

From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by qi - 05 May 2013 15:38

Hello all,

I'm in my late 20s and have been masturbating since I was 12. By the time I found out it was wrong I was so used to it I couldn't stop. I saw lots of pornographic pictures online but wasn't addicted until I discovered pornographic videos. I tried hundreds of times to stop but when the inevitable fall happened I despaired of ever fully recovering. That changed about a year ago when I started really trying to stop and when I fell I got right back up.

However, I'm far from recovered. The longest I've gone is 40 days with no P or M. I found GYE a few weeks ago and joined last week. I think it's fantastic that we have a frum site on this. And, it's much better organised than goyishe equivalents.

So here I am trying to kick the habit of a lifetime for a lifetime. I'm interested in the 12 steps although I don't fully understand how they work. But here goes:

Hi, my name's Qi and I'm a porn addict. Porn has damaged my life considerably. It affected my school work when I stayed up till 2 am looking at it. It affected my learning when I needed to leave mid seder to M. It affected my shidduchim in a profound way. It made me depressed when shidduchim were hard. It affected my shteiging because nothing else matters compared to this. It affected my moods. It affected my relationship with my family. It affected my relationship with HKBH.

When I first found out it was wrong I still didn't know how bad it was. I'm ashamed to admit this but I actually masturbated on Yom Kippur once. HKBH please have mercy on me and forgive me.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by Dov - 23 Aug 2013 03:20

Well, *lots* of ideas can be helpful to non-addicts...but then what do you call it?

Recovery?

'Recovery' refers to *recovery of sanity*, as the 2nd step clearly sets as the problem and goal. But non-addicts ***truly*** never lost their sanity. And even if you say they are recovering their self-respect or whatever, that's just not what the goal of the 12 steps is: Recovery of sanity through a spiritual (not religious) experience as the result of working these steps. That's just a simple reading of steps 2 and 12, not any 'drosho'.

So again: why bother calling it the 12 steps at all, *or* recovery? I just don't see it.

The label, '12 steps' is being used to mean what, exactly? I don't get it.

Why would a non-addict ever want to divulge the exact nature of **all** their wrongs (relating to 'addiction' or not) to *any* other person as step 5 recommends? That really seems like overkill for most people and is debatably wrong to do (for them). Why go to these lengths if they are not really sick people?

And besides, people who are not really sick will simply not *do* these things, I think. Do you really think they will...or will they adopt a 'conservative judaism' method of 'using' these ideas...? Is that 12 step recovery at all, or just liking the label?

And why would they need to learn - or even *want* to learn - how to *only* ask G-d for the knowledge of His Will for them and the power to carry that out as step 11 recommends, rather than for all their daily needs and stuff? That's just not normal. Clearly Torah does not teach everyone to do that. Yes, there are many sforim that do speak of living this way and there are many tzaddikim who *were noheig exactly like this*...but normative, party-line yiddishkeit *clearly does not sell this path for the average Jew*...and the 12 steps of AA is mostly selling it to goyim who are among the biggest losers on the face of this earth: drunks, heroin, sex, gambling, and pill addicts!

Yet these extreme ideas and practices are mainstays of 12 step recovery for pretty much all successfully recovering addicts out there.

And regarding the 'black hat' comment, I think the above is exactly the same issue I havdil, with insisting on calling it Torah:

Calling these 'Torah ideas', or as you asked that guy, "Why do you say it was a lesson from the program that you were not G-d - why couldn't you find that in Torah?", is just all about labeling it Torah...but how is good sense 'Torah'?

All good chochma is *Torah*? I think not.

Bear with me here, OK? ...

There are plenty of frum Jews who R"I go through an amputation of a limb, a terrible illness, a spinal cord injury, or any other tragic loss, and become more mature people, as a result. Deeply changed people, in their approach to Toah and avodah, childraising, loving their spouses, tefiloh, and even to just sitting on their porches. They do those things differently now. A higher consciousness fills them. They gained an new flavor and perspective on life **while meeting with other heart transplant recipients *who were goyim*** and JUST LIKE SOME OF THEM, gained some new perspectives on life. And they being frum, become better Torah-yidden, better ovdei Hashem.

Was that a 'Torah' experience?

And by the same token, was it a 'christian' experience for the goy there, who goes to church more now, or cries when he reads his religious stories?

Sure, it is comforting to label things the way we like. But I suggest to you that it is small of us to do that.

