Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??)
Posted by ss7107 - 26 Jan 2011 15:57

I am almost 9 months sober from acting out (white book definition) but still struggling pretty consistently. I feel ashamed at my fantasies and thoughts of going to act out. I feel ashamed of still looking at porn from time to time and I am feel ashamed that I am not where others appear to be in their recovery. I thought that at this point, some of the obsession should have lifted. I need to keep going and having recovery and sobriety in my life but it proves quite difficult. Life is full of its own pressures and the knowledge that a "little" acting out would make me feel better for the moment, is quite tempting. Also, seeing others slip and slide down the slopes of recovery and sobriety shows me that "a little slipping" won't kill me. Others are doing it and surviving. Very confusing.

Also, for the sake of honesty, I need to share that I have hatched an idea in my head that I would visit an acting out location nearby my office and "just look" around. Of course this is the great lie I tell myself. If I keep it to myself I am going to go crazy. So now it's "out there".

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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??)
Posted by ben durdayah - 26 Jan 2011 19:04

Sick Man Getting Well wrote on 26 Jan 2011 15:57:

I am feel ashamed that I am not where others appear to be in their recovery.

No, no, no Reb SMGW, this is not about anyone else and you have nobody to be ashamed of.

Remember we are not in a "recovery competition" over here. We are here to be useful to ourselves and others.

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I thought that at this point, some of the obsession should have lifted. I need to keep going and having recovery and sobriety in my life but it proves quite difficult.

You noted that you are still looking at P*** sometimes, I don't think that it's realistic to expect 'the obsession to lift' as long as you're doing so even if you say that you are within the guidelines of SA sobriety despite the occasional look (I don't know what your/their definition is). IMVHO that's like the Vodka drinking alcoholic who decided to switch to beer, and couldn't understand why he still craves alcohol.

Life is full of its own pressures and the knowledge that a "little" acting out would make me feel better for the moment, is quite tempting.

SMGW, you are much smarter than that. A "little" acting out didn't **really** make you feel better, even for the moment. Maximum it took you out of reality for that moment, just to make you feel empty a moment later. I wouldn't call that 'knowledge'. I would call that 'fantasy'. The YH's big lie.

Also, seeing others slip and slide down the slopes of recovery and sobriety shows me that "a little slipping" won't kill me. Others are doing it and surviving. Very confusing.

SMGW, you seem to be a big chusid of SA. Is that what they tell you there? That you joined them to look at others and what they can "get away with" and still "survive" (if you consider that survival -go for it!). That's like the alky looking at your 'social drinker' and saying, "Hey, that's not fair, he can have three drinks and let it go at that! Why can't I?".

If you're really into the Torah of recovery ala Whatever-Anonymous you can think of, the first step is admitting that your life has become unmanagable, and that when it comes to your addiction you are utterly powerless.

Some Acharonim -such as our very own R' Dov -say that the proper Nussach is, "I felt like it was Death or recovery, any other option was unviable".

When you're holding there, what other people are doing is totally irrelevent; so much so that it's almost laughable to entertain the thought of 'other people'.

Sorry for being preachy,

Elazar ben Durdayah

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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) Posted by ss7107 - 26 Jan 2011 19:34

all good points. Thanks.

The "death or recovery" happened months ago. My problem is that it loses its power after i've been sober for some time. Life seems ok then I get hit with it.

As far as looking at others, your points are well taken, however, in reality I have no idea how to stop judging myself with regards to others.

Lastly, yes, I am a very big chosid of SA and the thing I was taught was that we need to focus on progress and not perfection. I disagree with this point:

ben durdayah wrote on 26 Jan 2011 19:04:

that's like the Vodka drinking alcoholic who decided to switch to beer

For me, Lust is a monster that will always exist and I will always be powerless over. However, my thoughts are that a person who does *occasionally* dip back into old behaviors = provided he keeps to his bottom line of sobriety = is like an alchoholic going to a bar, asking for a drink, holding it, smelling it and listening to it in the glass. Whatever the view, it's no good. I accept responsibility for the behavior and I am sure you are right that by eliminating this from my "schedule" I will see results.

