

The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 07 May 2025 21:01

In this thread I will b"n post from "The 18 Wheeler" and some other relevant 12-Step literature.

I will also post some of my own 2 cents, things that work for me, and some of my very limited ESH (Experience, Strength and Hope).

I would love to hear feedback; all feedback and questions are welcome but please identify yourself first as either a member of SA (or other 12-Step group) or a non-member in order to put things into context.

The 18 Wheeler is found in the back of the SA white book and titled "How I Overcame Lust" it consists of 18 ways that the author (Roy K.) overcame his lust.

To be clear The 18 Wheeler is not SA but tools that go along with SA and come from concepts within the 12-Steps.

If you are someone who really needs SA then The 18-Wheeler will be very limited in how much it can help you.

SA is working the 12-Steps with a sponsor; when done properly and thoroughly it can take months and even years to complete.

The Steps are never really complete and recovering addicts live with Steps 1,3,10,11 and 12 for a lifetime.

SA also involves going to inperson meetings and participating in fellowship.

In person meetings are 1000 times more effective than posting on the GYE forum.

The purpose of this thread is 3 fold.

1) For those who need SA it is to familiarize them with SA concepts and into becoming more comfortable getting to their first meetings.

2) For those who do not need SA, many of the methods posted here can still be helpful getting out of our head and dealing with the lust issue.

3) For those already in SA this thread can serve as a spring board to discuss how we understand and apply SA principles.

All **bolded words** are from 12-Step literature and non-bolded writing are my own opinions and not necessarily consistent with SA principles.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 16 Jun 2025 13:48

[iwillmanage wrote on 15 Jun 2025 21:16:](#)

I doubt Dov would give his haskomo to that, shame he isn't around these parts any more to respond. Either way I beg to differ. Powerless over lust means powerless over lust. Same goes with our lives. And there's absolutely nothing intellectual about it; if you're trying to understand the 'concept' or see if it fits with your hashkofo and worldview, you've taken it wrong. We're talking in the most practical way possible. We've been through all the philosophy and intellectual stuff more times than we can count, we're convinced that there's bechiro, if there's a nisoyon we must have the ability to overcome it etc etc, intellectually we're sure we weren't created doomed to sin, but none of that changed the facts an iota, this lust thing had beaten us. With all the tools and advice and therapy and GYE and thinking we had done and that we could dream of, practically we were hopelessly helpless when it came to lust. As long as we could manage our lives together with our lust, 'powerlessness' made no sense to us, after all it didn't seem 'intellectually correct'. But the minute the consequences started to overtake us, being intellectually correct wasn't going to help us. We simply didn't have the power to pull ourselves out of the pit. On the most simple and practical level, we had to admit we were powerless over lust and our lives had become unmanageable.

When I joined SA I was also bothered by your points on an intellectual level, but I had to put that aside, leave it as a question. The fact was I had a deep awareness that I couldn't manage this thing, I'd always end up going back out there. (You also start your post with this realization, but then get all caught up with the intellectual.) So I started doing what others had done and stop trying to manage it myself, give up the 'iwillmanage' attitude and instead turn it over to a Power that can manage my life and keep me sober. When I turn to Him with sincere humility, giving up my self-will and my desire to be the one in charge, turn to others with honesty, relinquishing my desire to give off a false self image, and look to be of service to others and stop living a selfish, self-absorbed, self-centred, self, self, self type of life, I find that I *do* have the power to stop. I don't think any of that's a cop out at all.

And who knows, maybe that's the answer to the 'intellectual problem'. Maybe I really do have the power, if I live life the way He meant me to, rooted in the reality of being a creation, and thereby a servant, of God, created to do my part whilst being fully conscious that I'm just a part of a vast interconnected existence of which I'm in no way the centre and which doesn't revolve around me. Today I understand that I'm powerless only in as much as I'm living a selfish life, disconnected from God and others, if I let all end in myself, if I take not in order to give.

It's also true that I may be powerless over lust, but I'm responsible for the first drink. Once sober, if I decide to take a drink of lust, that's on me. It's my responsibility to stay involved in sobriety and follow my sponsor's suggestions. It is my responsibility to cultivate and grow willingness. I can't cop out behind a smokescreen of powerlessness.

