

My journey to Emotional Sobriety

Posted by Elya K - 23 Aug 2009 04:24

I recently attended an Emotional Sobriety Intensive. 10 days of intensive therapy, group therapy, bodywork, breathing and relaxation to learn how to become not only sober but emotionally sober. If you've ever read the AA big book you'll discover that although some people don't drink again they remain "dry drunks." They have not perfected their middos and are still irritable and discontent, despite not drinking.

I have been struggling keeping emotionally sober. Ups and downs create an atmosphere where I'm uncomfortable in my skin, successful or struggling. So my purpose is to learn how to even out the sobriety and be sober and present no matter what happens.

I have written a diary of each day of my journey and will publish it here.

Day One: Oxford, Mississippi at Camp Hopewell.

The journey begins. When I listen to others share their stories I get an uneasy feeling because it seems they have worked their process for so long, understand it but are still sad and struggling most of the time. That does not give me hope even though I am not that person.

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety

Posted by Kedusha - 23 Aug 2009 04:28

Dear R. Elya, who is Mezakeh so many people in this area,

Great to hear from you. You are an inspiration to us all!

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by the.guard - 23 Aug 2009 11:04

Wonderful! I am really looking forward to seeing your posts from your diary! I may share the inspiring things you learned on our website or in the daily chizuk e-mails!

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by Sturggle - 23 Aug 2009 15:19

Elya,

I relate a lot to your comments about being emotionally sober. I hope to be able to learn a lot from your sharing of your diary.

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by Elya K - 24 Aug 2009 02:27

Seldom do I play the perpetrator. Perhaps when i think about it, my relationship with my grandkids when they don't say hello to me.

The feeling of anxiety and anger overtake me. i want to feel powerful, release tension to boost my self confidence, become more assertive and set boundaries. This presentation brought back memories of the flip-flops I make rescuing my wife, then the victim, stuck in between my wife and mother for over 30 years. The fear of the perpetrator envelopes my body and sould where i couldn not function as an adult but still as only a child.

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by the.guard - 24 Aug 2009 11:45

Elya, I'm confused. Is this from your diary? I must say I don't really understand what you wrote. I

may not be smart, but if you could explain a little more - I sense there's a lot of depth there that

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we could all learn from...

Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety

Posted by Tomim2B - 26 Aug 2009 04:28

Elya, I have read up on your posts when I first came to the forum. Aside from the inspiration you have brought, you have a clear sense of direction as well as a firm and sound plan in how to progress. I learn a lot from you, and hope you continue to share.

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety

Posted by Elya K - 27 Aug 2009 13:16

My last post was the continuation of my diary. I was discussing the Trauma Triangle which consists of us playing the "victim" "rescuer" and "perpetrator." I was simply giving an example of when I fall into the perpetrator role, where I build up so much resentment in between two people with conflicting messages.

Continued....

How do you get a group of strangers to feel comfortable with each other before you do intense group therapy?

Friday morning we did the "lower ropes" course which is done in a lot of camps worldwide. It's purpose is to build team spirit and to

get to know each other better. It taught us that at the beginning we think we can reach a goal and accomplish things on our own.

Sometimes that's impossible, like with addiction because on the ropes you physically need the support of others. And we also need

the emotional support of others as well. Even though at first glance we feel we are in control and can balance ourselves on a round

log, after trying to maneuver around 6 people without falling off, I came to realize that in order for me to be in control I have to have

the support and cooperation of others. When you have group support your recovery works faster and easier.

After lunch we all drew time lines of our life in picture form, no words, just symbols and shapes. I could feel the emotions well up

inside me as I drew my childhood adolescence, marriage, work life and the present. It was like a roller coaster ride, with the high points

of achievement and the low points of despair. My challenge is not to get rid of the ups and downs, that's life... the challenge is to

even out the playing field so I maintain emotional sobriety in spite of the ups and downs.

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by Elya K - 04 Sep 2009 19:01

Shabbos. It is a bit frightening to be in such a place for the holy Shabbos and I have mixed feelings about it, except that what goes on during the weekend is quite fascinating and quite powerful. One person is the "star" of the day and he is doing a "reconstruction" of his life. Actors play out the important emotional traumas of his life before him and he interacts. Then the therapist "reconstructs" it so he sees abuse, trauma, shame in a whole new light. He gets out all of his anger. Everyone sitting there relates to something in the star's life that he is experiencing and it helps everyone to heal. POWERFUL!

I felt my emotions stir up from the very beginning. I have been in group with the "star" for 2 years and know very well. The star was playing the victim role and I saw myself playing it also. It opened my eyes to the times I play the perpetrator role and how painful it is afterwards when resentments creep up. I also was struck with the idea that I can't live with my addiction doing

the one thing for a living and staying emotionally sober, I should change professions. This is all very scary, not knowing what the future will bring. One day at a time. I was also struck by the fact that when we show emotions there is still something there we need to work on from an emotional sobriety standpoint.

This segment changed my life. I've decided at 58 to close my business in 2 years and go back to school to become a counselor. I'm now enrolled in school and applying for grad school in the spring.

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by the.guard - 05 Sep 2009 18:32

Go Elya Go!

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by Elya K - 10 Sep 2009 03:00

Sunday, we had group again today. We wrote down the resources we have to keep us clean and sober. This was put on

our timeline so that we can see our strengths and the causes of our weakness. As I wrote down my resources, my mood changed

for the worse. The petty talk of the group reminded me of a secretary my father had who constantly spoke gibberish. You think

I have a Southern Drawl? You should have heard this person from Mississippi :D

but the idle talk shocked me back into reality. "What the (^)& am I doing here again?" Not much to do. Eating with the group

in traif restaurants with my little sack of kosher food, listening to meaningless chatter. Today I was getting frustrated because

we were off a lot and not doing much group work. I was going crazy living here temporarily with a bunch of strangers.

I'm being tolerant and I understand I have to trust the process but it's so uncomfortable and I don't feel like I'm making any

progress except on my career path.

Note: this was a bad day, but it got better, so stay tuned. In every day there is a lesson of tolerance and staying emotional

sober enough to live in my own world of daily serenity and let the rest of world have their frivolity.

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by Sturggle - 10 Sep 2009 14:56

Elya,

Thanks for sharing all this. Sounds like a real interesting program...

I wonder if part of it is for you to figure out what is going on with you that is making you so uncomfortable...

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety
Posted by Elya K - 10 Sep 2009 23:49

It is part of the struggle. The rest of the story gets better, so stay tuned. I'm learning that there is a difference

between sadness, depression and mourning. Mourning your past is actually very healing.

Elya

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My journey to Emotional Sobriety

Posted by Elya K - 30 Oct 2009 02:25

On Monday we did a guided meditation. If you've never experienced deep guided meditation there is nothing

more calming. One of the points I discovered in a new book called "Search for Serenity" by Presnall is about self pity. When

we pity ourselves we will never get out of the rut to look at ourselves in another, healthier way.

Why do I laugh when I want to cry? Why is my guard always up protecting myself from others?

I instinctively anticipate danger, conflict, disappointment and saying no. Because that's how I protected myself most of my life to cover up my feelings. Once I let my guard down - like prison

bars - my emotions came out... the sadness then acceptance. Acceptance of myself and acceptance of

others.

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Re: My journey to Emotional Sobriety

Posted by the.guard - 30 Oct 2009 12:59

Elya, this is good stuff!

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