

Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?

Posted by boruch - 18 Mar 2009 21:25

[battleworn wrote on 18 Mar 2009 16:36:](#)

Think you can do this without the 12 steps groups? Do you think that you can serenely learn the Eibishter's Torah while the yetzer hora disturbs you with the most profane temptations? I wish you the best of luck, but it is at very least, much easier said than done. And it is certainly a lot easier to do it a lot more effectively by joining a 12 step group.

I've kept silent on this issue for a long time for two reasons. First of all, I try very hard to avoid confrontation. I've learned from a lot of experience that debate gets you nowhere at best. So, as much as I have said on this forum, there's just as much that I've refrained from saying.

Second of all, before commenting, I took a lot of time to make sure I really understood the issue properly.

It's plainly obvious, that the 12 step groups are an absolutely amazing thing.

Battleworn, since that first quote was from me, I'll say a few things.

Firstly, I apologize to you Yaakov for having gotten into a vikuach with you on your thread. I certainly meant well, but at the time I did not at all anticipate how it would come across. There is a time, place and way to share a message and the key to making sure that the message is on target is to focus totally on the person with whom you want to share it. I did not realize that then and I realize that more now.

Secondly, since I created a discussion of the steps and the entire system as first practiced by Alcoholics Anonymous, the steps, the sponsors and the groups, I am going to ask you Yaakov for a little patience to allow me to undo some of what I posted earlier.

The first thing I want to share is how that system is changing the way I am posting on this forum.

But before I do that I need to share with you how I have come to see an approach that was after all is said and done, totally conceived by goyim.

The Maharshal in teshuvos (98) said that the author of the sefer hakrisus, the Rash Mikinon, had studied all of the hidden mysteries of Kabbala and yet, when he davened, he davened like a one-day-old baby.

What could a one-day-old baby possibly teach Rash Mikinon that he did not know from Kabbala?

I will tell you how I now understand it. There is knowledge in all its complexity. And then there is behavior. Someone who has all the knowledge of hilchos shechita who has never seen a shechita will have no concept of how to shecht. That is shimush. Learning the behavior.

So knowledge of tefila is in Kabbala, but learning how to behave? Rash Mikinon chose a one-day-baby as his model.

Why?

There are two things about a one-day-old baby.

1) He is totally dependent on his parents and has no hope of taking care of himself.

2) He only has one option of self-expression. He cannot choose how to approach his problems. How to present them. What words and expressions to use. No complications. He just opens his mouth and cries. Straight from the heart, honest and direct.

That's how Rash Mikinon davened. With the same total dependence on Hashem and with the same simplicity as a one-day-old baby.

Now, if we wanted to visualize for ourselves, the behavior of a one-day-old baby we could walk in to any maternity ward anywhere in the World. The baby doesn't have to be Jewish. It could be a Mexican baby, a Vietnamese baby, it makes no difference whatsoever.

That's exactly how I understand the original AA groups and the 12 steps. The alcoholics of AA were, just like the one-day-old baby. They were totally desperate, they knew that Hashem was their last and only hope and they knew how they needed to come humbly to Hashem for His help. They needed an approach so simple that even a drunk could get it.

Now, we Frum Yidden are not short on knowledge of how to Return to Hashem. We may not be Rash Mikinon but we do have Shaarei Teshuva of Rabbeinu Yonah, we do have hilchos teshuva from the Rambam. B"H knowledge we have in plentiful supply. And knowledge of hilchos teshuva we will not find among goyim, Torah bagoyim al taamin. But where are we addicts to learn how an addict who is returning should behave? Certainly not from a one-day-old baby.

I have found that, as a Frum Yid, I can learn the *behavior* with which an addict should return to Hashem from the early founders of AA. I can learn a set of behaviors so simple that even *this* drunk (me) could get it and implement it.

Does it matter whether the AA founders were Jewish? Absolutely not. Whether they were American, Mexican or Vietnamese? Absolutely not.

Certainly the AA founders wrote the steps in English and certainly they were to an extent influenced in some of their external presentation of the steps by their religion and culture. But in essence the 12 steps represent a Path of Return to Hashem so simple that even a drunk could get it. That's why it can work for me too.

And if you want to see the steps working, you need to look no further than the latest change in my style of posting.

