

Shomer's Journal

Posted by mevakesh - 18 Dec 2008 19:22

I just wanted to start a new thread here to track my progress.

Today is day 7 and I am doing reasonably well B"H. I have been reading the chizuk e-mails every morning and reading the forum periodically throughout the day.

Will try and stay strong through the weekend and will *bili neder* be on Sunday's support call w/ Elya.

Link to my original post on GUE [here](#)

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by me - 18 Apr 2009 18:51

I am beginning to learn that we don't have a pornography problem, we have a pornography solution. Our problem is a life problem and we must seek ways change ourselves from the bottom up if we ever hope to rid ourselves of this terrible machalah once and for all.

This reminds me of the difference between conventional medicine, and the natural approach:

When r"l someone gets cancer, the conventional Dr's try to ***fight the cancer*** by adding more poison to the body, (trying to poison only the cancer and not the body.....good luck!)

The natural approach is to strengthen the weak body, and all of it's immune systems so that cancer can't grow there in the first place.

Cancer grows where it is allowed to.... in a weak debilitated body. Leave the disease alone, (the lusting), and instead work on the person. Rebuild and strengthen the person, and there will no longer be any place for lust.

I have seen on this forum that most of those experiencing nefilos, are the one's who are fighting the disease head on, rather than "leaving the disease", and building and changing the person so that the disease can no longer exist.

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by the.guard - 18 Apr 2009 19:20

What a beautiful post, Shomer! And "me" hit it on the head, as Rabbi Twerski once wrote to someone who claimed he could not stop...

His conviction that he cannot overcome the addiction is the addiction talking to him, saying, "Give up the fight, It's useless. You'll never succeed, so why put yourself through the misery."

Other than try to stop and pray etc, what has this young man done to make essential changes in his character? That's where one should begin.

I attended an AA meeting where the speaker was celebrating his 20th year of sobriety. He began by saying, "The man I once was, drank. And the man I once was, will drink again" (but the man I am today, will not). Alcoholics who have not had a drink for many years but have not overhauled their character are "dry drunks" and will often drink again. The same is true for sexual addiction.

How does one become a different person? By working diligently on improving one's character

traits. Learning how to manage anger, to rid oneself of resentments, to overcome hate, to be humble, to be considerate of others, to be absolutely honest in all one's affairs, to admit being wrong, to overcome envy, to be diligent and overcome procrastination. In short, one should take the Orchos Tzaddikim (I'm sure it's available in English), and go down the list of character traits, strengthening the good one's and trying to eliminate the bad ones. This does not happen quickly.

When one has transformed one's character and has become a different person, one will find that this "new person" can accomplish things that the old person could not.

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by mevakesh - 20 Apr 2009 15:17

Today is day 33 ...

This *motzaei Shabbos* I had to stay up half the night for a work related item. I had not anticipated having to stay up and was caught somewhat off guard. All the symptoms that normally preceded a slip began appearing. I was resentful for having to stay up, there was a stretch of idle time in the middle of the night where I had to wait on someone else, euphoric recall began to creep in etc. etc.

So here is what I did to stay sober

- 1) Attended a meeting *motzei Shabbos*
- 2) Called a fellow SA member and told him about my issue
- 3) Book-ended every hour (made call every hour and left message on one of the members cell phones)
- 4) Told my wife about my *nissayon*

These are the tools that SA and the fellowship have given me. I would not be sober without

them.

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by bardichev - 20 Apr 2009 16:31

here is a cute tip it works for me (usually)

if you have a palm or a blackberry

write motivatoinal sayings in your schedule do it for every 15 minuets in your schedule for the duration of time you plan on being in front of the compuer.then put in a time for GO TO SLEEP NOW.

its cute it can work

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by the.guard - 20 Apr 2009 16:32

Shomer, we are forever grateful for your sharing. You are inspiring us all and teaching us the secrets to winning in this great struggle. Every time you pass a nisayon and share it with us, you are placing another beautiful jewel in Hashem's crown of glory!

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 20 Apr 2009 17:15

Wow! that is great. It takes great courage to use the proper tools at the right time. You are a real hero. In time, hopefully the yetzer hara will get the hint and give up. Keep inspiring us!

