

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 a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. (2 Ne. 10:24; Omni 1:26; 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; 3 Nephi 12:24; 3 Nephi 12:44–45)
- 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. (Alma 5:7; Mosiah 27:36–37; Moroni 7:3)

*Any problem may be inserted here, in place of "compulsive addictive behaviors." Permission to use the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by A.A. World Services, Inc.

Dearest Friends,

One More Take on Steps 1–3, Then on to 4!

The most important thing we can do to be *really* ready to take Steps Four and Five is to go back and read and prayerfully ponder the first three steps. Let their truths sink deeply into your heart.

Step One: The truth is, you're "nothing" without God. In other words, you're just a child, lost in a wilderness, in a panic, trying every which way to cope with the fear and confusion. And besides that, you're very myopic and can only see what's right in front of you (that's what the "veil" does to us). It's like we're near-sighted and can't see far enough behind us or in front of us or even around us to realize we're on a good path. God understands that and has prepared a rescue plan for you from the beginning.

Check 1 Nephi 8:5-9 for a scripture you can liken unto yourself. You followed the Savior, our Father's Son, into this "waste" (wilderness). Reconnecting to Him and Father in a deeply personal and spiritual way, again, will bring you to the "tree of life."

Step Two says that God can restore you to "sanity." In other words He can clear things up, walk with you, help you sort out the past, no longer regret it. Why? Because He will come to you in Spirit and in Truth and show you all the lessons that your "wilderness trek" has to teach you. He'll help you think more spiritually-minded, be more true-principle oriented. He will help you to live in the present and have hope that the future (with His personal counsel and guidance) will make more sense to you, even as it unfolds.

Step Three teaches us that we must trust God in *all* things. That is the highest and most complete way that you can express worship of Him. It means more than any amount of

One More Take...Then On to Step Four!

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frantic activity in His church. All that frantic activity is good as far as it goes, but it isn't what will help a person come to peace with being lost in the wilderness. Only He can do that.

The single most important thing you must trust Him in is *you* and all your foolish, childish choices. *You* are part of the *all* things you need to trust Him in. You need to realize that there is no mistake you've ever made or that has ever been made against you that He can't neutralize and make "white as snow" (in other words deal with and make up for and resolve forever). None. Nada. Not one!

With these three truths firmly in place, doing a Fourth Step is a joy, a romp, a "Yes! Yes! Yes! I'm going after everything. There's nothing I need to be ashamed of any more. There's nothing I need to hold back. I'm getting it all out so it can't reinfect me later. I'm letting go of shame. Christ died for that. I'm letting go of blame! Christ took all that, too. My sins. Their sins. All sin." (What part of *all* don't we understand.)

In the light of the first three truths, you start throwing the blinds open, pulling out every box and barrel, opening every back closet, dragging out the "skeletons" and sad events that cause negative feelings. Why? Because every negative feeling is going to be swallowed up in *far* greater reality of Christ's mercy and power.

And you don't have to do this house-cleaning alone. The

With [the first three steps] firmly in place, doing a Fourth Step is a joy, a romp, a Yes! Yes! I'm going after everything.

Savior will stay right with you, and hold your hand and smile at you over every icky, sad thing you come up with.

Do you remember the stories of people who have had near-death experiences? They say that as their life was replayed for them, the Lord (or "Being of Light") who was with them didn't flicker a frown over even the parts of their lives they thought they would surely "burn" for.

When are we, you and I, going to realize that God is *big enough* to take it all. He's *already* taken it all. We can go free! Steps Four and Five represent our faith (a principle of action—always connected with taking action) in that promise. We are exercising faith that Christ is greater to make right than we are to mess up.

Now, go throw back the curtains and drapes, open all the windows, roll up your sleeves and go to it. (See "The Power of His Everlasting Word" in the Appendix of *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage* for one of the simplest, yet effective ways to do the written part.)

—Colleen □

Living By the Light

The Book of Mormon includes the testimonies of three witnesses who were shown the gold plates by an angel. It also includes testimonies of eight witnesses who merely saw and handled the plates, but were not visited by an angel.