When I wrote that piece above I had not gone beyond working steps 1 through 3, and most importantly, I had not read the primary text of Alcoholics Anonymous, commonly referred to as the AA Big Book (it's available online, in PDF and as a Palm DOC). In SA, the working assumption from the beginning has been that whatever is true for alcohol and liquor is true for lust. They commonly read directly from the Big Book, replacing the words alcohol and liquor with the word lust, and replacing the word alcoholic with sexaholic.

Today, having read the AA Big Book and working currently on all 12 steps, these excerpts from page 65 and on best capture how I have learned about self-will and it's impact on my life as a whole and even my posts on this forum:

"The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion. Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way. If his arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful...

What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well...

He decides to exert himself more. He becomes, on the next occasion, still more demanding or gracious, as the case may be. Still the play does not suit him...

Is he not, even in his best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?"

Until now, in my posts on the forum *I have always been most mindful and have focused on how I wanted to post*, even though, and as much as, to a certain extent I have also tried to bear in mind, after the fact, people's reaction to my posts.

Being brutally honest with myself, as the AA founders say they were, much as I had taken notice of how people responded, I was still not getting beyond the description above in the Big Book. As the Big Book describes, my relationships, as my posts on the forum, were often self-serving and defined on my own terms, even when I thought I was being helpful.

Now I realize the difference and B'Ezras Hashem I will do whatever I need to in order to post with much more patience and with much more thought and attention to how others need to hear the message.

[battleworn wrote on 18 Mar 2009 16:36:](#)

But listen to this: To me it's seems clear that going to R' Tvi Meir *instead* of the 12 groups, is **at least a 100 times as amazing**. So why don't I push R' Tvi Meir, like some people push the groups?

The answer is, because I try not to project myself on to other people. In my humble opinion this truly wonderful forum could use a little more open-mindedness (I'm not talking at all about Rabeinu Guard) Just because ploni didn't have emunah before he went to the groups, it doesn't mean that everyone is like that. Just because Almoni suffered abuse, it doesn't mean that we all did. Etc... Personally, I don't believe that the groups are appropriate for ykv at all (The fundamental differences between him and boruch are quite obvious to me) But I know I could be wrong.

Battleworn, now that I have read the primary text on the 12 steps I can finally express what I had been unsuccessfully trying to say. Obviously different people are inspired in different ways and obviously you cannot stuff everyone in the same mold. But that is not the issue at all. What I was trying to share with Yaakov is something I later found in the AA Big Book describing the experience in the late 1930s of the newcomers who joined AA and worked the steps, p85,

"And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone--even lust. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in lust. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward lust has been given us without any thought or effort on our

part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation."

So that's the claim printed in 1939. Is it true? Well, as I explained earlier on this thread, *before I had seen the piece in the Big Book*, I was most certainly *fighting* my addiction, I had been for 36 years. And losing. Then *before I had seen the piece in the Big Book* came SA and the day I called my sponsor. He told me to stop *fighting*, to surrender to my Higher Power and in a moment of temptation just work steps 1-3.

Of course, as many people on this forum have written the last thing on their minds in a moment of temptation is 12 steps, let alone the presence of mind to use them. And I was originally no different.

But I have since found that when I made my recovery the single most important thing in my life and I joined SA, when I took part in a weekly Back to Basics Step meeting that works through all 12 steps in 4 weeks in addition to a regular meeting, when I met and learned from people with 15 years of sobriety and more, when I was working the steps together with everyone else, much as soldiers march in step and find it easier to march together, doing the steps became the most natural thing in the World. And *before I had seen the piece in the Big Book* I experienced what I posted earlier in this thread. That I no longer needed to fight.

Are there other methods that are so effective in turning a losing fight into no battle at all? I can only tell you of one method like that, doing the 12 steps by working them with a sponsor and active 12 step group meeting attendance. If anyone else has another method with the same results, I would certainly be interested to hear about it. Not because I am looking for another method. The 12 steps are helping me change in many areas and I would not trade them in. But recovery from addiction is extremely important to me and I am interested in all things Recovery.

Now you raise a legitimate question, Battleworn. Are the groups for everyone? Is the SA 12 step program which is directly and totally modeled on the complete AA 12 step program for everyone? The best way to know the answer to that is to read the first 164 pages of the [Big Book](#). You can download it as a [PDF](#) or put it on your Palm OS device from this [link](#).