I think the point is that compared to the person I used to be, I am doing great. Compared to the person I want to be, i'm doing awful. I was looking for feedback not to cure me, or fix me. Rather to identify and give hope that this merry-go-round of addiction will slow down at some point. I am very grateful for a forum to discuss it.

-SMGW	
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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) Posted by ben durdayah - 26 Jan 2011 20:12	
Thank's for clarifying your view of things.	
SMGW,	

I am in no way a detractor of the SA approach, and I am also trying to follow up with the twelvestep approach -although as I like to think of it, I am an addict in quality, though according to the nature and frequency of my falls, some might even deny me that title for lack of quantity. Unlike some frum people, I totally identify the Yiddishkeit in **all** of the twelve steps, and feel that they are part of the "Derech Eretz" which comes before Torah. It is hard for me to say the word

"loath", but I harbor little respect for those so close minded and ignorant of the nature of the 12 steps that they just scream -"TUME! Christian!" -upon hearing the number 12.

That having been said, I must say that I wonder at this "Theory of Relativity" that you put forth here.

First of all, one of the things that puzzles me about SA is this "set your own bottom line business". The sober alcoholic who walks into the bar and orders a drink, gazes at it longingly, smells it repeatedly, fantasizes about how it will feel trickling down his throat -but does not **drink** the alcohol -might be doing something stupid, and is defintely teetering on a narrow cliff which borders on insanity itself.

BUT he did not drink the drink, and he did not ingest any alcohol, which means that he might have stimulated his cravings for alcohol -which is again very stupid -but will not have gotten him drunk again; and therefore may not have any connection with his recovery, other than perhaps serving as a sign that this person is not far from actually drinking (because we all know that YH line, see you can handle the temptation, you can actually hold it in your hand without... and not even..., you can and you can... until he wins, and you do! And then he says -see you can't even blah blah blah...).

When it comes to lust on the other hand, X is a form of lust, Y is a form of lust, Z is a form of lust, A is a form of lust AND YES, SURPRISE SURPRISE viewing pornography is ingesting lust into your system through your eyes. Herion and Cocaine can both be snorted, smoked, injected, ingested and pardon me if I left out some of these wonderful forms of drug abuse which I forgot to list (May the Moderators forgive me!). P*** can be heard, spoken, viewed, acted out and comes in more varieties than Baskin-Robbins ice cream or Dunkin' Donuts. -all of these are forms of lust-abuse. And even if you set your own bottom line, your body and brain have gotten a fix of the stuff which feeds your addiction. And 'dipping back into old behaviors' while holding your 'bottom line' is not going to let your brain kick the acute addictive furrows that you've plowed through it. Because if your 'old behaviors' don't consist of anything worse than listening to old Abbot and Costello radio shows -then they will probably have little or no effect on your recovery. But if you're feeding your habit with a softer variety of the same drug -you're going to be on this "merry go round" (that's pretty tame, I'd call it a roller-coaster) until the day you die.

You don't want people to fix you or cure you?

Great! No one here professes to be able to do that. Maybe you can, only with the help of your higher power, which in your case -I would imagine that you call him Hashem.

You wanted identification and feedback?

Okay, I identify with your struggle, but after reading the ideas that you set forth- I think that you are either deluding yourself or that you are being misled by others.

You say that "Lust is a monster that will always exist" and that "You will always be powerless over it"?

I've never heard of people "dipping in" to play with the monster that they're trying to escape from.

I have some other feedback for you, but this has been enough of an earful for now, I'm sure.

EBD

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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) Posted by ss7107 - 26 Jan 2011 20:45

ben durdayah wrote on 26 Jan 2011 20:12:

one of the things that puzzles me about SA is this "set your own bottom line business".

ben durdayah wrote on 26 Jan 2011 20:12:

You say that "Lust is a monster that will always exist" and that "You will always be powerless over it"?

I've never heard of people "dipping in" to play with the monster that they're trying to escape from.

