

(BIG) LONG SHOT!?

Posted by stillgoing - 30 Apr 2015 18:20

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Sometimes I wonder if being a big shot (since I am the most humble guy I have ever met, I must be a big shot) is such a bad thing. Right now the main thing that is keeping me clean for 6 days so far is the 90 day chart. Why does the 90 day chart work for me, because I know that my name (ok, not my birth name, my rebirth name) is up on the chart for everyone to see, and since I think that I am G-d's gift to the world, I know that if I fall everyone is going to see that I'm a loser (which I am, since I've been losing for more years than I can count on my hands (and feet). Ok I know someone is going to tell me that I'm not a loser, and I would say that to you also, and I would believe it too - when I'm talking about you. Somehow when it's about myself, it's much harder to believe.

So that's why I'm specifically calling attention to my chart so that if I feel myself slipping I will think how embarrassed I will be since everybody will know about it (which hasn't been since high school.)

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by TalmidChaim - 21 May 2015 14:59

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I'm probably not making sense, and also undermining the bent of the thread in the process. Sorry.

I think the act of intellectualizing something, anything, creates the possibility of making it just academic, and less real. Our brains are our most precious organ, and should be used, used, used, so I don't agree that thinking about something is detrimental. However, if your time is spent only thinking about something, and never acting, then a crucial balance has shifted in one direction and you're probably missing some opportunities for acting.

Anyway, thanks for listening - assuming that anybody is listening. Also, some questions require soul-searching, thought experiments, mental modeling...just spending time in your own head pondering. And some questions require real-life, hard data. I think your question is (mostly) the latter. "Am I selfish?" Well, is your time spent doing things for others? Yes, there's the deeper question of whether you're wired one way or the other, etc., etc. And I don't mean to dismiss that as trivial. But that's a huge question, one, potentially, with a huge, complicated answer, or...no possible solution. Maybe we're all selfish, and selflessness is just roundabout selfishness.

The potential for pilpul on this is endless, and maybe even a diversion from the most simple solution: just forcing yourself to do things for others.

I would simultaneously think about this question while pursuing tangible acts of Chesed (a variation of random acts of kindness, maybe). Make sure that while you're looking for an answer, you're also living more selflessly. That could only be a good thing.

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by TalmidChaim - 21 May 2015 16:42

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By the way, you're a tzadik for even asking this question in the first place. In my opinion, anyone even remotely interested in knowing whether they are selfish is, by definition, not selfish. Selfish people usually don't even bother asking that question.

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by TheBigX90 - 08 Jun 2015 23:49

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I definitely agree with what TalmidChaim said about not being selfish. I also think you might be over-thinking things, which I'm guilty of. That's nothing crazy, it's normal just realise that it may take you to places in your mind that you don't want to go (ie. I'm so terrible by being so selfish etc.) It may be one of the methods of the Yetzer Hora.

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by cordnoy - 14 Jun 2015 21:06

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I heard a saying: not all selfish people are lust addicts but all lust addicts are selfish.

There might be exceptions. ....who knows?

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by stillgoing - 18 Jun 2015 22:20

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**R' cordnoy**

I heard a saying: not all selfish people are lust addicts but all lust addicts are selfish.

There might be exceptions. ....who knows?

My Rav once said, that we are all really big two year olds. A two year old, only wants what he wants and will cry and scream until he gets it. We also only want what we want, we just know that we have to play the game. In order to get what we want from others, we need to give first, but it's really no different then the two year old, except that we figured out a more efficient method of getting what we want. (Actually, crying and screaming seems to work pretty well for my kids). All people - even giving people are selfish (by default) unless they work on themselves to change

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by cordnoy - 18 Jun 2015 22:25

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[stillgoing wrote:](#)

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Givin' people are also selfish even if they want nothin' in return. Some give, for it makes 'em feel good. That is selfish. [It is a good level, however; halevay of mir gezugt.] When one gives for the sake of givin', so the other should feel good - that is selfless (but perhaps that makes him feel good....]

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by stillgoing - 18 Jun 2015 22:38

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**R' cordnoy**

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**Dale Carnigie**

*"I did not want anything from the fellow, oh yes, I did want something. I wanted the good feeling that comes when you do something for someone else that can't ever repay you back"*

(Ok, maybe it wasn't an exact quote. You cant find Dale Carnigie on the GYE archives)

Really you're right. That's not called *"nothin' in return"*. Nothin' means as you said *"when one*

*gives for the sake of givin', so the other should feel good", and if that makes the giver feel good too - All the better. No one said living selflessly is supposed to be massively depressing, without an ounce of sunlight. So long as that's not the reason that the giving is being done.*

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by stillgoing - 18 Jun 2015 23:06

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## **R' cordnoy**

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by shlomo613 - 19 Jun 2015 15:06

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I've got a long long way to go.

