

Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 20 Jul 2012 12:17

I used to be Mifatfait Biyitzro, now I'm Charlie. I changed my name, on this thread I explained why: www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=5489.0

(I don't really know how to hyperlink, I just did copy/paste and hopes it works).

My basic desire to change is that I'm realizing more and more that I simply have to change my outlook on this whole issue if I don't want to spend the next 20 years (or more) struggling to sometimes barely stay sober.

It's so obvious that I need to take on the 12 step attitude and feel powerlessness and start relying only on Hashem and work harder to avoid triggers and...., but somehow the Y"H manages to stop any effort after a short time. His most successfull tactic is convincing me that this is all the wrong haskofoh and I should stop all this monkey buisness and simply fight him head on until I win, of course all this starting right away after one last juicy acting out....

On of the biggest pro's here told me to just do powerlessness even when I don't feel it, little by little it'll sink in (like the mesilas yesharim says about zerizus and humility). I tried it several times and was blown away by the immediate effect, but somehow each time after a week or so I burnt out. I guess after several hard days of not feeling what I'm doing it maybe stopped working?

But now I'm determined to give it one last do or die shot. 8 days ago I decided that until Elul I'm doing powerlessness with no ifs ands or buts, even if I'll feel it's the worst thing in the world for me I don't care. Since then I've been perfectly clean, I beg Hashem every day to help me continue recoveing - one day at a time. After these 5-6 weeks are up I'll see if this works, maybe I'll need some additional help to get sober? Only Hashem knows.

I love all you fellow GYE chevra, thanks for all of your unbelievable help.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by nederman - 28 Aug 2012 01:13

[alexeliezer wrote on 27 Aug 2012 14:06:](#)

Cognitive therapy makes perfect sense for illness such as depression.

However, when it comes to addiction, it is simply unproven. The fact that one guy stopped masturbating by applying cognitive techniques doesn't constitute proof. In contrast, a recovery program such as the 12 steps has helped millions of people from diverse cultures recover from many different kinds of addiction. That's robust proof that it works. Do you know of cognitive therapy groups that are consistently helping large numbers of people recovery from addiction? Or is it, this makes sense and worked for me so everyone should drop what they're doing and do this instead?

In addition, in the throes of addiction, a defining feature is the *turning off of one's rational thinking*. Therefore, a therapy based on rational thinking is going to help precious few in their journey to recovery. So it may be an additional tool, but I wouldn't bet my retirement fund on it as my only weapon.

I believe that it's proven. If you really want to get some numbers you can probably find them. Maybe start from smartrecovery.org. Do you have information to the effect that it's uproven, as you say?

But I think what usually happens with cognitive therapy is that the person actually moves on. The therapy ends. If he went to a group for a while, he stops going. So there is a strong temptation to conclude that the guy was not an addict. In other words, the 12-step program becomes the definition of addiction. This is not a reliable conclusion.

I do not share this view. I believe that I am an addict and that I am successfully treating my addiction with cognitive therapy. In your choice of words you seemed to imply that I am just some guy, I.e. not an addict. Do you believe that? If you do you really shouldn't because you don't know. It would serve you better to suspend judgment there.

Definitely it works for me (so far). On this web site there is a forum called "what works for me." Can I save myself the trouble of arguing that the best solution could come from the most unexpected source?

I disagree with you about your last point. Did you know that if you learn hilchos lashon hara every day then when you get an opportunity to speak it you can stop yourself? Have you ever experienced that feeling when time stops and you choose to keep quiet? Same with addiction. Study the tools daily and time will stop.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 28 Aug 2012 08:56

Sorry R' Nederman but I'm with Edge and Alex, and since it's my thread then I'm right (what an ego I have!).

But seriously, as you and everyone else said the only goal for all of us is to get sober with whatever works, we don't need to promote any specific way as the single valid method.

I personally identify with alex's idea that rational thinking won't help me when I'm completely irrational.

