

Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 07 Dec 2011 21:33

I attended an SA workshop with lots and lots of tools for recovery (about 100 or so). I hope, little by little, to share them here on this thread.

Some of them are very simple and might even seem silly (but may surprise you--and work if you try them), and some of them are very deep. Some of them you may have heard of before, and some of them not.

Take whatever you find helpful, and leave the rest--maybe someone else will find it helpful. I can't say that I have tested them all personally, either.

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I posted this on Jan 1, '12, but thought it would be appropriate to add it here at the beginning of this thread, too:

I could have easily cut and paste the whole list of recovery tools into a post all at once and left it at that. However, I thought that by posting only one each day, it would give people a better chance to digest them and implement them (and remember them) to some extent in their lives. Also, in posting one at a time, I see it is giving me a chance to reflect on each of these tools and appreciate them much more.

So, if you are joining this thread now that so many of these tools have already been posted (and more yet to come, BE"H), I suggest you will have the greatest benefit by reading this thread slowly, just one or two tools each day. There's no hurry.

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--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 09 Mar 2012 08:07

104. Run the movie through to the end.

Whatever you're thinking to do, think what will happen next... all the way to the end.

I was walking with my children one day, and also having a hard time controlling my eyes. I was thinking, "Okay, here's an attractive lady. Let's say I manage to play out my fantasy--to spend some time with her, etc. Then what? I'm going to lose ALL THIS (all my kids)! I won't ever see them ever again. I won't see their success in school, I won't see them grow up, I won't see their bar- and bat- mitzvahs, their chasunas, and their own children, either." Is it worth it for a few seconds of second-rate pleasure?

That's one example.

Also, "If she (actually) will cheat WITH you, she'll cheat ON you." Just a matter of time. Then you won't have ANYTHING!

Also, sometimes, depending on who you are attracted to, it's not hard to imagine catching some venereal disease and dying a horrible death. I heard of an SA guy who had something like 10 or 20 years of sobriety, he let up on the program, went on a massive spree, and then caught AIDS and died as a result.

Some people struggle with "accidental" contact with women in public places. I have heard a number of stories of people who got reported to the police for such acting out. In our heads we think all this stuff is harmless, but we are warped. Other people don't think the same way we do.

Joe and Charlie (from the Joe and Charlie AA workshops, available for free download on Silkworth.net) said a line which is appropriate here: "The trouble with trouble is that it always starts with fun."

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 10 Mar 2012 20:29

105. The joy of recovery.

We need joy in our lives, especially when we're tempted.

I try to keep in mind that, as I see it, the worst thing this addiction did to me was separated me from other human beings--I became completely inept at communicating with other people. As a result of recovery, I am becoming less fearful of talking to people and of social situations.

The fact that I can cope with life much better, that I can be patient with my wife and children (at least more often than in the past) and spend time with them and have a relationship with them--this is all a result of recovery.

The fact I can be responsible and waste less time and take care of my responsibilities and be helpful to other people instead of being afraid and resentful of them--this is all a result of recovery.

The fact I can turn off the computer and get a good night's sleep and function the next day instead of drifting aimlessly through the Web--this is also a result of recovery.

The fact that my emotional well being and feeling of self-worth is no longer directly, and solely connected to my s*x life--this is a result of recovery.

The thing is, I find I have to think a little bigger to identify and then appreciate the benefits of recovery. It's a little more abstract, but more fulfilling and lasting, than a brief moment of physical pleasure.

You can probably identify different ways that your own life has improved as a result of recovery.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 11 Mar 2012 14:01

...adding to "the joy of recovery"...

When I first joined this forum, I remember a big issue for me was these huge mood swings. I was totally at the mercy of my emotions--some days I'd be flying in the sky, and other days I'd feel totally depressed. Also, I could brood about things for weeks on end.

My moods, now, if charted out, still wouldn't look like a brain wave scan of a corpse. But, I definitely feel much more emotionally stable as a result of recovery.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 11 Mar 2012 14:05

106. If I take an action, my feelings will follow.

This may sound familiar, for anyone who has ever learned Sefer HaChinuch.

Take positive actions, you'll start to feel better.

I don't WANT to stop acting out. I may NEVER FEEL like I want to stop--certainly if I wait to FIGURE OUT what's in my head, and if I wait until I understand myself well enough and can psychoanalyze my addiction away.

But, if I act "as if" I am not interested, (and if I keep it up, though at the beginning I don't feel like not acting out), then my feelings will eventually follow.

And, again, it's not enough to just NOT ACT OUT. Negative sobriety doesn't last. We need to take some positive action, to be involved with life and with other people in a positive way.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Mar 2012 12:31

107. Keep learning about recovery.

The standard recovery literature for our particular issue includes:

The Big Book

12 Steps and 12 Traditions

SA White Book

And on the forum, of course, the GYE handbook

I have also gained a lot from the following recordings:

The Joe and Charlie workshop (AA conference)

Sandy B (AA meetings)

(Available on Silkworth.net)

I gain a lot just by reviewing these materials regularly. Also, there's plenty of great material out there, and there are also people who are further along in recovery to learn from. And you can also find a lot of helpful and inspiring seforim (GASP) that can easily be applied to our struggle. But personally, I find that when I stray too far away from pure recovery material, I end up in confusion more than I end up in recovery, which isn't a healthy place to be.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 15 Mar 2012 13:39

