

What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by Tomim2B - 24 Dec 2009 03:28

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Some thoughts on support and my disappointments:

You hear: "Okay guys, I fell!".

What do you think he wants to hear (what do you think he's *got* to hear)? Could he be wallowing in guilt and self pity, perhaps depressed or feeling down? That's a possibility! Maybe yes, maybe no. Though some might argue that they've acted out only because they found it pleasing, I'd think it'd be safe to assume that the person was **Restless**, **Irritable**, or **Discontent** at the time he made that choice. If so, that would probably call for some empathetic words, wouldn't it? He's probably under tons of stress or pressure. So, fine! Say you tell yourself that you don't want to reinforce his feelings, put yourself in a position to get yourself down, or anything like that. You decide that instead of getting absorbed in the negativity of the situation, you're going to find something more positive to say; maybe something uplifting and encouraging. The key here is "positive".

We begin by launching into the lines, slogans, stating our demands and our expectations. "*I* wanna see *you* get right back up onto that horse! It's progress not perfection!", we outrightly declare. I do this too! But what are we doing? Why are we attempting to assert *our control* over a situation (or choice) that really *doesn't belong to us*? We're all here because we want to grow, and we've taken **personal responsibility** for our sobriety. I don't know how many people feel like they need to be reminded about what they want, every moment of the day. If they really want recovery and take steps towards it, they'll get there! If not, not! But to lay down our expectations on other people, leaving them to feel guilty when they may sometimes feel they cannot come through, is entirely unfair! How do we **expect them to feel**? Perhaps we've got to think about what it means to "support" someone. Certainly by casting ourselves onto others who are in a position of weakness can be seen as victimizing. More than asking the other person to pause, freeze the moment, and live only the present moment, ***we've got to pause***.

What does it say when an addict posts that they are slipping or that they are about to fall and they are answered back by a string of posts, screaming at them to grab control of the situation, stating expectations and demands. Is this our way of conveying a message that we can calmly let go? I think not! If we want the struggler to be able to let go, ***we've got to do it ourselves***! As addicts it is our nature to jump right in and take **control** when we see a situation like this. If we take that route, this is our own **weakness** coming to play.

NA's basic text on sponsorship tells us: *"the heart of NA beats when two addicts share their recovery," and sponsorship is simply one addict helping another. The two-way street of sponsorship is a **loving, spiritual, and compassionate** relationship that helps both the sponsor and sponsee.... Sponsorship works for the same reason that NA works—because recovering members share common bonds of addiction and recovery and, in many cases, can **empathize** with each other. **A sponsor's role is not that of a legal advisor, a banker, a parent, a marriage counselor, or a social worker. Nor is a sponsor a therapist offering some sort of professional advice. A sponsor is simply another addict in recovery who is willing to share his or her journey through the Twelve Steps.***

Though we are not sponsors, in giving support, the above statement applies to us no less.

Personally, if I could sum up my attitudes on "support", I'd say this: the general attitude that I want to give when supporting someone, is that I, on my own, *don't care if they fall*. The only reason that I express care and concern is because *I care about **them!** I **love** and **accept** them **as they are*** (that's right, *even as they lust!*) and because they've made choices to combat this, I will stand behind them every step of the way. In *no way* do I feel let down when a person falls! If he chooses to take that route, and if it doesn't get him down and depressed, than there's certainly no reason for me to mix my own feelings in.

While this may not be considered the "Torah approach", it defiantly is a moral approach. But than again, many of us have agreed that our being here is to deal with an addiction, and not to make ourselves more powerful over our y"hs. Some like the mussar/teshuvah approach in dealing with this, some don't. I don't think that's very important.

Some people might need a word of encouragement or a pat on the back to keep them going even when it's tough. Some might need gentle and empathetic words to help them recover from a fall without sinking deep into depression. And though some people may benefit from the obvious and reassuring words, what's most important, is that we take their personal *feelings* into account when responding to them.

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by Kedusha - 24 Dec 2009 04:48

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[Tomim2B wrote on 24 Dec 2009 03:28:](#)

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When a person announces that he's about to slip or fall, my reason for speaking up (when I do) is to try to save the person from misery. I would suggest that it's a form of Hashavas Aveidah, applying not to the person's property, but to his Yishuv Hadaas. As one precious member of the forum recently bemoaned "I would do anything to be able to turn the clock back half an hour."

