

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

January 2010

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 20 — Issue 1

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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OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE

When I look back on the last decade of recovery, I am amazed at the depths of humility that each Step invites us to, and how there are layers upon layers of meaning to each and every step.

When I finally fell to my knees with the realization that I was powerless over my compulsive addictive behaviour, it wasn't so much a feeling of defeat that came with it, but more hope, I think. The portion of Step One which states that "our lives had become unmanageable" wasn't really opened up to me until recently.

After all, I had a job, a family, a home, we paid our bills, attended Church and did all the things "responsible people" did. How could my life have been called unmanageable?

I think that perhaps my inability to see how my life had become unmanageable was an act of mercy on the Lord's part, and now that I am ready to see it, He has brought about the circumstances to help me to understand what it really means, and some of the implications of it.

It has just been brought to light that someone I love very dearly has been living with an increasingly out of control addiction. Looking in, from the outside of this person's life, I could see quite clearly that things were beginning to spin out-of-control. There was (and is) a frantic energy that settled around me whenever I was in this person's presence. Things weren't adding up. That person's life had become unmanageable.

I can see this looking from the outside, but this person can't see it -- and neither could I when I first entered into recovery. It is only now, as I look at the way my loved one's life has become unmanageable,

(Our Lives Had Become... --continued from p. 1)

that I am mercifully opened up to see how unmanageable my life was — and still is.

The difference is that through the Grace of God, I can see it now. In fact, the longer I am in recovery the more obvious it is to me that I cannot manage my life . . . that life, for me as an addict, is far too busy and overwhelming, and that managing it is out of the question.

This is not what I thought a decade of recovery would bring. I thought that somehow I would be able to manage my life as I got better, but it turns out that the opposite is true. I am gradually awakened to the truth of my life, as walking in the reality of my very real limitations as an addict begins to set in, as the truth of Moses' words: “. . . Now for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed”(Moses 1:10), sink into my truth, I am gently awakened to the height and breadth and depth of the Grace of God.

Perhaps the point is living in Christ. Walking and talking with Him.

Everyday the unmanageableness of my life becomes more and more obvious to me, and every day the reality of my incredible need for God sinks deeper and deeper into my soul. Every day I wake up and fall into the arms of the One who can redeem my soul, bring me to a state of relative sanity, and guide me in this overwhelming experience we call life.

Today I understand that while I can't manage my life, I can turn to Him. Somehow my life looks more manageable on the outside, but probably it doesn't look as good as it did before recovery.

The Lord has torn down the false foundations of my

life and when that happened, I fell -- hard. All the outside veneer of “fineness” went down with me, and it became obvious to me, that I could not clean up the mess. I had nothing to bring to the table. No bargaining chip. No good works. No abstinence. Nothing.

Nothing except what HE had been asking for all along -- my heart -- Broken and Contrite.

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My life had become unmanageable! Thank Goodness.

I wonder if life was ever meant to be “managed,” and if all my attempts to manage it are exactly what make it unmanageable. Perhaps it's not managing life that's the point. I remain powerless over my compulsive addictive behaviours. My life remains unmanageable *by me* . . . but I have a Saviour who has brought the good news of the Gospel alive in my life, and a huge part of the good news is that I have but one thing to do in each day -- Seek This Jesus -- and when I do that, when I bring to it the weight and attention it deserves, everything truly does fall into it's proper place or drop out of my life.

Today, I live in a state of remission from several of my many compulsive addictive behaviours. Today, I understand that in order to continue this walk of recovery I require a relationship with Diety that is so intimate and honest that it changes me. Today, I can live quite happily understanding that I CAN'T manage my life -- but I do know Who can!

How Great is our God!

Mary S. ☐



THE SPONGE AND I

Have you ever noticed how living in an alcoholic relationship makes us resemble a dried-out sponge? I frequently think of others and myself in a meeting as sponges. In our pre-Al-Anon days we took on the characteristics of a dried sponge-hard, brittle, rough and unusable. We sit on the shelf and wait for something to change us.

The program is like water dripping onto a sponge. With each passing drop we become renewed, more supple and flexible. We continue to add the program water and suddenly, when the sponge is full, we have enough water to help newcomer sponges.

It is important to keep the program flowing into our sponge, even though we may think we have an abundance of water. A drip once a month or once a week sure doesn't keep a sponge as pliable as several drips a week.

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I have had seasons in the program where I felt the abundance of water, an overflowing for several others. I have had periods of maintenance when I was only open-minded enough to keep my own dampness. And I have had experiences where I thought my sponge had dried. But always I kept coming back to allow others with an abundance to help me.

