

I'm Going To Try This Despite

Posted by genigshoin - 03 Mar 2015 07:24

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I'm Going To Try This Despite the fact that I absolutely HATE the stupid categories assigned to the achievement badges. Does everything that frum Jews do HAVE to be infantile? What would be wrong with just colors? We are struggling with the same stuff that everyone else in the world is struggling with but we must at all costs keep up the narrative that we are better than everyone else. We are so addicted to the view that we are better than everyone else that we have to tell ourselves "if a non Jew stays sober for 7 weeks he just gets a little badge, but I'm better - I don't just get a badge, I'm an "Oheiv Hashem" and 90 days gets me onto "The Wall of Hashem's Honor" but the goy is still a goy so no matter that I'm doing exactly as he is I'm still better...

It is so annoying! I am a human being who has suffered my whole life. Yiddishkeit and frumkeit did not protect me from that suffering. My suffering led me on a 40 year journey to the bottom of this pit. I need help, NOT frumkeit. Is frumkeit going to take responsibility for my recovery? No. I need to take that responsibility. So why do you have to shove yiddishkeit at me every step of the way!?

I appreciate the fact that this site allows us frum Jews to deal with our issues and the particular nuances that we have to deal with - like it NOT being OK to ever be open about our real issues because of our kids shidduchim and loss of standing amongst everyone else in this Loshon Hara obsessed society. A society where EVERYONE is pigeonholed into some sort of category that is usually based on some distorted idea of who is frummer than whom. (In our great and wondrous frum society of Ohavei Hashem we get accolades for the slightest effort if we have cancer - but for our type of struggle we get judged as lowlifes no matter how much effort we put in.)

So I for one would appreciate a space where I didn't have to feel like I was being put right back in a frum category, and one from 4th grade day camp to boot... If the categories help some people, great. For me - they turn my stomach and I wish there was an alternative to this site. Or at least a way to choose simple badges and categories. How about a simple Wall of Honor? This could then be interpreted by each of us in the way that we need to. But frum Jews rarely think about the idea that there could be multiple interpretations of something - (despite the fact that we study years of Gemara where there are multiple interpretations of everything) - it is so much easier to just accept the "one true way."

This site makes me feel like I am being proselytized twice. Once makes sense - that's what I'm here for. I am here to be proselytized by recovery - nothing else. My understanding is that in 12 Step programs people look forward with pride to their clean badges. I will NEVER be able to

look forward to the badges you've got. It's like when they felt they HAD to rewrite the lyrics to Cat's In The Cradle. Whoever did that thought he was improving the song while he was dragging it through the mud.

If you feel as I do reach out - I need friends and support and am willing to offer friendship and support in return. But if you are one of those who thinks those badges are a good idea, and The Wall of Hashem's Honor is more inspiring than The Wall of Honor - please do not contact me and pretend you agree because some distorted sense of obligation makes you think you can help me. I have been betrayed enough for several lifetimes and it would be VERY unhealthy for me to deal with more fraud at this time...

There. I feel a little tiny bit better now. I needed to get that off my chest so that my anger about this didn't lead to night number 1 becoming 0...

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite  
Posted by cordnoy - 08 Mar 2015 02:57

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Dov once wrote the followin':

Woah, May I remind you of what Bill and Bob wrote near the end of their book: "This book is suggestive only...". My sponsor reminded me once that this is not a matter of faith, just experience. If something doesn't work for you, why would anyone want to keep it? Is AA or SA a religion? Last time I checked, the Program was secular (look up the word if you think [as I did] that it means "w/o G-d"). And thank G-d for that! I can have a roman catholic sponsor whose help saved my life and led me to caring about wearing rabeinu Tam's, learning with hislahavus before shacharis in the morning, building a heilige (sorry Reb b!) home with my wife, and learning how to be a true jewish father to my kids - and for the same reason, I am able to sponsor yidden who are frum, agnostics, frum but still totally sold on lust (oy?), evangelicals, and mormons, all the same way. And each person is precious to Hashem right where he is, and will grow into living the right way only after they become sober.

