Value systems
Posted by noquitter - 17 Jan 2011 00:00

_____

Hi All

Its ages since i posted last. I was pretty desperate at the time after a fall post 62 days. I am now over the moon to have hit 100+ days and really feel that on the whole, it's getting easier. Yes I'm still an addict and probably always will be but having a chunk of sobriety under my belt is something that feels great, fantastic, super, I can't describe how good. This website has been superb as was a couple of chats i had with Dov who I found a breath of fresh air. Thanks Dov and everyone.

I am not currently actively working the steps although I have read them a lot and there must be stuff going on in my deeper subconscious.

I would like feedback from fellow members on the subject of Value Systems. Like most of you, I was brought up frum. G-d, Torah and mitzvas have always been a central part of my life and upbringing. But sadly, as an addict for years, one gets into a rut where NOTHING seems to matter. I have BH never broken shabbos to surf the net etc but I know ppl who have. Now that I am slowly trying to flush the garbage out of my system, I am struggling to develop real values that count. When I say count, I mean really really count.

There is a famous story about a contest between the Rambam and some "wise" men who debated as to whether cats could be trained to act like humans. There was a planned showdown at a banquet where the cats entered on their hind legs bearing platters of food and offered it to the guests. The Rambam opened his snuffbox and out jumped a mouse. The cats scampered after it smashing all the platters and shattering the theories of the wise men.

After years as an addict I feel like one of those cats. I have talked the talk and walked the walk but come a trigger, a nisayon, call it what you will, everything goes to the wayside so that I can get my fix.

I am now determined to unlearn all of this. To know what real truth is. To know what it means to be honest to myself. To learn to love G-d. To value Torah, Mitzvos, honesty... The list goes on and on. I need to start believing in myself. To develop some real values and believe that I

believe in them.

One hears a politician giving a speech and thinks - does he really believe from his core what he is espousing? And then I look at myself... Do I really believe what I do? What I say? Do I believe anything?

On a positive note, I am encouraged that if I am brutally honest, I have seen that I <u>AM</u> capable of subscribing to a value. I have seen it TWICE in fact. Firstly, as a lost and addicted soul, I truly wanted more and more schmutz. That was really important to me to the negation of anything else. And now, as a recovering addict (I hope!), I really want to get well. To stop lusting. To be a mensch. So in a perverse way, I am able to have something important and to believe it and "live" it to my core.

I'd love to hear your feedback on this. Does it get better? Easier? Is there anything one can positively due to start developing and living those values in a real and meaningful way.

Sadly, I'm am a terrible cynic and and more than anything, I am most cynical of myself. But having said that, 100 clean days is nothing to sneeze at - snuff or no snuff!

Thanks for your time reading this... And looking forward to your encouraging words...

===
====

Re: Value systems
Posted by ToAdd - 17 Jan 2011 07:01
_____

Hi,

It's great to hear you are doing so well.

I feel your struggle – now that we know right from wrong, how do we live it and not just act it.

I'm not sure where I heard this, it may have been the Ramban who said that we can not change the traits we are born with.

This is however not so simple. One of the main points of us being here is to overcome our base traits, our animal instincts.

The way I understand it is that we are each born with different traits, some have a desire for blood as an example.

Our challenge is to direct these traits in the service of G-d.

Back to my example, people who have a desire for blood would be best off if they became a shochet or surgeon rather than a serial killer.

I personally have strong lust and a very vivid imagination. These two together are a bad combination. I could let those two dispositions ruin my life by letting them run wild OR I could choose to utilize them for my own good or for the good of my community.

As far as my imagination goes, this makes me good at storytelling and designing software.

I can use stories to help describe my point in a vivid way an I can picture the final outcome of a project and work towards it.

Lust is a bit more difficult to deal with. We should be directing that desire towards Hashem. If we are the cat and someone lets a mouse out in front of us and we have a desire to run, we should steer ourselves to run after a mitzvah.

I imagine a person who is addicted to gambling saving up money for a big tournament – and on that morning while driving to the casino, he gives it all to charity or buys a chumash for himself.

This sounds good in theory, but I don't really know of any practical use for lust. I guess it's similar to anger. One should stay as far from anger as possible, but it may be necessary to display (although not feel) anger at the right time. Staying as far away from lust as possible at all times is a very good idea.

Lust is actually based on envy, so the key to controlling it may lie in one directing one's envy in the right direction i.e. it's wrong to envy your neighbour's house, but it will motivate you if you direct your envy at his skills that got him the house.

This makes sense in my head, not sure how it's coming across though.

We all have a G-d shaped hole inside ourselves. We're just trying to fill it with something other than G-d.

==
====