(Agav, I don't think it's possible to get a true idea of what the program is about from the experience of just one member, even someone with a sobriety as strong as Dov's. The best way to truly get it is to do it).

I am in close contact with a 12-Step old-timer who has 40 years of sobriety (not Harvey) and has a very different derech than Dov. I have discussed many of Dov's points with him and showed him things written by Dov and he strongly (but politely) disagrees. I also have listened to a great many of talks from SA old-timers (both frum and non-jewish) and they have all different ways of going about recovery. Some of them completely disagree on some very basic points within SA. There are many legitimate pathways within recovery and Dov's mehalech will work for some and will probably destroy others. Each person will end up following whatever path works for him as long as it's a legitimate one and with a sponsor.

There is nowhere in 12-step literature which tells us that we must become intellectual boors (I'm not saying Dov says to either I'm just trying to make a point). Some people may have to completely let go of their intellect in order to recover but that is determined on a case by case basis. It's turning into too much of a ramble. Maybe that's what happens when I try standing in for Dov.

That being said, part of the point of this thread is to get a variety of points of view within 12-Stepers and I definitely appreciate the feedback. Healthy disagreement is good, as people will take whatever ends up working for them. Please keep posting whenever you disagree with

anything posted here (which will probably be more & more often as we get further into this

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thread.)

Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by chosemyshem - 17 Jun 2025 03:04

[iwillmanage wrote on 15 Jun 2025 21:16:](#)

[chosemyshem wrote on 12 Jun 2025 15:02:](#)

[azivashacheit101 wrote on 12 Jun 2025 14:11:](#)

Here is the fourth of the **18 Wheeler**:

4. Admit powerlessness. At the very beginning, all I could do when the compulsion struck was cry out, "I'm powerless; please help me!" Sometimes a hundred times a day. Powerlessness was the most beautiful word in the world to me then as I was coming to experience the First Step at depth. It still is. Later I would discover that I was really powerless over *me*.

The more I had fought lust before, the more it fought back; all my willpower seemed to empower lust rather than hold it in check. Reading Step One in the *Twelve and Two/ve* helped me see that my powerlessness was the "firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built" (p. 21) I finally stopped trying to stop. Only by admitting lust's power over me to others in the fellowship could I receive power over my lust.

Interested in hearing where this goes.

As an outsider to SA, I always thought the powerlessness thing made sense. Clearly, I have zero self control. My struggles with porn have taught me that well.

And so but while I acknowledged that emotionally, it wasn't something I could accept intellectually. And it struck me that my emotional acknowledgment that I cannot control myself didn't seem very healthy.

The way I've come to understand this, entirely through Dov's lectures, writings, and phone conference, is that it's ridiculous to say we are completely powerless over ourselves. That's a cop-out. He explained we are powerless over life. Life is always going to have it's things that rub us the wrong way. As addicts, our response is lust, but it's not lust we are powerless over, it's life.

And this of course makes perfect sense, since it's a tenet of our faith that G-d is in absolute control of our lives and everything that happens to us is precisely calculated and for the good. So the solution is to learn how to surrender your life to G-d's will - as made manifest by, well, your life. To stop being fearful and resentful, and to accept G-d's will with joy (to do his will as our own is not a christian idea, it's a mishna).

We also cannot control lust. That is to say, we cannot use it in measured amounts. We can't watch five minutes of porn and then walk away and forget about it like others can do. But the ikkar is the powerlessness over life?, not lust.

Does that make sense? Isn't that radically different than saying we are powerless over ourselves/lust?

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'intellectually correct'. But the minute the consequences started to overtake us, being intellectually correct wasn't going to help us. We simply didn't have the power to pull ourselves out of the pit. On the most simple and practical level, we had to admit we were powerless over lust and our lives had become unmanageable.

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Hmmmm.Verythoughtprovoking.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 18 Jun 2025 15:48

From Step One in the **12&12**, remember this book was written about alcohol but w can just replace the word alcohol with lust.