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by mevakesh - 28 Apr 2009 16:17

Hello Dear Friends ...

I just wanted to update the group on my progress, as I had not updated my journal in a while.

A lot has happened over the past couple of weeks as I have attempted to lay the foundation for a solid and lasting recovery **bezras Hashem yisborach shemo**.

I have been attending the frum SA groups 6 days a week for the past 40 days or so. While the groups meet early in the morning and required me to forgo my morning *seder*, it was obvious to me that recovery had to come first, period.

Something happened, however, in the past week that may drastically impact the course of my recovery.

The first major block that I encountered with the program came when I was told to "get a sponsor". I was told that one cannot work the program without a sponsor and that if I did not get one, my recovery could be in jeopardy. The process, I was told, to go about getting a sponsor was to find someone that I could relate to on a recovery level and who's individual recovery I admired and ask them to become my sponsor. I was also told "do what your sponsor tells you to do and don't ask questions".

I will be quite honest and state frankly that I naturally have an aversion to authority. I don't like people telling me what to do and I am not interested in people getting involved in my affairs.

There was an individual in the group, however, who I do admire and was planning on asking to become my sponsor. Then boruch joined my group and began rubbing some people the wrong way, particularly this individual. I received a call from this individual that sounded very much like a request for boruch to leave the group and I began to get very nervous.

Although boruch has since ingratiated himself to this individual as well as the group as a whole, this experience began to plant questions in my mind regarding whether I wanted this person to be my sponsor.

I spoke to boruch about this and he advised me to ask this person to become my temporary sponsor.

I did this, but was subsequently told by this person that he did not feel that I was "surrendered" completely and that because of this as well as time constraints on his end, he could not be my temporary sponsor.

At this point I can honestly say that I am not "surrendered" completely in the sense that I am willing to accept the SA program point blank.

The meetings are great, the phone support is fantastic, but I am quite frankly not ready to have another person from my group sit down and tell me what to do.

I am also questioning my readiness to accept the level of personal disclosure that the program requires to another individual yet. Additionally, I feel that I am not ready to sit down at this point and do the personal inventories.

All this came crashing down on me yesterday and I began feeling very disconnected from the group. I realized that I needed to do something immediately to halt a slide *chaliyla* and promptly told my wife about what I was going through. She listened to my dilemma and was very supportive and understanding, a true *aishes chayil*.

I got a good nights sleep last night and did not attend a meeting this morning.

At this point I do plan on attending a few meetings a week, but cannot continue with the 90 meetings in 90 day regiment suggested by the program.

I realize that there exists certain mental barriers that are preventing me from fully embracing the program.

I also feel that I need to find my own path to recovery, whether that be through a literal process of working the steps or a combination of meetings, support and spiritual growth through Torah.

I am open to any and all options and am willing to do **whatever** it takes to recover.

My sobriety will my barometer and personal bottom line.

I would, however, advise any and all individuals suffering from this addiction to try SA.

I do still plan on attending meetings and cultivating my network of recovery contacts. I also plan on continuing to read the literature as I do believe that the 12 step program does contain the keys to conquering addiction.

I am constantly being *mispalet* to Hashem to continue to grant me the gift of sobriety and will continue to work hard to achieve those ends.

Today is day 41

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by DuvidChaim - 28 Apr 2009 16:40

Shomer

Yasher Koach for making the extraordinarily serious commitment to the SA Program.

I have been in SA for nearly two years and I also remember how difficult it was to find a sponsor and to "connect" to the fellowship. And then to "surrender" to an authoritative approach to recovery.

I also remember looking around the room at the other guys in my fellowship and thinking to myself, "I'm sure not a messed up as them! What am I doing here? I have nothing in common with these losers."

For whatever reason, I hung in there. And I started doing the text work. I found a sponsor. And I did the steps.

Now, nearly two years later, I walk into the meetings. And I have only admiration and respect for my fellow men; who are my heroes; each of them braver than any men I know.

And as Pirche Avos says, "Who is a wise man? He who learns from others."

In closing, if you are still struggling with finding a sponsor, I would be willing to discuss this step with you. I have already sponsored two men, quite successfully. And while we stay focused on the text and the steps, we are flexible enough to see how G-d unfolds each day full of awe and wonder.