In SA, no idea why or how it came to be, there is a definition of sobriety. Additionally, regarding "dipping in" to play with the monster that we are trying to escape from, here is a quote from the White Book of SA: "The sexaholic has taken himself or herself out of the whole context of what is right or wrong. He or she has lost control, no longer has the power of choice, and is not free to stop. Lust has become an addiction......for the sexaholic, any form of sex with one's self or with partners other than the spouse is progressively addictive and destructive. We also see that lust is the driving force behind our sexual acting out, and <u>true sobriety includes progressive</u> <u>victory over lust."</u> (SAWB)

Two things that stand out for me is that in my addiction, this monster shows itself as my best friend and only bites me after I have indulged it. Secondly, because Lust will exist as long as I am alive in this world, my sobriety is defined as sex with self (masturbation) or with partners other than the spouse AND that my sobriety must include progressive victory.

I categorically disagree with the idea that people don't "dip in" to play with the monster they are trying to escape. If this were so, alcoholics, gamblers, over-eaters, etc, would have a really easy time getting sober. For me the awareness that it is there and that I will forever "think" I want to indulge it is the very thing I am powerless over.

I enjoy your points and value them. Thanks.

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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??)
Posted by ben durdayah - 26 Jan 2011 22:12

No one with an addiction has 'an easy time getting sober'.

But an Alcoholic who takes the AA route, knows that drinking even a sip is afall.

In your self-defined world, you feel that you should be able to recover from your addiction while (or at least think that the program deems it legitimate to be) 'dipping in' from time to time to behavior which is a. motivated by lust, and b. the absolute biggest trigger to engage in the behavior which even in your opinion is considered a fall.

That is as far as possible from the Anonymous programs as one can get.

You are powerless over electric current, do you play with live wires.

Well, if you think that you are only powerless over voltage above 100Kw, so maybe you will...

And what happens when a surge rushes through?

BTW-

Statistics prove that the best and almost sole method of effectively treating addictions are the 12 steps -and sometimes they are combined with other methods as well -but they are the way to get an addict's life manageable.

And yes, one of the reasons why is that the addict knows that one sip is one sip too many.

Recovery is not easy for alcoholics or any other addicts, just as it's not easy for you -or anyone else for that matter.

But the 12 step approach is simplistic, and clearly defined.

If the definition of sip, slip, and dip are variable, that **complicates** things.

It's sort of like the Dubno Maggid's parable on the passuk "V'lo Oisi Karasa Yaakov, Ki Yagata Bee Yisrael". And if you're not familiar with the parable -it's been posted somewhere around here -or I can share it with you a different time.

Look, I haven't done more than a cursory study of the 12 steps -and you have been attending a live SA group for at least 9 months.

But one thing I can tell you as sure as my pseudonym is Ben-Durdayah-

Either you're learning a different set of twelve-steps than Bill worked out, or SA has twelve steps of their own.

Whatever the case may be, this is a sure way to let the addiction lead you by the nose -because if you, the addict, are the one who determines that P*** is okay, while M*st*** is off limits -how do you know that that's you speaking, you are a person has lost control, no longer has the power of choice, and is not free to stop. Maybe it's your addiction (we call it the YH as well) talking and calling the shots here.

And the answer to your question is a big N-O -because if **this** is your definition of "sobriety", the lust will never stop, because you are bringing it right back into your system every time you take a slip- oh I'm sorry, you call that a 'dip'.

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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??)

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 26 Jan 2011 22:49

Reb Ben Durdaya,

Take a deep breath. You seem to be a bit too worked up!

Personally, I happen to agree with your sentiments, and I think that what you describe is the definition of sobriety in the GYE World as has been laid down by the founder of this great site, Guard himself.

BUT!!! We must have tolerance for others. There are many flavors of 'Anonymous' Groups out there. SA, SAA, SLAA etc. SA happens to have the 'strictest' bottom line. Although their line is still too lenient for a Torah Jew.

GYE is Torah based. Our bottom line ought to include anything that is precluded by the God given Torah! Viewing improper material is an explicit prohibition. Fantasizing is also not allowed. We are forbidden to stray after EYES and our HEARTS!

Any intentional viewing of something that will awaken that lustful sensation is a FALL. Lusting without viewing anything improper, otherwise known as fantasizing is, on the long run, even worse. *Hirhurei aveira kashin meiAveira*.

