

Big Steps

Posted by Shlomo24 - 21 Oct 2014 17:59

i came to israel for y"t and i am staying here,
im going to be going to yeshiva here also.

Why did i switch? well i came here and i was hooked up with a bunch of guys who also have ssa just like me. that is something that i never experienced in america, simply because of logistics and availability. i israel there is a whole support group of guys who are willing to reach out and connect with each other. its amazing.
hey whats up yall? im in israel now, permanently

additionally, because the gay rights group has a much smaller contingent here, many therapists openly say that they can change ssa. something that i would say is close to nonexistent in america, b/c u could lose your job from saying that, especially if the media finds out. i started going to a therapist who specializes in ssa and so far it has been awesome.

another reason is that in israel the general atmosphere is an atmosphere that is dedicated to torah and growth in yiddishkeit (at least in yerushalayim). i personally see that the level of tznius is much higher here. in america it has become normal for women to wear skirts above the knee, i am not sure who made up that garbage halacha. in israel the percentage of women who are untznus is soooooo much lower.

also, i have started going to sa in israel. what is unique is that i would say 97% of the members are frum, not just that, in fact most of them are in yeshiva/kollel and look like yeshivish guys.

basically, the feeling i am getting is an overwhelmingly positive one. with a lot of seyata deshmaya i have arrived here. i actually have to thank gye, because i would have never gone to sa if not for gye. also i made contact with someone who has ssa through gye and he was the one who gave me the original numbers of other guys that i could talk to.

KOT! YTC!

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by cordnoy - 21 Apr 2017 14:49

[Shlomo24 wrote on 21 Apr 2017 14:01:](#)

Lots of funny people.

Ain't dat the truth!

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Shlomo24 - 01 May 2017 03:21

I've been debating sharing this for a little bit now but I think that the message is important:

I am thankfully in a very good place with my sobriety and my program. I do a lot for SA and for my own health and well-being. I actually realized that it would take a very large effort for me to avoid program and isolate because I am consistently having people call me, text me, email me, etc. Which I'm very grateful for.

However, my sobriety doesn't mean smooth sailing. It doesn't mean that life will suddenly get so much better. This past week (the details are beyond the scope of this forum) has brought me more pain than I can remember. Probably not since I relapsed last summer and it may have even been more pain than that. I used to have an illusion that my only problem was sexually acting out and once I stopped that everything would be fine. But my reality is different. The main trigger this past week was connecting to a deep loneliness that I realized I have had since my childhood and I have been carrying it around all this time. It shaped a lot of who I am today. If not for the help and care of my therapist, other fellows, and mainly my loving Higher Power, I do not know how I would have survived. My whole life I was avoiding pain and now I am finally facing it, one day at a time, with the help of God. It's a miracle that I can cry. Before I got sober I couldn't cry. I would get so frustrated that I couldn't cry. And now I have that gift.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by MayanHamisgaber - 01 May 2017 04:22

Not sure whether to say sorry to hear you are having a rough time or

?Congratulations on becoming human and dumping the numb robot that we become

In any case KOMT

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 01 May 2017 11:18

Thanks Shlomo for the great share. May Hashem give you yishuv ha'daas and simcha.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Shlomo24 - 07 May 2017 20:54

I'm grateful to be celebrating six months of Shlomo sobriety. That means six months free from pornography, masturbation, phone sex, downloading ways to access lust and actually accessing that lust. But that's what I didn't do. I went to meetings (one a day for the past while), I did stepwork on a basically daily basis provided I had work to do, I called/checked in with my sponsor every day and I made at least 3 calls a day. Some intangible things I did were listening to everything my Sponsor said, actively seeking and listening to my Higher Power, being of service to others whether they were in the program or not, praying and surrendering. Recently, I have come to realize that lust addiction is just one area of my disease and I have been focusing on going to sleep and waking up on time, eating three meals a day, showering and getting dressed every day, getting exercise and cleaning my room. I also go to therapy weekly. My closest friends are in program and fellowship is a way of life for me. I don't consider them "SA (or AA or 12-step) friends." I consider them friends. I also have friends outside program and I try to live by spiritual principles with them also.