Good luck to you,

Duvid Chaim

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by mevakesh - 28 Apr 2009 16:50

Thank you so much Duvid Chaim!

I sent you a PM

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by the.guard - 28 Apr 2009 17:34

Dearest Shomer, you don't know how lucky you are to have Boruch as a partner. I want to share with you a recent e-mail that Boruch sent me (that wasn't intended for everyone to see), but all the same, I'm sure Boruch won't mind since I think it will inspire you now and "open you up" more to understanding why it is so important that you have a sponsor and listen to him **unquestioningly**. Here is what Boruch wrote:

Here is what the Big Book says about perfection in working the Steps:

"No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection."

My experience was that I started with a similar approach towards the 12-steps, doing them the way I understood that the Eibishter wanted me to do them based on Yerushalmi and Rambam etc, and I formulated my own tefillos in loshon hakodesh based on davening and Chazal. And that was what I was ready for at the time.

*Today though, I strive towards **letter perfect** adherence of the Steps, as they are printed and described in the Big Book and Twelve and Twelve.*

My original approach was OK while it worked. Until I realized that even if I would ever come up with the best program the World had yet seen, it would not work for me.

*Why not? Because in my experience, working **my own** program is doing what **I want** and will never give me a model of doing what **Hashem wants**. Working **the other guy's program** though, even if inferior to my own, is good practice for the necessary humility to working Hashem's Will and not mine. As Rambam says in Peirush HaMishneh to Ovos, that there is so much value in "aseih lecho Rav" that it is even worth taking a Rav smaller than yourself (if there's no one else).*

*And it did not take long for my experience to prove the point very powerfully. My Step Three would have skipped handing over **our lives** to Hashem and would only have included handing **our will** over to Hashem. The addict in me was not yet ready to hand over his **entire self** and I convinced myself that it was a Christian concept. No matter that we know "bechol levovecho uvechol nafshecho", no matter that we know of "mesirus nefesh", no matter that we visualize actual mesiras nefesh in the first Pasuk of Shema, all because I was not ready, so I shut it out and it would not have been in my program. It was only through working the program **exactly as written** that I found the missing piece and discovered that I was not "fully surrendered".*

And that's when I deleted my own tefillos.

*Now the Big Book does say that we should use Rabbis, ministers and religious people for prayers, but I was not using "Rabbis, ministers and religious people", I was using **me** and I believe that addicts should not compose their own recovery. To me, it is too much like trusting the wolf with the hen house.*

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by mevakesh - 28 Apr 2009 17:53

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Point taken ...

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by the.guard - 28 Apr 2009 18:01

I wouldn't mind getting it every day. :D It's the deepest truth.

Working the other guy's program, even if inferior to my own, is good practice for the necessary humility to working Hashem's Will and not mine. As Rambam says in Peirush HaMishneh to Ovos, that there is so much value in "aseih lecho Rav" that it is even worth taking a Rov smaller than yourself (if there's no one else).

It is through this practice, that we learn how to truly give over our lives to Hashem. Without this practice, it can't be done. Hashem is too abstract. We have to practice it with someone we can

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by mevakesh - 12 May 2009 15:56

Dear Friends,

I just wanted to update my thread and day count for the WOH.

Today, *b'chasdei Hashem yisborach* is day 55 for me.

I have been going to SA meetings, making phone calls and trying to come to grips with the program as a whole.
~~see first~~

I cannot say that I have fully integrated the SA 12 step program fully into my life yet, but I am trying.

I still have relatively strong urges that I have been attempting to quell by working steps 1 - 3.

Thank you all for the continued support and encouragement!

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Re: Shomer's Journal

Posted by the.guard - 13 May 2009 12:39

Shomer, you are truly an inspiration to us all. A wonderful example of what a Jew is willing to go through to make sure he heals. The Yetzer Hara can't continue to lie to you anymore. You have come to see him for what he really is and are working hard at ridding yourself of his grip on you!

I believe you will one day be a big asset to us on GYE. We are starting a whole new SA division (see tool #14 of the handbook) and we need people like you. So get the experience now, so you can uplift your whole past and begin to help so many others as well! :D

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