

I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps

Posted by maybethistime - 14 Jun 2013 11:58

It is very bizar, I have no problem realizing that I have no control over my problem, thats pretty darn obvious. where i think my problem is, is in internalizing the ralazation that this means I am powerless. I kinda realised this when I noticed I was beating myself up after my last fall. I just got so unbeleivably frustrated (in addition to depressed and exhausted). Then it dawned on me, I can only sincerely get frustrated at something if deep down I believe I had some control.

I had posted once before of my preveous struggles with the SA program. what I think never clicked was that there were all these people who were sober for years...and still there at the meetings more regularly than I. It just didn't (and still doesnt fully) make sense to me if you are sober then why are you here. I guess I never really wanted to accept that maybe I am different, and will be forever, and that this is not a problem that a few meetings and a therapist is going to solve. I am not saying I didnt put a real effort into both, I traveled a long distance once, and sometimes twice a week to go to meetings, i had a sponsor and read the big book. I had meetings with a therapist for a long time and got to some pretty heavy places. but at the end of the day i kind of gravetated away from it all. I think both because I realized I wasent really 100% in it, and also because my natural mechanism is to withdraw and avoid -- to be alone -- and to self comfort.

So basically. I wanted some help with this problem of acceptance, and maybe with being able to really take the steps necisary to be free of this problem once and for all.

A little more about the problem. In general when I see people who have completly given themselves over to the life and lingo of the 12 steps, it makes me feel a little sorry for them and uncomfortable at the same time. For some reason I see them as week people who have chosen to get lost in something bigger than themselves to be able to solve a problem that they could not on their own. And by something bigger than themselves i dont just mean a higher power, I mean the religion that is the 12 steps. There is a common sacred text, and common customs of how to talk and interact. I think that i am ready to relinquish myself to a higher power (I obviously have a lot to work on, and still think I havent fully comprehended what exactly it entails), but i am not ready to relinquish myself to the steps. And yet I have to admit there is simething to the program.

There are other things in the program that didnt click at the time but its been to long so I cant really remember well enough what they were.

I would greatly appreciate some advice --Thanks

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by gibbor120 - 14 Jun 2013 22:04

It sounds like you are trying to "fight" and "win". We all do, and that is our gaivoh talking... and that is why we fail miserably. The steps, as far as I can tell, are about giving up the fight, humbly admitting that we CAN'T do it on our own. Somehow, that allows us to "win". It's kind of counter-intuitive, but it seems to work.

The 12 steps often uses the phrase "we were willing to...". It sounds like you were not willing???

I'm no 12 step guru, so I hope someone else steps in to offer advice.

That's my 2 cents, though.

It sounds like you are on the threshold of a breakthrough.

Hatzlacha Rabbah! Have a great Shabbos!

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by AlexEliezer - 14 Jun 2013 23:39

I'm no 12-step guru either, but I do want to say welcome!

I've never been to a meeting, don't have a sponsor, and share some of your distaste for the whole meeting thing. When I first committed to getting sober, I told myself that I would try to do it my way, but if I was unsuccessful, then I would join a group. Baruch Hashem my way has been working for the past 4+ years since I first came here and learned I was an addict, not an evil pervert. Maybe I'm not as far into recovery as I would have been had I joined a group, but I'm gradually learning more about myself and what it means to be in recovery.

What's my point? Nothing. Really just wanted to say welcome.

But I will say this: with full, uncompromising commitment to sobriety and recovery, anything is possible. Some people commit to joining a group. Others commit to just doing whatever it takes. Depends on your personality. But you need to be honest.

On more thing. I wouldn't worry so much about the people that are still going to meetings years later. Worry first about getting sober. One thing at a time. The groups do work. And maybe that's what you need *now*.

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by maybethistime - 15 Jun 2013 22:56

First of all thanks guys for your replies , it means alot to me, thanks for the welcome, I am glad to be here, and glad to feel just a little less isolated.

Like I said I think my problem was with the acceptance part. the comitment in general is always there, unless I am in a slump/fall, then I just dont give a hoot.

AlexEliezer - its nice to hear that another way accept for the 12 step way seems to work. do you think theres a chance that you could elaborate a little. Because the truth is that is exactly my struggle, I was kinda saying that I am not so comfortable in the 12 step setting, but at the end of the day if that is what I need to do to get sober, then thats what I will do. But if not, I would love some lessons on how people manage without.

Do you still need a sponsor type figure?

Are the steps at all a part of your recovery?

Did you manage with out constant contact with people in the same condition, or did the GYE community fulfill that for you?

What does it mean to "be in recovery", and do you feel that you are going to be "in recovery" for the rest of your life?

Kol Tuv and Shavua Tov

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps

Posted by AlexEliezer - 16 Jun 2013 16:43

My approach was to first get very sober.

