

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 yescharim 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 ontheedgeman - 06 Sep 2012 13:42

Well, first of all, share your resentment with us. What's bothering you?

Second, do you have the SA worksheet? Write down your resentment. ON PAPER. Check off the areas of your life it affects. Then examine how your selfishness plays a part in the resentment. Perhaps you lack proper compassion. Perhaps your ego wants things a certain way, and the resentment is really just ego fear. What are your expectations that are setting the agenda?

Finally use your power of imagination. Enter the world of the person or situation you resent. Go deep into that person place or thing and try to see it from their perspective.

And, before you leave, say a prayer and try to BE GRATEFUL FOR ALL YOUR FIRST-WORLD PROBLEMS. :-)

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by nederman - 06 Sep 2012 23:39

You are in SA, surrender your resentment. It does work. Just say "Hashem please allow me to let go of this, even if they wronged me, because I can't."

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 09 Sep 2012 08:07

Thanks, guys.

Erev Shabbos and Shabbos I asked and begged Hashem a lot to help me, and He did. I think I should have more patience, to truthfully give things up sometimes might take a few tries. Hashem doesn't take His time, but I do. Maybe I need to start davening right away, but also knowing that if it's something really big it might not go away until a day or two.

I sort of feel how working on surrendering my resentments in general is helping me stay away from lust, hey - powerlessness is powerlessness, when I feel how I'm weak and dependant that affects everything.

Good week everyone.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by nederman - 09 Sep 2012 10:55

I seem to recall that the white book talks about how the addition travels from one form to another, so if it's resentment now it might become lust later, or maybe anger, but always some form of ego.

In the cognitive approach I just call this the belief that everything must be the way I want it or I should be miserable. Because of pride it took me basically forty years to finish the thought: everything should be exactly the way I want it to be or else I will not make it. I spent many years wondering if some trauma kicked off my addiction, and in the end it turned out to be caused by too much attention: as I cried for help as a child and I got it I told myself that this proved that I cannot attack any problems on my own.

There are certain rare days when my wife wrongs me and I take it lying down, and then later I get a panic attack. I figured out that this is somatized resentment when I was in SA and I tried to surrender it. I said "Hashem please take this resentment away because I can't." After a couple of minutes my panic attack dissipated. if it happens again I will try to think "just because I am furious at her it doesn't mean she is wrong" and see if it works as well. That works for conscious resentment, or anger.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 10 Sep 2012 07:04

[nederman wrote on 09 Sep 2012 10:55:](#)

I seem to recall that the white book talks about how the addition travels from one form to another, so if it's resentment now it might become lust later, or maybe anger, but always some form of ego.

Thanks (the cognitive part is still above my head).

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 10 Sep 2012 07:15

Last night I fell after 2+ weeks clean. I feel really bad, but in the long run I didn't lose more than one day, all the times I gave up my lust are still extant. One day at a time.

Perhaps I'm getting to involved in my recovery, true it's the most important thing in my life, but I don't know if it should be on my mind all day. The Kuzari writed that the times of davening are the most important times of the day and from them we derive spiritual nourishment for the entire day, much as we get our physical food from eating. But hey, we don't daven all day, gotta learn and do mitzvos too. Maybe I should try to think about my powerlessness 3 times a day not more or less (optimally during davening). Unless an urgent need arises I should occupy myself with learning Torah.

I'm not so clear on this. Does anyone have any suggestions or experience with this???

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by alexeliezer - 10 Sep 2012 14:50

When we say recovery is the most important thing in our lives, that doesn't mean it has to dominate our day. It just means that nothing is so important that we need to do it if it means compromising our sobriety.

I agree. We all want and need to move on, get on with normal life and put this out of our minds. When we can. Easy when we're in the right environment. Not so easy when we face challenges. So when we do face challenges -- threats to our sobriety -- then recovery once again takes center stage. Remember too, threats to sobriety are really opportunities for growth.