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?

Posted by the.guard - 19 Mar 2009 00:45

Boruch has found a beautiful treasure, and he wants to share it with us all. I think we should be very thankful for that.

Boruch recently explained to someone how to implement the 3rd step of the 12 steps: "We make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of Hashem".

He writes:

An addict's strongest will is his lust (that's why he's addicted) and no matter what he says, he is not ready to give that up without a fight. If he says he will give up his "will to Hashem" he really only means that he will give up the acting out, but not his will.

What he really needs to do is to be mevatel his rotzon to the rotzon Hashem. That means giving up the lust.

If it doesn't look like this description from the Big Book (page 85) for the newcomer after a couple of months, then it is not being done right:

"And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone--even lust. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in lust. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward lust has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation."

What Boruch is saying is very profound: **Instead of retaining the lust and trying to give up our will to Hashem, we just give up the lust *itself* to Hashem!**

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?

Posted by battleworn - 19 Mar 2009 12:16

Are there other methods that are so effective in turning a losing fight into no battle at all? I can only tell you of one method like that, doing the 12 steps by working them with a sponsor and active 12 step group meeting attendance. If anyone else has another method with the same results, I would certainly be interested to hear about it. Not because I am looking for another method. The 12 steps are helping me change in many areas and I would not trade them in. But recovery from addiction is extremely important to me and I am interested in all things Recovery.

If you're asking me, the answer is a resounding yes. For me, learning Tzidkas Hatzadik of R' Tzadok Hacohen provided me with all that and a lot more. (I had very special siyata dishmaya to understand and connect with the sefer and I'm not ready to suggest that it will work for others.) Going to R' Tvi Meir did a whole lot more than *that*. The advantage of that over the groups is -in my opinion- so great that it can't be described.

Now you raise a legitimate question, Battleworn. Are the groups for everyone? Is the SA 12 step program which is directly and totally modeled on the complete AA 12 step program for everyone? The best way to know the answer to that is to read the first 164 pages of the Big Book. You can download it as a PDF or put it on your Palm OS device from this link.

For now I'll just trust Rabbi Twerski. The following is a quote from Rabeinu Guard.

Rabbi Twerski agrees that the groups are not for everyone. He suggests that someone struggling start first with the 12-Step phone group that Elya arranged, and the other tools on our website, and if that doesn't work and he is sincere and determined that he **MUST** break free, and he feels that it's a matter of life and death for him - then he is ready for the groups.

Boruch has found a beautiful treasure, and he wants to share it with us all. I think we should be very thankful for that.

I agree wholeheartedly.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?

Posted by the.guard - 19 Mar 2009 13:41

The quote from Rabbi Twerski above was only in the context of two very real fears.

- 1) that someone who is not sincere may learn WORSE things from the groups.
- 2) someone not sincere may breach the anonymity of others in the group and cause them untold suffering.

However, Rabbi Twerski still holds that, other than these two concerns, the groups and the steps are the best and most reliable way to break free of this addiction.

And the reason for it is, as Rabbi Twerski once wrote:

- I have attended many mussar shiurim. Everybody understands the importance of mussar, but I doubt if many people walk away with the feeling, "If I deviate from this, I'm dead!" A person sincere in recovery realizes that his very life depends on following the program, not theoretically, but very practically. If people would accept mussar that way, it would work.

- No one in any mussar shiur I attended has ever spoken up and said, "I tried to do things my way, and I fell right back into my old ways." That helps bring home the message that

one's life depends on following the program.

- I don't recall anyone in a mussar shiur being so touched that they began to cry. It happens often in the 12 step program.

- No one in a mussar shiur shares strength, hope and courage.

Rav Tzvi Meyer's Shiurim may be super-powerful, but I don't know if they have these above ingredients which are so vital to recovery for the hard-core addict.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?

Posted by battleworn - 19 Mar 2009 15:19

The quote from Rabbi Twerski above was only in the context of two very real fears.

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- 2) someone not sincere may breach the anonymity of others in the group and cause them untold suffering.

However, Rabbi Twerski still holds that, other than these two concerns, the groups and the steps are the best and most reliable way to break free of this addiction.