The miraculous appearance of an angel to the three witnesses shines through in their testimony. You can feel the strength and power of it, the fervency inspired by it. The testimony of the eight, while valid and necessary, lacks some of the power of the testimony of the three.

I do not presume to wonder how one of the three witnesses, after having a face to face experience with an angel, came to a point in their lives where they found themselves at odds with the LDS Church. To do so would imply that I feel I would not have done so under the same circumstances. I have no right to judge them, but instead feel a sadness for them.

What a struggle it must have been to have that experience and yet have weaknesses in character great enough to prevent you from living up to that experience. I feel that same struggle in my own heart. In the pages of my journals, I have received and recorded the words of the spirit, or personal revelation. And yet, as I live through my day, I frequently find myself unequal to the task

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Letting the Lord Be Your Spotter

O my son, do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way; for so was it with our fathers; for so was it prepared for them, that if they would look they might live; even so it is with us. The way is prepared, and if we will look we may live forever.

And now, my son, see that ye take care of these sacred things, yea, see that ye look to God and live. Go unto this people and declare the word, and be sober...do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way.

(Alma 37:46–47)

The human mind, at least my human mind, has difficulty focusing on what it perceives as mundane. I have experienced that effect many times. Even good habits (like reading the scriptures) became mundane over time because the task is the same, day in and day out. This is a curious thing really, that something which provides such tremendous value to my life should become less meaningful just because of its repetition.

I also tend to over complicate things, thinking there needs to be some mighty event to change my life or bring me back into remembrance of the Lord. If I am really honest with myself, I have to admit that at times I even crave this. I want it to be difficult. Maybe this is an attempt to add validation to my suffering or struggle. Maybe I

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am also “consuming it on my lust” or pride to be able to say “look what I had to go through,” as if I have anything to do with the victory. The Lord carries me and I want the credit. He magnifies me and I want to say “look at me.” How silly it really is, isn’t it?

The gospel is actually very simple (not complicated). The way is easy. Finding The Way (Jesus) is easy, because His hand is always stretched out ready to receive, if we but look to Him. God has but one motivating force—LOVE. He has no hidden agenda, no alternative motive or goal. everything is out in the open with Him—simple, all consuming love, the pure desire to share with me *all* that He has, and to do so in a way that I can maintain my agency (in fact strengthen it), my right to say “no thanks” and also the right to develop these things in my life on my own. Well, with His help, but with all the capacity I can

muster, to my benefit.

I enjoy lifting weights with a friend. For those that have done or do this, you know that you get the greatest benefit from lifting when you have a spotter, someone that can watch you lift and when necessary help. This has the benefit of:

- 1) keeping you safe
- 2) allowing you to push your strength to its limit, to work your muscle to the point of exhaustion.

Working to your limit is when the greatest growth occurs. You push the weight and as the muscle begins to fail, the spotter steps in and adds just enough of his own strength to help you finish the lift.

I remember several times as I would loose power, my spotter would be able to easily lift the weight back into place, sometimes with one hand. The Lord really is the ultimate and perfect Spotter. He helps me bear the burdens in my life, but only as needed, so that I can gain the greatest growth and benefit.

This brings me of another element in Alma’s words—“the easiness of the way.” The nature of life’s burden doesn’t change, just like my exercise weights didn’t change. They didn’t get heavier or lighter. When the Lord helps, it doesn’t mean that trials of life become less difficult. Trials, sometimes very weighty ones, will come my way. But the Lord will lift the

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burden and allow me to carry it. His way is easy and His burden light, because He lifts it for me, but still helps me to grow in the process as I use my capacity.

When I first began lifting weights, my capacity didn't amount to much. I was embarrassed as I compared myself to others. But slowly, my ability to master the weight grew until I was able to add more weight. The Lord does the same for me in my weakness.

Another phrase that impressed me was "look to God and live." I have always seen this phrase as an anti-negative "look to God and [don't die]." It struck me this morning that this phrase could also mean "look to God and live [life to its fullness, to live life richly]." To get off the sidelines and experience the goodness that life has to offer and become a real contributor by letting God lift the burdens and make them light so that I can concentrate on learning to love Him and others.

