

My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 06 Mar 2016 18:47

Hi all

I'm revamping my efforts all around. Got an accountability partner, a sponsor, a 12 step group, a coach, and some new tools. Of course if I started to list what I don't yet have this post would never end. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I recognize that my "plans" are only as good as what I will make of them.

I thought it might be helpful to have a place to write about my experiences at times. Fell free to share any thoughts/suggestions/comments you may have along the way.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by markz - 06 Mar 2016 18:49

Welcome!

Wow you took the full package deal!

Amazing

I hope you got a Trucking discount!

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Re: My Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 06 Mar 2016 18:49

Great stuff!

Keep us posted please.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 09 Mar 2016 05:53

Still clean. And thanks for the well wishes. Good chatting with you too Markz and I'm re-posting the [i-phone](#) song for anyone else who might be interested.

I've listened to some interesting 12 Step / Recovery Calls. Thanks Dov :)

Let me wonder something out loud - I've become (somewhat) used to opening up about my lust struggles with internet addiction to friends, Rabbeim, GYE members, therapists, my sponsor, even a girl I dated once!, etc. (not family though-I'm single btw). However, I've always kept what I consider the dirtiest details to myself. Lately though, I've been giving some thought to whether it makes sense to consider revealing some of these things by doing a written 1st step inventory - and I guess sharing it with someone, YIKES! Also, to share with my sponsor some of the darker parts of my journey and potential triggers and boundaries that might be relevant for me.

I'm giving it some thought, but I still think certain things might be better kept between myself and my creator..

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Re: My Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 09 Mar 2016 10:50

[thanks613 wrote on 09 Mar 2016 05:53:](#)

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Each person is different, but I know that I needed to unload everythin', more than once.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 14 Mar 2016 02:36

Still Clean.

Thanks for the input about the 1st step inventory cordnoy.

As it turns out I've been listening to [Joe and Charlie 12 step recordings](#) (follow link and scroll down if interested), and I kinda decided not to do a 1st step inventory because of it. Basically, they describe steps 1-2-3 as being not so much action steps as much as realization steps of the need for change, believing in the power of Hashem to help me do so, and being willing to rely on His help and support... or something like that. So I figured- "I've gone through these steps on some level, and I think I need to dive into step 4". Then I go ahead and mention to my

sponsor how I'm actually not sure that I am in fact a sexaholic. There is no doubt to me that I've been living my life just about exactly as a sexaholic would have done so for the past 10 or so years, maybe more. Yet, I still have what I believe, after careful inspection are legitimate doubts. Anyways, It doesn't matter to me what I call myself - bottom line is that I want to change and haven't been unable to do so on my own, and if the steps will help...well then my name is thanks613 and I'm a sexaholic. Long story short - my sponsor wants me to do a 1st . So here's 2 more questions I have about it.

1. I am a bit troubled by the notion of admitting my darkest moral failures to another person because it strikes me as being awfully close to the Christian (or Catholic maybe?) concept of confession (and absolution). While I would not object to a seemingly Christian idea if it seemed useful and not counter to the Torah, I believe that, as Jews, we reserve confession (and certainly absolution) to Hashem Himself. I agree that it may be necessary and acceptable at times to reveal our secrets to others in order to be helped, but I'm not sure what would be gained by revealing (and bringing to memory) my most shameful moments; those in which I crossed boundaries that I feel would make me repulsive to my fellow man, those in which I flaunted my lust without shame in G-d's own face, and those in which I may have been more motivated by spiritual rebellion than by lust per say. Hope that helps make my question clear. Maybe I'll search the archives or ask Guard about it

2. There's really only the 1 question I guess

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Re: My Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 14 Mar 2016 03:45

However, another part of this step is admitting one's sins to a human being. This specific component of the 5th step is questioned by people because it seems to contradict a Gemara in meseches brachos 34b which says that telling a human being one's sins is forbidden; if the Gemara says it is forbidden to talk about one's sins with other people, then how can it possibly be permissible to do the 5th step?

This may be the only legitimate question on the 12 steps, although you will soon see that it also has a legitimate answer. In fact, you already rely on the answer that I will give in other ways in your life, even if you are not a member of AA.

In the original edition of this paper I wrote a lengthy teshuva on this step. In this edition I have shortened it to the bare bones of why it is permitted in halacha to do step five and admit one's sins to a sponsor.

The answer simply is, the Torah forbids sharing one's sins when it has no constructive purpose. However, if the sins are being told over for the purpose of seeking guidance or in the context of working a spiritual program to sober up from addiction, this is permitted. Not only that, it seems to be the minhag Yisrael as well. If this idea was not true, it would not be permitted to discuss one's spiritual problems with a Rabbi, Mashgiach, or Chasidic Rebbe in order to seek guidance.

