

I have questions

Posted by battleworn - 24 Nov 2008 13:48

There are some things I want to discuss, for my own benefit as well as other's.

My first question is about Rabbi Twersky's definition of addiction. If I remember correctly, he said that anyone who does something against their better judgement, is addicted. Even if it's not very often. But I believe he also said that anyone that's addicted should go to a SA group. I know he doesn't mean that a bachur that is nichshal once in a while, should go. So there must be two kinds/stages

of addiction. If that is so what constitutes the worse one.

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Re: I have questions

Posted by battleworn - 22 Feb 2009 17:31

Thank you Elya, that's exactly what I wanted to know! I most definitely agree with you, that many people's yidishkait is very superficial.

Don't you have anything to say about my earlier post (right before that one)?

Also, does anybody else have something to add?

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Re: I have questions

Posted by the.guard - 22 Feb 2009 18:31

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Re: I have questions

Posted by Elya K - 22 Feb 2009 20:49

I'm glad you brought that up. To me it seems very clear that the point of the first step is this. For most people, there's no way in the world that they will ever agree to such a drastic change in their life, and such demanding accountability, if they think they can manage without it. Especially if they're not very religious!

Now, if someone had a solid chinuch, his Emunah is strong and he knows right from wrong (and the severity of the sin), then there would be no point at all in the first step (in it's standard form).

Before I go and rewrite the first step, I'm asking you to please enlighten me if I missed something.

I think that I mentioned in another post that if you're in this forum you are doing a first step. Powerless means once you begin you cannot stop as far as the addiction is concerned. It also means you cannot stop on your own, you need to trust Hashem that HE will help you stop. Granted you have to stop acting out in order to receive Hashem's help, HE's not going to shower you with abundance if you're filthy.

the other part of the first step is that your life has become unmanageable. If you're on this forum looking for answers your life is unmanageable.

even if you know right from wrong halachically, if you're addicted, you're going to do it anyway. that's what powerless means. So I disagree on that point. All 300-400 people on this forum KNOW it is wrong, why are we here? We're here because we cannot control this by ourselves, we're powerless and we need G-D and others to help us.

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Re: I have questions

Posted by battleworn - 23 Feb 2009 15:34

Thank you very much, Elya.

Actually, I think I agree with everything you wrote. When you say "your life has become unmanageable" it seems to me that you mean to say that you refuse to continue living like that (please correct me if I'm wrong). Some people understand those words quite differently.

I'll explain myself: Let's take me for example (me not "Me"). I went through many stages and I struggled for many years. I was never at peace with it; I was always quite desperate to brake free.

Because I was (pretty much) always fighting back, it never really got "out of hand" - it never interfered with my life in an unmanageable way. There was no breaking point, no hitting rock bottom. I was always desperate, not because my life was unmanageable, but because the addiction/drive was unmanageable, and that's unacceptable to me(which is, I think, what you mean).

If I understand you correctly, the meaning of the first step is: 1)You must decide that this just can't continue!!! 2) You must realize that you can't do it yourself; you need Hashem's help. (There is someone on the forum, that understood it all very differently)

For people like me [and I believe there are quite a few of us here] different wording would be understood a lot better. I think the wording of the steps turns some people off unnecessarily.

Thanks again for your help.

We're waiting for your book with baited breath

Don't hold your breath, but I do hope to start working on it very soon.

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Re: I have questions

Posted by the.guard - 23 Feb 2009 17:10

Not being an expert on the 12 steps, I leave most of these things to Elya to answer.

1) You must decide that this just can't continue!!! 2) You must realize that you can't do it yourself; you need Hashem's help.

I see it like you Battelworn.

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Re: I have questions

Posted by battleworn - 22 Mar 2009 15:18

I read Yair Shochet's book [which is very highly [b]un[/b]recommended as it contains very graphic descriptions that can be triggering] and I see that he has very different definitions than I've seen until now. An addict -according to him- is only one who's whole life is totally out of control and totally controlled by the addiction (Yerachmiel in the story was not addicted (a.t.h.). Rock-bottom (a.t.h.) means a lot worse than that (for ex: a Rosh Yeshiva who was caught etc.) The idea of rock-bottom (a.t.h.) is that every addict cuts himself off totally from the whole world and doesn't trust anyone at all. Therefore it's impossible to help him until he becomes so desperate that he's forced to open up. The whole idea of the Higher Power (a.t.h.) has nothing to do with Emunah it's just about breaking through the isolation of the addict.

I'm wondering if there's a right and wrong here or it's just open to anyone's interpretation. If anyone has anything to say, please post. Thank You.

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Re: I have questions

Posted by the.guard - 22 Mar 2009 23:22

The triggers you speak of are minimal. They appear only once in the book, and with no descriptions... But again Battleworn, it is similar to the 12-Steps. It is vital to differentiate between someone who is heavily addicted / not coping, and people who **are** coping and are not so addicted. The story of the Rosh Yeshiva should perhaps only be read only by someone who is heavily addicted, and in such a case it is **neccecery** for him to read the story the way Ya'ir tells it - with what you call "the triggers", because otherwise the point wouldn't get accross fully.

BTW. R' Ya'ir has a Rebbe who is very respectable (I can't say his name, but he is well known and a respected in ALL circles) and he told Ya'ir to KEEP the book exactly the way it is, otherwise the point would not get across properly (see the intro).

Anyway, when I read the book, I found that the discussion with Yerachmiel could be very helpful to us all - since Yerachmiel was NOT addicted so badly and we could all relate to the things that he learned from the Rosh Yeshiva. As I wrote in the first e-mail (#401 on [this page](#)):

"The lessons of the book apply to anyone working on this area, whether he has hit "rock bottom" or has only begun the decent into the cycle of addiction. In the coming e-mails, we will focus mainly on the lessons that apply to those who have not yet "hit bottom", since most of the members of this Chizuk e-mail list probably fit into that category".

According to the book there are different levels of addiction. Yerachmiel was also addicted pretty strongly, but not to the point of total surrender. I think that is where a lot of guys on GUE are.

As far as what you write about the "Higher Power", as frum Yidden we can relate to it much easier. Those who treat the higher power as something other than a spiritual experience will not be AS successful in using the 12-Steps. They will mainly gain from the group support, but may ultimately fall back into it. Again, I encourage you to read the article [over here](#). There you will see that although the 12-Steps have been watered down over time to accommodate more people - even agnostics; and today "Higher Power" can be anything, however, the fact remains that the truest and surest way to recovery is when the Higher Power is Hashem. And for us frum Yidden, this poses no problem at all.

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Re: I have questions

Posted by battleworn - 25 Mar 2009 15:25

According to the book there are different levels of addiction. Yerachmiel was also addicted pretty strongly, but not to the point of total surrender. I think that is where a lot of guys on GUE are.

Are you talking about the same book as I am. In Yair's book it says that the R' Y' told his group that he couldn't imagine how he would ever do the 12th step. Where on earth would he find someone to spread the word to. Then he realized that he was mikayem it by helping Yerachmiel to not get there. If you read it again you will see that it's 100% clear that he doesn't consider Yerachmiel an addict and therefore he doesn't consider him a candidate for the 12 steps.

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