Now you have me thoroughly confused. First of all you posted it as an answer to my question of how does one know that he is addicted enough that he needs the groups. see here: rehab-my-site.com/guardureyes/forum/index.php?topic=129.0

Second of all, you told us more than once that R' Twerski himself recognizes that there are good reasons not to go and the only reason that he still recommends going is because there's no other eitzah.

This is how you yourself put it once:

The 12 Steps groups around the world are intentionally mixed, even though it is known that the opposite sexes do trigger each other in group support - especially for addicts. And yes, this can -and has - led to trouble, but only with those who hadn't really hit bottom or weren't really ready for the groups yet...

HOWEVER - and this is a big HOWEVER, as frum people, we can't take these kind of risks, even if there is some benefit to be found in it. The risk of even one person falling is not worth the gain.

I want to clarify a Hashkafa point over here. For Holy Jews that were commanded by Hashem "Kidoshim tih'yu" the problem is **not only** the risk of falling. Kol makom she'atoh motzei GEDER ervah atoh motzai kidusha. The Chofetz Chayim said: the more geder; the more kedusha and siyata dishmaya. I think that if one goes to the groups unnecessarily he's probably over an issur di'oraisoh of kidoshim tih'yu. So even if someone doesn't fall, it's clearly not the ideal solution.

- I have attended many mussar shiurim. Everybody understands the importance of mussar, but I doubt if many people walk away with the feeling, "If I deviate from this, I'm dead!" A person sincere in recovery realizes that his very life depends on following the program, not theoretically, but very practically. If people would accept mussar that way, it would work.

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This is clearly the way yaakov and I and many others feel without having gone to any groups.

No one in any mussar shiur I attended has ever spoken up and said, "I tried to do things my

way, and I fell right back into my old ways." That helps bring home the message that one's life depends on following the program.

Yes it helps, and so does your holy forum in the same way only better and more balanced.

- I don't recall anyone in a mussar shiur being so touched that they began to cry. It happens often in the 12 step program.

That's how I know that R' Twerski was apparently never by R' Tzvi Meir

- No one in a mussar shiur shares strength, hope and courage.

I guess he's referring strictly to mussar as opposed to chizuk or chasidus. I think it's safe to say that there's more strength, hope and courage in a single shiur from R' T' M' than all the AA SA SLAA etc. groups that ever met.

Rav Tzvi Meyer's Shiurim may be super-powerful, but I don't know if they have these above ingredients which are so vital to recovery for the hard-core addict.

Not only do they have all the ingredients, they have a lot lot more. And I ask you: What constitutes a hard-core addict?

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?
Posted by the.guard - 19 Mar 2009 16:20

What constitutes a hard-core addict?

Someone who has reached their breaking point. See today's Chizuk e-mail (#434)

As far as the concern that the groups are mixed, this is basically what I meant by concern #1, i.e. that someone who is not sincere may learn WORSE things from the groups. In other words, if you haven't hit bottom, if you aren't ready to totally surrender, then maybe the groups are not right for you. Granted.

As far as Rav Tzvi Meyer, I've read some of his Shmuzen, but you sure are making me curious to join his Shiurim. Where can we hear them?

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?
Posted by battleworn - 19 Mar 2009 16:40

Quote

What constitutes a hard-core addict?

Someone who has reached their breaking point. See today's Chizuk e-mail (#434)

I'm not sure I know what that means. I saw the email and if that's what you mean by the breaking point, then many of us [for ex: our holy friend yaakov] never did and never will reach that point. The bottom line is that the groups are **NOT** for everyone!

As far as Rav Tzvi Meyer, I've read some of his Shmuzen, but you sure are making me curious to join his Shiurim. Where can we hear them?

I could give you a phone # where you can hear all of the shmuzen (I don't have it with me here now, but b'li neder on Sunday) but that's not what I meant. To get the real thing, you have to be there for sholosh seudos.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?
Posted by boruch - 19 Mar 2009 17:35

[battleworn wrote on 19 Mar 2009 12:16:](#)

Are there other methods that are so effective in turning a losing fight into no battle at all? I can only tell you of one method like that, doing the 12 steps by working them with a sponsor and active 12 step group meeting attendance. If anyone else has another method with the same results, I would certainly be interested to hear about it. Not because I am looking for another method. The 12 steps are helping me change in many areas and I would not trade them in. But recovery from addiction is extremely important to me and I am interested in all things Recovery.