Lord, help me to focus my wavering mind and heart on thee, to be more steady even in the repetitive nature of the task. Humble my proud heart and the need that I have to feel in control, even in the madness that I have created in my life by trying to do so. Help me to see thy hand in the small and simple means as thou liftest my burdens and indeed make them light—so that I might *live!* May we all live!

—Brooks ☐

Lehi reads from the book of prophecy. He reads of the abominations of his people, their forthcoming hardships, and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem. (v. 13) Since I already know how deeply he cares for his people, I can imagine the heartbreak and sadness this vision would bring. I would expect him to feel sorrowful, discouraged and overwhelmed.

And yet, in the next verse, he praises God, saying, "thy... goodness, and mercy are over all" (v. 14). How can he say that? How can he feel joy and praise God when his world is falling apart all around him?

How? Because he is resting in the arms of the Lord's comfort, fully partaking of His love and mercy on a personal level.

I know that feeling. I know what it is like to feel peace and love for and trust in the Lord when my own world is falling apart. I have felt it. I am feeling it now.

Enfolded in the arms of my Savior's love and mercy, I realize I am truly safe. Nothing can hurt me beyond my ability to heal, with the Lord's help. Should I become ill, He will sustain me. Should I die, He will receive me. Should my business crumble, my children lose their way, relationships dissolve, He will teach me.

Am I saying I will never feel pain or heartache or discouragement? Of course not! But when I do feel the pangs of mortality,

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whatever they may be, I know where to go to find balm to soothe my soul. If and when I turn to the Lord in fervent prayer, He will bind up and heal my wounds (Jer. 30:17; Jacob 2:8).

I know this because He has healed so many of my wounds already. He is healing me even as I sit here and write this message. It is only when I forget that I know this that the pain and discomfort of mortality become too much to bear. But the moment I turn back to Him, I feel peace enter my heart.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [protect] you hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

I know what that feels like. I've put it to the test. I have learned, and am still learning, to follow Lehi's example and to praise God amid the trials.

—Name Withheld ☐

Called to Be a Prophet (1 Nephi 1:5)

Why was Lehi called to be a prophet? Because he heard and believed the words of other prophets who said Jerusalem would be destroyed if they did not repent. And then he “prayed unto the Lord...with all his heart, in behalf of his people.” (1 Nephi 1:5)

One of the characteristics of all prophets is their great love for their people. Their capacity to love seems to have grown beyond what most of us feel, which is a deep love for family and close friends, then an increasingly diminished, ‘generic’ love for those we know less well or not at all. Prophets are able to feel that great love for all men, whether they know them or not.

Which brings me to wonder—were they born with this greater capacity to love? Did it come with them as an attribute they developed during pre-mortality? Or did they

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Perhaps it is something else entirely—a gift from God that we receive as we become more like Him.

develop that ability to love here on earth?

If it came with them, is this great love only inherent in and available to those who are born with it? Or can it be learned if one's desire is great enough? If it is something that can be learned, who taught them?

What experiences did they have that encouraged and developed it? How did they learn it?

How can I learn it?

Not that I want to be a prophet. But I want to be more like Christ, the greatest ‘prophet’ of all.

Oh! [light bulb moment] I guess if I became like Christ, it would automatically make me a prophet—in temperament and attribute, if not in calling. I wonder if that's what Moses meant when he said, “Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets”? (Numbers 11:29)

Perhaps this great ability to deeply love all mankind, collectively and individually, is neither an inborn quality nor a learned attribute. Perhaps it is something else entirely—a gift from God that we receive as we become more like Him.

—KB □

Living By the Light

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of walking by the light I have been given.

I am weak and selfish, full of pride. I cannot even say, “There but for the grace of God, go I,” because I do go there. And I feel ashamed. I can only imagine that having experienced the greater light of angelic visitation, the inner struggle and heartache and disappointment in self would be all the more difficult to bear.

But I know that as I return to the light at the start of each new day--sincerely repentant and committed and willing to do better, be better—I find acceptance, forgiveness and more instruction. And I know the same is available to any who seek it.

