

RECOVERY FROM MORMONISM
A SUGGESTED TWELVE STEP PROGRAM
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1

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO TRUTH

Step number one is to make a strong commitment to yourself, future generations of your family, and also to God (if you believe in God) that you will undertake an energetic and courageous search for truth and that you will follow that truth wherever it may lead. This means an honest and open-minded willingness to read anything and listen to anyone, and not limit or restrict oneself to those things approved by Church leaders or by anyone else. It also means never feeling guilty or apologizing for accepting and pursuing this challenging mission. A high level of courage and integrity will be necessary on this quest. In order to succeed, truth must be more important than comfort or the approval of others.

2

RECLAIM YOUR INALIENABLE RIGHTS

A person does not give up his or her basic rights to freedom of religion and the pursuit of happiness just because he or she has made some “eternal” covenants in an LDS temple. No one can legally take away these inalienable rights. Strangely, many LDS temple attendees seem to be willing to simply give away these rights without much thought.

Mormonism tries to take away a person’s basic rights by requiring those who participate in temple “endowments” to make **eternal covenants** of loyalty to Mormonism. These eternal covenants represent a promise to never learn anything in the future that may change a person’s mind. This is not only anti-intellectual but essentially dishonest and invalid. How can anyone honestly make such a promise about the future? This is an ingenious attempt to close a person’s mind for the rest of his or her life!

Mormonism also tries to make religion a family matter rather than a personal decision. A Church member is not free to see things differently from his family unless he wants serious trouble from them and also from Church leaders. The hypocrisy here is that Mormon missionaries go all over the world encouraging potential converts to go against their families and friends even if it breaks up families. They tell converts that God expects them to leave their families, friends, and churches in order to accept the truth (Mormonism). They are told that religious conversion is an individual matter. But once inside the Church, all of this changes.

3

TAKE EVERYTHING OFF THAT SHELF

Most thinking Latter-Day Saints have at least a few questions and doubts about Mormon history and doctrine that create dissonance and make them uncomfortable. The usual reaction is to put these things on a shelf somewhere in the back of one's mind to think about later. Some of the troubling things on that shelf may include illegal coerced polygamy, economic communism, involvement of Church leaders in the Mountain Meadows massacre and other atrocities, Joseph Smith's many failed prophecies, and his revolting Masonic temple rituals along with their blood oaths. Also on that shelf may be, Why are there horses, elephants, machinery, steel, and the wrong DNA in *The Book of Mormon*? And how could Lehi's family have come to an empty continent in 600 B.C. when other major civilizations had been here for thousands of years?

The list of troubling things on that shelf can go on and on and on. Now is the time to take everything off from that shelf for an honest and fearless examination.

4

LEARN TO TRUST YOUR OWN MIND

All of us start out in life as little children trusting the wisdom and judgment of our parents and then later our teachers and Church leaders. We look for values, direction, and our world view from authority figures **outside** of ourselves. We are programmed at a very early age to distrust our own thinking. Most men and women never seem to be able to escape this immature authoritarian paradigm and learn to trust their own minds. But what could be of greater value to any person than to gain confidence in his or her ability to do their own thinking?

And yet, this seems to be the very thing that threatens authoritarian religious organizations the most. Obedience is praised and demanded. Unorthodox personal thoughts, feelings, and questions must be punished and invalidated. Of course this powerful authoritarian thought control system is designed to protect the organization and not the individual.

A person who finally begins to think for himself or herself may feel like they are losing their mind. This can be a very frightening experience. And yet, ironically, it actually means that they are regaining their own mind. One of the first and most important steps to recovery from Mormonism is learning to **question authority** and trust one's own mind.

Another important aspect of gaining confidence in one's own thinking processes is for a person to lose confidence in the reliability of **feelings**. A woman said to me, "I threw away your book because it gave me

a bad feeling.” Of course it gave her a bad feeling. Anything that causes a person to question sacred beliefs will cause bad feelings. But that doesn’t mean those new ideas are not true. Sometimes the truth not only hurts, it is devastating! It then becomes a choice between comfort and truth.

A person may become enthusiastic over a business “opportunity” or even fall in love with someone only to find out later that those wonderful feelings led to serious mistakes. Rational thought is usually much more reliable than strong feelings. Hitler and other authoritarian dictators have always appealed to emotions and severely punished critical thinkers.