If you're asking me, the answer is a resounding yes. For me, learning Tzidkas Hatzadik of R' Tzadok Hachohen provided me with all that and a lot more. (I had very special siyata dishmaya to understand and connect with the sefer and I'm not ready to suggest that it will work for others.) Going to R' Tvi Meir did a whole lot more than *that*. The advantage of that over the groups is -in my opinion- so great that it can't be described.

The issue of Recovery is a very serious one and as much as I want sholom on this Forum there should be something that we can all agree on.

We should all be able to agree that we have two types of people here. We have those like ourselves who are currently coping, recovering or have even recovered and we have Frum Yidden on this forum who are still struggling and really suffering. They are tortured day and night. Some of them cry, literally and painfully. Some think of suicide. Some of them suffer in silence.

"The addict that suffers" is not a distant metaphor on these forums. For anyone who has even a spark of a neshomo inside them this should be very serious stuff. And if the twelve steps means anything real at all to any of us it should be that

our number 1 focus on these boards is not ourselves, it is the Frum Yidden that are on here today and will come here tomorrow who are suffering.

I have noticed something on these forums. And I have been just as guilty if not more so than most. No-one should be *telling* anyone who is coping how to run their lives. We can make thoughtful and cautious suggestions to such people for future ideas but anything more is counter-productive.

Even worse, many, especially myself, have been very free and easy in giving advice to others, some of whom may be struggling and we have no qualification to give our own advice to such people. What has worked for one person for X number of days is not necessarily going to work even 1 day for someone else whom is struggling and yet some of us, myself very much included, have not been serious at all when dishing out opinions to those who may be struggling.

So keshot atzmecho, setting myself straight first. Battleworn, I am not addressing anyone like yourself or Yaakov who is coping, and anything I have mentioned here should be no more than an insurance policy that you should never need but may want to keep in mind.

However, we need to be very serious about those who may not be coping. What should we say to them? Because step number 12 is all about this forum being for the addict who is *suffering*.

And Battleworn I believe that you will agree with what I am now saying as opposed to what I was saying earlier. I believe that it is not saying any chiddushim to say that we, who are Bechasdei Hashem Yisborach, coping, are both big enough to take ourselves, our own personal mehalchim and our personal sensitivities totally out of the picture and focus on what we can responsibly recommend for those in trouble and in so doing tell it like it is.

And I'll get straight to the question we had discussed about whether the groups are for everyone. I addressed that question earlier without realizing that it is the wrong question. Here is why it is the wrong question. In it's best years, over a 20 year period AA worked for 75% of those who tried it, meaning that it did not work for 25%. Is it then surprising that Rabbi Twersky would say the steps are not for everyone? Of course not. And that is not the issue at all.

The issue should not be who it cannot help, but rather who it can and should help.

AA's best numbers were during the years 1940-60. During those 20 years religion in the US was still a serious, central and fundamental part of the lives of members, the system was worked rigorously and in those years the standard addiction recovery estimate was seventy-five percent. That's a real track record of 75% over 20 years.

What does that tell us to expect for Frum Yidden today? It's not too unreasonable to assume that it is within the realm of probability that the same 20 year track record would be a good guestimate for what doing the steps the [strong](#) way and the traditional way, as it was done in 1940-1960 would achieve for chareidim who are serious about religion and serious about sobriety (click on the [link](#) for an excellent article on what the system is really about).

The issue for us, then, should be to recognize that almost every Frum Yid, even those for

whom, like myself, who the AA system is ideal are at least initially going to have a significant yetzer horo, as I did, to avoid the groups.

Now assuming even the *possibility* that doing the steps right could bring recovery to 75% of Frum Yidden what are we to tell those struggling yidden when they resist and make excuses? Should we tell them right away, "Don't worry, the steps are not for everyone."? There are other things out there that you may want to try now that you have an excuse. Is that what Rabbi Twersky meant we should do?

