

Painful Sobriety

Posted by ohr\_lreuveuven - 03 Oct 2010 16:01

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by Dov - 06 Oct 2010 16:51

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In light of the above post by the sweet yid ham'chuneh b'sheim, "Tried-123":

I pity the person who starts off his recovery by focusing on fixing the human wreckage his behavior caused. In my case that'd truly be putting the cart before the horse, and in the worst way. It would retard my entire - and I mean entire - recovery and leave me:

1- still running the show, instead of *following directions* (and judging by how well I did till now, that's not a good idea!);

2- prone to "forgiving" myself as soon as I feel all better because they forgave me! Who really needs to get any better once they can convince everyone they hurt that they are now a reformed ba'al teshuvah humbly begging for their mercy? Eventually, I'd get 'forgiven' by them and by Hashem - and *certainly remain the same exact pervert forever...*

and 3- it'd leave me at the center of my universe, which is exactly how I got so screwed up in the first place. It'd still be all about MY t'shuva, MY dveikus, MY tikkun, ME, ME, and more endless, bottomless ME. (This is apparently a subtle point to many people, for some reason...but it seems to be **everything**, from where I am standing.)

OK, enough spewage!

Have a nice day!!! 8)

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by trying123 - 08 Oct 2010 16:07

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Dear R' Dov,

I respect you immensely and truly believe that your approach is right for sex addicts.

Here is the thing though:

Not everyone posting here is the typical sex addict that you are familiar with.

A young adolescent crushed under the load of severe emotional abuse needs another approach.

A young adolescent crushed under the load of severe emotional abuse, his problem is not that he is at the center of his universe; It's that he was not allowed to have any wants or needs. He was not allowed to exist in the universe. He thus is ill adapted. he didn't get screwed up because he was selfish he got screwed up because he was made to be too selfLESS!

Someone like that needs to learn that he does matter... It would be detrimental to be told that he is all about me me me me. That's what his mother always told him when he needed a pair of new socks!!

He his not wallowing in self absorption, it is quiet the opposite.

Frankly someone like that needs to focus on me for a little in order to be a normal human being.

Also he already knows the severity of what he's doing. His parents already took care of that for

him. They already 'taught' him that he can expect to be abused if he steps a toe out of line!!

Thus his problem is that he feels too much guilt!! and believes he'll can never be forgiven for anything..

He is stuck partially because of the guilt he constantly feels.

He does not need to feel 'unforgiven' in order to be motivated he needs to feel forgiven to be able to have enough strength to move on and build a life for himself (something he was never given a chance to do)

Also his problem is not a lack of following advice from others, it's that he was never allowed to even have an opinion of his own!!!

The advice you have given may be for a different person in a different set of circumstances.....

I typed in a hurry and did not express myself as clear or as properly as i would have like, but I hope you get the picture....

P.s. I never said that one should be into Tikunim or that the beginning of ones recovery should be focused on attaining forgiveness. I was just bringing out that there is no such thing as being beyond forgiveness....

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by Dov - 08 Oct 2010 19:07

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OK, thanks, and though we have never met, I consider you a friend and respect your sharing and opinions a lot. Thanks for taking the time to write to me and please accept my apologies if what I wrote sounded personally critical. It was not meant that way. Also, please know that believe it or not I actually do doubt that most of the folks on GYE are addicts at all, in the sense that I understand the term.

I get the impression that many GYE-ers are just folks who are having a real hard time coming to terms with the fact that they *really* love the way that fantasy and masturbation makes them feel (while they are using them, at least). They are frum, decent men and women and know that self-pleasuring is essentially a childish, selfish and stupid thing to be all caught-up in, and *wish* they'd quit. Some do, some don't. Of course, a few are purely upset about their bad habit because it *is* a big aveiro, though that is rarely a big enough concern to get them to quit - *and that drives them **extra** crazy*, because they are pretty sure that they are **frum**! Of course some are truly addicts (like I am :o), some are *becoming* addicts, some are just crusaders to fix *others...etc.* It runs the gamut.

So, rather than state 'rules' and give instruction to anybody and being just an addict trying to remain sober and be useful to his people, I want to put my experiences out there and share them. Forgive me if I sound like a 'great white lawmaker' at times, but I *do* take pains to avoid sounding or being that way...unfortunately some folks have made it clear that they simply do not believe me when I write that "I am definitely not an expert, and just a pervert in recovery". Nu. What can I do?