5

ACCEPT REALITY

When a woman is presented with good evidence that her husband is having an affair, she can courageously confront reality or choose to live in denial. When an LDS man or woman is presented with overwhelming evidence that Joseph Smith had intimate relationships with many girls and women (including married women), that his *Book of Mormon* is not what it claims to be, and that the LDS Church is based upon deception, they can courageously examine the evidence and face this reality or live in denial. It may be very difficult for a person who has dedicated his or her entire life to Mormonism to even consider the possibility that Mormonism itself has been unfaithful. The need to believe otherwise is very powerful.

6

DEPROGRAM YOURSELF

Ambivalence (mixed feelings and indecision) are painful. Overcoming years of indoctrination takes time. Some people seek to avoid the pain of ambivalence by going back to the security of comfortable myths and illusions and rejecting what they have learned. It is important for a person to have the courage and the patience to go through the pain of ambivalence and continue on with their quest for truth. Ambivalence will eventually go away and be replaced by feelings of happiness and freedom.

There are some excellent books that can help a person go through this transition as quickly as possible. These books will convince a truth seeker that **LDS Church leaders do not have any special priesthood power or influence with God in this life nor in the next.** These books expose Mormonism as a clever program of deception, power, and fear. Five of the most powerful books include: *No Man Knows My History* by Fawn M. Brodie, *The Keystone of Mormonism* by Arza Evans, *Suddenly Strangers*, by Brad and Chris Morin, *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus* by Charles M. Larson, and *A Mormon Odyssey*, by Tamra Jean Braithwaite.

Some good web-sites include keystonebooks.com, postmormon.org, exmormon.org, latterdaylampoon.com, lds-mormon.com, and utlm.org.

It is almost impossible for a person to stand up to powerful family pressures if that person still has unresolved doubts. These books along with other similar books and websites will help a person see that there isn't one chance in a thousand that the LDS Church is "true."

7

BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM

It is important for a person to find at least one friend and preferably a number of other men and women who no longer believe in Mormonism. Otherwise a person may feel that there is something wrong with their own thinking when everyone else around them seems to see things differently. Other intelligent and respected people who no longer believe in Mormonism provide a person with support and validation enabling them to withstand the pressures coming from LDS family members and friends. "Fellowshipping" works! It can help to bring people into Mormonism or it can help to get them out.

Some people may need more than a few understanding friends. Recovery for them may include fellowship in a Post-Mormon Support Association, or perhaps membership in another religious organization. All of the different churches that I have attended have had a very friendly and accepting attitude toward visitors and new members.

8

TAKE OFF THOSE GARMENTS!

This is an important step. A person should be free to choose his or her own underwear! It also helps to tell another person the secret temple name that "you are to never reveal even at the peril of your own life." It is imperative for a person to break whatever powerful psychological hold the Mormon temple rituals may still have. Courage can overcome this fear.

9

DRINK A CUP OF COFFEE, HAVE A BEER, OR DRINK SOME WINE.

If you don't feel like doing any of these things, then do something else disobedient and rebellious. It is amazing how symbolic rebellion against LDS authority can be so freeing. It makes a person feel independent and in control after a lifetime of living by so many rules, laws, and "commandments" dictated by Mormon Church leaders.

10

RESIGN FROM THE CHURCH

The U. S. Constitution states very clearly that an American citizen has the right to associate or not associate with any legal group or organization of his or her choosing. The minute a person presents a letter of **resignation** to any legal agent for the LDS Church (the local Bishop or to Member Records in Salt Lake City), the Church has lost any right that it may have had to discipline or in any way impose on a person's life. Very large civil suits (some of about a half million dollars) have been awarded against churches that have violated this basic constitutional right. The personal act of resignation is very important. Asking to have one's name removed from Church records is not legally the same as resignation. The Church may legally do as it pleases with its own books and records.

Detailed but easy-to-understand information about a person's legal rights along with a sample letter of resignation can be found by going to the web-site: **mormonnomore.com**. This web-site is an excellent source of information for those wishing to resign from Mormonism and also to have their names removed from Church records.

Having this much legal power and control over their own lives may seem strange to many Church members since it has always been the Church that had all of the power. But not allowing a person to freely get out of an organization is a crime. This illegal behavior is expected from the Mafia or a street gang, not a Church that claims to believe in free agency.