We can not expect that someone who has been in SA for a while & has ingrained their interpretation of things to immediately switch to the Torah view the moment he signed up to our Great GuardYourEyes Community. We must accept every Jew with love. We can hope and pray for them, as I am sure you already do!

Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??)

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Posted by Rising Up - 26 Jan 2011 23:00

I am just starting out as you guys know, and in the course of my reading today, I came across this in the "Why stop Lusting " pamphlet written by SA:

"Our addiction to lust is like the alcoholic's problem with alcohol. Just as the alcoholic cannot tolerate one drink of alcohol, we sexaholics cannot tolerate even the smallest drink of lust. Lust always leads to more lust, eventually making us drunk with it. Once drunk, the urge to act out sexually is impossible to resist. Even worse, lust keeps taking us deeper and deeper into behaviors we promised ourselves we would never do. The shame that these behaviors caused us required more and more lust to mask it. Just a little lusting simply doesn't work for sexaholics like us."

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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) Posted by Dov - 27 Jan 2011 00:59

ben durdayah wrote on 26 Jan 2011 20:12:

First of all, one of the things that puzzles me about SA is this "set your own bottom line business".

With all respect for my fellow yid - and obviously a serious *recovering* yid, at that - what on earth are you referring to here?

SA does not have a pick your own bottom line sobriety, at all. Have I missed some part of the discussion here? If so, please fill me in.

Thanks.

On the other account, I find it very funny. On one hand, "the SA definition is not good enough for a frum yid"...but on the other hand, I bet there is not a single rov in the world who would meet a yid who he understands has been masturbating and using porn for *years* - and yet has now been clean from the masturbation aveiro for a few weeks or months - and simply say to him "it's not enough". If there is such a rov, I bet he lives in a sefer, not in a body. Anyone I know would say something like, "that's wonderful. Now, are you ready to enter into an easier way to stay clean of the zera levatolah? You are? OK, then you are ready to start learning how to give up the lusting and schmutz now, too. ...oh, you are not? Well, then let's talk about it. And if that does not work, he would encourage the yid to "keep up the good work and come back to me when you are ready to start having it easier and a cleaner head. Hashem is waiting for you with open 'arms' and taste a deeper shmiras hamitzvos."

Nu. I know I can be dead wrong. There may be many yidden for whom the opposite approach would work...I just do not know any.

And finally, SA's sobriety definition is not about a spiritual goal, at all. It is about a standard of behavior to guide a person through recovery. **The recovery is not in the sobriety, at all.** It never has been. It is in *the steps*.

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I find that frum yidden, in particular, who tend to see all rules and guides as a religious law, see the sobriety definition the same way. They also see the goal of SA recovery as synonymous with it's sobriety definition.

But it is not. A spiritual awakening is the only goal, as simply stated in step 12. It is just that sobriety is the only way alkies found to get there! And the steps cannot be worked for any real good if the addict is not sober.

Sobriety is like breathing, nothing more. The addict deserves no credit for staying sober - just as we do not pat anyone on the back for breathing and eating. The steps are the way into derech eretz (an honest way to live with myself, with my G-d, and with people) and is all about learning a way to live without needing to act out any more just for today.

And as far as I understand (and misunderstand) yiddishkeit, it loves life - so it loves sobriety, sanity, and breathing. It tells us stuff like "v'nishmartem es nafshoseichem"...but the Torah is not about staying alive, breathing or sanity. It is about the *rest* of that same posuk: v'nishmartem me'od l'nafshoseichem, lest you forget the day you stood at Sinai and recieved the Torah so that you could learn yir'as Shomayim, attach yourselves to My Will, and be a holy nation. (I paraphrase).

Recovery is not about holiness, at all. But it is a gateway for crazy people to get a shot at the good life. And for a yid there is one good life: Being Hashem's yid through His Torah. But how to get there, when we are plainly cracked and still believe that we *need* to hide in a bathroom on the floor with a dirty book or computer and masturbate; that we *need* to follow that woman down the subway or supermarket; that we need to *whatever*? We are clearly *not* bad - we are lacking sanity. And as 'sober' as we get, we keep slipping back into the insanity....