And what you wrote **really** strikes a cord for me! It's funny, because I have shared in SA meetings (and on our 12 step groups phone calls here) that a big part of my makeup as an addict and as a generally insecure person obviously derived from my childhood and adolescence during which my mother never let me choose my own clothes - it drove me crazy. I vividly remember feeling 'less than', very often. They were elderly holocaust survivors, I was adopted, and my parents felt that to love us they needed to shield us from all the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'...and in the meantime, I learned very few tools for being a grown-up. Basic life-skills like delivering a package, managing money, or going to the bank, have always been very difficult for me to get comfortable with doing. A normal adult relationship with a woman (including normal sex, too) were all things I couldn't *possibly* imagine 'a little kid like myself could actually succeed at participating in. Naturally, I gravitate toward porn, where the fantasy is **tailored** to childish folks like me who need a woman to ***just want me because I happen to have the right body parts***, that's all - *finally* something even *I* can qualify at, and even be worshiped sometimes! What safety! What a feeling of unconditional acceptance! Now *that* I could get comfortable with - and did, for years.

You get the idea, I hope. Do you share this with me?

Nevertheless, after all I have been through, I have not found it to be true that one must first love themselves before they will be able to love others, as I have heard many people say. Nor

do I buy that a healthy self-esteem is needed at all, in order for anyone to recover. Nor do I believe that I needed to feel forgiven, in order to save my butt and actually learn how to stop being dependent on lust and acting out. Rather, in my own case and in that of others I know, the order is reversed. First I stay sober one day at a time no matter what, by learning to be honest with others, cuz I must. Then I do my steps and begin to give at least a tiny sliver of my life to G-d. Then, I come to see all my character defects. Only after being absolutely clear how powerful a force pride and fear are in my life, do I finally come to be comfortable with myself. I could not comfortably look in my own eyes in a mirror until a month or so after doing my 4th step inventory the first time. I was sober a year and a half at that time, and discovered that I hated myself - until I came face to face with myself with all my warts and good qualities, too, and accepted the facts about me. I got right-sized and started to stop being so demanding on G-d, on my wife, and on anybody. I came to admit that my inner life is all - 100% - up to no one but me. *Ein hadavar tolui ella bee*, as they say, right? And the most essential ingredient in the entire thing was that I was no longer here to just feel better, but to stop acting out so that I might yet live.

You wrote

he didn't get screwed up because he was selfish he got screwed up because he was made to be too selfLESS!

In practice, I agree with what you write, but want to *look at it* a different way:

I believe that one of the main reasons that I was always hurting so much inside and felt so down on myself, was that in the things that really mattered, I honestly and innocently expected unrealistic things for myself. It was torture. I felt it was a great injustice that *I* was not considered one of the best guys in the beis hamidrash - yet I **am** a mediocre lamdan. My guts felt that I was such a loser that *I* was not on as high a madreiga as some others I saw - yet I really **am** in need of much growing up and other work. It all put the spotlight on my weaknesses and I needed to shift the blame and find a nechoma. Everyone deserves a nechoma from pain. Even innocent fools.

But once I finally got comfortable with the **facts** about myself, I began to get comfortable with my life, with the people around me, and of course, with Hashem. See, I was helped to see that the thing that made me feel so sure that I was a pathetic excuse for a yid was: **my Pride!** I had an *inflated* self image that was killing me, not just a **deflated** one. I expected R' Akiva status - though I am just Dov, and need a lot of basic work.

This perspective has shocked the heck out of more people than I can count, for we were always led to believe that 'poor me' is a symptom of low self-esteem. That is often a lie. So pumping up the self-image is the exact wrong way to go, if I want to really stop needing artificial things to alleviate me of my great disappointment.

And I believe that the common taina that "once I am convinced that I have (oversensitivity, and infated self-image and expectations, fear, and other) character defects, I will give up and just not try to grow at all in the beis midrash, learning, avodah, and lose ambition" - is not true, either. Quite the opposite happens to everyone I know who has ever done their 4th step. They feel that for the first time they now have the tools to be realistic and effective and to grow, unfettered by irrational and childish thinking. I started to slowly get happy after my 4th step, more than any other.

That is why I think it is not so simple that being self-less is the problem. Sure, a guy who feels like an undeserving piece of garbage will like the idea of having better self-esteem - but it may be that his lack is really in an accurate self-appraisal!

