

My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 11 Oct 2012 00:34

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by Dov - 27 Dec 2012 02:56

[reallygettingthere wrote:](#)

There's no question. I'm an addict, therefore my focus must be controlling my environment, not tangling with the Yetzer hora.

Dear Eli,

Where did you get the idea that controlling your environment was the way to get free of this problem?

Look carefully through your posts. There is one commitment after another and one fall after another. You say you have the power, but then say that you are an addict. You say that you have ther power and then qualify it by saying you mean to control this or that or punish yourself enough with money, or whatever...do you think it is working at all?

Even if you control your environment, whay do you figure that would fix you at all? Has anyone told you this orr did you read it anywhere? I am seriusuly asking, and mean no criticism at all.

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 27 Dec 2012 03:06

You are correct. It is definitely not enough, but the falls could have been prevented had I been more honest. That old smartphone was was sooner or later gonna give me problems. Instead of being proactive and getting rid of it I let it sit around and when the a strong urge arose, used the phone to bring myself to a point where i had lost control.

I might have not had control when the porn was on the screen but I still believe that I had control whether or not i wanted to get rid of the phone

I think what I'm saying is that I really didn't want to let go of the porn which is why I left the phone around.

Hmmmmmm I was gonna say that the first step is removing obvious obstacles which is what i meant by controlling the environment, but based on what i just came to terms with, it seems that getting rid of the obstacles doesn't treat he problem only the symptom

Eli

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere
Posted by Dov - 28 Dec 2012 00:19

If I read your words right, you just defined the **symptom** as *the environment (your leaving the phone around at all)*, and the **problem** as *you still wanting to keep your options open for future porn use*.

One solution you came up with is "more honesty". How might that look, exactly?

An interesting issue with "honesty" is the same problem that exists with Taphsic: we find that our desires trick us. The idea of *shochad* that Rav Dessler and the Bardichever refer to. They blind us to our own truth.

So how can you be trusted to 'punish' yourself? The fox is put in charge of guarding the hen house! As soon as your desire for integrity dips a little below your desire for relief from the obsession - you will reach for the erotica. No? It's so sweet! I probably would.

So how do we **ever** develop honesty and integrity, then? That is, Derech Eretz. If the only honesty that really matters in the end is *self-honesty*, how do the liars make themselves honest? It's the old "yohiv chochma lachakimin" question.

In the program I choose, it's done by *first* developing a habit of *honesty with others*... counter-intuitive, I know...

But let's face it - the entire idea of *getting together with a bunch of drunks* to stop **drinking** is just as counter-intuitive! [And isn't it the exact opposite of normal Jewish life? You go to a Rov to help you with problems he has (hopefully) never had - and if you really need help [i]badly[/i], you go to a tzaddik - a person who we imagine may never have even *desired* the things we have problems with! Like Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlit"a - the closer to perfect they are, the better! Chaza"l do not say "Choose a rebbi who is a ba'al Teshuvah." Rather, the Braisa says, "choose him as your rebbi *if he is like a malach Elokim Tz'vakos*"!]

Now, sobriety is certainly not what recovery in the 12 steps program is all about. If it were, the steps would be about getting sober - but none of them are. Sobriety is just the only objective measure of anything and it is what brings us to finally need to grow up (recovery). Since it is what brings us to finally **need** G-d, staying sober is like breathing - if we drop sobriety, we will revert to no longer needing a G-d. Cuz we've got out drug! That is just the sad truth for addicts according to how I understand the program.

In Torah, people tend to worship the mitzvos instead of Hashem. So Chovos haLevavos, Zohar, Chassidus, Mussar, all point out that the 613 mitzvos are eitzos to create the right relationship with G-d - the goal. So the *point* is the **relationship**, which is certainly not a thing that can be measured at all, by anyone. Now, if c"v all we focused on in yiddishkeit was "the relationship with Hashem," we'd have devolved into a new-age quasi-Protestant group ages ago and disappeared. G-d does not want that. So we have *measurable* mitzvos, even 'measurable' prayers! A system devised by G-d (who inspired Chaza"l for their parts of it) to *get* the relationship...and that is why we are still here after 3500 years of working on it! We never devolved. We survive to try another day, year, lifetime, another generation.

And lehavdil, we in 12 step programs all know that a person's real recovery is definitely *not* measurable by length of his or her sobriety! But the 'standard' (sobriety) gives us something clear that we can be open with others about so that we may learn integrity and start growing up using the steps...or a thing we can keep lying about - and remain in our shell as fakers. And that's the main reason for any sobriety definition at all, as far as I am concerned - and perhaps for why the disease exists in the first place! How else would we frum, sex-addicted liars have ever come to really, really need G-d if not for our addiction? I doubt ever. Hey, we had 'yiddishkeit' before and missed the boat...

But still: where is the impetus for honesty about it? Is it just shame?

Well, shame does not ever work, even to keep someone sober. The guys who have decided to use *shame* always eventually disappear. In fact, the guys who are in SA *just to get sober* always disappear, too! Rather, I believe that only one blessed thing stands in the breach for us: the pain of the wreckage of our acting out itself.

