

breaking down

Posted by tryingtobeme - 19 Dec 2012 10:34

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I just did something I cant believe I did. the good news is that my filter is REALLY strong. I could barely get anything in. the bad news is, is that for an addict, which I am coming to acknowledge that I am (on multiple levels), a bits enough to go too far. I sincerely wanted to stop because I knew how bad it could get. but I didnt believe in how bad it really was. I really thought I had overcome this. I guess not. I have been intending to do a cheshbon hanefesh lately and I still do. I really need to work through this. I checked SA meetings and there are none around me. the phone things arent at a time I can do. what are my other options? I really want to break free. not only want, I am getting to a point where I need to. not just from actually acting out (although that's obviously still an issue). I need sobriety, clarity. I need a relationship with myself and with Hashem that's honest. I dont feel I have that. they are so compartmentalized, egocentric, confused, arrogant, I dont even know what. I am mamash blocking out that I am so upset because I might not really be, and deep down where I know I am is too scared to come to surface. Its also scary to think that it might, but at this point it has to. what do I do now? should I work steps alone? Should I do the 10 step "self esteem/spirituality" system in the Rabbi Dr Twerski book I have put off for over a year now? should I do 12 steps alone? should I do one and then the other? someone of experience would be helpful. while this sounds frantic (and it is; I am spinning in my mind thinking of what to do, almost as much as when I fell the first time before winding up on this site...) I do want to get better. i do need to get better. i need sincerity, I need to be good (I know my neshama is good, I just need my actions and thoughts to reflect

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Re: breaking down

Posted by tryingtobeme - 21 Dec 2012 09:49

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I finally did that cheshbon hanefesh. I feel that if it was with people/out loud it would have been intense, but its good that its on paper. i have what to work on, and I cant do it alone. I am going to reach out to someone I know for help (smicha and social worker, with a nice blend of the two, ideal for me). any other ideas of how to have personal support? this isnt JUST a shmiras aynayim issue, its a "addict" issue. my addiction just happens to include porn. point being that SA may not be ideal, and also arent an option at my location. (except one in a church on . but other meetings in theory are, I just dont know which or where. thanks for listening!

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Re: breaking down

Posted by nederman - 21 Dec 2012 11:06

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that good...) ugg

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[tryingtohome wrote:](#)

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If you fundamentally believe that this yetzer is too strong for you, then you should stick with the steps and with SA. SA or any other method cannot be watered down, so you should just do whatever you need to do to get to meetings, even in the church on Shabbos morning (I am sure they are not in the location of idolatry, or you can ask them to move into another room.)

If you fundamentally believe that the yetzer just presents the case and it's up to you to choose to do porn or not, and that right now you just always choose to do it, then you should use the cognitive method. It takes about three weeks to know that you'll never go back to porn. You have to write a cost-benefit analysis and once you can really visualize that your days will be better without porn and masturbation I can show you how to discover that you do have a choice.

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Re: breaking down  
Posted by tryingtohome - 21 Dec 2012 22:08

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im in the middle. The yetzer bclal (ie addictive patterns of thought, emotion, "dry drunkenness" are somewhat too much for me. however, this particularly means of acting out is less so. not enough to go to church, but enough that cognitive may not be enough alone. not sure. any thoughts?

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Re: breaking down

Posted by nederman - 23 Dec 2012 05:51

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[tryingtohome wrote:](#)

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A lot of people take on some of the behaviors from SA, such as surrender, calling a friend, etc. All behaviors generate beliefs, which are mental programs that we use to choose behaviors without thinking. It's a feedback loop. We know from the Torah very well that action precedes belief (actually it's a loop.) When a relative dies one sits shiva, to make sure that if consciously he wants to deny the loss and just block it, he will indeed grieve. The action of sitting low bypasses his conscious mind. When you put away the sefer Torah you back away walking backwards, to cultivate the belief that you are in the presence of the King, and as a result you do feel awe for the sefer Torah. You are familiar with the concept of maris ayn. Why does maris ayn apply when you are alone? Because you witness your own actions and find rationalizations for them. So behaviors that are designed to "help" people also reinforce their very belief that they need help. So when people take behaviors such as surrender, or saying "I am powerless over lust" they can't avoid but strengthen the belief that they need external help. And indeed the behavior of asking for help and not face the yetzer head-on is a virtue in SA. You don't fight head-on, you call your sponsor. You learn that on your own skin in SA, and eventually you really believe it.

So if you are thinking of dabbling in surrender etc. you are really just choosing SA if you are the kind of guy who wants perfect sobriety. If you don't want perfect sobriety, then maybe surrender will be enough for you. But if you want it perfect then you will want to go into SA. And I think that's okay as long as you understand this and you do it consciously. It's okay because it's what you need given that belief and also because that belief will give you success in SA.

The cognitive method is completely different. You still don't fight the yetzer head-on because basically you give up the concept of the yetzer as an external force. You choose all your actions, good and bad. Most of the actions you choose unconsciously, automatically, and the point of cognitive skills is to bring out those unconscious calculations so you can change them, because usually they are fallacious, which is why you keep doing the same behavior and keep regretting later. It's basically the pasuk in the Torah that says that the rulers over the yetzer hara say "let us enter into an accounting," which is expounded in the Mesillas Yesharim. That sefer says that darkness can make a man look like a lamp post and vice versa, and there is a lot

of darkness in your unconscious mind. What the cognitive method brings is a couple of simple techniques, namely the cost-benefit analysis and a simple experiment to allow you to discover that you do have a choice. It takes about three weeks to know that you never want to go back to porn. The same techniques that get you to stop doing porn are also used to remove other unwanted behaviors. This part is sometimes called recovery.

If you want to go in the directions of SA I am sure Dov here would be delighted to help. If you want to try the cognitive method you can read some instructions I wrote here:

[docs.google.com/document/pub?id=1pVbfoTbMQ0CHj61cOj4hPxhNdAc4OXU01VKkhuWFL68](https://docs.google.com/document/pub?id=1pVbfoTbMQ0CHj61cOj4hPxhNdAc4OXU01VKkhuWFL68)

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