Please accept what I say as a possibility - I feel sure about it's validity in some cases, but you may not. I respect that and just want a chance to share my stuff with you, that's all. If you like it and want to use it, let me know.

Have a great Shabbos!

Sincerely,

Dov

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by trying123 - 10 Oct 2010 01:40

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I hear you...

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by Dov - 10 Oct 2010 03:28

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[Tried-123 wrote on 10 Oct 2010 01:40:](#)

I hear you...

Thanks. Hey, it says you edited the above quote. It seemed so incredibly short that I am plotzing with curiosity: what was the edit?! (I'm bad...reeeally baaaad....)

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by trying123 - 10 Oct 2010 05:03

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Can't the Higher Ups also see the pre-edited versssions??

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by trying123 - 10 Oct 2010 06:17

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If you must know,

The original version of that post stated that I would read your post a second time to hear you better.

I also started typing a response...

I then decided that it was pointless to hash this over since you will most likely not understand what I am trying to say since you don't seem to be a survivor of severe abuse.

From my own journey in recovery and from hearing from other 'survivors' I am certain of myself and of what I wrote.

I do however hear the concepts you were sharing, but it depends what the recovering person is recovering from

Is the problem **primarily** sexual acting out which is in total disproportion to normality and thus a **problem of its own** (with it's roots perhaps due to an unhealthy upbringing)?

Sounds like you...

Or is the problem General Dysfunction which may include debilitating anxiety, depression, isolation, family tension, social fear, Excessive Guilt, Self Criticism, Perfectionism, Isolation, etc?

In my case the sexual acting out was a **footnote** to my general inability to function. my sexual acting out was not in total disproportion to normality it was one of many symptoms that I try to deal with as best I can...

I was going to write all the above, but didn't think it was worth getting caught up in....

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by Dov - 10 Oct 2010 21:37



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Who is getting 'caught up'? I think that distinction was beautiful!

Thanks for that, and I am glad to know you, even just virtually....kein yirbu!

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by Dov - 11 Oct 2010 04:12

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Nu. Well, at least you now know that you are not alone, no matter how alone your nuttiness may tell you that you are...you are *not*. Thank-G-d! There *are* other people who *can* relate to you on a very *personal* level. Seek them out and share with them to help *them* and you will be helped *even more*, in turn. As a result of reaching out to create healthy relationships with other like-hearted people, you will discover that you gain the ability to reach out and create a healthy relationship with G-d....for a change. For the reason the relationship with G-d doesn't work for us is because we haven't anything like a healthy relationship w/Him. It is very sick, actually. We need to start from the bottom and work up to Him. As Hillel told the goy-ger: "mai desoni loch, l'chavreich lo sa'avid" Instead of telling him "v'ohavto lere'i'acho kamocho", he went with the lower, negative version. We need to start where we are! Eventually we will all learn how to **love**, and sometimes only after that - yes - *after* that - we will learn how to **be** loved.

Hatzlocha!!

Love,

Dov

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by trying123 - 11 Oct 2010 04:35

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[Bechori Reuven wrote on 10 Oct 2010 23:45:](#)

Thank you dov and tried!! Your posts have given me tremendous chizuk. My father didnt have a dad.. well he did, he was in jail for most of his life, and when he bailed him out he ditched him.. he was also damaged.. lol.

"General Dysfunction which may include debilitating anxiety, depression, isolation, family tension, social fear, Excessive Guilt, Self Criticism, Perfectionism, Isolation, etc?"

I have all of the above! lol.

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Pain is pain...

But there is light at the end of the tunnel.

I know that I was sure at times that it was hopeless but I thank Hashem for showing me that there is light, we can recover....

I share your pain (to the degree possible on an online forum...).

Hatzlocha

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by trying123 - 11 Oct 2010 04:48

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Dov,

It is no secret that I sometimes feel that what you say is the opposite of what I need. But I know that you care and are sharing what you know to be the truth.

Can I make one request?

You wield a lot of influence around here. Also people coming here are often desperate and are likely to just accept what they are told without knowing whether it suits them or is right for them. When I was very vulnerable (6 yrs. ago) I simply had no mind of my own... This is even more so with younger people...

Please Please be open to the idea that some people need a different approach.