I think the reality is that it is a human experience we can share, and interpret each in our own way - but it is still human and *if we experienced it together, it connects us no matter who we are*. This is Bills comparison of all the members of AA to the survivors of a shipwreck (in the book, AA). They do not ignore each other based on race, religion, socioeconomic status, or anything else for their connection with each other is not based on those. They are humans and they survived together, period.

Does a **real** ben Torah cry together with the goy husband of the woman next to his wife in the hospital who is a new breast cancer amputee and grow immeasurably as a human being - **but then** discreetly deny/ignore a relationship with any sheiget *as soon as he is with his frum yeshivish friends*? Is he embarrassed afterward to get a call from an African guy named 'Phil' on the phone at home in front of his kids? Or does he stand proud to say, "Kenny is a special man. I met him at the hospital when his wife was dying. I understand his pain and fear - *and he understands mine*"? I know of many tzaddikim who did this way, simply because they were genuine. And genuine comes first, even before Torah. It's the floor it stands on. There is no need to be so small as to 'kick the goyim off' that floor!

Is it 'the Torah way' to call the growth the yid had in the hospital 'Torah'? Well, I can call them Torah ideas bec's a mishnah or vort mentions it...so? This is what I wrote a long time ago, "I don't particularly care what lav suicide is - I am not interested in it for other reasons!" Let's not pretend that all good sense is Torah. And it would not be the Torah way for the Yid from the hospital to later shun the man who was there crying with him, as a sheiget - for now that he is out of his hospital gown and into his good levush he can say: "how could a sheiget *possibly* understand the pain and fear of a good chissidishe man who's wife is in surgery for breast cancer R"!? I mean, that guy is not even a yid!"

Ridiculous. Disingenuous. Fake. And all based on comfort with labels.

Labels are what makes frum life in Eretz Yisroel so hard for many people - a denial of Jewish unity because that guy wears a spodek, not a shtreimel/is a 'sroogie' not a normal black hat yid/is a litvak/is Hungarian...(ok, I understand the problem with the Hungarian - but the others? -)

This is why I maintain that recovery is just plain Derech Eretz - humanity. A thing we (holy masturbating yeshivah guys) share with the (very unholy masturbating) goy **exactly**. There are: 1- those who resist calling The Big Solution anything *but* Torah and so, rebel against any recovery and stay on the sidelines sick - and then there are 2- the ones who 'agree' to use the 12 steps...but 'conspire' that as soon as they *get well* (using the tool of those goyim) they plan to deny that it was ever anything but Torah and develop a 'Torah-framework for recovery'! Why bother? Gevalt, why? **Is it that bad to just admit you are human?** Human is OK. It does not deny our Jewishness. Once a addict gets some sanity back, he can use it to be Jew just fine! Or he can be in these two groups and stay holy with the rest of the holy masturbating Yidden.

And I am not denying other tools than the 12 steps that can help a person. I am just talking to those who are vying with the 12 steps, now.

Self-honesty is the key, and it is forfeit when faking is done - even if it is 'lishmoh'. Faking is worse than treif. *Midvar sheker - tirschok*: if I fake or lie, I will become separated and far from others, from G-d, from myself. It's numero uno.

There is nothing and cannot be anything 'holy' or 'Jewish' about the core of sobriety, at all: honesty, surrender, and connection. These are just human. Derech Eretz is kodmah laTorah in time and for a reason: it's the first priority and must be in place before Torah. Sakantoh *chamira* me'isura. And I think that the guy who needs to label it Torah will end up denying the humanity of his recovery experience go right back to the bad old days when he was 'struggling with the yetzer hora'. He will 'make it holy'...and be masturbating in the shower again, eventually anyhow. But will deny it because it would be such a chillul Hashem or something like that...

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by gibbor120 - 23 Aug 2013 22:59

The way I understand "powerless" (based on dov).

Powerless, means unable to use it in a normal way like a normal fellow. Wait, I'll explain.

I can take a drink of alcohol, then sing zemiros, take a Shabbos nap, learn with my kids etc. etc.

An alcoholic can not. Once he takes a drink, he cannot (usually) stop until he binges uncontrollably...

He is powerless over alcohol - He cannot safely use and enjoy alcohol like a regular joe (or yosef).

Lust addiction is exactly the same. The only difference is that to say "I can't afford to lust as other's can because I become insane and go on a lust binge" rubs us the wrong way. I can't afford to lust because it's assur! True, but as far as this definition, beside the point.