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite  
Posted by serenity - 08 Mar 2015 03:34

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Take this or leave it, but it is widely suggested that anger, resentment and inventory taking of others is toxic to recovery. I need a program of action for myself and need not to analyze or worry about other people. What I try to do is focus on my recovery and the recovery of those

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite  
Posted by genigshoin - 08 Mar 2015 06:14

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who I see are successful. On another note, I basically agree with what you are saying, cordnoy and serenity. Thanks for your input (and validation). I agree that what I need to focus most on is me (taking inventory). The problem is that it is not simple at all to separate out the me from yiddishkeit as I experienced it. My therapist suggested that my letting my feelings out here is a really healthy thing as I am able to say things here in anonymity that I would never say otherwise. Anger is not a very good thing but ignoring it and pretending it isn't there - or just trying to wish it away has been part of my problem - part of my "secret". By getting it out in these posts I am am trying to let go of it - release its energy from the horrible impact it has on me when I keep it bottled up inside. I hope that makes sense and I hope I'm not offending anyone here - not my intention...

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite  
Posted by newaction - 08 Mar 2015 10:02

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Thanks for clarifying about your parents i am glad that they are physically healthy even when they themselves are handling life to the best of their understanding and not having the success in doing so you wished they had . Sorry to hear about your wife's way in your relationship. You know, i myself felt the same way you're describing about my parents and about my wife. Since early childhood i had to learn tactics of survival especially around my father . He was always angry; very volatile to any wrong move i would do even by mistake. He would yell at me non-stop for anything. And prove to me that i was always planning to do something bad or did something bad . I was in fear day and night . I used to spend a lot of time in the bathroom , that was my safe place . Nobody sees me here . All of this fear in childhood became resentment and hate when i grew up and (in)matured. I could go on and on and continue to victimize myself and engulf myself with self-pity . And that is exactly what i did for decades . But if i want to live and hell i want to . Its going to be either my father or me . My father passed away some years ago, but, and listen to this my friend : With my anger and resentments he was still controlling me even from his grave. And is so absurd !! that is not life that is death. So FOR MY SAKE , and MY LIFE i HAD TO FORGIVE HIM a mechila gmura without any string attached . My

resentment was such that i was too "lazy" to say kadish for him . I am admitting this for the first time in my life in this GYE forum . I thank G.od that gave me the wisdom to try to wear my father's shoes and try to understand that he did not mean bad and he was limited in his understanding of chinuch and , etc . So today B"H i am much more healthy i dont hate or resent C"V and he doesnt run my feelings and emotions anymore (there is always work to do ) . I have not spoken about my wife yet but you get the point.

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite

Posted by genigshoin - 11 Mar 2015 07:26

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newaction: Thank you for sharing that. I'm trying to let go, trying to forgive. But my life (on the inside) is so messed up right now that even though I know intellectually that I need to forgive I'm having a really hard time doing that. When they die I won't be crying because they died; I'll be crying because of the relationship I never had with them... I'm waking up at mid-life and getting honest with myself and realizing that I've been living a double life for about 40 years. If not for my wife and kids I would probably pick up and leave yiddishkeit, leave everything I know, and start over. Yes, I'm wallowing in anger and self-pity right now - I really resent waking up to find that 40 years of my life have been stolen from me - and when I say "me" I don't even know who I really am? I can't talk about this with anyone but my therapist and I have to keep living this other persons life as if it's my own... Guarding my eyes is but a fraction of the really bad habits I've picked up along the way, and while I am trying really hard to take responsibility for my s\*(t - there's this voice in the back of my head that says - "but it's not my fault I didn't know what was happening to me" - and that voice wants to take revenge by crash burning this life and telling everyone to go beep themselves. Some days the only thing that stops me from doing that is the idea that my wife doesn't deserve it - she's not uncomplicated by a long stretch but she isn't a bad person and whatever happened in her life to cause her to choose me she still doesn't deserve the public humiliation that would come along with my leaving...

So yeah - I'm a little stuck right now as I continue to find out all sorts of pleasantries about myself - things that started out as coping mechanisms and have morphed over the years into addictions and compulsions and irrational ways of acting out... Every time I get more honest with myself I realize how much more messed up I am than I thought... I wish I had cancer - then at least people would have pity on me. If people knew about the diseases that I DO have they would not have pity they would judge me to be a Rasha.

So, despite the fact that I am trying to let go of the deep inner voice (yes, my fathers voice obviously) that agrees with the Rasha assessment - I've had a lifetime of practice in feeling that way and I'm having a really really hard time letting go of that. What feels normal to me is that there is something wrong with me - that I am bad.