To maybe explain more, in my close family there is a person who is constantly exerting tremendous negative influence on us (i.e. driving us nuts), not because he a bad guy at all, in fact he a very good guy, it's just that his thinking process is completely twisted. There's nothing we can do about it, no words of explanation accomplish anything, because it's who he is - all the logic in the world won't explain to a monkey not to eat the banana. Until he decides to change himself, the only solution is to simply stay away.

So too with us addicts, our rational thinking is gone with the wind for everything even remotely connected to acting out, I don't think I can be changed from my own logic just as I can't use my logic to grow another arm. My only hope is to avoid lust completely, not to try to play around with the vicious hungry lion. And when he comes knocking, to daven to Hashem to get him away from me, I don't want him.

This is what has been working for me.

My progress report - almost 2 months since I went powerless, fell 3 times (in one week) from being triggered by negative emotions (as mentioned in previous posts). But to put it into perspective, I have been lusting since I was old enough to lust and have been masturbating since I was old enough to masturbate, nothing I did worked to stop me. And in essence nothing has changed, because even my present sobriety isn't a result of my self control, rather through avoiding lust completely and relying on Hashem to get me out of the tough spots.

I'll be honest, I fell also yesterday from another thing which I must learn to avoid, when my learning is going really good and I'm getting a lot of honor and respect from my peers, it gets to me inside and I enter fantasy land and feel very strong and powerfull, the first thing I lose is my "one day at a time" when I'm planning my glorious future, then I start feeling powerfull and cool, and then I forget (sounds funny, but I'm serious, I forget) that I'm powerless over lust - and then the game is over. I guess this is a trigger like a pretty women and angry feelings, must surrender it completely right away. Any ideas, chevra??

Wow, I think this is my longest post ever, ah, the musings of a sexaholic yearning to recover.

Hashem, please help me stay clean today!!!

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by jack - 28 Aug 2012 12:24

there is a r' ovadia mebartenura somewhere in pirke avos who asks the following question: how can we ever suspect the kohen gadol on erev yom kippur if he's tamey? after all, he spent the entire week in purity! he answers that either one of the yetzers, the good AND the bad, fight against the other if he sees he's losing.so, after a whole week in purity, the yetzer hara sees he's losing, he makes every effort he can to beat the yetzer tov.similarly, when a person is dying, r'l, there is a burst of activity because the yetzer tov sees he's losing, so he makes an effort to help the person fight death.

does this apply to you?

jack

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by alexeliezer - 28 Aug 2012 14:17

[nederman wrote on 28 Aug 2012 01:13:](#)

Do you have information to the effect that it's uproven, as you say?

If you are coming to discredit and replace a proven system, the burden of proof is on you.

I believe that I am an addict and that I am successfully treating my addiction with cognitive therapy. In your choice of words you seemed to imply that I am just some guy, i.e. not an addict. Do you believe that?

I believe you are an addict and you have found something that is working for you. I wish you continued sobriety, and I hope many will find your suggestions truly helpful.

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Re: Charlie's change
Posted by ontheedgeman - 28 Aug 2012 14:46

I don't think Nederman has found recovery yet but maybe a good start. Why is this any of my business I don't know... The belief that cognitive therapy "must" be the answer, well, this is just another form of musturbation...

don't forget to tip your waiter, i'm back next thursday.

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Re: Charlie's change
Posted by mifatfait - 28 Aug 2012 20:26

Edge, that was really good - "Musturbation". I think that sheds much light on a lot of things about us. Oy, why "must" I have everything under my control, Why can't I just "let go and let G-D"?

Chaim

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Re: Charlie's change
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 28 Aug 2012 21:22

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by nederman - 29 Aug 2012 02:32

I'll be honest, I fell also yesterday from another thing which I must learn to avoid, when my learning is going really good and I'm getting a lot of honor and respect from my peers, it gets to me inside and I enter fantasy land and feel very strong and powerfull, the first thing I lose is my "one day at a time" when I'm planning my glorious future, then I start feeling powerfull and cool, and then I forget (sounds funny, but I'm serious, I forget) that I'm powerless over lust - and then the game is over. I guess this is a trigger like a pretty women and angry feelings, must surrender it completly right away. Any ideas, chevra??

