

MY Heart IS Whole

Name withheld

I was 18 years old and my heart, it seemed, was irreparably broken. I felt I would never trust again.

To avoid being manipulated, lied to, let down, or hurt, as had so recently and painfully been the case, I decided that it would be better to live my life without caring about or believing in others. From now on, people would be dispensable.

This philosophy succeeded in that it did usually protect me from getting hurt, but it also prevented me from experiencing a lot of happiness. After several years, long after this pattern of thinking had become my norm, I realized that I didn't want to end up where it was taking me. I knew that God, whom I still trusted, had a plan for me and part of that plan was happiness. I also believed that through Jesus Christ's Atonement, I could be whole again. I didn't know how, but I wanted to experience that reality.

I decided to take action. The first thing I needed to do was let go of

the pain of years past. I knew that the Savior would take it from me and that His Atonement was powerful enough to help me, but letting go didn't come easily. The hate and hurt had festered for years. Gradually, however, I began to let go. I realized that the Atonement covered *all* sins, and if my offender chose to repent, my withholding forgiveness wouldn't halt his progress. It would, however, hinder *mine*. To hold on to hatred and anger was akin to believing that my forgiving this person was somehow more essential than the Savior forgiving him, and that, of course, simply wasn't true.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:8–11 helped me understand this better:

"My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened."

"Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before

The hurt I felt had festered for years, but I knew I needed to somehow let it go.

the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.

"And ye ought to say in your hearts—



Finally, I allowed myself to be vulnerable again in forming friendships.

let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds."

Those verses helped me understand that I needed to stop focusing on the Lord's job (judging) and start working on my own: forgiving all men. When I did finally let go, I understood that my forgiveness did nothing to benefit the other person—he didn't even know about it—but it did *everything* to benefit me.

Next, I had to consciously change my flawed mental processes. I had to acknowledge that many people are trying their best to be good and kind and trustworthy. I faced the fact that most people aren't out to hurt me.

I also humbled myself in recognizing that none of us are perfect. People might let me down unintentionally, but then, I know I've let people down too. What really matters is that relationships are two-way streets; healthy ones involve giving and taking on both sides.

Finally, I had to put myself out on the line again. I allowed myself to be vulnerable in forming friendships and dating relationships. It was hard to trust at first, so I fasted and looked for help in the scriptures and on the Church's website, LDS.org. One scripture in particular helped me a lot:

"Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will

boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things; yea, behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land, for which we will praise his name forever" (Alma 26:12).

I realized that with God's help, all things were possible. If He had brought about "many mighty miracles" for Ammon, I knew He could bring them about for me. I had worked hard to change my attitude, but in the end, it was the Savior who helped me "after all [I could] do" (2 Nephi 25:23).

I also prayed earnestly that Heavenly Father would guide me to people I could love and trust and who would love and trust me back. In time, this happened.

It has been a long and difficult process, but healing has come. I no longer hold on to the hateful feelings that I once felt. I no longer feel like I'm bound by the "awful chains" that held me down (2 Nephi 1:13). I now feel love and trust and happiness, more than I ever knew I could. My heart is whole again. ■



BLESSINGS OF FORGIVING OTHERS

"If we can find forgiveness in our hearts for those who have caused us hurt and injury, we will rise to a higher level of self-esteem and well-being."

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Healing Power of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, May 2007, 68.