This is not about me. I don't want to share this. This is about carrying the message to all of the guys (and general people who read the forums) here. "It works if you work it" and I'm proud to be working it.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Shlomo24 - 21 May 2017 22:55

Another random update from Shlomo: Over the past week or so, I've been realizing that I was holding back from sharing something. I felt that it was very shameful and even some of my closest friends in recovery didn't even know. I started sharing it at first with some people and I shared it at a meeting. I also shared it with all those in the inner circle of my recovery. This past Shabbos I went to a retreat for frum sex addicts. I knew that they were having a meeting there about shame and I planned to share this there. (I'm deliberately not saying what it is yet, don't worry, I'm going to say it soon). I told my sponsor I was going to share it there and I told some other recovery friends that I was going to share it at the meeting also. I even called the guy who was leading the meeting during the week and I shared it with him. Shortly before I was about to share what it was I was feeling incredibly anxious and nervous and I checked that in with my former Sponsor. Once the meeting started and they opened it up for sharing, I felt my heartbeat tick up and I was freaking out. But I shared it. The reason why I haven't said what it is yet is because I wanted you to see the process first and then to see what I shared. I think that if I shared it right away the process wouldn't have been brought out as well.

What I shared there, and what I'm sharing now (although not exactly, for my own discretion), is that all of my acting out was with men who were significantly older than me. There was one exception, and he was only like 4-5 years older than me (married though, he was actually at the retreat), but all of the others had to have been at least 15 years older than me. I had even had sex multiple times with a 50-year old guy. I also just had an experience about a month ago, it was not a loss of sobriety or anything close to that, but there was intimate contact. He is 38. I'm 21. I shared how ashamed I was that I am attracted to older men. I shared how I felt defective as a person, that there was something wrong with Shlomo for being attracted to older guys. I felt very different and terrible about myself. I have been doing a lot of work on acceptance, and I accept that my homosexuality is a part of me. Does it define me? No. Does it mean that I am going to pursue it? No. But it's a part of me. The shame was that I am genuinely attracted to older men, not that I acted out with older men. My disease can take me anywhere, and I know that. But this is a part of me that I have been learning to accept as a part of my personality, not just my disease. And that was very shameful. I barely made it through my share without losing my (ahem) but I felt like I wasn't being present with my feelings. I left the meeting and I grabbed my former Sponsor (who's actually my current best friend in a way) and I just broke down crying. For the next while (15 minutes or so, I would say) I was crying bitter tears. I had put up a wall that I wasn't going to share that with anyone and it was the only barrier between me and a huge dam of pain and shame. Once I removed that wall by telling others, the dam broke and so

much of the shame came pouring out. I have never cried like I cried then. Sweat, snot, spit, I was a mess.

Eventually I calmed down and my friend asked me a question. He said "Shlomo, what is the shame about?" I said it was about being attracted to older guys. He said that he's heard much more shameful things than that at meetings. He repeated his question. I thought about it and I realized that the shame was really what I was saying before, that I am defective. That Shlomo is subhuman. That was a big step, realizing that the shame isn't really about the attraction, it's just the attraction is what connected me to the shame of feeling like I am defective. The core belief that I am wrong was where the shame was.

Then he asked me another question. He said "And what's wrong with being defective?" I was floored by that question. But then it hit me. There's nothing wrong with being defective. In fact, every single guy at that Shabbaton is also defective. We are all addicts, we all have something broken inside us that can never be fixed, only maintained. I understand it that I have a void inside me. Some people say that addicts have a "God-sized hole inside them." I have a void and I am always trying to fill it. For around 20 years, I was trying to fill it with unhealthy things. In recovery, I fill it with healthy things, such as God, spirituality, program, fellowship, service etc. But I can never avoid filling it. If I'm not filling my void with positive things I am filling it with negative things. That is my reality. If I don't work a program I will act out. And if I don't stop acting out, I will kill myself from my acting out, sooner or later. I do not have the ability to coast. I need to work my program on a daily basis. And that's not normal! Most people won't destroy themselves just because they aren't living a spiritual life. They may not be enjoying, and life may be boring, but they won't be bringing themselves to their deathbeds. But as a powerless addict, I will kill myself slowly if I am not acting spiritually. And that's ok. It's the way God made me. He made me an addict and he made millions of other people also addicts. And that's totally fine.