It seems like a simple thing; yet the more I think about it the more truths unfold. Consider the sponge the next time you think the program isn't working and ask yourself if you have had your sponge near water recently. Keep coming to meetings – my sponge may be drying and I need you as well as we

all need each other.

Below is my favorite acronym for Detachment. Detachment was one of the hardest things I think I ever tried living. As I was taught by the Master teacher and allowed him to weave this principle into my sad, broken and hardened heart, I learned of His peace. A true peace that comes from unconditional Love for myself as well as others who have touched my life.

Determination
Easy does it
Traditions
Acceptance
Control Anger
Hope
Meetings
Expectations
No Gossip or Criticism
Think

I am so grateful for Al-Anon and the many gentle and tender-hearted women who talked with me many hours and loved me so unconditionally. Sponsorship saved my life, as I was learning to connect to the great sponsor in the Heavens. I am grateful for a sponsor who always guided me to Jesus Christ first and foremost. I am grateful for My Jesus and his marvelous tenders mercies extended unto one such as I.

I am grateful to have become aware of my nothingness before him and the humility it brings when the Holy Ghost guides me to embrace it.

This season of the year that has just passed has great hope for us all. A baby sent to us to bring us back to Him. Thank You Lord Jesus! Jesus is the Heart of the Christmas Season. May we start this New Year with His undeniable Hope and Peace, along with His promise to set the captives FREE!

Is my prayer for us all, in the Holy Name of our precious Savior, Amen and Amen!

Ellen S. ☐



STEP STUDY: STEP EIGHT

Capture from the CoDA 12 Steps Handbook, p 36 (Step Eight) -

What was important here was to discover if we had harmed ourselves or others as a way of venting our rage, grief, or hurt at these past injuries.

How can I NOT still be doing this? It can only stop if God heals me from the rage and pain. Since I cannot tell how much of this has been healed in me, I must assume that at least some of this harm may still be happening. And just like all of the other intelligence I have gained in recovery through God's grace, I am sure I cannot discover this on my own -- only with His help.

I pray that if it is His will, He will bless and show me how I may still be affected by and reacting to past injuries. I am sure that my feeling "not good enough" has tinted all of my reactions and emotions. If it is His will in this also, I ask Him to remove this short-coming, this debilitating belief that I will never be anything but a disappointment.

I know I am nothing, but precious to Him. I know that in my own power I am nothing, but in God's power I can do all things. May my focus be on God that all things in me (and out) will fall into their proper places. May I remember and believe heart-deep (especially since the Spirit has brought this to my mind) that it is God who determines my worth; that, because of His infinite love, I have infinite value.

I believe that the painful lessons of this world must be worse because we are all tinged with the expectations born from our premortal experiences of God's love, even though we cannot actually remember them. Our spirits were born of God and molded under His tutelage and presence. Wouldn't how infinite love feels be ingrained in our spirits? Did we forget that, too? Could even that have been expunged from our spirits' "cells"? An institute teacher told me that Brigham Young said that the veil is our bodies. How changed are our spirits as a

result of acquiring a body?

Whatever the answers to these questions are, we must certainly have been hurt to find anger and disappointment when we expected unconditional love. The size of that pain does not matter, does it? The fact of it does. My Dad has described the bitterness of his family towards his grandpa, the drunk who spent the family's support on alcohol, and Dad did not seem to recognize his own bitterness as it poured forth. Do I have unrecognized bitterness? Can't pain exist in someone without bitterness?

We swim in a sea of infinite love. How can we be so closed off from it?

I think bitterness is unresolved anger and I think I have had plenty of indications of anger in me, so there MUST be bitterness in me. I pray God will heal my anger. I wonder if healing anger means that the pain is healed too, or if one takes longer than the other. I hope that as I am healed, anger will not occur as often because I will face and turn over my pain to my Lord.

We swim in a sea of infinite love. How can we be so closed off from it?

Lord, let me open to Thy love. Let me look to Thee only for my source of healing, approbation, intelligence and love. I pray in the name of Infinite Love, who is Jesus Christ, Amen.

Karen T. □

UNITY: THOUGHTS ON TRADITION ONE

Joseph Smith said "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves." Although the context was his explaining to an outsider how the LDS society was so well-ordered, I believe it reflects an eternal principle. The Lord teaches us correct principles, and then we choose whether to follow those principles.

It has been my experience that the Lord teaches us in many ways, from many sources. I had a wonderful experience not long ago when participating in an online meeting of Heart t' Heart, of having the Lord open my mind to the eternal nature of the first tradition of Heart t' Heart.

The original 12-step program was Alcoholics Anonymous. AA consists of individuals whose lives have been ravaged by alcoholism. They came together to support each other in following 12 simple steps that have successfully led millions of alcoholics to a life of sobriety. This happens through finding a form of spirituality, of connection to a higher power, that works for them.

