

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 - 18 Mar 2012 13:53

Thanks. (I hope you didn't spend too much time doing that!)

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 19 Mar 2012 20:09

110. Select prayers from the Big Book.

Beginning of Day Prayer (BB 86-87)

O G-d, please direct my thinking, so that it may be divorced from self-pity and from dishonest and self-seeking motives. Let me make every decision and begin every action in You and continue it only through Your Inspiration. Throughout this day, show me the next step to take and to trust in Your care of me and my problems. Free me from all self-will and self-sufficiency. Help me to neither seek nor pray for selfish ends.

3rd Step Prayer:

"G-d, I offer myself to You - to build with me and to do with me as You will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Your Power, Your Love, and Your Way of life. May I do Your will always!". (BB p 63)

7th Step Prayer:

"My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do Your bidding. Amen." (BB pg 76)

(Yes, I know I've posted these somewhere before).

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 21 Mar 2012 13:37

111. Daily quiet time.

Besides all this praying and talking to G-d, we need to spend some time LISTENING to Him.

It need not be a meditation marathon. Even 60 seconds can make a difference.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Mar 2012 07:22

112. Invite G-d in

...to every action. "Help me, I'm having difficulty with..."

I have also heard that steps 1-3 do not only apply to lust, but can also be applied to whatever we are struggling with.

For example, for financial difficulties:

1. I believe I am powerless over my financial situation; my life has become unmanageable.
2. I have come to believe that a Power greater than myself can return me to my sanity.
3. I now make a conscious decision to turn my will and my life (in particular, regarding financial matters) over to the care of G-d as I understand Him.

The same can be done for health problems, broken washing machines, child-rearing difficulties, etc.

Make G-d a part of your life.

"All G-d, all the time."

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Mar 2012 19:04

113. G-d's will discernment tool.

Before you are about to do something, ask yourself if it is:

1. honest
2. unselfish
3. pure
4. loving

A "yes" to ALL FOUR indicates that what you want to do is probably in line with G-d's will.

Also, ask yourself if what you are about to do is the following (the flip-side):

1. Dishonest
2. Selfish
3. Impure
4. Fearful

A "yes" answer to ANY ONE of these four indicates that what you want to do is not in line with G-d's will.

I guess, it's necessary to ask from the positive and negative perspectives because it's sometimes easier to recognize one side than the other. Also, I don't know why "fearful" seems to be the opposite of "loving." This is just the way this tool works somehow.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Mar 2012 09:46

114. Envision the presence of G-d.

Interestingly, pretty much near the beginning of the Mishna Brura, regarding "Shivisi Hashem L'negdi Tamid," he mentions that, quite literally, some people envision the 4-letter name of Hashem in front of them throughout the day.

I think it is noteworthy that this Name refers to G-d's attributes of kindness, and also it refers to His being above time--He IS, WAS, and SHALL FOREVER BE.

I think our acting out is basically a product of our fears and resentments. On a more basic level, we act out because we're in pain, because we don't think G-d is providing for us.

RESENTMENT is when we feel that G-d wasn't providing for us in the PAST.

FEAR is when we feel that G-d won't provide for us in the FUTURE.

And, I think LUST, is when we feel that G-d is not providing our needs in the PRESENT.

Or, if we believe He was taking care of us, we believe He was "taking care of us"--being cruel towards us instead of acting out of kindness for our best interest.

Just a little idea.

Another point--from what I understand, it is forbidden to BELIEVE that G-d has a corporeal existence. However, it is permitted to IMAGINE some sort of physical being in order to help us feel G-d's presence. Agadda, and Tanach, are filled with this--"G-d appeared as a mighty warrior, or He appeared as an old man cloaked in a tallis, and the visions of a man sitting upon a celestial throne." And, from what I have learned (but have not yet experienced myself), these images are crutches, but necessary ones; however, after a person gets used to imagining and feeling G-d's presence in a concrete way, he can begin to sense G-d's presence, just as tangibly, without needing to imagine anything physical. (I highly recommend the sefer B'nei

Machshava Tova, by Rebbi Kalonymous, the Piacezna Rebbi, the same author as Chovos HaTalmidim. But, don't get too carried away with it!)

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Mar 2012 06:55

115. Examine your old ideas about G-d.

Start having a mature relationship with G-d. Stop relating to Him as one might relate to Santa Clause "gimme gimme gimme."

Our relationships with other people are supposed to help us get out of our own heads, and to be a springboard for our relationship with G-d. In other words, our relationship with G-d should be SIMILAR to our relationships with other human beings. What works with other people is what works with G-d; what doesn't work with people, doesn't work with G-d. That's the way He set up the system.

Imagine that what you are doing to G-d, someone else IS DOING TO YOU! Imagine a friend who only came to you to kvetch about his problems and beg for help whenever he was in serious trouble. But, besides that, you never saw him much. Or, you saw him very frequently, but only when he was coming to nag for help. Again.

Now, imagine a friend who is considerate of how he can be of service to you. You have a good relationship. And, besides that, sometimes he asks for help.

What does our relationship with G-d look like?

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 31 Mar 2012 18:21

116. Came... Came to... Came to believe.

This is a slow-motion step 2, "Came to believe a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity."

At first, we just participate. Come to meetings. (Post on the forum).

After a while of this, we gain a bit of clarity; we start to realize how sick we have been in our thoughts and behaviors. I remember people pointing out to me, "There's nothing normal about having sex with yourself! It's sick!" Or, when I was wondering about the exact extent of my addiction someone commented, "You can't be only a little bit pregnant; either you are or you aren't."