With alcohol it's simpler to be sober. You simply don't drink.

With lust addiction, the substance is everywhere, and can be had many ways.

The two basic ways are what we see and what we think (fantasize).

So extreme, aggressive, active shmiras eynayim is critical to cut off the most obvious source of the drug. It also decreases the number of fantasies which are triggered.

This means not looking at women unless absolutely necessary for business. No movies, TV, newspapers, magazines, posters, and of course people on the street. A peace will come over you as soon as you start doing this.

Next is to surrender lustful thoughts to Hashem. I simply daven every time a lustful thought comes, asking Hashem to take my lust.

I continue to work the steps as I have come to understand them, in my own way.

My wife does know about my addiction but she is in no way my sobriety partner. I was sober 3

years before I told her (see my thread in the married section for the complete story)

I have someone I met on GYE that I can call at any time, and we speak around once a month. I have found this very helpful. I also spent many hours on the phone with guys who were struggling unsuccessfully. (Several have since joined SA groups and are now sober.)

I have made amends with my wife and children for my behavior towards them when I was in active addiction. I make an effort to get together with friends once or twice a month. I learn with a chavrusa every weekday (I was doing this in active addiction also, but it's going much better now). I exercise, try to get enough sleep, don't overindulge in food, listen to mussar mp3's in the car.

In short, I'm

A) avoiding the drug (sobriety)

B) living real life (recovery)

Ready?

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by maybethistime - 18 Jun 2013 19:15

Thanks for the advice, you make it sound so simple.

Do you feel you stay connected to the struggle constantly, and do you think that that is essential for sustained sobriety?

You ask if i am ready, I am, the thing is I had a great streak and recently fell, and am finding it really hard to pick myself up again. And at the same time I am trying to figure out where i went wrong. Which maybe will help give me a little more positive outlook, because as always after the

fall, things look pretty bleak.

Have a great day

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by AlexEliezer - 18 Jun 2013 23:59

[maybethistime wrote:](#)

Thanks for the advice, you make it sound so simple.

It is simple. It's just hard, stubborn work. I try to take it one right decision at a time.

Do you feel you stay connected to the struggle constantly, and do you think that that is essential for sustained sobriety?

I am connected to the struggle. It's just my reality. I wish it weren't so. If you can manage to get so far away from it that it's truly behind you, kol hakovod. It is easier now. I've done the initial work. It's a reflex now to avert my gaze and surrender my fantasies. I still need to work on the social end of things. Relationships will always need tending.

You ask if i am ready, I am, the thing is I had a great streak and recently fell, and am finding it really hard to pick myself up again. And at the same time I am trying to figure out where i went wrong. Which maybe will help give me a little more positive outlook, because as always after the

fall, things look pretty bleak.

You went wrong where everyone goes wrong. You allowed yourself to slip. I think people also forget to keep Hashem in the loop.

Also, I never considered my sobriety a "streak." That's what I mean about commitment. I never counted days, weeks, or even months. I just committed.

Have a great day

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by maybethistime - 19 Jun 2013 20:46

Thanks I need to chew on that for a while.

After a while of not acting out and being sober, for me at least, I didn't feel that the struggle was part of my reality. But the truth is it might have been had my level of defined sobriety was higher. I go to a secular University a few times a week for classes, and I guess if I wasn't feeling a struggle there every day then I must have been indulging the lust to some degree all along.

I guess I never realized the importance of Shmeras Ainayim, or having aggressive and active shemiras ainayim like you posted earlier. maybe I still don't. which is interesting because that seems to be the basis of this whole website. I maybe am focusing on just stoping the p and m and explicit fantasies, everything else just doesn't seem so bad as long as it doesn't become explicit in my mind. meaning up until now I wouldn't consider it a slip (or at least a major slip) for looking twice at an attractive girl, but I would have if I fantasised about it later (or then and there).

I feel like I am missing something big. I understand the importance of guarding your eyes, but I wouldn't name the whole website after it if you know what I mean.

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by gibbor120 - 19 Jun 2013 21:55

[maybethistime wrote:](#)

I guess I never realized the importance of Shmeras Ainayim, or having aggressive and active shemiras ainayim like you posted earlier. maybe I still don't. which is interesting because that seems to be the basis of this whole website...

I feel like I am missing something big. I understand the importance of guarding your eyes, but I wouldn't name the whole website after it if you know what I mean.

That is where it starts. Most of us can't make any progress while our eyes are wandering. It's like an alcoholic hanging around a bar. He is in danger. We have it harder since the "bar" comes to us. It's everywhere. We need to avoid it as much as possible. Otherwise, any other efforts we are making will likely not help us at all.

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by ur-a-jew - 20 Jun 2013 00:52

[maybethistime wrote:](#)

Like I said I think my problem was with the acceptance part. the comitment in general is always there, unless I am in a slump/fall, then I just dont give a hoot.