I am powerless, and sober today, b"H. And it is no accident, for I *want* to be sober, so I let Hashem help me. Ein hadovor tolui ella bee. Truly.

Much love,

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e: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) osted by Yosef Hatzadik - 27 Jan 2011 01:30

Lest anyone misunderstand my intentions, allow me to make myself a bit more clear.

The post (reply #6 in this thread) was **not** written with the intention of saying that it is wrong for a yid to work with SA. By all means, if you can grow through their help, grab the opportunity. Hold on tight. Don't let go!

My point is just that we do not have to adopt *their* bottom line as *our* bottom line. Yes, I know, many of you will start yelling that all the dirt that we were busy with isn't either Torah'dig. Such comments are entirely off the point! We are not arguing if that is OK or not. The question is: What is our goal? Where are we aiming to? **Dov** will say that he is aiming for Spirituality. Others may say that they are aiming to uphold every one of Hashem's mitzvos. It would seem that this is the GYE definition of sobriety that I was referring to in the aforementioned post. (Incidentally though, the 'Spirituality' definition is also part of the Torah's definition of Living with Hashem.)

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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) Posted by ss7107 - 27 Jan 2011 04:44

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I appreciate Dov's response and thank you for it. However, my fear of GYE negatively affecting my SA program has been recognized. Accepting powerlessness was the first part of step one to me and it has been seriously questioned. As if I chose to act out for 18 years because I didn't have enough will power to stop! Preposterous. My life is still very unmanageable, however, it is slowly getting better and better. I have a Higher Power who I call Hashem and He runs my life today, I try to step aside for Him to do His thing. My lust is crazy and takes me to crazy places not because I want it to but because it does. And lastly, for now, I need to have the sobriety definition. This is the first time in my entire life, since I started acting out, that I have been able to be stopped from masturbation and sex outside of marriage. I know I have a long way to go

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but the direction of some of the posts here don't seem to be able to tolerate that and I certainly don't need to question myself.

If it works for you, good for you. I need to follow direction I am given and I am told to follow my program. I respect the opinions here, just don't need to subscribe to it. Good night friends. Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) Posted by bardichev - 27 Jan 2011 06:22 I didn't follow the volleys between team EBD and team SMGW. But I thank u two chevra its always so good to hear my rebberebber=DOv explain in simple english that sobriety is derech eretz Boom I just nailed it Did I rebbe? В Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) Posted by Dov - 27 Jan 2011 09:09 Of course you did Reb b.

I love everyone here, may Hashem help help me just shut up and be with Him today. And especially help me get up for shacharis tomorrow after the 6 hour trip it just took me to get home from 10 miles away at work tonight cuz of the snowstorm here...

If GYE is endangering your sobriety, then how is GYE any better for you than playing with fire? Why not drop it? My sobriety is far more precious to me that my 'madreigos'. For there *is* no such thing as avodas Hashem while I am acting out, there *is* no marriage, I am *not* really a father - all those things are *on hold* at any given minute...so I do not really have them at all, as far as I am concerned, and I am constantly in real danger of *losing them all* by my own hand when under the tyranny of lust.

Of course we keep trying to do the mitzvos and avodah as best we can - because He wants us to try! But if it takes you five years of derech eretz to finally be ready to do mitzvos *right*, then I say that's no worse than "Hashem chofetz I'ma'an tzidko, yagdil Torah v'ya'adir" as the RMB"M explains it: Hashem gave us a ton of different mitzvos so that the odds of each yid at least doing one mitzvah right is much better (and he defines 'right' as: purely because Hashem wants me to do it). And the Chovos haLevavos says that the purpose of the miztvos *is* to give us a real relationship with Hashem. That's the goal. So where does my program fit into my avodas Hashem? Because I am an addict it is the very bedrock of it - it is my sanity, my breathing. Ohn Vus is schlacht with that?

Those who fear that such an attitude will lead people to forsake the mitzvos for spirituality, as in "I'll have a Jewish heart and that's enough for me" can relax, I think. That's because *people are doing that already anyway!* The non-frum do, and so do many of us frummies! We create our own yiddishkeit with emphasis here, chumrah there, kulah here, so whose Torah are we *really* living in? His or ours?

