

Can I recover without the 12 steps?

Posted by doingtshuva - 26 Dec 2014 01:04

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Hi everyone

I'm on the site close to a year. I have read the Handbook several times, I try reading the daily Emails, I downloaded and printed out many books from the Ebooks section, the White book, Big book and lot more, I spent a tremendous amount of hours reading in the past year.

I constantly download to my Mp3 Shiurem, lectures, guest speakers.

I post on the Forums.

I even opened up to my therapist which I'll share with him everything.

But, I have a feeling that I can achieve more in my recovery, and maybe I can achieve it through the 12 steps? or in meetings? But I don't see myself opening up to another person so fast, I'm full of fear and shame.

Can I work the steps alone?

I would like to hear from the Chevra some advice.

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?

Posted by shomer bro - 26 Dec 2014 01:09

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O haven't done the 12 steps, so i won't comment on that. I will say, however, that you are most certainly not a nebach! You're taking concrete steps toward recovery. You're an awesome person who gives me chizzuk in my own struggle. Keep it up bro!

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by doingtshuva - 26 Dec 2014 01:17

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Nice to hear it gives me Chizuk

Thanks Bro

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by Watson - 26 Dec 2014 01:47

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[doingtshuva wrote:](#)

Can I work the steps alone?

No.

Sorry.

Step 5: Admitted to G-d, to ourselves, **and to another human being** the exact nature of our wrongs.

NIGHT PRAYER:

G-d forgive me where I have been resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid today. **Help me to not keep anything to myself but to discuss it all openly with another person** - show me where I owe an apology and help me make it. Help me to be kind and loving to all people. Use me in the mainstream of life G-d. Remove worry, remorse or morbid (sick) reflections that I may be of usefulness to others.

Here's Dov from the chizzuk email a few days ago:

What's wrong with surrendering alone?

Is your surrendering done all by your lonesome, or do you have a few choices of folks you can call to quickly do the surrender with and then move on? It is important for us to surrender together with other people - and my favorite reason for that is quite cool:

The only place surrender is ever made is inside my heart, where my motivations are found and where my actions are decided. What we say is not often worth very much. So you'd think that surrendering in my heart = success, period. Technically, that's true. Still, there is a huge poison inherent in surrendering exclusively privately and I bet it has ruined many good-hearted frummeh yidden like us, addicts or not:

When I surrender privately exclusively, and am granted relief by Hashem, I will be grateful.

When I do it again a few more times, though, I will be machzik myself as a good Jew. And what's so bad about that? Nothing really, but....

After a few more times, I will believe that I am 'really something'... I see it all the time, and saw it in myself, as well. And unfortunately, in the sick realm of his or her addiction all the 'positive self-esteem' stuff of Rav Twerski avail an addict zero, really. Thinking we are 'really something' means one thing: EGO: Edging G-d Out. Period.

A normal person can afford that, but many addicts agree that they cannot. We need to remember exactly who we are and what we are prone to. The first step (of the 12) is not done once - it is an awareness that saves us again and again from death.

When we surrender in our hearts and share that surrender with another (safe) person, it is really hard to consider ourselves heroes. After all, my thoughts (if I am really being honest and open about them) are occasionally quite immature, perverted, and goofy. And my recovery buddy knows all about it! He surely doesn't look down on me for my thoughts, cuz he understands his own addiction and how even men and women of great quality - even great rabbonim, good fathers, and courageous people - are quite pathetic in addiction. I know a lot of great talmidei chachomin, lawyers, and doctors - all addicts like me - whose brains can come up with the silliest and most dangerous ideas when a woman with the right 'accouterments' talks nicely to them, or when they are alone at the office with an unfiltered computer (or book)... or whatever. Willpower will not protect them forever - hence, they are guaranteed to fail - they are powerless and admit it freely.

But it's nothing to be ashamed of, really. It's just the truth about us! Hey - my body will eventually die, slowly rot, and smell horrible - people will run from it. Not a pleasant thing to think about, so we don't. And that's normal. But with addiction, if we choose to allow our shame to guide us we'll never share it and surely self-destruct. We make philosophical and religious excuses for keeping it private - it's all really just shame of our own 'stink'.

Addicts in recovery know better.

So we share it with another person rather than just privately give up our 'right' to it and ask Hashem to save us from the pain/regret. We tell them all about it. There is no shame left when it comes down to saving my life, thank-you. We all know what happens to the guy who has a heart attack R"l in the bathroom and is too shamed to call for help because he hasn't wiped himself yet... (sorry)

It helps keep me right-sized in my own mind and heart when I know that other people are fully aware of the depth of craziness that my addict mind is capable of. And right-sizedness is perhaps the greatest 'sobriety insurance' in the world.