Many have heard of 12-step programs. Fewer are aware that AA also has 12 traditions that are part of the power of the AA program.

Here is the first tradition of Heart t' Heart, modeled on the first tradition of AA. "In Heart t' Heart individual recovery depends on the loving, supportive fellowship of the group. Without acceptance and unity there can be no fellowship and thus no recovery."

And here is how it applies to the Church, as the Lord explained it to me: "In my Church, individual spiritual growth depends on the loving, supportive fellowship of others. Without acceptance and unity there can be no fellowship and thus spiritual growth is limited."

The Savior told us over and over that he did nothing but what his Father directed him to do. He pleaded with his apostles and pleads with us to seek that same unity with Father. "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine." (D&C 38:27)

Why is that unity so important? The Lord has told us that we cannot be saved without our ancestors, nor they without us. In fact, no one can be saved on their own. *We save each other – not because we have any saving power, but by helping each other connect to the Savior's saving power.*

The process of progression towards eternal life is the process of becoming like Jesus and Father – of turning our desires to helping others. As our desires for our own comfort and convenience give way to a desire to help our brothers and sisters, to let them feel loved and accepted, to achieve unity with them, we become more unified with the Savior and Father – we all become unified together.

We save each other – not because we have any saving power, but by helping each other connect to the Savior's saving power.

The Savior longs to have that unity with us: "And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not." (3 Nephi 10:5).

May we seek to support each other in love and acceptance and unity is my humble prayer, in the name of my Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Keith H. □

A SHARING FROM THE ONLINE MEETING ABOUT AGENCY

In the nearly 20 years since HDDMFB "went public," I have only had people call me in protest over one part of the text. Several mission presidents, famous CES teachers, and even an Apostle have read the text and not found even this concept objectionable.

But 2 or 3 times, I have had long conversations with people who scream (well, raise their voices a bit), NO!!!! There's no way I would have chosen THIS! Or no way I would have chosen THAT (a horrific

childhood.) But, this is the way—the way of agency—that God set things up.

I have to admit that I too have had the hardest time accepting life (mortality) due to this one “term” or condition: Agency. It has taken me the entire 29 years I’ve been in 12 Step study to become even partially convinced that it is truly the Supreme ruling principle in all of eternity.

I mean, I felt given of the Lord—inspired, moved upon—to “pen” those words, 20 years ago, but I have retreated over and over from believing them. And yet I see them confirmed constantly—in my own life and in the life of my loved ones. I see that there is nothing I can do about other people’s choices to make them be the way I’d like them to be.

When I chose to follow Jesus Christ (our Father’s plan) in the premortal life, I chose to follow the way of agency—of patience, longsuffering, persuasion, love “unfeigned” (unfaked).

And there’s nothing I can do to get God to interfere with their choices either. And I can’t even get Him to interfere with MY choices!!

He will not use external force to MAKE anyone do anything. That’s the truth of it.

I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God does not “victimize” anyone. That He would never have sent any of us totally blind into the lives of our parents and into the circumstances we have experienced while on earth. I know He promised us that no matter how hard it became here in mortality, He would provide us a Savior—and Jehovah promised HE, Himself would come to be with us in this fallen world, and would always be with us as our conscience—if we would just CHOOSE to listen. He is so still and small, so meek and mild. The ETERNAL GOD, the Book of Mormon calls Him. And yet He chooses to stay so far behind the scenes of my mind, that I keep taking credit for all the wise (sane) things that go through my mind.

I know that ALL power and ALL wisdom that has EVER been witnessed in my life has come through the “whispering” and the empowering (grace) of Jesus Christ. Either through His Light/Spirit directly and/or through the Holy Spirit—it’s all been Him.

When I chose to follow Jesus Christ (our Father’s plan) in the premortal life, I chose to follow the way of agency—of patience, longsuffering, persuasion, love “unfeigned” (unfaked).

Satan’s way of making a perfect world—where everyone would behave perfectly and there would be no messy agency to deal with—was love *feigned*.

I am still on the quest of allowing my choices to be acts of love unfeigned, and thus without any hint of irritant. I am a most rebellious child, but I am astounded at His (Their) unfaltering love of me. Thanks . . .

Colleen H. □

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 Literature Study - Articles based on quotes and capturing from any approved literature sources: the Scriptures, AA, SA, NA, HtH, etc.
- 4 Open Sharing - Articles with positive recovery messages
- 5 Program from the Prophets - Articles based on finding support for the principles in steps in the public talks of the Prophets.
- 6 Short quotes, thoughts or one-liners

Send articles to:

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or hthorder@hotmail.com

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Editor's Note: Please remember, the opinions shared in Heartbeats are those 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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