—Anonymous □

The longings of your heart...are not incidental; they are critical messages. The desires of your heart are not to be ignored; they are to be consulted. As the wind turns the weather vane, so God uses your passions to turn your life. God is too gracious to ask you to do something you hate.

—Max Lucado,
Grace for the Moment

Recovery Without an ‘Alma Experience’

I think it must be quite common among addicts to “look for something big.” How many times have I waited for a “big day” to begin my recovery? The first of the year. The first of the month. My birthday. My wife’s birthday. Our anniversary. I always felt I needed to pick a day that would be the “Great Turning Point” beyond which I would never act out again!

I felt I needed to hit bottom and actually went searching for my it. Not a great idea, to say the least. I think my perfectionism has hindered my willingness to take sobriety “one day at a time.” It hinders my ability to accept imperfection in my recovery as a valid (and valuable) part of my recovery.

Jesus knows me and my weaknesses. He also knows my desires (the true desires of my heart, not what I pretend and profess my desires to be). He loves and accepts me as I am, knowing that mistakes are a part of my mortal experience. When I finally accepted the fact that I can’t do it alone, and I realized there isn’t going to be one great “Alma experience” for me, recovery began in earnest.

Now, many months later, I try to look back to when the change took place. What was the one “big day” that started the change. I don’t know that there was one. There have been a series of tender mercies that the Lord has extended to me, and he has blessed me to recognize them as such. And that

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recognition of His love has supported me when my recovery has moved two steps ahead and one step back.

There have definitely been some miracles in my life over the past couple of years. But none of those miracles, in and of themselves, were the “big change.” I occasionally made mistakes, even after the miracles. But that didn’t diminish the fact that the miracles occurred. Eventually I began to believe that a mistake didn’t mean that I had to search for a new bottom before coming back to Christ. He would accept me back immediately. I didn’t have to prove my worthiness before I could approach Him again.

Then, slowly, one day at a time, the days have added up to weeks, and the weeks to months—not only of sobriety, but recovery. And the *big change* is that I am not white knuckling it anymore. Oh, I still feel very weak. I am still an addict, but I am a *recovering* addict. I still know that I could fall in an instant if I fail to “always

remember him,” but He has changed my heart.

I now read the scriptures because they are delicious to me, not out of duty. (Well, most of the time anyway.) His fruit has begun to be delicious to me. I have begun to acquire a taste for His goodness. I have gone from not only being able to feel His love, but to actually love Him with all of my heart. That is the “something big” that has occurred in my life. But it has come slowly, bit by bit, here a little, there a little, over the past couple of years—and has been interrupted with some slips and mistakes. But that doesn’t make it any less “big.”

I am so grateful for my Savior and his patience and love for me. May He grant me, and each of us, another day of His tender mercies. What a great fellowship this is! May God continue to bless us all.

—John F. 

When we begin to take our failures non-seriously, it means we are ceasing to be afraid of them. It is of immense importance to learn to laugh at ourselves.

--Katherine Mansfield

January's GSB Contributions

KY-01	\$25.00
(in memory of Bette Berdan)	
ID-15	\$6.00
Total Income	\$366.83
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HEART T' HEART

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Online Meetings

To attend one of the online meetings go to:
<http://www.heart-t-heart2.org/chat>.
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All are welcome to attend. If this is your first time, review the information on the regular Heart t' Heart webpage:
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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:
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 Colleen (435)245-4744;
 colleenh99@comcast.net

OL-01—Thursday, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA).
 General Focus. Book Study:
 HDDM. Open Sharing. Mary S.;
 mtshaver@mts.net

OL-03—Saturday, 7:00-8:30 a.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA).
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- Personal experiences with the Steps, Traditions, Tools; how they work in your life
- Capturing from the scriptures, Big Book, He Did Deliver Me
- Open Sharing with positive recovery messages
- Program from the Prophets – quotations from modern prophets with a “recovery” message
- Short quotes, thoughts or one-liners

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What’s inside this issue of Heartbeats...

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