11

PRACTICE ANGER MANAGEMENT

Betrayal hurts! It is very painful to finally realize that the great sacrifices in time, money, and even life itself that have been made by one's family and ancestors have been made for a clever fraud. It makes a person feel terribly violated, like a rape victim. It is only human nature to become angry. But what should a person do with all of this anger? Anger turned inward (depression and suicide) are very destructive. Anger turned outward can turn into violence and serious trouble. But a person cannot just ignore his or her anger. It doesn't just go away. Perhaps the safest thing is to verbally express one's anger and sense of outrage to a counselor or another understanding person and then try to work on forgiveness. Staying angry over a long period of time can cause a person serious mental and physical health problems.

It has always helped with my anger management to realize that either there is an afterlife and a just judgment or everything just ends at death like a light going out. If there is an afterlife and a judgment, then

Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and the other masters of power, deception, adultery, and false prophecies have been given the just judgment and severe punishment that they deserve. But if there is no afterlife, these men have simply ceased to exist and have no way of taking any satisfaction in how wildly successful their plan of power, fear, and deception has become.

Dedication of time and money toward exposing the pain caused by Mormonism can also help dissipate anger. I have spent twenty years and many thousands of dollars writing and printing my book, *The Keystone of Mormonism*. It has made me feel better to know that I was doing something to help others escape from Mormonism's powerful web of deceit. Donating to web-sites, support groups, speakers, and conferences that provide support and encouragement for those leaving Mormonism can help a person with anger management and also be of great service to others.

12

MOVE ON, ENJOY LIFE, FIND HAPPINESS

Once a person becomes convinced that Mormonism and its pretended monopoly on priesthood authority cannot deliver on its promises of great and glorious rewards in an **afterlife**, then it must prove that it can bring great happiness and joy to a person in **this life**. But if Mormonism brings so much happiness in this life, then why do so many Church members become inactive, leave the Church, get divorced, take anti-depressants, go bankrupt, and even commit suicide? The statistics on these things do not look good for Utah and Mormonism.

Many Church members become discouraged in trying to live up to the countless commandments, rules, and expectations of Mormonism. Many of those who still believe that the Church is true just can't seem to live up to everything that is expected of them no matter how hard they try. They feel inadequate, guilty, and depressed most of the time.

After leaving Mormonism, many of us have felt a strong sense of freedom and happiness. A heavy burden has been lifted from our shoulders. We can now read anything we want to read and do our own thinking. We no longer need to ask, "Does this information that I am reading go along with Mormonism and is it faith promoting"? It doesn't matter any more. And we can even choose our own underwear!

We are now **free** to respect the beliefs of other churches and religions and reject Joseph Smith's claim that the Lord told him that other churches were "all wrong" and that their ministers and pastors were "all corrupt." What deceptive nonsense this "revelation" was and is! How could I have believed this baloney for so many years? And Post-Mormons no longer need to rationalize away or explain why over ninety percent of the

many, many things that Joseph Smith prophesied never happened. The answer becomes obvious. **Joseph Smith was a false prophet.**

We no longer need to explain away or defend the immoral and illegal activities of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and other Church leaders. These activities included money digging in New York, an illegal bank in Ohio, a private army (Zion's Camp) in Missouri, secret police (Danites) in Missouri, Illinois, and in The Utah Territory, and polygamy and blood atonement in Illinois and in The Utah Territory. Involvement of Church leaders in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, the Gunnison Massacre, the Aiken murders, and a number of other atrocities were certainly immoral and illegal. All of this no longer reflects upon us as post-Mormons. We reject all of these things and also the Church leaders who were involved.

We no longer need to explain away the many contradictions between *Book of Mormon* Mormonism and Nauvoo Mormonism. The overwhelming scientific evidence against the authenticity of *The Book of Mormon* including the Asian DNA of Native Americans is no longer our problem. But it is still a very big problem for LDS Church leaders and defenders.

We are also **free from guilt** for not attending endless meetings, and for not fasting, doing genealogy, temple work, home teaching, visiting teaching, accepting all "callings," and confessing our personal lives to our bishop. Also, our sons and daughters are no longer subjected to an embarrassing personal interview with an LDS bishop who will probably tell them that their natural self experimentation with sex is evil thus leading to a lifetime of guilt about sex. The irony of this is that Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, was one of the most infamous womanizers in recorded history. Married, single, young (14), or old, Joseph had them all!

Other freedoms we experience as post-Mormons include freedom from the financial stress of paying tithing, and sending our children on missions. We are also **free** to spend less time earning money and doing Church work and more time doing things with our families.

In the immortal words of Dr. Martin Luther King: "Free at last! Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

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