Here's a summary of the 2 most recent sections:

IMPROVE RELATION WITH SELF

GOOD ATTITUDES

79. Abstinence from lust is the most important thing in my life without exception.

80. All hits are toxic; I refuse them.

81. I won't act out--no matter what.

- 82. It's none of my business.
- 83. Who I am is none of my business.
- 84. Bring reality into situations.
- 85. No one is flirting with me.
- 86. No one is lusting after me.
- 87. This is not a sexual situation.
- 88. Only a sick person would respond to my lustful advances.
- 89. Sex is only a small part of any real relationship.
- 90. Clean and Sober.
- 91. Attitude of gratitude.
- 92. Easy does it.
- 93. One day at a time.
- 94. Keep it simple.
- 95. This too, shall pass.
- 96. Three thinks is the limit.
- 97. Let go and let G-d.
- 98. First things first.
- 99. Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 100. The pain and the loss.
- 101. My addict never sleeps.
- 102. My addict lies.
- 103. I am not smarter than my addict.

104. Run the movie through to the end.

105. The joy of recovery.

106. If I take an action, my feelings will follow.

107. Keep learning about recovery.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by JackAbbey - 15 Mar 2012 17:23

hey! when do you press which button?

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 15 Mar 2012 20:43

[Shmeichel wrote on 15 Mar 2012 17:23:](#)

hey! when do you press which button?

What?

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by JackAbbey - 16 Mar 2012 10:32

i can see you have 107 buttons

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 16 Mar 2012 13:09

[Shmeichel wrote on 16 Mar 2012 10:32:](#)

i can see you have 107 buttons

Wait! There's still more!

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 16 Mar 2012 13:30

We are now moving along into the second section:

IMPROVE RELATION WITH G-D

Surrender, prayer, and meditation

108. Surrender in every moment.

Surrender is constant.

Your first objection might be, "I'm a frum yid! I daven 3 times a day, learn Torah, and do mitzvahs. I'm moser nefesh all day long! I already HAVE a great relationship with G-d. What do you mean I need to improve it?"

I can only speak for myself, but I think it is easy, especially with mitzvah observance, to be doing OUR thing. I know I have spent time in Kollel when my wife was a shmattah--sick or pregnant and taking care of all the kids. Looking back, I don't think G-d wanted me in Kollel at that time. I am learning, but I learn WHAT I want to learn and WHEN I want to learn it, and HOW I want to learn it. Is that really what G-d wants? I have buried my head in the sand for over 10 years and basically neglected my responsibilities as a provider for my family--and my wife has really suffered as a result. Is that what G-d wants? I am so busy in Kollel and busy "working" on the computer, but at the same time I have wasted--probably years--sitting in front of the computer simply wasting time, and often looking at p*rnography. In the name of my holy learning and my so-important "work," I have almost entirely ignored my wife and my children. Is that what G-d wants? And, furthermore, due to my addiction, over the years I have had a totally warped idea of marital intimacy and this has taken a toll on my relationship with my wife--and I could back myself up with shalom bayis shiurim and halcha sfarim, too. I even had rabbis, therapists, and even my wife convinced that I was right. But, was I doing what G-d wants?

I daven every day, 3 times a day (hey, and sometimes 4 or 5), but I am not connected to G-d when I do so. If I would talk to a human being in the same way, I think it would hurt our relationship. When I do have moments of inspiration, when I call out to G-d from the depths of my heart, I approach Him in much the same way one would approach Santa-Claus, "gimme gimme gimme." If I would relate to any human being like that, I don't think they would appreciate it.

So, I have work to do.

Surrender does not just mean, "don't act out." It means, throughout the day, all day long, I should be asking myself--and frequently--WHAT DOES G-D WANT ME TO DO. And, it may be something which is the total opposite of what I FEEL MOST like doing right now. Surrender means, doing what I think G-d wants me to do, instead of what I want to do.

It also means, all that obsessive thinking--worrying, plotting, and planning--all the constant noise in my head, I need to let go of it. I have to Trust G-d to take care of me.

It also means I have to quit playing the expert on all matters--financial, medical, raising children, etc. I have to turn to people who are wiser than I, and I have to stop thinking that I, with my awesome mental powers, am able to solve any problem and am able to out-smart anyone no matter who they may be. I have to defer to people who actually know what they are doing; I have to stop thinking I have all the answers.

I have to surrender my right to judge everyone; I have to admit that I really don't know what they should be doing or how they should be doing it. It is not my job to control everyone and everything.

Rather, I must stop fighting everyone and everything.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by mechazek - 16 Mar 2012 13:42

thank you elayah I want to follow your lead.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by gibbor120 - 16 Mar 2012 13:47

Elyah, you have an uncanny ability to read my mind. Are you sure you are not my long lost twin?

Have a wonderful shabbos!

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Mar 2012 06:22

109. Meditate upon the "Serenity Prayer."

Say it slowly; internalize it.

In case you happen to not know what the Serenity Prayer is yet, here it is:

G-d grant me the

serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

courage to change the things I can,

and wisdom to know the difference.

Some people add the following P.S.:

Your will, not mine, be done.

--Elyah

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