutely not. It does not mean I do not love Him or that I am being cavalier in my recovery. As long as I take each slip as a step toward Him and learn from my mistakes, I am experiencing positive recovery.

For some this change may occur more rapidly than others. For me in the beginning I was acting out daily and now I was blessed with 63 clean days. That is progress. I hope to arrive to where it is no longer the controlling force in my life. I hope to get to where I am able to recognize the temptation and root it out long before the point of no return. I know that with God's help and in working the 12 steps that I can someday get to the point where I never feel the compulsion to act out any more.

I am so thankful for this safe haven where I can come and bear my soul and be transparent. I am grateful for the 12 step program and for a hope that even though I only have 4 days of sobriety today, I will someday get to where I can proclaim that to be

40 years.

I love the Lord and I give these 4 days to Him as a token of that love. May we all have success in our recovery is my humble prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

– Mike.



Thank you for your share, Mike. I have thought about the "counting days" principle as well, and feel the same way you do - a step forward is always counted as a victory for the Lord. Granted, we would love to be able to put away our addiction forever right here and right now, but our pride doesn't allow many of us to do that so suddenly.

I was recently blessed with a month of sobriety - the longest I have had in a LONG while. To me, it has been a blessed time, and does not end because I slipped. It just means that this next time, I need to make it 31 days. If it's beyond that, wonderful. If it's shorter than that, I will be disappointed, but allow myself to dive deep into the scriptures and prayer and all those good things that will help me to get to a month again.

– Byuibeauty



Thank you for bringing the topic of counting up. I actually struggle with this principle a little bit. I have some questions of my own about the topic and would love to hear some more thoughts on this.

It is interesting (or frustrating may be a better term) to me that even after a few months of sobriety, that I could slip again. If I can be blessed with 2 or 3 months of sobriety, than why not more? What is the difference between my day 60 and 61? Or 90 and 91?

Right or wrong, I have recently begun making attempts to not count. I did this in my attempt to make each day feel the same. I pray that each day I can have the same desire to give my pride and will (100%) to Him. If I can do that, than what day of sobriety I am on is irrelevant, right? (rhetorical question)

That being said, after I realize a good deal of time of

SYMPHONIC LIVING

sobriety has passed, I will inevitably retrace the time to see how much time has passed since my last transgression. And then, and this is the clincher for me, the temptation to pat myself on the back and let pride sneak in becomes irresistible. It seems that no matter how hard I try to continue to give my whole self to Lord and treat each day the same as in the past - that somehow it becomes more difficult. Pride somehow manages to find its way inside me yet again!

So, to sum this up, I struggle with counting because my desire is to make every day seem the same - like day 1. The farther out I get, the more false confidence I get. If I count, I am reminding myself everyday that it is not day 1 and I begin to forget how easily it could all slip away again.

Hope this makes sense. Thanks everyone.

– Stephen



One reason to de-emphasize the number of days of clean time is that focusing on it keeps our attention on our addiction. It keeps the obsession going. We used to be obsessed about looking for chances to act out. Now we are obsessed about NOT doing it. The disease still has us captive.

I wrote in my journal when I acted out, but then moved on and tried to focus on the solution as HDDM encourages. After I had been abstinent for a couple of years I read back in my journal and found that it was Nov. 1999 that I had my last slip with pornography. So next month will be ten years for me. But the only reason I pay attention to that now is so I can give Jesus credit for my abstinence and maybe give some hope to others that recovery is possible. I find I have to constantly give God all the glory or I start to slip back into the addiction with my thinking. I know that is the slippery slope that leads to acting out, so I have to surrender any of that kind of thinking to the Lord.

God bless us all. It's the only way we will make it.

– Phil H.



This morning, I am still saturated with the beautiful music I experienced last night. The Mozart was lovely, and Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake Suite* was incredible, but Stravinsky's cello piece was amazing. I've never heard a cello played with such passion. There were places in the music where I laughed and others where I cried. It was sorrowful, wild, delightfully creative, and so tender that I could feel my spirit rising up, near to bursting.

After the concert, I exclaimed, Lord, You have a beautiful mind! No man could compose such music without inspiration. Is every life intended to reflect Thee, Lord, in such a magnificent way? – One with a bow and a cello, another with brushes and paint, or with words, or with any of an endless variety of creative expressions?

The spiritual message I heard was:

Whatever you do, Peg, do it with enthusiasm and with the sheer joy of life. This is how I live. This is one meaning of "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25) – that they might feel life deeply and express how they feel.

The need to create is part of your inheritance as a daughter of God, for to be a God is to be a creator. It is to believe that what gifts you have been given are for a purpose: to be increased, bringing forth both abundance in your life and joy in your Creator through your faith, or in other words, in your belief that what you have been given is good and of God, and is for your use and enjoyment. (Matthew 25:14-30) It is in doing something you love that you testify best of your faith that I am good and generous and that I love you, Peg.

Remember? The slothful servant was afraid, and buried his talent in the ground, thinking I was a "hard man," reaping where I haven't sown and gathering where I haven't strawed. There is another way of looking at his attitude. He had no faith that I was with him, sowing and strawing – in other words, inspiring and supporting him. He had so little faith and so much fear of failure that he didn't dare try my love.

Peg W. □

September GSB Contributions

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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>.

01-04 - Sunday through Friday: Every morning, 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 a.m. General Focus (MST).

01-02 - Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA). General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

01-05 - Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA). Food Focus, Book Study: AA Big Book.

01-03 - Saturday, 7:00 - 8:30 a.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA). General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

Phone Meetings

Thursday-11:00 am, MDT

Sunday-4:00 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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