Your friend,

Tried

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by jewinpain - 12 Oct 2010 00:25

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Reb Dov, I liked what u said that most people here are not falling under ur definition of an "Addict"

BR & Tried 123 ,regarding the issue u talked whether they will ever forgive u for the damage u did to them

I'm here to speak from the Victim's bench, I was molested @ a very young age by a family member & now 20 years l8r I have not forgiven him yet for it, but that's only I didn't allow myself to open up & grow out of that experience I went through, its just recently when I started psycho therapy & self awareness of who am I , what am I doing here & who sent me down here &

what's the purpose of all this things happen to me, I started to realize that there is someone above us running the show for our ultimate good, & I can see myself forgiving the guy sometime soon, I don't follow the advise of my therapist yet, regarding pulling out an apology from the guy cuz I'm still too weak for it. But as I work the program I see it happening,"cuz I know that w/o being molested I wouldn't be able to grow the way I do now," so in ur case, were u already asked for an apology u r a step ahead of the game with that. Now it all depends in what state of mind the victims are now, if they never went for help ,I doubt it they will forgive u, cuz they are still very sick from all the damage the abuse caused them, but if u can make sure that they follow through therapy and start to work on them self I can see a much happier ending to this story

I wish u tons of luck in this journey

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by Dov - 12 Oct 2010 03:14

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Dear BechoriReuven,

In light of yet another post from Tried, it may be important for me to lay this out: As I am not like you in some important ways, my experience may very well have no bearing at all on yours, and what works for me may have no use for you. I do not know what you kneed, and probably never will. This is not news to me, though. I have always tried to put my comments in the form of either using myself as an example for people who *want* to, to *use*; or to make suggestions that people can consider. I do not recall ever intentionally telling anyone what I think they should do.

Should I have crossed that line with you, I'm sorry, and it is because of sensitive and concerned people like Tried and others who you are meeting on GYE that these forum boards will probably remain safe for **all** people.

I am so happy that you have found some of the things I wrote helpful, but hope you will give more weight to things that *fellow sufferers* share with you than to what other well-wishers (like me) write to you.

If you ever decide that your sobriety is what must be your primary and overriding concern - even ahead of closure and healing from your heretofore mentioned pain - then feel free to give me a ringie-dingie if you like. In the mean-time, hatzlocha!! :-\*

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Re: Painful Sobriety

Posted by Dov - 24 Oct 2010 06:15

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Dear BR,

Guard can get a message to Rav Twerski for you, and you can try information to call his office or home if you want to. There are probably others who you can call.

I am far from an expert on addiction and sobriety, and even farther from understanding abuse and self-disgust due to past abusing. So, everything I am writing here may be posul and ridiculous.

However, I spent years ignoring my own excrement on my face and obsessed about why life smelled so bad. My obsession with figuring it all out was my whole life. Everything else was commentary. In my case, the excrement was my present - not past - obsession with lust.

I stank. I had no idea it could be washed off. I just stank, and that was the only starting point, for me.

In my case, insanity for lust was what I needed to get help to give up. I got it, and after about a year and a half sober - with all the failures and struggles for help in that year and a half to remain sober at all costs - the dust began to clear, for me.

After that, I discovered that *behind my addiction*, I was hiding a load of shame, self-loathing, pride, and tons - I mean *tons* - of fear. I just didn't see it. It was irrelevant because the lust adventures and the pain of stupidly fighting the lust on my own and without recovery was blocking all the light of day. *Sobriety* allowed me to finally approach *recovery*. Then I stagnated

for about three years - remaining sober - and got a huge kick in the butt in my fifth year which propelled me into much more serious recovery (in order to remain sober). And it has been a growing thing ever since.

I do not know if your shame about what you did and were a party to is *for you*, what my acting out was *for me*. I do not know if the present lust issues you have are just irrelevant and the big fish is the past and the present pain you bear. Perhaps you need to sacrifice self-respect and forgiveness on the altar of sobriety (as Avraham avinu chose to sacrifice his entire future, Yitchok) to eventually receive true forgiveness from Hashem, yourself, and others, in the end. Perhaps not. I do not know.

But whatever your road is, please do not give up on the most important thing in *your* entire world. The *only* thing you possess and have been given to work with: Yourself. Get the help you need. Don't depend on Guard or anyone else. Al tivtechu bindivim. Search until you find it and then keep digging and trying to use it. "Bishvili nivra (ha)Olam" means that *your* entire world was created *for you*. I believe that it is going to be OK with His help.

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