We do not need to guess the answer to that question, because he clearly wrote this in a letter featured on Guardureyes.com:

"Broken, threatened with divorce and yet not believing I could ever stop, I had finally "hit bottom". I wrote to the renowned religious psychiatrist, Rabbi Avraham Twersky, the author of many books and a leader in dealing with alcoholic addictions. I told him my whole story and I asked him if there was anything I could do to break free. Here is what he answered:

"Your case is not unusual. I say this because I can tell you what works and what does not work. Sexual compulsions come in a variety of ways, but the common denominator is that the person has a compulsion which he finds it very difficult to resist. He tries all kinds of ways (like you did) but nothing works, including marriage. This kind of compulsion is essentially an addiction. ***The only thing that works, in my experience, is participation in a 12-step recovery program similar to that of Alcoholics Anonymous.***"

What about those who would make excuses? He addressed that very clearly in the same letter:

"There are many excuses for not attending meetings. What happens if someone sees me? The bottom line is, if a person wishes to be cured from cancer, he'll do anything. "

So if you really are true to your word and you will do as you said and just trust Rabbi Twersky,

then there is nothing more that needs to be said.

The AA Group Face to Face system as recommended in the letter above by Rabbi Twersky has a track record. There are compelling reasons to believe that as many as 75% of Frum Yidden needing help could get cured. Nothing else including the phone-in-meetings and including "Torah Steps", "Jewish Steps" or anything else that is new has any track record remotely as long with such high Recovery figures.

So what shall we say to the addict on these forums who is *struggling*? We *know* that he will make excuses. Since AA began addicts have been making excuses. Those excuses take up tens of pages in AAs 1939 Big Book. Welcome to addiction. Addiction=excuses. Rabbi Twersky says clearly that there will be excuses.

So what are we to say to the *struggling* addict when he makes excuses? In my opinion there should be no question at all in the mind of any sensible and responsible recovered or recovering addict. We should tell them, "Before you decide whether you are ready for group attendance first read an interesting [book](#) on addiction, the earliest book we have on the 12 steps and think about it".

If after reading it he is willing to consider groups and he is struggling, then it's clear to me that we need to be responsible and encourage him to go to the Face to Face groups. If he is still not willing then we should take Rabbi Twersky's suggestion and encourage him to try the phone groups and take it from there and if necessary he should then move on to the Face to Face Groups.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?
Posted by battleworn - 19 Mar 2009 17:39

As far as the concern that the groups are mixed, this is basically what I meant by concern #1, i.e. that someone who is not sincere may learn WORSE things from the groups. In other words, if you haven't hit bottom, if you aren't ready to totally surrender, then maybe the groups are not right for you. Granted.

I'm not sure what exactly is granted and what is not. If one did in-fact hit bottom and is ready to totally surrender BUT he has the option of doing it in a lichatchila way instead of going to the groups, *then* what do you say? And what would R' Twerski say? And what in the world do you mean by "maybe"?

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?

Posted by boruch - 19 Mar 2009 17:53

[battleworn wrote on 19 Mar 2009 15:19:](#)

I want to clarify a Hashkafa point over here. For Holy Jews that were commanded by Hashem "Kidoshim tih'yu" the problem is **not only** the risk of falling. Kol makom she'atoh motzei GEDER ervah atoh motzai kidusha. The Chofetz Chayim said: the more geder; the more kedusha and siyata dishmaya. I think that if one goes to the groups unnecessarily he's probably over an issur di'oraisoh of kidoshim tih'yu. So even if someone doesn't fall, it's clearly not the ideal solution.

You are not taking the metzius into account, of course, not being familiar with it, you cannot be blamed. The metzius is that not all groups are created equal. The first thing that any Frum Yid has to know is that lechatchilo if he is going to groups he needs a conservative and strongly religious group. That leaves only SA groups as opposed to the others. Among SA groups he needs lechatchilo to find a conservative group. At conservative groups they are very particular that no nonsense go on. The leaders are all ex-addicts and have a very hightened sense for these things, are very vigilant and keep control.

But ultimately it depends who we are talking about. If it's you or Yaakov and in the meantime you are managing, so ask a sheiloh if you are interested and if you are not it is anyway not nogeia. I asked and was told to go. You do what you need to.

However to raise this issue for someone who is constantly being nichshal is pure chassidus shel shtus, the ultimate foolishness, stupidity, tzvius and rishus. Would you date your future wife over the phone? Would you see a therapist over the phone? Let's stop fooling ourselves and let's stop describing BIG bedieveds as if they were lechatchilo.

So let us get back on track, we may be OK, the suffering addict is not, let's stop debating the styles that work for those who cope, and I take full blame for having started that here.