Humility in action, not just in words. Talk is certainly cheap. But talking out our insides to another is precious, precious, precious!

Let's come out - and stay out - of the shadows.

One point I'd like to make is that SA is not exclusively for addicts. You can be a non-addict and join the fellowship. The only requirement for SA membership is the desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.

I don't know if it's possible for people to recover without the 12 steps. I have no idea. But I think it's the easiest, best way, with numerous fringe benefits. There is so much to be gained from the steps, for anyone not just addicts. R' Twerski's been going to meetings for about 60 years!

Can I ask you, what's the tzad not to do the steps?

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by dms1234 - 26 Dec 2014 02:03

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Great Question!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I am not in a position to answer but I know that when i opened up to other people and even met with some gyers in person that fear and shame went away. We all were in the same boat. We all had similar problems. It was a very liberating feel. I felt free. Now of course i wasn't going to run down the street screaming i was a sex addict but i gelt this calm that i never felt before. I felt free. Free of my self. I was now among a group just like me. It was truly incredible. And my new friends loved me and cared for me and they wanted to help me become better.

That was my experience. I highly commend you for going to a therapist. Thats very noble and i found a therapist helped me a lot.

Whatever you do, i hope you also feel that feeling i felt that day. That calming, freeing sense that everything is going to be fine. Hashem is here and no matter what happens, i am assured that everything is going to be alright!

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?

Posted by cordnoy - 26 Dec 2014 03:33

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I know that the key to success is the talking out with real people.

Watson and Dov wrote eloquent, deep, logical, simple and truthful stuff.

Read it again and again.

Are the 12 steps necessary?

Maybe yes; maybe not, but talkin' to others is a must (I think)!

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by doingtshuva - 26 Dec 2014 15:58

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I really want thank everybody for the advice, and I hope to get more.

After Shabose I'll have the time to reply.

Meanwhile have a great Sober Sabose

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by doingtshuva - 28 Dec 2014 03:05

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[Watson wrote:](#)

[doingtshuva wrote:](#)

Can I work the steps alone?

No.

Sorry.

One point I'd like to make is that SA is not exclusively for addicts. You can be a non-addict and join the fellowship. The only requirement for SA membership is the desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.

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it's the easiest, best way, with numerous fringe benefits. There is so much to be gained from the steps, for anyone not just addicts. R' Twerski's been going to meetings for about 60 years!

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Hi Waston

I believe and understand that I can't work the steps alone.

Btw Dov's post is Givaldig, it's just so true, he's amazing in the way he writes.

I have some questions:

- 1) Why should a non-addict want to join the fellowship?
- 2) How can I feel safe and secure after going to meetings, can I just trust everybody attending the meeting?
- 3) If I'll decide to go, how will I then brake my fear and shame?

I'm asking cause my therapist wants me to attend meetings, but I don't see it happening.

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by Watson - 28 Dec 2014 03:44

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[doingtshuva wrote:](#)

I have some questions:

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- 2) How can I feel safe and secure after going to meetings, can I just trust everybody attending the meeting?
- 3) If I'll decide to go, how will I then brake my fear and shame?

I'm asking cause my therapist wants me to attend meetings, but I don't see it happening.

- 1) Why should a non-addict want to join GYE?
- 2) At the end of every meeting the leader says "anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions." Everyone keeps anonymity because everyone depends on it for their own recovery.
- 3) Fear and shame live in the dark. When you say them out loud to someone who fully relates to them they are broken to a large extent.

This is from an SA pamphlet called "Why stop lusting?"

Honesty - For so long we were afraid to tell anyone what was really going on in our heads. By keeping it a secret we allowed our addictive thinking to grow and spread. By sharing our thoughts and actions with others in SA we discovered that much of the power of lust was removed. Therefore members of SA are encouraged to share honestly both in and out of meetings.

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by serenity - 28 Dec 2014 11:45



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You've read the Big Book, so you know what it says about the topic. For some people, who are not true addicts, self knowledge may be enough to stop their drinking. But for the addict the program with all it entails is essential. The Big Book also brings out that of one has doubts, he should try recovery based on self knowledge without the program, so that any doubt about the necessity of the program will be removed. Speaking for myself, I want what recovered addicts have and I am willing to go to any length to get it! Half measures will avail me of nothing. There's a story of a guy in AA who hadn't taken a drink in some time. When he got to one of the steps, he said he didn't need that one. He balked and he relapsed.

As Watson points out, the only requirement for SA is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.