It means that you have not taken your first step yet. You have used the technique called surrender, but the first step is to make up your mind that your life has become unmanageable. When you are flying high your life feels manageable, even great, and you tell yourself that your addiction is negligible.

It was easier for my friend in SA who used to molest 10-year old girls.

Another way to say it: you are having trouble maintaining your motivation.

And what about your sponsor? What did he say when you called him, before you lusted?

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by nederman - 29 Aug 2012 02:40

If you are coming to discredit and replace a proven system, the burden of proof is on you.

No, because I don't claim that the 12-step program doesn't work, just that having done both I like cognitive therapy better. And there are a lot of problems with the 12-step program in a Jewish context, a lot of tough questions, but I don't have to come onto those because there's a huge number of people on this forum who knows them better than I do. But even more importantly, arguments have almost no value, the goal is sobriety.

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Re: Charlie's change
Posted by nederman - 29 Aug 2012 02:49

[ontheedgeman wrote on 28 Aug 2012 14:46:](#)

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You may be right.

What I like about cognitive therapy is that it is compatible with the Mesillas Yescharim. Note how Rabbi Luzzatto never mentions surrender. Instead he says that this world is compared to the darkness. In other words, the yetzer hara is only deception, nothing more. Intensify the men's labors, so they won't think.

So it's okay for me to believe that this really is THE answer because it's actually the Torah, of which there is only one.

I was amused by your use of the word musturbation. The term was coined by Albert Ellis to mean what depressed people tell themselves "I should be learning" or whatever. Rather than helping them get off their behind this paralyzes you.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 30 Aug 2012 06:38

[nederman wrote on 29 Aug 2012 02:32:](#)

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It means that you have not taken your first step yet. You have used the technique called surrender, but the first step is to make up your mind that your life has become unmanageable. When you are flying high your life feels manageable, even great, and you tell yourself that your addiction is negligible.

It was easier for my friend in SA who used to molest 10-year old girls.

Another way to say it: you are having trouble maintaining your motivation.

And what about your sponsor? What did he say when you called him, before you lusted?

Thanks, Nederman. I like that. Seems like you hit the nail on the head.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 02 Sep 2012 07:01

Ok. I've thought and watched myself a bit more, I think the issue may be more than not being "unmanagable", I really think that getting to excited about myself is a hard-core trigger which must be avoided (before it comes) or "davened" (when he crashes uninvited) like all other triggers.

By the way, this whole surrender/powerless/davening thing is simply amazing . Countless times in the past 2 months I've had that burning feeling that I simply must act out or look at that creature on the bus. I tell myself and Hashem that yes it's true I must listen to this temptation as much as I need to breath, even if I force myself to hold back it's just like holding my breath and eventually it'll all come pouring out (a lot more and stronger than if I wouldn't have held it to begin with). So what can I do? Nothing. Except to ask and beg Hashem to take this away just for the next few minutes, I really don't want it, if he stays I'll have to give in, but if You send him away I'll have a bit of a reprieve... And it works, it's simply amazing.

Now sometimes it bothers me, is it really true that little me can live such a miracle every day, that Hashem is really changing me whenever I ask Him to. I think the question is a mistake. Hey, I'm a Jew and my Code of Life is the Torah and by it I percieve what is "true" and what is "false", and the Torah says not to masturbate or look at pretty women (except my wife when proper), and if the way to do it is by living every moment in Hashem's grace, then that is 100% the solemn truth. I have 613 mitzvos to do, truth is doing them, false is not doing them.

It may be that I should just say even simpler of course Hashem does miracles all the time (???? ?????), but for me the above was an insight.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 04 Sep 2012 07:58

Was yesterday clean? I don't remember.

Will tommorow be clean? I don't care.

Is today clean? I hope so.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by E-Tek - 04 Sep 2012 19:38

[ChaimCharlie wrote on 04 Sep 2012 07:58:](#)

Was yesterday clean? I don't remember.

Will tommorow be clean? I don't care.

Is today clean? I hope so.

This. Definitely.

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