R' Tzvi-Meyer says that we all tend to see others as kitzoni - either a bit too dull to see how precious yiddishkeit is, or a bit too fanatic rather than 'real'. Where are we? Of course, we see ourselves as in the middle of the road....whose Torah are we working? His, or ours?

The entire point is to do it for Him. Boy, do addicts like me have a long way to go. We have trained ourselves for years to self-pleasure when the going gets tough, or just for the heck of it, or just cuz it's there....we are in for ourselves, alright, and have learned to trust our orgasm for what we need. Maybe we *will* need 'a bit' of work before we can really, honestly *switch* that to Hashem, no? Maybe it is *not* just gonna take a little vidui, dikduk bemitzvah, a little mikvah, and Is there a bigger no-

brainer? Not to me.

I've got some work to do, and I will need Hashem and you to help me a bunch. OK?

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Sorry if this makes no sense to anyone, I am very tired and am entitled to a goofy rant at least once a month. It is in my GYE contract.
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Re: Lust in Sobriety (Will it ever end??) Posted by ben durdayah - 27 Jan 2011 10:11
dov wrote on 27 Jan 2011 00:59:
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ben durdayah wrote on 26 Jan 2011 20:12:
First of all, one of the things that puzzles me about SA is this "set your own bottom line business".
With all respect for my fellow yid - and obviously a serious <i>recovering</i> yid, at that - what on earth are you referring to here?
SA does not have a pick your own bottom line sobriety, at all. Have I missed some part of the discussion here? If so, please fill me in.
Aderabah, I'm glad to here that -from SMGW's post that was unclear he used the following description, Sick Man Getting Well wrote on 26 Jan 2011 15:57:

my thoughts are that a person who does *occasionally* dip back into old behaviors = provided he keeps to his bottom line of sobriety

There seemed to be an emphasis on "his" bottom line of sobreity. which led me to understand that the bottom line is a matter of personal preference

Thanks.

And finally, SA's sobriety definition is not about a spiritual goal, at all. It is about a standard of behavior to guide a person through recovery. **The recovery is not in the sobriety, at all.** It never has been. It is in *the steps*.

If you will read carefully, I tried to keep Torah and religion **out of my posts** (with the notable exception of the famous Dubno Maggid mashal). I do not confuse Toras Hashem with Toras HaRecovery, and I fully agree that for many of us here the only way to Torah and Hashem is through recovery -because dead people do not have much chance to live a life of Torah and mitzvos.

The main thing that I take issue with is this...

Because if this is where you're at

Sick Man Getting Well wrote on 26 Jan 2011 15:57:

I am almost 9 months sober from acting out (white book definition) but still struggling pretty consistently.... I feel ashamed of still looking at porn from time to time

How can you expect this Sick Man Getting Well wrote on 26 Jan 2011 15:57:

I thought that at this point, some of the obsession should have lifted. or this <u>Sick Man Getting Well wrote on 26 Jan 2011 15:57</u>:

give hope that this merry-go-round of addiction will slow down at some point

to happen?

I also took strong issue with this...

Sick Man Getting Well wrote on 26 Jan 2011 15:57:

my thoughts are that a person who does *occasionally* dip back into old behaviors = provided he keeps to his bottom line of sobriety = is like an alchoholic going to a bar, asking for a drink, holding it, smelling it and listening to it in the glass.

as I thought that is clear in my posts. I reiterate...ben durdayah wrote on 26 Jan 2011 19:04:

you are still looking at P*** sometimes, I don't think that it's realistic to expect 'the obsession to lift' as long as you're doing so even if you say that you are within the guidelines of SA sobriety despite the occasional look (I don't know what your/their definition is). IMVHO that's like the Vodka drinking alcoholic who decided to switch to beer, and couldn't understand why he still craves alcohol.

Far be it from me to impose my standards on others.

I just think that it is unrealistic to validate looking at P*** from time to time and expect the struggle with lust to ease over time, by following the steps inasmuch as they pertain to Mas***** and not to P***.

And the idea that GYE endangers sobriety in the opinion of one who opines that the occasional look at P*** fits in to the guidelines of SA recovery -is IMHO self contradictory.

Gey Shluffen, EBD

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