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by silentbattle - 24 Dec 2009 05:26

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First of all, I agree. I will certainly think more before my encouragement in the future, and try to choose my words with more care. I love my brothers here, and I want to express my love and concern by helping them do what they really want!

I do take issue slightly with one phrase that you used, that being the idea that something can be "not the torah point of view," but still moral.

However, I would say that your points are the torah point of view, the halachic point of view, and the mussar point of view. Our goal here is to encourage people in a way that will lead to their feeling good about themselves, and overall, getting free of this issue. We're in a long-term battle, not a short-term one. Obviously, we'd like our friends to win every battle, and have the joy that comes with it, but clearly, we also want to express our caring no matter what.

Sometimes, we do that by letting them know that we have confidence in them, and faith in their abilities.

But again, you're right - we need to think more. In general.

Thank you.

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by jerusalemsexaddict - 24 Dec 2009 05:54

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Tomim,

Beautiful post!

Kedusha,yishuv hadaas does not necessarily come from being sober.

In fact,many times the need to be sober is a serious obstacle to yishuv hadaas.

As you know,Duvid Chaim often discusses RID.Does that come from acting out?

This is a serious mistake for any who might think that.

I would think you would know this yourself as you shared with us that you were a year and a half clean before falling again.

Did you have yishuv hasda'as during this time?

This in fact is what bothered me last time.

I saw people i really cared about pushed into the need for sobriety which really hurt their yishuv hadaas and,as tomim said,put the pressure cooker on full blast.

And of course that person wishes they can turn the clock back.

They feel depressed.

But is that cause they acted out?

Many people can masturbate and be fine afterwards.

Is this feeling of intense guilt purely caused by their sexual activity?

Just my opinion

-uri

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by jerusalemsexaddict - 24 Dec 2009 06:01

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And in response to your claim about hashavas aveida,

I see it more as a visit to a sick person.

Are we tempted to just tell the person:

"Come on man!Get out of bed!You can do it!"

Maybe.But we know that that is immaturity,stupidity,and rings of a lack of patience.

Everyone here admits that we have an illness.

We need to do real bikkur cholim with each other.

Hey,Jo.How you feeling man?That must hurt.Oy.

This is what Jews do.

That is true avodas Hashem.

If you force the guy to get out of bed too early and that causes him to become more ill,ch'v...

"his blood are on your hands".

So,as tomim so beautifully said,lets cut out the selfishness and care and feel for each other.

This,incidentally,is what elya was maybe reffering to in a beautiful post a couple days ago:

About 70 years ago a doctor and a drunk went to the famous Carl Jung and asked him what would it take

to take away the guilt and shame, the stigma and the hopelessness from drinking too much alcohol, raging

and then feeling bad about it later.

Carl Jung answered "let people get together in a group and tell their stories and when they are finished

telling their stories, do not criticize **or give advice - just accept that person for who they are.**"

We are all in this together. The proven way to get better and heal is to literally speak the shame and

guilt out of your mouth and out of your body, similar to what we do on Yom Kippur at Viduy time. It

is difficult to admit your faults and falls in public AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHY WE MUST DO IT. We

co-dependent, addictive, compulsive, lonely souls must learn to fill up the gaping holes in our

souls

with honesty instead of with acting out in our dis-ease.

What we hold in our bodies and our minds grows more powerful, like le'havdil a cancer, chas v'sholom,

and the more power we give it and let it grow the more it affects us negatively.. Rigorous honesty is

the key.

The power of the group concept cannot be overstated. Isolation and loneliness are our worst enemies

and our addiction's most treasured friend. And he reminds us constantly that our isolation will shield us

from having to be honest with ourselves and others. and this is the power our addiction has over us, until

we kill the obsession by talking about it.... about our feelings... about our loneliness.... and yes, about the

details of our acting out. Not in vague generalities like , " I did that m word thing" but actually saying it

and getting it out. Not necessarily here on the forum, but also in person.

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by jerusalemsexaddict - 24 Dec 2009 06:05

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In fact,to be really honest,this damaged some of the relationships that I had been building here.

People I loved and admired and respected all of a sudden became like Holier Than Though.

I was like hello?every single person here is a sex addict.no one better or worse.

From Guard to Uri,we're all in this boat together.

I dont care if one person has 200 days and another 2 days.

I do not see the strength of guardureyes in pple telling each other what they need to do to reach sobriety.

in fact,i see that as one of the site's few detriments.