Just to relate my experience. I was scared as anything to go to a face to face meeting. I had all these fears and preconceived notions about SA. I finally realized I had no hope to recover fully without SA and I became willing to go to any length for sobriety. I have been to four meetings and the people there are regular guys just like me with a disease. There are married men who are professionals, there are frum yidden, there are religious Christians, there are yeshiva bachurim and secular jews and non-jews. Everyone seems to be very cautious about anonymity.

So if self knowledge has brought you sobriety maybe you're okay, but if you're like me the Fellowship of SA is needed.

Hatzlacha!

Also see the Q&A section here on GYE

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by doingtshuva - 28 Dec 2014 17:55

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**Thanks for Waston and Serenity**

I agree that the only requirement for SA is a desire to stop lusting and to become sexually sober, and I believe that I have this desire of being sober. This is my main goal in life for the past year, just to become and stay sober.

I understand from what you are saying, that everyone keeps anonymity because everyone depends on it for their own recovery, so I believe that meetings are considered safe.

I still wonder why R' Twerski's has been going to meetings for about 60 years!

I even heard him saying it on one of the recordings of Duvid Chaims Guest speakers.

Is the meetings something we can't stop one day? So maybe this is my fear, I'm scared I won't be able to stop going?

**Cordony wrote:**

**I know that the key to success is the talking out with real people.**

I feel that opening up to real people is what's helping me the most.

When I have an urge to look at some P at work or even M when I'm alone, my mind reminds me that later I'll have to share it with my therapist, so for the meanwhile it's helping me, not 100% but it helps.

I'm sure that sharing it live with an addict would have a greater affect.

I also understand that by going to meetings, I'll have more people I'll wish to share my experience. NO?

**But my dear Waston,**

Why should a non-addict want to join the fellowship?

I'm sorry, but I'm satisfied with your answer, I would like a better one.

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Joining Gye is not the same as joining SA or AA.

Thanks again for every peace of advice and Chizuk.

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by Shakeitoff - 28 Dec 2014 20:15

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The Night Prayer is interesting. It sounds like a version of the Kriat Shema al-HaMita.

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by cordnoy - 28 Dec 2014 20:42

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[doingtshuva wrote:](#)

### **Thanks for Waston and Serenity**

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I even heard him saying it on one of the recordings of Duvid Chaims Guest speakers.

Is the meetings something we can't stop one day? So maybe this is my fear, I'm scared I won't be able to stop going?

don't worry; you will be able to stop.

He goes probably for two reasons

1. To show others that it's ok.
2. To remain vigilant.

[doingtshuva wrote:](#)

**Cordony wrote:**

**I know that the key to success is the talking out with real people.**

I feel that opening up to real people is what's helping me the most.

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I'm sure that sharing it live with an addict would have a greater affect.

I also understand that by going to meetings, I'll have more people I'll wish to share my experience. NO?

Real people, real time, at the time, more people.....eino domeh!!!

[doingtshuva wrote:](#)

**But my dear Waston,**

Why should a non-addict want to join the fellowship?

I'm sorry, but I'm satisfied with your answer, I would like a better one.

)

Joining Gye is not the same as joining SA or AA.

Thanks again for every peace of advice and Chizuk.

Nowhere does it say that you need to be an addict to join; there are even many definitions of the word 'addict.' one goes, for he has an issue in these areas, and this is a way of dealin' with it. you can always try, and then leave. heck! I did that!

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?  
Posted by Watson - 28 Dec 2014 23:35

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[doingtshuva wrote:](#)

Is the meetings something we can't stop one day? So maybe this is my fear, I'm scared I won't be able to stop going?

Of course you can stop going on day. As soon as you feel that you've had enough spiritual growth you can leave the group. No-one is there by force.

(btw there are people who leave SA after many years of sobriety and continue to stay sober. My only problem with that when they leave they are no longer helping the group. But certainly people are not meshubad to the fellowship).

[doingtshuva wrote:](#)

**But my dear Waston,**

Why should a non-addict want to join the fellowship?

I'm sorry, but I'm satisfied with your answer, I would like a better one.

Joining Gye is not the same as joining SA or AA.

All I meant was that people join SA for the same reason they join GYE. Plenty of people join GYE and find that it's not enough to stay sober. The real question is why **don't** they join SA?

I would take a guess that you are the type of person who's desire to become sexually sober will outweigh the fear.

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Re: Can I recover without the 12 steps?

Posted by doingtshuva - 29 Dec 2014 01:32

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[Watson wrote:](#)

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I would take a guess that you are the type of person who's desire to become sexually sober will outweigh the fear.

I hope and Daven that my desire to become sexually sober will outweigh my fear very soon.

Maybe to start with phone meetings. **(step -1)**

Thanks Waston

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