Rabbi Twerski is known to bring the source for this from Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk in his Tzetaf Katan. Although I was originally bothered that Reb Elimelech seemed to be the only one who writes that this is permitted, I later understood that no one else wrote this is permitted simply because it is so obvious that it is unnecessary to speak out. Indeed, all the Rabbanim that reviewed this paper said this idea is obvious, and that it is clearly the custom of Klal Yisrael to understand the halacha in this way.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 14 Mar 2016 03:46

This is forbidden because the man specifying his sins has no reason to do so out loud; because of this simple fact, it is forbidden. However, if there was a compelling reason why this had to be done, it would be permitted. A case where saying over one's sins to another is necessary is the case of an addicted Jew who joined a 12 step group and needs to do step 5 in order to recover from addiction. In this case, the intention is noble and it is certainly no less of a constructive purpose than the reason why sharing one's sins is permitted in the Gemara of Sota 7b. I reviewed this with 4 Rabbis and Poskei Halacha in Yerushalayim, where I live. They unanimously agreed that this halacha formulation is correct and obvious (see also the Mayim Chaim brought by Mekoros ViTziyunim in the Frankel edition of the Rambam, hilchos Teshuva 2, 5) who writes that revealing one's sins for a constructive purpose is permitted; see also Sheilos U'T'shuvos Noda BiYehuda Even Haeizer, 72 who writes "One time before Rosh Hashana...several people came before the Beis Din and

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specified the aveiros that they did that year in order to confess their sins and to ask the Beis Din for guidance on how to do teshuva...". Eyin sham, upashut, vian kan makom liha'arich.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 14 Mar 2016 03:47

Even when permitting step 5 in halacha, some Jewish AA critics make a fuss and claim “well, it has a Catholic taste to it so it is no good anyways, even though permitted by halacha!”

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Re: My Journey

Posted by markz - 14 Mar 2016 04:15

There was once a Catholic that got sober from lust, hence all Jews are considering not to follow that route

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Hey - I only drank 2 ounces

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Re: My Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 14 Mar 2016 04:37

by the way, my quotes were from r' tannenbaum's book on the 12 steps.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 14 Mar 2016 18:51

Wow. Thanks for replying so much on target! - and Markz, I'm not sure I accept your diyuk. I think it may depend on whether you hold the "12 Steps" and mandatory (chukos) or "12

Those quotes from R' Tanenbaum sure addressed my question, or at least most of the substance of it. I can't say I'm entirely surprised, but it sure is nice to see it in writing. What's the book called by the way?

For myself, I'm not sure it's entirely necessary for me to disclose some of these things for where I'm at right now, but maybe I'll err on the side of caution rather than risking a chumrah haba liydei kula (or aveirah I should say). Something my sponsor said along these lines that kinda shook me up was 'It may not be necessary, but if you want to get the most out of the program, you need to be COMPLETELY honest..' Anyways, I've already tried the path of shortcuts, and I know how that turned out for me.

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Re: My Journey

suggestions/traditions"

Posted by thanks613 - 14 Mar 2016 19:09

[cordnoy wrote on 14 Mar 2016 03:47:](#)

Even when permitting step 5 in halacha, some Jewish AA critics make a fuss and claim "well, it has a Catholic taste to it so it is no good anyways, even though permitted by halacha!"

Did the Rav have more to say about this? I'm wondering what he responded.

Part of what is bothering me is that my sponsor talked about how freeing it was to admit his past to his own sponsor. I can imagine that telling a sponsor "I'm so ashamed at having done X, Y, and Z" and having my sponsor respond by congratulating me for facing myself honestly by coming clean would make me feel free and validated, very much the same way that absolution from a priest would do so. (I'm not actually familiar with absolution, but I think it basically is when a priest tells a confessor "Behold-I grant thee forgiveness from the heavenly father..."). Maybe I am making too big a deal of this. If feeling freed and validated will help me recover, then maybe that is enough to justify whatever concerns I have, as R' Tanenbaum says. Maybe I am confusing the power of human validation that I would gain from a sponsor with Heavenly forgiveness and atonement, which I only seek to gain from Above.

Catholic spirituality I'm ok with, sort of. But I like G-d to be my way! After all, He's the jealous type...

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 14 Mar 2016 19:11

Oh yeah, and still clean.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by pischoshelmachat - 14 Mar 2016 21:23

17 is the gematria of Tov!

Hatzlacha Rabba!!

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