I know my parents did the best they could given their parents and circumstances etc... But their best screwed me up royally. When I interact with them I usually don't feel anger - unless of course they say something stupid and hurtful which happens fairly often as they have done virtually no work on themselves in this area and can't even bring themselves to say one word of sincere praise and or appreciation of me. The closest they can come is to call me and tell me they bumped into so and so and he said something nice about you. And every time that happens I just want to scream - who the ^&\*( cares about what so and so said - what about you!!!? When are YOU going to say something nice about me. And the saddest part about it is that I know that the answer is probably - never.

Lets say I can find the strength to truly forgive them - they suffered too and they did the best they could, I get it. But Hashem is by definition fully aware of exactly what he is doing at all times. And I'm not sure I can ever forgive him. The only way I can deal with Hashem is to accept that he does NOT directly control everything - hashgacha pratis over every single thing is a lie or Hashem is cruel.

And please don't bother trying to argue hashkafah with me - I can and will rip apart anyone who tries to - I'm not the first to feel this way and the fact that politically correct yiddishkeit is being homogenized for the increasingly unintellectual masses doesn't change the fact that we have a rich and varied history of how to understand Hashem's involvement in his creation...

bah - I got off topic...

Anyway newaction - thanks again for sharing. And I hope I can get to the point of letting go and forgiving the way you seem to have done... I'd do it right now if I could but although I've tried - so far I have been unsuccessful. And I really need all the energy I have to stay clean from my various issues...

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite  
Posted by cordnoy - 11 Mar 2015 11:32

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I feel for you again, and wish you all the hatzlachah findin' the energy to deal with all this stuff.

Mussar seforim don't do it for me; some of the whitebook (which can be found in my signature below) does at times.

Wishin' you success!

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite  
Posted by serenity - 11 Mar 2015 14:39

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You sound better already!

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite  
Posted by serenity - 11 Mar 2015 15:44

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. Seriously though, aren't these the type of issues that we really need to deal wit.h. I walked into the doors of AA 18 months ago and here and SA four or so months ago. 18 months ago yiddishkeit held little value for me. I couldn't let it have value, I numbed myself to God and focused on every reason out there to reject yiddishkeit. I came into recovery with a blank slate about how I had been approaching life and opened up to AA. This seems to be the number one failing of our people. They are unwilling to fully follow a simple program of recovery and they avail themselves of half measures, which we know gets us nothing. What I have found in recovery is people who are erliche yiddin, talmedei chachomin who are real and I find beauty in their struggle and in their yiddishkeit. I find no hope or value in people who hold up a false persona of religiosity in order to protect the integrity of the tradition. I think that approach may have worked in a non-intellectual era and in a non-media era, but today it is causing an infection at our core. There are people here who happen to be a lot smarter, are more knowledgeable, and have longer recovery and disagree with me on this, but I still stand by it. I think if you live in a heavily populated frum area and mostly deal with the ultra frum community, no matter how open minded you think you are, it's impossible to truly examine ourselves with an objective perspective. So what do we do in response, we ban the internet, we ban college, we don't teach basic secular studies, we don't teach math or science, we create an elitist society that is based on the complete and utter lie that our leaders are perfect and that they are ethically and morally superior. That being said, recovery has made me more accepting of yiddishkeit with all it's frailties and our people with all our weaknesses.

What made my perspective change is seeing people like Avrom, Dov, Skep, Kedusha, Hashiva and the many other frum yiddin here, many who are talmeide chochomim, who are struggling just to be decent people and serve Hashem. What also had a profound impact on me (and this actually came first), was the faith and the testimony of non-religious and non-Jewish people in thevelt about their belief in G-d. Many people who came into the program as atheists, now testify that the facts dictate to them that a Higher Power saved them. I have yet to hear anyone with substantial recovery deny that G-d helped them, regardless of their prior beliefs.

18 months ago, I saw no future with my wife. Now I hold our relationship as the dearest thing in my life. Before I saw her defects, now I only see her beauty. I saw no value in religion, now I see grace and comfort. What helped me was acceptance and surrender. I was not going to leave my wife and I wasn't going to leave my religion, as much as I unhappy with both. Leaving them surely would lead to my end. Family and religion with all their headaches, kept me from the brink of self-destruction. So I opened a huge empty space between myself and my wife and between myself and my religion and then I let only the good in both come in and fill that space. I also knew that I had no other choice left than to accept the simple program of recovery that SA provides and that's the only time the program works. If held onto my old ideals, I was doomed to failure.