If a person believes in the power of honesty to shine the light on their struggle and enable them to run from it like one runs from fire (see tzet'l koton #13), then they will pay what feels like 'the ultimate price' and use openness with other safe **real** people in order to learn how to be honest with themselves. Integrity is the main fruit of the program, not sobriety. Not perfection or even perfect *sobriety* - but integrity. I have mentors with far less 'sobriety time' than I have been given - for they have more recovery than I do.

So we make calls to other understanding recovering masturbaters like us, *before* we give in to a temptation and learn to give it up by opening up about it. We are instructed by our sponsors to write our entire sexual-lust behavior history on paper from day one and to share it openly with another sober addict. Many share it with their entire meeting group. We establish recovery relationships to build on that every day and keep learning to open up to the honesty by practice. No forced honesty is ever possible, all that matters is if we have had enough pain. If I finally treasure honesty above the sweetness of my porn and sex, then I will make the **choice** to practice honesty with the sponsor and group. Hashem will give the gift of integrity to such a person. Yohiv chochma lachakimin - he gives it to the one who is wise enough to *really* try to get it. And that is just the *introduction* into recovery - not recovery.

Recovery is all and only in the steps. And they cannot be worked at all unless an addict is already sober and trying to learn how to stop living in a way that will make him feel like he needs to drink again.

Sorry if I talked of a lot more than you were - it just seemed like the entire topic was worth fleshing out. There are other ways to do this. I am only sharing my own experience, Eli.

Hatzlocha!

- Dov

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 28 Dec 2012 03:13

Dear Dov,

You didn't talk too much. You just brought me to a new level of clarity.

Thank you.

Eli

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 30 Dec 2012 08:26

Friday was kinda crazy busy so I mamash did not have time to post (to keep up with my posting twice a day comitment).

Shabbos Baruch Hashem went well.

I've been thinking a lot about what I've been reading here and came to the following conclusion: I really need to become more honest - with myself, my wife, my kids, my family and the world.

People have this impression of me that I am a very straight and honest guy, but the truth is that I'm not. The question of, "will I get caught" was always more motivating than, "is that the correct thing to do" and I have the sneaky behavior to prove it.

I need to become more honest. Period.

No more vague answers to my wife. No more brush offs to kids etc.

It started tonight.

Me: I need to go up stairs (check email and news before going out with my son to avos ubonim)

Wife: (emphatically) I need your help downstairs in the kitchen

Me: ok I will help you before I go (and didn't go upstairs)

Nothing major, but a small step in the right direction

Eli

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere
Posted by Dov - 30 Dec 2012 10:49

You are really getting it. Wow. That's rare.

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere
Posted by reallygettingthere - 31 Dec 2012 07:36

AAAAAAnd I'm back on the chart.

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere
Posted by reallygettingthere - 31 Dec 2012 08:01

Thank you Dov for your kind words.

I do think that I'm getting it.

I made a resolution today that was inspired by the beginning of *shovavim* but not because of
not to go to a particular website that usually doesn't pose a problem but every so
often have something that you would not be permitted to say a bracha in front of *l'chol ha'deios*.

I will be fine without visiting that website and quite frankly if I never went to that website again
for the rest of my life I would be just fine. What have I ever seen or read that changed my life
over there? I dunno. Nothing.

I don't have a real desire to go to that website but my yetzer hora certainly wants me to see that things that I shouldn't see.

By being honest with myself about whether I really need to visit that website I can prevent myself from slipping.

Eli

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 02 Jan 2013 09:09

I moved one step closer to honesty. I wrote my wife a letter telling her that I know that I have not been spending enough time with her (emotionally and simply spending time with her) and that I intend to change that.

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 02 Jan 2013 23:41

Day Seven.

I feel like I'm getting back into the swing of things. (as in a few clean days)

With Hashem's help it will continue. (that is with Hashem's help and my hishtadlus which in this case involves staying far from triggers and actively filling the gaping hole in my life with good stuff)

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 04 Jan 2013 01:18

Day 8

Today started off very stressful (money, what else) and was hoping to post. In the past, acting out was a way to get away from the stressful reality.

When I saw the site hacked my heart dropped.

I made an active decision not to act out, got busy doing something else, and... viola!

Baruch Hashem!

The money problem has not been fixed but I have some more clarity as to how long it will be a problem, which kind of takes the edge off the "worry".

I thought to myself, Hashem is not trying to hurt me. He is giving me exactly what I need to have a perfect existence right now. I know I don't like how my situation makes me feel but anything else would be a disaster.

THAT'S RIGHT! A MILLION DOLLARS RIGHT NOW WILL NOT MAKE THINGS BETTER IT
WILL MAKE THINGS WORSE

(exhale)

Eli

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 05 Jan 2013 01:01

Day 9.

Barcu Hashem things are going well. I'm staying away from the potential triggers (easier) and being more honest (harder)

Good shabbos

Eli

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by Dov - 06 Jan 2013 09:32

Hatzlocha and may we keep building on the good things be"H, one day at a time.

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Re: My Story - Reallygettingthere

Posted by reallygettingthere - 07 Jan 2013 10:21

Day 12

Baruch Hashem things are moving along. I have a challenge ahead of me. It's the situation where I fell last time. It will present itself over the next few days. I will make sure that I am not a sitting duck like last time.

Eli

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