STEP ONE

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol (lust)—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Who cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness. It is truly awful to admit that, glass in hand, we have warped our minds into such an obsession for destructive drinking that only an act of providence can remove it from us.

No other kind of bankruptcy is like this one. Alcohol, now become the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands, Once this stark fact is accepted, our bankruptcy as going human concerns is complete.

But upon entering A.A. we soon take quite another view of this absolute humiliation. We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. Our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built.

We know that little good can come to any alcoholic who joins A.A. unless he has first accepted his devastating weakness and all its consequences. Until he so humbles himself, his sobriety -if any- will be precarious. Of real happiness he will find none at all. Proved beyond doubt by an immense experience, this is one of the facts of A.A. life. The principle that we shall find no enduring strength until we first admit complete defeat is the main taproot from which our whole Society has sprung and flowered.

When first challenged to admit defeat, most of us revolted. We had approached A.A. expecting to be taught self-confidence. Then we had been told that so far as alcohol is

concerned, self-confidence was no good whatever; in fact, it was a total liability. Our sponsors declared that we were the victims of a mental obsession so subtly powerful that no amount of human willpower could break it. There was, they said, no such thing as the personal conquest of this compulsion by the unaided will. Relentlessly deepening our dilemma, our sponsors pointed out our increasing sensitivity to alcohol—an allergy, they called it. The tyrant alcohol wielded a double-edged sword over us: first we were smitten by an insane urge that condemned us to go on drinking, and then by an allergy of the body that insured we would ultimately destroy ourselves in the process. Few indeed were those who, so assailed, had ever won through in singlehanded combat. It was a statistical fact that alcoholics almost never recovered on their own resources. And this had been true, apparently, ever since man had first crushed grapes.

In A.A.'s pioneering time, none but the most desperate cases could swallow and digest this unpalatable truth. Even these “last-gaspers” often had difficulty in realizing how hopeless they actually were. But a few did, and when these laid hold of A.A. principles with all the fervor with which the drowning seize life preservers, they almost invariably got well. That is why the first edition of the book “Alcoholics Anonymous,” published when our membership was small, dealt with low-bottom cases only. Many less desperate alcoholics tried A.A., but did not succeed because they could not make the admission of hopelessness.

It is a tremendous satisfaction to record that in the following years this changed. Alcoholics who still had their health, their families, their jobs, and even two cars in the garage, began to recognize their alcoholism. As this trend grew, they were joined by young people who were scarcely more than potential alcoholics. They were spared that last ten or fifteen years of literal hell the rest of us had gone through. Since Step One requires an admission that our lives have become unmanageable, how could people such as these take this Step?

It was obviously necessary to raise the bottom the rest of us had hit to the point where it would hit them. By going back in our own drinking histories, we could show that years before we realized it we were out of control, that our drinking even then was no mere habit, that it was indeed the beginning of a fatal progression. To the doubters we could say, “Perhaps you're not an alcoholic after all. Why don't you try some more controlled drinking, bearing in mind meanwhile what we have told you about alcoholism?” This attitude brought immediate and practical results. It was then discovered that when one alcoholic had planted in the mind of another the true nature of his malady, that person could never be the same again. Following every spree, he would say to himself, “Maybe those A.A.'s were right . . .” After a few such experiences, often years before the onset of extreme difficulties, he would return to us convinced. He had hit bottom as truly as any of us. John Barleycorn himself had become our best advocate.

Why all this insistence that every A.A. must hit bottom first? The answer is that few people will sincerely try to practice the A.A. program unless they have hit bottom. For practicing A.A.'s remaining eleven Steps means the adoption of attitudes and actions that almost no alcoholic who is still drinking can dream of taking. Who wishes to be rigorously honest and tolerant? Who wants to confess his faults to another and make restitution for harm done? Who cares anything about a Higher Power, let alone meditation and prayer? Who wants to sacrifice time and energy in trying to carry A.A.'s message to the next sufferer? No, the average alcoholic, self-centered in the extreme, doesn't care for this prospect—unless he has to do these things in order to stay alive himself.

Under the lash of alcoholism, we are driven to A.A., and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us.

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