Can I use it casually or do I become totally and completely obsessed. That is the litmus test of powerlessness.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by cordnoy - 23 Aug 2013 23:50

welcome back gibbor

there's a lot of good guys around here; nevertheless, you were missed

hope all is well

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by gibbor120 - 23 Aug 2013 23:52

Thanks. It's nice to be missed. I sure missed you guys!

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Dr.Watson - 26 Aug 2013 14:46

Hello. It's been just over 2 weeks now that I've been clean b"H. Not only have I not looked or even peeked at porn, but a weird thing happened yesterday that hasn't happened to me for, well, maybe ever. I was on the internet looking for information on something when I saw in the corner of the screen a naked picture. without even thinking about it I looked away muttered 'oy gevalt' and turned off that tab. I didn't think much of it but now looking back it's a very weird thing. It was only 2 weeks ago that I was going out of my way to find such pictures, and now I instinctively turned away. I'm so happy. Will I ever have a moment like that again, maybe not, but it's nice that it happened at least once in my life.

I was thinking about things this morning after I read the chizzuk emails and I realised that what I really want in the short term is to be able to say al cheit on yom kippur and feel like i mean it. In previous years I always had in mind "please Hashem forgive me, I really want to stop and I'm really trying. Yes, I know that I will fall soon and I know I haven't really done teshuvah for this, but I am sorry, so please forgive me." It kind of made sense but not really. I mean if someone spoke loshon hora about me every day and on erev yom kippur asked me for mechilla saying he knows he'll carry on soon but he at least he feels bad about it, I wouldn't even feel bad about telling to go jump on erev yom kippur. Why should I expect Hashem to be so forgiving in the face of such hypocrisy?

So that's what I want. iy"H I will have been clean for 35 days by then and iy"H that will continue, so I can ask for mechilla without feeling ridiculous.

I can't help thinking this way. But it's so wrong.

First of all, if I keep my eyes on being clean until y''k I'm fairly sure I'll fall long before then. I need to worry about today, and today only. Secondly if I have in mind on y''k that I can ask for mechilla because "I got it from here, don't worry", I'm fairly sure I won't stay clean for long.

So I need to work on my patience. I really want to be able to say that I've been clean now for a year woohoo, look at me, I've really done it, but it doesn't work that way. It's never going to happen for me if I don't stop focussing on the prize instead of the ride.

Patience Dr. Watson, patience.

If anyone has any suggestions of how to stop looking so far into the future and just focus on today, I'd appreciate it.

It's a bit like learning. You know I don't know the last sugya of any perek, because whenever I get there I'm so focussed on finishing that I don't take in what's right in front of me.

Somehow I need to cool my jets and stop thinking that I know what I'm doing.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by Dr.Watson - 26 Aug 2013 15:27

So as if to immediately highlight the point, Hashem gave me another clip round the ear. I was just looking at a furniture website of all things, and I clicked the 'tour the living room' link. What comes up but a very good looking woman showing the room in a very seductive way. My automatic reaction was, wow she's pretty, I'd like to see someone like that naked, let me look at some pictures online. I'd say I'm pretty powerless over this kind of stuff. Please Hashem help me.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by Dov - 26 Aug 2013 16:59

So very much relating here, Doc. Thanks for that reminder! No matter how crappy I may feel on any given day, I choose today to admit I am completely powerless to enjoy that imagination and keep it under any control whatsoever...so I choose not to use it. And instead, I do what you did here: reach out to others, and surrender as publicly as I safely can (usually on the phone or in person).

And thank-G-d, G-d takes it away and I move on with our day with little, if any, pain.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by chesky - 26 Aug 2013 17:16

[Dov wrote:](#)

And thank-G-d, G-d takes it away

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by Dr.Watson - 26 Aug 2013 17:49

I'm going to fall soon, I can feel it coming.

I'm going out for a walk.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by AlexEliezer - 26 Aug 2013 23:13

Today. You can do this today.

Say it. I can do this today.

Hashem, please take my lust, so I can live today.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by AlexEliezer - 26 Aug 2013 23:20

Today. You can do this today.

Say it. I can do this today.

Hashem, please take my lust, so I can live today.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by Dr.Watson - 27 Aug 2013 14:30

Thanks AE, b"H I managed yesterday. Today is very hard already, and it's not even lunchtime.

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof
Posted by jewish jew - 27 Aug 2013 14:55

Go for a run! If the walk helped yesterday then a run today should help even more!

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by cordnoy - 27 Aug 2013 17:02

and keep coming back here

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Re: From a deep pit to a tall roof

Posted by skeptical - 27 Aug 2013 18:10

What is gnawing at you so strongly?

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