

Trying to be Good to Myself

Posted by goodtomyself - 24 Oct 2012 21:58

I've been putting this off for a while. Here I go.

I'm new to this forum, and pretty new to recovery in general - just a few months. Been going to therapy, attending SA groups, reading, and I've met with some success. I've had bursts of sobriety for 14 days, 10 days, once even up to 59 days - the most ever in my life - but I haven't been able to stay sober.

This lack of sobriety is driving me nuts. Every time I fall, I reevaluate. I look at what I am doing, what actions of sobriety I am taking, and try to step it up. I look at the things I'm NOT doing, and I try to incorporate them. I focus on "half measures availed us nothing", and ask myself if I am only half-trying.

I'm not perfect, I know that, and there is a lot more that I could be doing. Right now, I'm attending 2-3 meetings a week, making a specific number of phone calls every day, and reading from recovery literature.

But there's so much I'm not doing. I isolate myself, staying at home when I could easily be among people. I don't write or journal on recovery (I post on a list occasionally, but I wouldn't count that). This is really my first foray into that world. My sponsor mentioned that actual physical writing would be better, but this is easier for me to do, so this is what I'm doing for now. Is it only a half measure? Maybe. I hope not. I'm still human, I can't do everything.

What else could I be doing better? I could go to more meetings. On a day when I'm not doing anything anyway, I could get on a train and go to Manhattan for a meeting. It's just very hard for me to do that. It's hard enough for me to get myself to socialize with friends a couple of blocks away. It would take so much more to travel over an hour to the city! Again, another half measure.

I'm frustrated because I slipped again today. I was home alone, not a good situation, and I came up with another way to bypass my safeguards. There were some boundaries that I didn't cross, but I would still count it as slipping. Annoying, because I had 14 days of sobriety, and also because I really want to get to 90 days already. I haven't asked my sponsor if I need to reset my sobriety date, but I will. I'm assuming I will need to, and I have already in my head.

I'm really trying to reach the 90 day milestone, especially because my wife has been bugging me to fully disclose to her (we had a partial disclosure already), and is making some threats if I don't. I do want her to be happy, and though I know that recovery has to be for me, and I AM doing it for me, I think my quality of life will go down if she is increasingly angry and distant.

That's me in a nutshell. I hope to use this thread I created to post on my progress. I would appreciate any and all feedback, support, and discussion.

Thanks!

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Re: Trying to be Good to Myself

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 25 Oct 2012 14:50

Welcome GtM!

Stick around and you'll surely find some good advice and chizzuk. You seem to know more than me about the 12 steps, but here's a 1-step program:

Step 1: WATCH YOUR STEP!!!

We need to be extremely watchful and to avoid all triggering sights and thoughts.

We need to have safeguards to avoid all things that trigger us. But most of all, we need to safeguard our heart, to keep it lust-free.

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Hatzlacha!

MT

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Re: Trying to be Good to Myself

Posted by goodtomyself - 25 Oct 2012 16:27

Thanks MT! Trying to Watch my step today - I had to go to the city, and it's unreal what ppl wear, even in October.

The truth is, even if women would dress completely tnius, my addict's brain would find a way to lust.

I stayed off the computer this whole morning. Good for me! It can really be a black hole that I disappear into for hours. Even if I'm not lusting, on the computer lust is always just around the corner.

I'm sober today, and I commit to being sober for the rest of the day.

One day at a time.

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Re: Trying to be Good to Myself
Posted by Dov - 25 Oct 2012 17:42

[goodtomyself wrote on 24 Oct 2012 21:58:](#)

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Wow, what a burden you carry. I go to SA meetings, too. And I have a few ideas of feedback from my own experience. If you'd prefer to speak on the phone about them, that'd be great as far as I am concerned. Just let me know.

1- You are probably doing far better than you realize. Resetting my sobriety date on my own would be just more self-will, for me. And making up my own definition of sobriety (the White Book's definition is not at all "not lusting") would be even more of the same. Gevalt. I hope I never go there. The most common cause for depression among people I know is not poor self-esteem - but rather, gayvoh. We assume we are qualified to be nearly perfect. So we blast ourselves for not being unlusting, for not being gedolim, for not feeling kedushah right now, for not being mekarev yidden everywhere, etc, etc. That assumption is completely based on an inflated self-perception. It's gotta go.

I do not know if that is at all what is happening for you, chaver, but if it is, then maybe you can take a page out of my book and do what the AA's say: "Easy Does It."

I hope you talk with your sponsor first - and if you want to, ask him if the definition of sobriety that he is using for *you* right now is exactly the same definition of sobriety he used for *himself* when he first got sober. If it is not, then I'd just want to have that out on the table, as a sponsee. Not to *doubt* him, but just to know the score.

2- "Half-measures"...hmmm. My sponsor and mentors in the program taught me that meeting attendance is only a half-measure; even working any specific step is only a half-measure. The only full measure is an honest relationship with your very own G-d. Elokai. There is nothing else. It's called integrity. I can't act out because I am an addict - and whether there is no one else in the room with me and the porn and no one will ever know I peeked, or if ten people are watching me...I cannot afford to use it, period, so I don't. G-d is with me and it'll be OK without the sweet porn. That is the integrity we need. It's why Hashem not having a body is one of the **required** articles of faith per the RMB"M (though not per Rav Sa'adyah and others): He is everywhere, for if He had a body it could not be everywhere, really. And integrity is based on Hashem always being with me, in me, and for me, all the time. So Dovid haMelech wrote, "Onoh eileich m'ruchecho, ve'onoh mipanecha evrach?" You are here with me no matter how low or far I go. There is no escape from the truth, in reality. Accepting that is a gift of recovery, for an addict. No?

Now, I feel that in some respect you and I will always be making half-measures in our actions. Nesaneh Tokef says: umalochim yechafeyzun" - why? Aren't they perfect? No - even they are not, and they know it. So do you think all the *sober* farm-boys and inner-city drunks and drug addicts out there are *perfecter* than you are? I doubt it. But they get by. And so can you.

The "full-measure" is a gift Hashem gives us as a result of working our steps in a chevra and being as open as we need to be, be"H. I believe that if I want to, I can do it.

3- If you have been given the vision and wisdom to see that you are isolating socially, then it has been shown you for a reason. Probably the reason is so you will be more likely to *do* something about it. No?

I would suggest the first person to socialize with is your wife. Perhaps try what we do, and go for evening (or late night) walks with her. Talk. It may start off as awkward, but will soon become fun and a thing you two will miss when you can't do it. And it's free! Balehbustehs usually like that part...

The second person would be your child/children, if you have some of those.

After that, there are safe program guys you can have a quick breakfats or lunch with, no?

Then there are chavrusas or people in shul you can have a walk with, luch with (go dutch), or whatever.

Single guys are usually recommended to volunteer in local libraries, hospitals, whatever. Don't let fear stop you, amigo. You are a recovering man. You have walked past a few fears already! I was *terribly* afraid that I could not possibly live without all the sweet porn, sex phone calls, and orgasms on demand - then I **had** to...b"H I found recovery.

Above all, chazak v'ematz! You are geshmakeh boychik of Hashem!

- Dov

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Re: Trying to be Good to Myself

Posted by nederman - 26 Oct 2012 00:18

Poor self-esteem and gaavah are the same thing. Because you secretly think of yourself as worthless you try to look to yourself like an important person. You believe that the real good stuff will always be out of your reach, so you settle for pretending.

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