That's the way I see it.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by nederman - 10 Sep 2012 17:00

I do think it's not good to focus on recovery as a project, so to speak. I think what you can do is form a mental picture of your thoughts and moods throughout the day, some day in the future when you might be fully recovered. Well, if you are fully recovered then you will not be thinking about your addiction at all, you could reminisce about it, or perhaps tell someone about it because you'll be helping them overcome their problem, but it certainly won't be a source of stress.

But I am approaching from the cognitive therapy standpoint. I believe this scenario does not exist in SA because you sobriety is achieved only by feeding the belief of powerlessness, so maybe you'll have been sober for a really long time, but you'll still be talking about it a great deal at meetings. If you are sort of in SA but not going to meetings and your strategy is to believe you are powerless then I think you are probably just going to be a periodic, i.e. be sober for short periods of time.

But I guess my main point is to behave as you want to become, not the way you are.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by Dov - 11 Sep 2012 04:25

[ChaimCharlie wrote on 10 Sep 2012 07:15:](#)

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day, much as we get our physical food from eating. But hey, we don't daven all day, gotta learn and do mitzvos too. Maybe I should try to think about my powerlessness 3 times a day not more or less (optimally during davening). Unless an urgent need arises I should occupy myself with learning Torah.

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When you say

Perhaps I'm getting to involved in my recovery, true it's the most important thing in my life, but I don't know if it should be on my mind all day
by the words 'my recovery', do you mean 'overcoming lust temptations'?

If that's what you mean then wow, are you *onto* something! When I look at the people I know with long term sobriety (and remember when they were 'young' in the program, too), I see a common thread. They focus on *recovery*, not on *staying sober*. In fact, the SA meetings I go to have plenty laughing in them, and the atmosphere of a good meeting is actually sometimes funny. We can laugh about how big a deal we make of some things - and have some real gratitude for the little things we overlook. You can't get heavy in this program. That's actually what it's all about. Rare are the meetings I attend that have not looking at porn or masturbating as their main discussion.

If recovery (and life) were all about *staying sober*, then all the steps would be about sobriety. But the addiction is only mentioned *once* in the steps. None of the other steps are about overcoming lust or staying sober, at all.

From the second step and on, the only goals are:
restoration to sanity in living (2 and on);
acceptance of a life that is focused on spiritual progress and not based on my instincts and defects (3-7);
and restoration of sound relationships that actually work with others including G-d (8-11).

Nothing there about overcoming lust. We come to the program knowing that we can't afford to act out our lust any more, simply because we have done it enough to know that we have lost that ability - it always ruins things for us, eventually. That's *our* contribution: bitter experience, hitting bottom. We come humbly after spending years trying to negotiate with our wives, trying to negotiate with lust, trying our guts out to negotiate with hashem to make us able control (and still enjoy it 'when we really *really* need to')...never letting it go. We really believed we *should* be able to partake just as the rest of the non-addicted world can. Nu. So we addicts were wrong, and that is our 1st step admission. We use Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk's eitzah in his Tzet'l Kotton (written for normals, of course), to open up to a trusted friend without shame and without holding anything back. The reward is freedom from the temptation, for we let go of ego that way
And we

keep doing that to keep surrendering the ego. Beautiful. (And it's even free!)

So steps 2, 3 and all the rest are only and all about how to **remain** in a life that is free enough of the kind of pain that will likely make us resort to using our drug. It's a nechomah. Dependence on G-d by gradually reducing the defects of character we have that are not allowing us to effectively put ourselves into G-d's hands and accept ourselves, our life, and people (and Him) as they really are (steps 4-7). So none of the steps are about how to stop the pesky porn and masturbation habit. For that's what we bring into recovery ourselves! Like Hashem says he sent 48 neviim and 7 neviot - but we only quit and gave up and started to depend on Him when . Hitting bottom is Haman getting that ring - it's all over. We give in.

So either we cannot afford to act out our lust anymore and are willing to make the calls on the phone to admit it and let it go when we feel tempted, to pray for the people we lust after and let them go that way, and to call out to Him humbly to take away the pain and help us walk on without it - or we still think we *can* afford to 'partake' as anyone else can. Then we lose our sobriety and cannot work the steps effectively. Nu.