Why the double loшон? Well, long is for sheloi lishma; the long long is for lishma.

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by stillgoing - 21 Jun 2015 18:58

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**shlomo613**

I've got a long long way to go.

Why the double loшон? Well, long is for sheloi lishma; the long long is for lishma.

you know what we all always say, backwards and forwards...

emit a ta yad eno...

**Warning: Spoiler!**

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by shlomo613 - 21 Jun 2015 19:03

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I am glad that you're catering for the dyslexic among us.

Btw it was backwards and backwards

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by stillgoing - 21 Jun 2015 19:07

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**shlomo613**

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by stillgoing - 30 Jun 2015 02:41

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Today was a very sad day for me. Yesterday too. After being clean for 60+ days, I fell down so hard that I'm still dizzy. This Thread is titled appropriately "Big Shot". I was smug. This streak was from my first time on gye and I thought that I had finally licked this habit clean. I was going to 90 and beyond. I wasn't that badly entrenched after all. **Stupid!**. What was I thinking. That I pushed the reset button on the last 20 years? I was carless and confident and that led to disaster. While I was slipping (and smearing more oil to slip faster before I could start to think) I was wondering if I was going to have to anyways restart the chart l'sefak, after it was clear that I

crossed the line, my thoughts were, "oh well, I can't restart it until tomorrow anyway, so I might as well get my moneys worth." So far that money is costing me two days. Once one falls, the negative momentum makes all of the things that used to keep you clean insufficient. Theres gotta be a air bag somewhere that will catch me. If I restart the chart now, I can **iy"**H be 90 days clean for zman simchasainu. But that thought won't help me because then I can go for a few more days (c"v) before I start.

Don't worry, I know some people are telling me that depression is worse then falling because you keep on falling, I'm not depressed, just very very frustrated and annoyed at myself for trusting a luster's (me) will power, not to fall.

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Re: BIG SHOT!?

Posted by serenity - 30 Jun 2015 03:04

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The Doctor's Opinion seems appropriate here. I will highlight a few parts that are calling out to me right now.

## THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the reader will be interested in the medical estimate of the plan of recovery described in this book. Convincing testimony must surely come from medical men who have had experience with the sufferings of our members and have witnessed our return to health. A well known doctor, chief physician at a nationally prominent hospital specializing in alcoholic and drug addiction, gave Alcoholics Anonymous this letter:

To Whom It May Concern:

I have specialized in the treatment of alcoholism for many years.

About four years ago I attended a patient who, though he had



been a competent business man of good earning capacity, was an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless.

In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that they must do likewise with still others. This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear to have recovered.

I personally know thirty of these cases who were of the type with whom other methods had failed completely.

These facts appear to be of extreme medical importance; because of the extraordinary possibilities of rapid growth inherent in this group they may mark a new epoch in the annals of alcoholism.

These men may well have a remedy for thousands of such situations.

You may rely absolutely on anything they say about themselves.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) - - - - M.D.

The physician who, at our request, gave us this letter, has been kind enough to enlarge upon his views in another statement which follows. In this statement he confirms what we who have suffered alcoholic torture must believe that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind. It did not satisfy us to be told that we could not control our drinking just because we were maladjusted

to life, that we were in full flight from reality, or were outright mental defectives. These things were true to some extent, in fact, to a considerable extent with some of us. But we are sure that our bodies were sickened as well. In our belief, any picture of the alcoholic which leaves out this physical factor is incomplete.

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The doctor's theory that we have an allergy to alcohol interests us. As laymen, our opinion as to its soundness may, of course, mean little. But as ex-problem drinkers, we can say that his explanation makes good sense. It explains many things for which we cannot otherwise account.

Though we work out our solution on the spiritual as well as an altruistic plane, we favor hospitalization for the alcoholic who is very jittery or befogged. More often than not, it is imperative that a man's brain be cleared before he is approached, as he has then a better chance of understanding and accepting what we have to offer.

The doctor writes:

The subject presented in this book seems to me to be of paramount importance to those afflicted with alcoholic addiction.

I say this after many years' experience as Medical Director of one of the oldest hospitals in the country treating alcoholic and drug addiction.

There was, therefore, a sense of real satisfaction when I was asked

to contribute a few words on a subject which is covered in such masterly detail in these pages.

We doctors have realized for a long time that some form of moral psychology was of urgent importance to alcoholics, but its application presented difficulties beyond our conception. What with our ultra-modern standards, our scientific approach to everything, we are perhaps not well equipped to apply the powers of good that lie outside our synthetic knowledge.