I loved the irony of this line. It's like saying: I'm generally not an alcoholic except when I get drunk, then I don't really care.

I agree it is not necessary to do the steps and stay sober, at the same time they provide a framework and all of the concepts necessary for staying sober. If I had to say what the single biggest difference for me between today and 3 years ago when Boruch Hashem I found GYE and have been Bezras hashem sober since, it is the recognition that acting out is not an option for me. I now know that I can't act out even a little bit. Because if I do, there is no stopping. So in that sense, I have accepted my situation in life, and that I may be different than others. I know it sounds easier said than done, but once you come to that realization everything flows from there.

Wishing you much hatzlacha.

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by maybethistime - 20 Jun 2013 14:11

Then why is it I felt so much better and felt I grew so much even when Guarding my Eyes wasn't the main crux, or "the starting" point of my work at staying sober?

To me it seems like if it was as critical as that I shouldn't have gotten anywhere. Or at least not to 60 days which is the longest I have ever gone.

Again I am not saying I did everything but that, I did make an effort to watch my gaze, but in no way would I have said that is was the main front of my battle.

And yes sometimes it is also a struggle to surrender, I know I should, I say to myself I really want to, but somehow the lust still gets the better of me.

How do I change my outlook, how do I cause a paradigm shift, how do I increase the psychological importance of Guarding my eyes, how do I make it a priority?

I understand the part about the first drink, but to me I just cant seem to convince myself that it is. (maybe because to some degree I am not really willing to give it up, I have to think more about that).

And again thanks for your replies, it really helps with the solitude.

By the way does anyone have any idea where I can get a free download of the white book?

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by AlexEliezer - 20 Jun 2013 18:51

[maybethistime wrote:](#)

I understand the part about the first drink, but to me I just cant seem to convince myself that it is. (maybe because to some degree I am not really willing to give it up, I have to think more about that).

After distorting truth and habitually escaping reality for so long, honesty can be difficult for us, *especially about this*.

It sounds like you're coming to some important but maybe uncomfortable realizations about what it means to give up lust.

When I first started guarding my eyes, it was *murder*. I felt like I was going to die if I didn't take a good look at what just walked by. I was missing out on the greatest thing ever.

The truth is the discomfort only lasts a few moments.

I also found life was easier if I avoided shmiras eynayim challenges whenever I could.

Thanks I need to chew on that for a while.

Ditch the analysis paralysis. Don't chew, DO!

Try living lust free for one day.

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by skeptical - 20 Jun 2013 19:03

AlexEliezer

Ditch the analysis paralysis. Don't chew, DO!

Great line!

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by gibbor120 - 20 Jun 2013 19:20

[maybethistime wrote:](#)

Again I am not saying I did everything but that, I did make an effort to watch my gaze, but in no way would I have said that is was the main front of my battle.

I'm not sure it is the MAIN front. It is a prerequisite. Is the MAIN course for a computer programmer "Intro to Computing 101"? Nope. But it IS a prerequisite.

[maybethistime wrote:](#)

How do I change my outlook, how do I cause a paradigm shift, how do I increase the psychological importance of Guarding my eyes, how do I make it a priority?

Usually when someone realizes that they can't control themselves otherwise, that is when they make that committment. It is better to make that committment earlier, but we are stubborn human beings and want to hold on to lus as long as we think we "can".

[maybethistime wrote:](#)

I understand the part about the first drink, but to me I just cant seem to convince myself that it is. (maybe because to some degree I am not really willing to give it up, I have to think more about that).

[maybethistime wrote:](#)

By the way does anyone have any idea where I can get a free download of the white book?

I attached it.

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Re: I cant accept acceptance or the 12 steps
Posted by maybethistime - 20 Jun 2013 21:47

Thanks a ton Ya'll,

It is comforting to realize that the struggle to really give it up was/is part of other peoples journey as well. Sometimes on this site I get the impression that some people simply have come to realizations that I have not, and until I do I wont be one of those awesome guys who have some serious sobriety and still take time out of their day to respond to people starting over again (thanks, your advice and support are priceless and appreciated). To say the least that thought is a little discouraging. Its good to know that I am not the only one struggling or had to struggle to sincerely give it up.

Gibbor120 thanks for the link I have been looking for it all over the place, apparently all I had to do was ask, another lesson learned.

I just got off that phone conference with Rabbi Twersky and he really gave me some food for thought about the twelve steps. Just to think that he actively works the twelve steps and had a sponsor is something to marvel about. He also really hit home how an addiction is a potentially fatal illness.

But one of his main points reminds me of the advice a great man one gave me:

"Ditch the analysis paralysis, don't chew (or just chew), DO!!!!!!!"

SO here goes - to life!!!

May G-d bless you all!

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