Okay.I'm prob about to get kicked off the forum again.

Sorry Guard.

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by TrYiNg - 24 Dec 2009 06:25

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I agree with most of your points Tomim, however I don't want this to discourage ppl from responding to someone who may need help. The truth is that most of the time it doesn't matter exactly what you say. When someone is posting for help and gets responses it may help him/her get out of isolation and reconnect. Which gets one out of lusting mode.

If the specific content would matter so much than all we'd need to do is reread certain posts..

Okay.I'm prob about to get kicked off the forum again.

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by jerusalemsexaddict - 24 Dec 2009 06:31

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I actually hear what you're saying trying.

But some responses are still harmful.

In reality,this whole issue just exposes and points out the lackings of a virtual community.

It is like talking to a sick person online.It's hard to express your desire for him to get better.

But in person,it is worlds and worlds apart.

Just having people there is the strength.

By the forum,the only way pple can share that they are there is by posting something.

At SA meetings,when a person is sharing,other pple dont talk.

They just hear them out.

To go further on the main point here,

I myself have avoided the forum sometimes when I fell cause the responses were too pushing.

This did damage to me because it put me back in isolation mode.

Others have shared with me that the same exact thing happened to them.

So the point that comes out of all of this is:

Get yourself to a live SA meeting!

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by TrYiNg - 24 Dec 2009 06:42

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In reality,this whole issue just exposes and points out the lackings of a virtual community.

congrats 8)

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by the.guard - 24 Dec 2009 11:12

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Tomim and Uri, thank you for the beautiful posts. You were *Mechaven* to Dov in a great post of his back in September. [Click here](#) to see it, and read it through carefully. There are a lot of great Yesodos there for how we should give support and treat others who are about to fall.

I do not see the strength of guardureyes in pple telling each other what they need to do to reach sobriety.

in fact,i see that as one of the site's few detriments.

Okay.I'm prob about to get kicked off the forum again.

Sorry Guard.

As long as you are just sharing your honest feelings and not "bashing" any particular approach (that may be working for others), we'd love to have you stick around :-\*

I agree with what you write - for people who have a more serious level of addiction. For such people, telling them **how** to stay sober (i.e. the first 13 tools of the handbook) may be detrimental. They need to change their entire attitude to life... And by telling them **what** to do and giving them **pep-talk**, we may just be increasing their RID and inner anxiety!! And like you

posted, they might need real live SA meetings, which is really the best and most effective treatment for an addict. Agreed 100%....

**BUT**, for people whose addiction does *not* stem from deep underlying issues, like perhaps they just fell into it because they looked for an extra 2 seconds (as we brought from the clip of Rabbi Twerski, that it takes less than a second to become addicted to this stuff) we **do** see a lot of success in our work by "telling them" (yes, "telling them") what tools work for getting sober... Even things like having the right attitude (pep-talk included in this), learning to guard our eyes, getting daily chizuk, signing up for the 90 day journey, etc...

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?  
Posted by Kedusha - 24 Dec 2009 12:38

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[Uri wrote on 24 Dec 2009 05:54:](#)

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As you know,Duvid Chaim often discusses RID.Does that come from acting out?

This is a serious mistake for any who might think that.

I would think you would know this yourself as you shared with us that you were a year and a half clean before falling again.

Did you have yishuv hasda'as during this time?

Acting out has caused me more pain (and RID) than anything else. My mistake after a year and a half clean (September 2002 to March 2004) was that I took a second look at a woman in Walmart and then felt that all was lost. That's sad, because it was at most a "slip," and

definitely not a "fall." I am sure than GYE would have saved me from subsequently falling.

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Re: What does giving support mean to us?

Posted by silentbattle - 24 Dec 2009 14:53

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I can only speak for myself, but when it comes to accepting advice, or even just how I feel about it, there are two variables - 1) how close I am to the person giving me advice, and 2) how it's given.

On this forum, I feel like there's a certain level of closeness that bonds all of us. Now, we just have to make sure not to force something down someone's throat. As long as people don't do that, I know that for me, people giving me advice would be welcome, like i way of saying, "I care enough about you to spend my time helping!"

And even if i don't agree, or feel that I can't take the advice for whatever reasons, THAT will make me feel good.

Although yes, it should also come with the message that even if I don't take the advice, they still accept and respect and love me.

Just my feelings.

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