

A new stage in my recovery

Posted by syataDshmaya - 31 May 2013 18:48

I feel like I'm at a new stage in my recovery - one I haven't been in in a long time. I haven't seen any p*** in over 40 days, and I can daven now and close my eyes without seeing any disgusting images. I've also been going to therapy for a while, and it has helped me come to terms with some of my emotions. The idea of needing to live life differently really resonates with me. But I'm scared I will let this get to my head and think I'm done with recovery. I don't feel this tremendous weight from having watched p***, and the feeling my life is spinning out of control. I'm much closer to accepting that Hashem is in control, and his plans are better than mine. But I'm scared that if I don't feel desperate, I will not remain open and honest with myself and with Hashem, and I'll go back to my delusions of grandeur. How can I get myself to stick with it? How can I continue pursuing normalcy, and just plain healthy, balanced living, when I don't have that urgent feeling of impending doom that reminds me of the cost of trying to get into the driver's seat?

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Re: A new stage in my recovery

Posted by gibbor120 - 31 May 2013 19:14

I can't remember if you ever did a first step inventory, but that can help as well.

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Re: A new stage in my recovery

Posted by AlexEliezer - 31 May 2013 19:29

It was really torture for me to get sober.

My mind was a battleground. A storm of images and fantasies, and my incessant surrender of them. Finally the storm died down.

I will never forget those first few days and weeks.

If I slip, I will fall. And if I fall, I'm back to square one, and the battle will be back on fiercer than ever.

I'm not going back.

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Re: A new stage in my recovery
Posted by syataDshmaya - 03 Jun 2013 06:02

what is a first step inventory?

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Re: A new stage in my recovery
Posted by gibbor120 - 03 Jun 2013 20:08

You write down your entire acting out history and then share it with a safe person (not necessary word for word). It crystallizes that we are out of control and need help, but it does more than that. It is somehow very liberating and helps us to let go of our old ways and accept that our old methods didn't work and we need a new derech.

It's something I can't quite do justice to in words, but for whatever reason, it really helps.

Maybe one of the real 12 steppers can explain it better.

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Re: A new stage in my recovery
Posted by gibbor120 - 03 Jun 2013 20:09

Oh, here. I found an explanation:

guardyoureyes.com/inspiration/12-step/item/the-first-step-inventory

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Re: A new stage in my recovery

Posted by syataDshmaya - 03 Jun 2013 23:03

I've been considering telling my therapist about my addiction for over a month now, but I still haven't. I'm scared to because I'm concerned that he will tell me it is not an addiction, as I have heard about some therapists. I think this is something that has affected every area of my life for the past several years, and only recently, (before I joined GYE), when I was acting out and missing classes, and had to sit at the library all day to avoid being alone with my computer, did I realize this was serious and I couldn't just deal with it myself. I admitted that I needed help, and, B"H! Hashem helped me and showed me GYE. Each time I would act out, before GYE, I would feel guilty for weeks, it would make me feel self-conscious, like I didn't deserve to be frum, like a hypocrite, anxious that I would act out again... It was terrible. I'm concerned that my therapist will say that watching porn once in a while is okay, or something like that. Should I tell him about it anyway? What if I'm not being paranoid, and he does actually say something like that? I don't have any particular reason to think that he would say that, but...

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Re: A new stage in my recovery

Posted by Chachaman - 03 Jun 2013 23:50

Even if your therapist holds that there's nothing wrong with it, they could still help you--(from their perspective), eating is a good thing, but if someone is addicted to food, it becomes a bad thing. So even according to them, your therapist should still help.

Also, how can you receive help if you aren't being completely honest with your therapist? If necessary, could you find a different therapist if you really aren't comfortable sharing?

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Re: A new stage in my recovery

Posted by AlexEliezer - 04 Jun 2013 00:04

For some people, having a drink or even a six-pack once in a while is OK and not indicative of an addiction. But for an alcoholic, even one sip is too much.

The issue for you is that you feel you need to stop. You feel it is not something you want to keep doing. It takes over your life. It is an unacceptable escape from reality. You feel it is inconsistent with who you really are. And you are having a challenge stopping.