Ultimately, we see other people who have been around longer, and who have traveled the road to recovery somewhat further along than we have (and can give us such helpful feedback as mentioned above). We realize that, we too, can travel that path. Help (with a capital H) is available to us, and can restore us to sanity.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 01 Apr 2012 08:33

Here's a summary of that previous section:

IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH G-D

Surrender, Prayer, and Meditation

- 108. Surrender in every moment
- 109. Meditate on the Serenity Prayer
- 110. Select 12-step prayers
- 111. Daily quiet time
- 112. Invite G-d in
- 113. G-d's will discernment tool
- 114. Envision the presence of G-d
- 115. Examine old ideas about G-d
- 116. Came... Came to... Came to believe

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 01 Apr 2012 08:40

And here's a new section:

IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH G-D

Maintain a fit spiritual condition

- 117. Pray every morning and every evening

Note: This is an SA tool. If you are Jewish, you probably already are davening Shacharis, Mincha, Ma'ariv.

The prayer referred to here, however, I think is supposed to be that spontaneous prayer, or even a particular prayer text, which relates in particular to recovery and its various aspects. Such as asking for help with lust, asking to find in G-d what you are looking for "out there," asking for G-d to remove your character defects so that you can be of service to Him and you fellow man, and asking for knowledge of G-d's will and for the strength to carry that out. Also, you may have a discussion with G-d about any particular challenge you are facing right now, and for clarity on the subject. I think it also may include asking for help staying focused, sober, and useful throughout the day (in the morning and as the day goes on), and asking at the end of the day to see things as they truly were--where were you at fault, and also where did you succeed.

...just some ideas for you.

Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 02 Apr 2012 08:06

118. Read SA & AA literature.

Don't just read it; read it like a mussar sefer. Figure out how it relates to you, and how to apply it in your own life.

Frankly, I read the Big Book a number of times on my own and totally missed the point; it didn't make so much of a difference in my life. But, after I joined the Duvid Chaim calls and heard how a veteran in recovery views these texts, and after I heard which points (and practical exercises) he pulls out from them, THEN it made a huge difference.

Also, I know some people go right to the 12 steps and figure that ought to be enough (I did that myself for a while). I just read the list, and try to do what it says. But, without actually reading the Big Book, the steps don't make too much sense on their own. For example, "Admitted I was powerless over lust," so, it's easy to get confused about what that actually means. The Big Book spells it out very clearly. To simplify--there's an obsession of the mind which drives us to act out. Yet, there's an "allergic reaction" we have which guarantees that, once we start, we won't be able to control ourselves. We're stuck; left to ourselves, it is inevitable that we will eventually act out, and then once we do, we won't be able to stop. And, it doesn't matter how frequently or infrequently, and it doesn't matter that sometimes it seems that we really DO have control over ourselves (if sometimes we don't, then really we don't).

Besides that, there are very clear, and simple instructions for making an inventory of our character defects. There is a precise procedure for sharing this inventory with another human being in such a way as to free ourselves of our character defects. It's all spelled out in the book, but if you're trying to figure it out all on your own, you're going to miss it. You either won't do the necessary activities for recovery, or you are likely to devise something which is so convoluted that it is likely to worsen the addictive condition rather than bring relief and recovery.

Also, a common objection is, "Well, if I'm powerless, I guess I'm just doomed to act out." The Big Book very clearly spells out how to tap into a power that CAN heal us, though, on our own, we are powerless. Sort of like, if your laptop battery dropped dead, you can still plug it into the wall and it will work. A self-interpretation of the Big Book, or a superficial reading of the 12 steps, will leave one in a confusion.

Another mistake that people make is to try working the 12 steps from the "12 Steps and 12 Traditions," or from the White Book. These books, however, are only supplementary readings. The instructions for how to work the steps are really contained only in the Big Book.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by gibbor120 - 02 Apr 2012 16:01

Thanks Elyah,

I always enjoy reading your thread!

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 03 Apr 2012 07:34

Thanks Gibbor.

119. Write fear lists.

Write down ALL your fears.

I have sometimes thought I didn't have so much bothering me, though I was aware of a couple of fears bouncing around in my head. After I put those down on paper, I was surprised to see that room cleared up for some more fears to come forward. Sometimes I assumed 2 or 3 things were bothering me, and I have written a list of 20 fears. NO WONDER I WAS ABOUT TO ACT OUT!

I have also had the opposite experience. I assumed a few dozen fears were haunting me. I set out to put them on paper, and after writing 2 or 3 fears, I sincerely felt I was done. Perhaps they were major fears, so they felt a lot worse. I would look at the list afterwards and say, "OH, THAT'S ALL?" I guess I don't really have to feel so bad, then!

We don't really know what's bothering us until we put it down on paper, where we can see it clearly--no matter how clearly we think we understand what's going on in our heads. Also, I think there's something about the writing process which takes our emotions and somehow helps us be more calm and rational about them.

After completing a fear list, say the following prayer:

"ALL my fears are self-centered. I surrender them to G-d. I humbly ask that He remove them and direct my attention to what He would have me be. Immediately I begin to outgrow fear."

How are fears self-centered? I don't quite understand. But, I think it's because when we are afraid, it is because we are relying on self-will; we feel that WE need to solve our problems, and we are concerned that perhaps WE won't be able to do so.

Just an idea.

It is possible to get dragged down by focusing too much on one's fears; this should be done at regular intervals, or when you're feeling particularly overcome by fear. It should not be done all day long all the time. Also, there is another tool (coming up soon) to help keep a balance.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 04 Apr 2012 07:23

120. Maintain a gratitude list.

Write a running gratitude list. Add something every day, and review it every morning.

It is also recommended that, whenever you stop to do a list of your fears (the previous tool), finish off by writing a gratitude list on the spot. This helps give you a balanced perspective on life, helps you not to get completely bogged down in those fears, and even helps you to be positive.

--Elyah

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