So no, ChaimCharlie, you *are* right, but can reword it: keep your *recovery* on your mind all day - not your *sobriety*. Recovery is positive, growth, and done with G-d and people....sobriety is just *not* acting out - that's negative. Sobriety is just *breathing*. Recovery is **living**. No one enjoys life ~~Haman got the ring. Same thing here - we are in good company~~ thinking all day about not suffocating, right? That can make a person kind of nutty, nervous, no? Yechh.

Lust is nothing but a distraction from the life G-d is giving me - real life. It really does not deserve my time of day. That's the goal for any sexaholic/alcoholic in recovery - being too engrossed in their real life of meaning to get involved with shtuyot. That's the whole fruit of recovery, I think. It's growing up. Sadly, we don't really like growing up.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by alexeliezer - 11 Sep 2012 13:48

Thank you for clarifying that Dov.
That's a lot of truth. Yasher koach.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by E-Tek - 11 Sep 2012 18:44

Yeah, after about the 40th time, it's finally starting to sink in.

Thanks.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 13 Sep 2012 11:02

I just read Dov's post for the umpteenth time. This is exactly what I needed, if it wouldn't look weird I would hang it on the wall together with one or two of Alex's and Elya's and Mottel's posts, and look at them like Yosef Hatzadik looked at the image of Yaakov Avinu.

But either way, one of the the big things I've been struggling with is how to be constantly living in recovery (thanks Dov, yeah, recovery) and still not get bogged down by the sobriety itself, the proverbial "pink elephant syndrome" is a big issue for me.

If I understand right, I think the bottom line is to live life in general with this purpose of not focusing on me, myself, and my fantasies (whether lust, anger, or honor, or anything), but rather on the life itself. Like for example yesterday I had an extremely busy day and accomplished B"H many important things, the whole time I tried to focus on the goodness of the life I am living and not on how great and wonderful I should feel about myself.

This is all still relatively new, I gotta go simple and not get overwhelmed. I assume that recovery is also "one day at time", not just sobriety.

Also Alex's post was a big insight, making sobriety the most important thing doesn't mean to think about it all day, rather than nothing overrides it. It's like Dov's mashal that we don't think about breathing all day, but it certainly is the basis of our life.

One reservation - from past attempts to venture past the basic Step 1-2-3 sobriety approach, I'm know that I can literally forget about the foundation of the whole thing which is the simple fact that I'm powerless over lust. I might coast along clean a bit, maybe deep down even recovering, but when the first trigger comes it all comes falling down. I musn't forget why I'm doing all this, when lust comes knocking to beg Hashem to help me, and to be prepared for that. Not to forget the basic tennets of sobriety just because I'm trying to recover. This isn't gonna be easy, only with Hashem's help will I be able to do it without making it to complicated and centered around

myself which will destroy everything. It's good Hashem runs my life and not me.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 15 Sep 2012 20:54

Hashem, thank you for your never ending kindness.

Thank you for sending me GYE this year.

Thank you for sending those messengers who taught me to start to admit my powerlessness to lust and my weakness in general.

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Re: Charlie's change

Posted by mifatfait - 19 Sep 2012 14:34

On Rosh Hashonoh I fell big time. At the most shamefull times possible. In ways I haven't fallen since I joined GYE. Somethings wrong with my so-called recovery.

I walked into shul and almost immediatley felt that uncontrollable urge. I tried fighting (don't know why I didn't daven like regular), just got worse, until I exploded. Again and again. As the holiness of the days passed so did the fall, now I feel so stupid that I simply forgot all the techniques that work.

I'm sure it was something in my attitude to the Yomim Noraim that triggered this, I remember in years past also having big struggles during these days.

Perhaps I lose my attitude of submission and living "one day at time" when I think of the whole last year and the whole year ahead. Or that my tefilos are filled with fantasys of MY HOLINESS and My Closeness To Hashem. Or that when I'm not sitting and learning all the regular resentments and fears come tumbling in. Or that I'm confused what I'm doing in the regular teshuvah oriented setting when I'm really an addict who needs to get better. I don't know if it's one or all of these (I felt all of them), or something else.

I'm pretty scared what'll be Yom Kippur.

Guys, please help me. I need advice.

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