Sober today by the compassion of Hashem,

Yaakov

Hatzlacha!!!

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite  
Posted by genigshoin - 15 Mar 2015 09:48

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Update: 12 days. A good start - some tough tough nights but I've held out....

serenity: Thanks for your words though I confess that I do not relate to some of them... My

problem has never been with Yiddishkeit. My problem is with the way Yiddishkeit is currently practiced and I don't believe that is going to go away with meeting ehrliche yidden and talmidei chachamim. I know plenty of yidden who are ehrliche and talmidei chachamim. But they are all part of a system that cares much more about appearances than about people's feelings. We have a system where resources are spent on "Lashon Hara" campaigns at the same time that we put down anyone who is not like us. We have a system that is increasingly draconian in its inability to allow for individuality and personal nuance in everything from dress to avodas hashem. Twersky is an ehrliche yid and presumably some level of talmid chacham - and though he won't say it out loud (cowardice?) he can't stand the system either. Why else would he move from Monsey to Teaneck!? I love Torah and always have but I ask questions that get people nervous - so I learned to shut up and not ask questions. Just like every other bright and intuitive kid in Yeshiva today is learning to shut up - because our community needs everything to be homogenized. Example: Recently I tried asking an adam gadol a difficult question about a certain Hashkafa topic. He looked at me with surprise and said "YOU have this question!?" - of course I backed down and said "No, of course not, just a non-frum Jew asked it to me at work and I want to know how to answer him." So he said "Tell him to learn Torah and he'll get the answer to his question..." Whatever happened to "I don't know?"

I appreciate that you "get" what I'm talking about. Your comments about the difficulty of living in a frum community and objectivity are right on. But how does recovery solve any of this? I'm working hard, really hard to deal with my multiple issues. I'm being helped by an excellent therapist. He happens to be frum but obviously not yeshivishe - if he had been in Yeshiva his rebbeim wouldn't have encouraged him to become a therapist... The people running the show today - the Rebbes and Rosh Yeshivas - they are out of touch. They couldn't care less about the fallout they cause by telling everyone there is only one way. The Novominsker is a good man but he is blind to the very real pain and suffering that the rigidity in his community is causing to many many people...

I am determined to get better. Are they???

So, while I respect and honor your journey, I don't think I'll be having a similar one with regards to this point. I am angry. I am going to work really hard not to let my anger get in the way of my recovery. And then I am going to work really hard to let my anger drive some sort of change in this community... I read these boards and they are full of the casualties of this community yet many many people defend it. I get that it is important to make sure the focus stays on recovery but pretending that our system is not a big part of the problem just ensures that there will always be a lot of customers here...

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite

Posted by shomer bro - 15 Mar 2015 12:47

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You make several very good points. However, not all rabbanim quash those types of questions and desires to become professionals. Example: I told my rebbe that i have ssa. His first response was... have i done the 12 steps? Have i seen a therapist? Have i told my parents or a sibling? Have i done any of the weekends that work on this? He acted like it was totally normal, but with respect to me that i had the strength to seek guidance from a rav.

Another example: When i was about to start premed, i spoke to my rebbe. What did he say? Not only did he not try to convince me not to pursue medicine, but he actually gave me tremendous chizzuk and solid advice for my journey. In short, while there are problems in the way our communities run, but there is much good as well. Please don't stereotype us.

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite

Posted by cordnoy - 15 Mar 2015 14:54

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there are rabbis on this site as well.

there are rabbis that i know out of here as well that are sympathetic and understandin' to these issues.

I do understand your sentiment though.

i try to focus on my recovery and the recovery of others on this site.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: I'm Going To Try This Despite

Posted by serenity - 19 Mar 2015 05:02

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I'm saying the exact same thing that you are. And as far as meeting Talmedei Chochomim and ehrliche yidden, I'm clearly talking about the ones who are in recovery and are not a part of the type of system you describe. Sorry you didn't understand the meaning of my post, but I'm not sure how you could have read it the way you did.

Hatzlacha!

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