

steps to the best of his or her ability. Sponsors generally have more experience in the program and have maintained some level of recovery.

It is recommended that we ask someone to be our sponsor soon after coming into the program. We listen to the sharing and to the Spirit and then choose someone with whom we feel we share a common bond. Or we take down the name and phone number of someone who has checked the sponsor column on the “We Care” list. Sponsoring may develop into a long term friendship or it may be temporary. It is perfectly acceptable to have more than one sponsor at the same time so that we can be sure of reaching someone when we are in need.

Telephoning

At *Heart t' Heart* we are encouraged to use the telephone as a means of breaking through our isolation and getting back on the road to recovery. Using the telephone to call other members has been compared to having a meeting between meetings. It's a tool we can use any time we need to talk about our feelings and experiences, whether it be before, during, or after engaging in our compulsive behavior.

At meetings, a “We Care” list is passed to each member, inviting us to write down our first name and telephone number. This list is then circulated a second time to allow everyone take down the names and numbers of other members. We are encouraged to build a personal phone list that we can keep in a convenient place and use to reach out to others.

Writing

Those who are most successful in the twelve step programs use the tool of writing frequently. Unspoken, unacknowledged feelings, whether positive or negative, are often the source of our need to “use”, or do our compulsive behavior. Writing is a way of bringing our feelings to the surface and exploring them. Many people find that they do not realize what their true feelings really are until they see them in front of them in

black and white. Once on paper, these thoughts and feelings can be acknowledged, and a solution to the problem can be found.

Writing can also be used as a means of communicating with God. Some members of *Heart t' Heart* write the prayers of their heart and then record what they feel the Spirit speak back to them during their private meditation.

The Nine Tools of Heart t' Heart

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The Nine Tools of *Heart t' Heart*

As a help in working the twelve steps and twelve traditions, we use the following nine tools. To be useful, a tool must be picked up and used. Not every person in *Heart t' Heart* uses every tool listed below. Those who do use them do not always use each of the tools every day. However, we have found that the more tools we can use on a consistent, daily basis, the greater our potential for staying in recovery. The tools are not a replacement for the twelve steps, rather they help us work on the principles of the steps and traditions.

The Nine Tools of Recovery

Abstinence

Abstinence, simply defined, is the action of refraining from our compulsive behaviors, whatever they may be. Abstinence is a personal matter between ourselves and God. It will differ from person to person, even if their compulsions are the same.

Abstinence has been said to be both a tool of the program and a result. To be “physically” abstinent, to abstain from our compulsive behavior, is a tool because it helps us to honestly face our feelings, rather than resort to our compulsion to distract or comfort us.

There is a dimension of abstinence that goes far beyond the physical realm. This is the spiritual gift of a complete loss of our desire to do our compulsive behavior. This gift comes as a result of applying the steps and their underlying principles in our lives. For some of us this gift comes quickly, and for others, it comes more slowly, but it does come to all.

Anonymity

Anonymity (anna–nim–it–tee) is called the spiritual foundation of this program. This tool reminds us that the focus in this fellowship is on

the principles and not the people in it. It assures us safety in the freedom of expression of our innermost thoughts and feelings without the worry of gossip or retaliation. Our sharing will be received with respect and kept in confidence. Even our presence at these meetings will not be made known without our permission.

Anonymity does not mean that we cannot share the ideas and principles discussed in the meetings, only that identities not be attached to them. It also reminds us that all are equal in these groups. There are no prescribed leaders or “gurus” within the group and outside status makes no difference. We all gather here to acknowledge our common humanity.

Literature and Music

Literature is used to help us more fully understand our path to recovery and to reinforce the use of the twelve steps. It gives us the ability to have a meeting with just ourselves when we are not able to reach out and connect with someone else. We recommend the daily use of the scriptures, any AA or other organized twelve step program literature, and *Heart t' Heart* approved literature such as the workbook, *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*.

It has been said that music is a powerful way to speak God’s language, to praise Him and to express our deepest feelings to God and to others. It can be felt inside our hearts or performed aloud for others to enjoy. Listening to inspired music is both comforting and healing to our souls.

Hymns can be particularly healing. According to the 1985 LDS Church hymnbook, “hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord...move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end” (p.ix). These attributes correlate directly to twelve step principles.

Meetings

Meetings are an opportunity to come together to share our experience, strength, and hope. It is a way of providing ourselves with the fellowship of

others who have finally decided to acknowledge personal powerlessness over one or more compulsive addictive behaviors in their own life or the life of a loved one, and who are seeking a God-centered solution. There are several types of meetings, but fellowship and sharing are the purpose of them all.

Prayer and Meditation

Prayer and meditation are two sides of the same coin and are probably the most vital to recovery of all the tools. The whole focus and purpose of the twelve steps is to bring us closer to God. Communication between parties is critical to establishing a two-way relationship, and no relationship is more important than the one we have with our Savior Jesus Christ. In honest prayer we share the intimacies of our heart. In quiet, sincere meditation He shares His will for us.

Service

Service is a way of getting out of our compulsive behavior and into recovery. Sharing the message of recovery through faith in Jesus Christ and the application of the twelve steps is the most obvious form of service we can perform. Other acts of service are not so obvious. Going to meetings, sharing, listening to others share, talking to newcomers, and telephoning between meetings are all acts of service that will enhance our recovery. The seventh tradition, which states that we are self-supporting, refers to the service we render to the organization of *Heart t' Heart* as well as the monetary donations we make. As members of *Heart t' Heart*, we are responsible to serve the groups we attend by leading meetings and volunteering to fill positions on the service committee.

Sponsoring

When a person goes to a foreign country, they will often be met by a sponsor – someone who knows the customs and practices of the country and will assist the new person in getting oriented. Sponsoring in *Heart t' Heart* works the same way. A sponsor is someone who is living the twelve