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Re: A new stage in my recovery
Posted by gibbor120 - 04 Jun 2013 00:10

I agree. I'm not sure how you can get the most out of therapy while you are withholding arguably THE most important information. In the worst case scenario, he doesn't see it as a big deal. Are you any worse off than you are now, when he doesn't even know about it?

What do you have to lose? I can't think of much.

What do you have to gain? Possibly a great deal!

We are with you! Let us know what happens.

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Re: A new stage in my recovery
Posted by syataDshmaya - 08 Jun 2013 02:37

So I just had my therapy session... The therapist clearer agreed that p*** was much like other addictions, and we talked through a lot of my issues with it. I am VERY glad I decided to tell him about it B"H!!

Afterwards, an old lady came up to me and asked me if I was Jewish. I said yes. She asked me

what is the Holiday coming up soon. I said there is not a holiday coming up very soon. She said Yom Kippur, in a month or so? I said yes. She asked me, "What is this holiday." I said it is a day of forgiveness. She said "that is beautiful," We could all use one of those. She said she was greek orthodox, but that she doesn't like the word "Christianity" because she believes in one God that gave the ten commandments to Moses, and that she loves the "old" testament. After that conversation, I thought it was a sign from Hashem, like a pat on the back. Like he was telling me that I am on my way to Kaparah.

The only thing about the therapist is that he doesn't think its healthy to have no outlet for sexual needs (though he didn't say so explicitly, it was clear from his expression.) More specifically, he does not think ma***** should be forbidden. This is, I think, typical of the secular mind set. While pornography involves degrading others, masturbation is private, does not harm others (no social impact), and thus should not be forbidden. But how can it be healthy for a person to have s** with himself? How will that not breed loneliness, selfishness, remove kedushah. All this is even without considering the fact that morality is not constricted to the social sphere, and it is forbidden because Hashem says so.

He used the term "sexual needs," as if masturbation could fulfill them. How can relating to yourself in that way fulfill "sexual needs," which ultimately stem from a person deep desire to connect with others, and with Hashem. As chazal say, a man has an organ, if you feed it it is hungry, if you starve it it is satisfied. This is also true from my own experience. But this secular mindset is what my yetzer hara says when I am half-awake and vulnerable.

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Re: A new stage in my recovery

Posted by gibbor120 - 09 Jun 2013 20:21

Ultimately, it may not be healthy to have *no* outlet. That's why Hashem created marriage. But, using masturbation is not healthy either. Hashem has told us that as well. If it was healthy, he would have commanded us to use it - no? In marriage it *can* be an act of giving. Outside of marriage, it is by definition and act of taking (as you alluded to).

Does your therapist beleive that masturbation can be an addiction the same way porn can? There is nothing intrinsically wrong with drinking alcohol, but an alcoholic can't take a sip. Why wouldn't he say the same about masturbation for an addict?

Mazal Tov for opening up!

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Re: A new stage in my recovery

Posted by AlexEliezer - 10 Jun 2013 20:22

You're right.

Your therapist is wrong.

That's all.

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Re: A new stage in my recovery

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 10 Jun 2013 20:32

Wow! You said it so good! The emperor has no clothes!

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Maybe he just finished masturbating before you came in

Re: A new stage in my recovery
Posted by syataDshmaya - 10 Jun 2013 22:53

I am finding that life being clean is very different than before. Living day to day, not being obsessed with my shame, facing my problems head on, instead of escaping in pornography... Its a new kind of existence. I'm graduating College soon, and I'll be going to Yeshiva in Israel. Hashem has done so much for me, it is overwhelming. It is so much better to face reality than run away. I'm seeing that Hashem has given me the challenges he has for a reason, that the uniqueness of my personality, and my personal experiences are exactly what I need - and to the extent that I don't understand, I trust that Hashem knows what He's doing. One thing is for sure, He knows much better than I do! When I try to claim the "drivers seat," as Dov says, it doesn't

work out so well, so... I'll be honest, I'm not doing this l'shem shamayim - although I wouldn't be doing it if I knew Hashem didn't wanted me to. I'm just doing it because it is infinitely better. Life is good. And even when its not, I know its meaningful, and that Hashem is there for me.

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