About four years ago one of the leading contributors to this book came under our care in this hospital and while here he acquired some ideas which he put into practical application at once.

Later, he requested the privilege of being allowed to tell his story to other patients here and with some misgiving, we consented. The cases we have followed through have been most interesting; in fact, many of them are amazing. The unselfishness of these men as we have come to know them, the entire absence of profit motive, and their community spirit, is indeed inspiring to one who has labored long and wearily in this alcoholic field. They believe in themselves, and still more in the Power which pulls chronic alcoholics back from the gates of death.

Of course an alcoholic ought to be freed from his physical craving for liquor, and this often requires a definite hospital procedure, before psychological measures can be of maximum benefit.

We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action

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of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their selfconfidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve. Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices. The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people must have depth and weight. In nearly all cases, their ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves, if they are to recreate their lives.

If any feel that as psychiatrists directing a hospital for alcoholics we appear somewhat sentimental, let them stand with us a while on the firing line, see the tragedies, the despairing wives, the little children; let the solving of these problems become a part of their daily work, and even of their sleeping moments, and the most cynical will not wonder that we have accepted and encouraged this movement. We feel, after many years of experience, that we have found nothing which has contributed more to the rehabilitation of these men than the altruistic movement now growing up among them.

Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect

produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.

On the other hand—and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.

Men have cried out to me in sincere and despairing appeal:

"Doctor, I cannot go on like this! I have everything to live for! I must stop, but I cannot! You must help me!"

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Faced with this problem, if a doctor is honest with himself, he must sometimes feel his own inadequacy. Although he gives all that is

in him, it often is not enough. One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change.

Though the aggregate of recoveries resulting from psychiatric effort is considerable, we physicians must admit we have made little impression upon the problem as a whole. Many types do not respond to the ordinary psychological approach.

I do not hold with those who believe that alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control. I have had many men who had, for example, worked a period of months on some problem or business deal which was to be settled on a certain date, favorably to them.

They took a drink a day or so prior to the date, and then the phenomenon of craving at once became paramount to all other interests so that the important appointment was not met. These men were not drinking to escape; they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control.

There are many situations which arise out of the phenomenon of craving which cause men to make the supreme sacrifice rather than continue to fight.

The classification of alcoholics seems most difficult, and in much detail is outside the scope of this book. There are, of course, the psychopaths who are emotionally unstable. We are all familiar with this type. They are always "going on the wagon for keeps."

They are over-remorseful and make many resolutions, but never a decision.

There is the type of man who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink. He plans various ways of drinking. He changes his brand or his environment. There is the type who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time he can take a drink without danger. There is the manic-depressive type, who is, perhaps, the least understood by his friends, and about whom a whole chapter could be written.

Then there are types entirely normal in every respect except in the effect alcohol has upon them. They are often able, intelligent, friendly people.

All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence.

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This immediately precipitates us into a seething caldron of debate.

Much has been written pro and con, but among physicians, the general opinion seems to be that most chronic alcoholics are doomed.

What is the solutions Perhaps I can best answer this by relating an experience of two years ago.

About one year prior to this experience a man was brought in to be

treated for chronic alcoholism. He had but partially recovered from a gastric hemorrhage and seemed to be a case of pathological mental deterioration. He had lost everything worth while in life and was only living, one might say, to drink. He frankly admitted and believed that for him there was no hope. Following the elimination of alcohol there was found to be no permanent brain injury. He accepted the plan outlined in this book. One year later he called to see me, and I experienced a very strange sensation. I knew the man by name, and partly recognized his features, but there all resemblance ended. From a trembling, despairing, nervous wreck, had emerged a man brimming over with self-reliance and contentment. I talked with him for some time, but was not able to bring myself to feel that I had known him before. To me he was a stranger, and so he left me. More than three years have now passed with no return to alcohol.

When I need a mental uplift, I often think of another case brought in by a physician prominent in New York City. The patient had made his own diagnosis, and deciding his situation hopeless, had hidden in a deserted barn determined to die. He was rescued by a searching party, and, in desperate condition, brought to me.

Following his physical rehabilitation, he had a talk with me in which he frankly stated he thought the treatment a waste of effort, unless I could assure him, which no one ever had, that in the future he would have the "will power" to resist the impulse to drink.

His alcoholic problem was so complex, and his depression so



great, that we felt his only hope would be through what we then called "moral psychology," and we doubted if even that would have any effect.

However, he did become "old" on the ideas contained in this book. He has not had a drink for more than three years. I see him now and then and he is as fine a specimen of manhood as one could wish to meet.

I earnestly advise every alcoholic to read this book through, and though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray.

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