This whole thought process took very short, it's longer in writing. But I basically went from feeling the most intense shame about being defective to feeling complete acceptance that I *am* defective in about 5 minutes or so. It was very surreal. I felt like I had joined the human race. I felt like I had no more secrets and nothing else was hiding. Whatever was inside me was outside me. I felt like I had climbed my Everest. For me, that was the hardest thing I had ever done and it was the most painful experience I had ever had in my life. But I came out so much stronger from it and I feel like a new person. And now I am much less ashamed to say that I am attracted to older men. It's ok! For whatever reason, that's a part of my personality makeup. I have accepted it.

There's more to say, but I have a final in 1 hour 20 minutes. I think my message was conveyed clear enough. It doesn't need to be perfect.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by GrowStrong - 21 May 2017 23:40

Thank you. It was perfect.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 22 May 2017 11:09

Shlomo, WOW! What a share. It must be very relieving to have gotten that all out and to finally realize you are really a good person despite your challenge in life. We all have issues, disappointments, agmas nefesh. We dont have to make them worse than they really are by using them to define ourselves. Someone who has no money is not a "poor person". He is a wonderful person who happens to be poor. The same can be said about a "blind person", "ugly person", os "sexaholic person". The adjective only describes their challenge, not who they are as people.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by yiraishamaim - 22 May 2017 11:26

Wow! So impressed by your honesty and steadfast attitude towards doing everything needed for your sobriety.

You feel ashamed?

Your raw honesty,

NOW - AT THIS POINT - when you are sincerely working on yourself is humbling to hear and contagiously inspiring!

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Shlomo24 - 07 Jun 2017 13:09

Today I am celebrating 7 months of Shlomo Sex Sobriety (hehe). I am very grateful to my HP for this gift he has given me. It truly baffles me how I went from doing what I was doing a year ago to what I'm doing (and not doing) now. This is particularly emotional for me (I paused for about 10 minutes and was crying) because it is also the 1 year anniversary of my first sober day after my relapse last year. In a way, this is a year of sobriety for me. I had a masturbation and sexting slip 7 months ago, and those are both bottom-line behavior for me, but they are the tip of the bottom-line. My main, and most dangerous, MO is anonymous sex with (older) men and it's been a year since then. I have acted out for a total of 4.5-5 hours in the past year. I'm so grateful. Words cannot explain how grateful I am to God. He loves me so much, it's indescribable. I cannot fathom it. Particularly this past month an a half, which has been without a doubt the most painful period of my life and its still continuing. On the one hand, I'm so bewildered how I am staying sober through it, and on the other hand, I know that sobriety is the foundation that allowed all the growing pains that are occurring to happen. There's no way that I would have been so in touch with myself as I am today if not for the fact that I have a very strong and qualitative sexual (and alcohol also) sobriety. In this past year my growth has skyrocketed in so many ways, from sobriety to professional life, to general health. This is what happens when I do God's will. Miracles. Miracles, miracles, miracles. Its all from Him and I am committing to His will.

Thank you so much, God. I love you.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 07 Jun 2017 13:55

Beautiful!!! KUTGW and Hatzlacha with everything.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by LifneiHashem - 07 Jun 2017 14:46

Thank you Shlomo!

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 08 Jun 2017 02:38

Mazel tov Shlomo. You always have wise and intellectually stimulating posts. Honest, perceptive, and inspiring. May Hashem give you continued success in your development as a healthy ehrliche normal eved Hashem. May you especially have the ability to pass cleanly through the challenging times you write about.

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Re: Big Steps

Posted by Shlomo24 - 16 Jun 2017 13:00

For those who have been following my saga, it seems to be that things calmed down. Now we have to deal with life...

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