We should have one message for the suffering addict. Read the book and go to the real groups if you are ready.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?
Posted by battleworn - 19 Mar 2009 18:09

However to raise this issue for someone who is constantly being nichshal is pure chassidus shel shtus, the ultimate foolishness, stupidity, tzvius and rishus. Would you date your future wife over the phone? Would you see a therapist over the phone? Let's stop fooling ourselves and let's stop describing BIG bedieveds as if they were lechatchilo.

Honestly, I have no idea what you're talking about. Who is fooling himself and describing bedieveds as if they were leachtchila?

It pains me greatly that this was turned in to a debate, all I wanted was exactly what I posted originally. But I can't stand by when the truth is distorted. I fully agree that the 12 steps should be the standard solution according to Guards criteria, as long as we can't offer a better solution. But there's no reason in the world to distort the truth. And there's also no reason not to clarify the criteria.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?
Posted by battleworn - 19 Mar 2009 18:21

I want to add that it can very well be noigeia in the future. I believe that with a lot of work we

can, with time, come up with a highly improved system that is much much better for frum yidden than SA. Again, this has nothing to do with what we recommend to someone who is suffering right now. But misrepresenting the truth could jeopardize such an effort.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?

Posted by boruch - 19 Mar 2009 19:11

[battleworn wrote on 19 Mar 2009 18:09:](#)

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Let's see if for the sake of those who need us we can agree on the following:

- 1) We should not express our own opinions on addiction for those who are struggling.
- 2) We need to be humble enough to realize that we are not experts.
- 3) You have stated opinions about everything from SA groups and 12 steps to Rav Tzvi Meir.

You are unfamiliar with SA groups and so it does not make sense to discuss criteria about them. You probably don't realize that until the time that you have been a part of SA you will most certainly be equally unfamiliar with the steps as long as and until you see how to do them lemaaseh and only then could you understand. Guard gets the steps much better than you do, ask him if I did not have to explain to him a fundamental part of step 3.

Is there any sizeable data on recovery rates of struggling addicts who listen to Rav Tzvi Meir? If there is not, then suggesting it to someone who is being nichshal instead of a proven method is less than bedieved it's assidin liten es hadin.

The phone conferences are certainly bedieved as I clearly explained, no-one would date over the phone instead of in-person.

None of us would walk into a Beis Hamedrash and start giving shiur on a sugya that we had not adequately prepared. On this forum it's pikuach nefesh.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?
Posted by boruch - 19 Mar 2009 19:13

[battleworn wrote on 19 Mar 2009 18:21:](#)

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can, with time, come up with a highly improved system that is much much better for frum yidden than SA. Again, this has nothing to do with what we recommend to someone who is suffering right now. But misrepresenting the truth could jeopardize such an effort.

You want an effort that is better than SA? Go ahead. No-one is stopping you, just make sure that you experiment on people like yourself who are coping.

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Think you can do it without the 12-Steps?
Posted by the.guard - 19 Mar 2009 19:35

As far as the concern that the groups are mixed, this is basically what I meant by concern #1, i.e. that someone who is not sincere may learn WORSE things from the groups. In other words, if you haven't hit bottom, if you aren't ready to totally surrender, then maybe the groups are not right for you. Granted.

I'm not sure what exactly is granted and what is not. If one did in-fact hit bottom and is ready to totally surrender BUT he has the option of doing it in a lichatchila way instead of going to the groups, then what do you say? And what would R' Twerski say? And what in the world do you mean by "maybe"?

If one did in-fact hit bottom and is ready to totally surrender
Then he should definitely go to the groups and not search for "lichatchila ways" that have no statistical data to back them up. Like Boruch said, at such a stage it is Pikuach Nefesh. And this is clearly Rabbi Twerski's stance on the issue.

Now if you *haven't* hit bottom, if you aren't ready to totally surrender, or if you are coping, then **maybe** the groups are not right for you. By **maybe** I mean that you still might be able to benefit from them more than you could stand to lose. Hard to know. Like Boruch said, if you can find an SA group that is **conservative** and **no-nonsense**, it would probably still be an advisable thing to do.

Battleworn and Boruch, I am truly impressed by both of your sheer will to find the absolute, unadulterated truth! Wow.

And Boruch, I think you did a beautiful job of explaining it there in reply #72!

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