

The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 07 May 2025 21:01

In this thread I will b"n post from "The 18 Wheeler" and some other relevant 12-Step literature.

I will also post some of my own 2 cents, things that work for me, and some of my very limited ESH (Experience, Strength and Hope).

I would love to hear feedback; all feedback and questions are welcome but please identify yourself first as either a member of SA (or other 12-Step group) or a non-member in order to put things into context.

The 18 Wheeler is found in the back of the SA white book and titled "How I Overcame Lust" it consists of 18 ways that the author (Roy K.) overcame his lust.

To be clear The 18 Wheeler is not SA but tools that go along with SA and come from concepts within the 12-Steps.

If you are someone who really needs SA then The 18-Wheeler will be very limited in how much it can help you.

SA is working the 12-Steps with a sponsor; when done properly and thoroughly it can take months and even years to complete.

The Steps are never really complete and recovering addicts live with Steps 1,3,10,11 and12 for a lifetime.

SA also involves going to inperson meetings and participating in fellowship.

In person meetings are 1000 times more effective than posting on the GYE forum.

The purpose of this thread is 3 fold.

1) For those who need SA it is to familiarize them with SA concepts and into becoming more comfortable getting to their first meetings.

2) For those who do not need SA, many of the methods posted here can still be helpful getting out of our head and dealing with the lust issue.

3) For those already in SA this thread can serve as a spring board to discuss how we understand and apply SA principles.

All **bolded words** are from 12-Step literature and non-bolded writing are my own opinions and not necessarily consistent with SA principles.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 21 May 2025 16:21

Here is the introduction to **The 18 Wheeler** as found on page 157 in **The SA White Book**:

Overcoming Lust and Temptation

When we withdraw from our habits and are able to stay sexually sober for some length of time, we discover that even though we may not be acting out our compulsion, the obsession is still with us, though it may seem to disappear for a time. Lust, as we have seen, assumes many disguises, which we begin to recognize in sobriety as time goes on. For one person, lust may be lusting after someone. For another, it may be the obsession to be lusted after. For yet another, lust may appear as a desperate sexual or emotional need for someone. In any case, it is the inner disposition of the heart that is the real problem, and the work of recovery continues with altered attitudes and gaining progressive victory over lust.

Lust only yields to slow, patient working of the program in the context of others who are doing the same. This is one reason we need the fellowship of sobriety on a continuing basis. The rewards are unending, giving us the true freedom we always wanted.

In the following piece, a member tells how he overcame his obsession with lust. For many, these suggestions have proven to be useful in maintaining sobriety and overcoming lust and temptation.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 22 May 2025 09:47

Here is The 18 Wheeler as found on pages 158-168 in **The SA White Book**. It starts with a short introduction and then goes into the 18 ways the author overcame his lust. As you will come to see some of the 18 (for example 1&2) don't have much chiddush and will not tell you very much that you don't already know, while others (for example 4&5) are quite profound. Some of the 18 that don't sound very profound are still worth discussing for various reasons and we will try to do that.

How I Overcame My Obsession with Lust

How did I do it? I didn't. A woman in AA told me after she spoke in a meeting, quoting chapter 5 in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, that " G-d could and would, if he were sought." And that's how I did it by letting G-d do it. Because I couldn't. But G-d could and would-and did. But I had to go to meetings to learn things like that. "Meetings, meetings, meetings,meetings..." That's what they told me. "Just keep bringing the body." "Work the steps, work the steps, work the steps, work the steps, work the steps." Going to meetings and working the steps; that's how I did it. That's how I learned to let "the grace of G-d enter to expel the obsession." Here's what worked for me:

1. Stop practicing the compulsion. I stopped acting out sexually in any and all forms, including sex with myself (Masturbation) and nonmarital relationships. There could be no relief from the obsession of lust while still practicing the acts of lust.

The first of **The 18 Wheeler** is quite obvious and doesn't say much that any serious GYE member isn't already trying to do. There are however several points to discuss such as the SA Bottom Line, the main point of the 12 Steps, and where stopping to act out comes in with regards to the rest of the steps.

I will IY"H post in the near future to include these discussions.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 25 May 2025 14:34

A few comments on the first of **The 18 Wheeler**:

1. The SA bottom line (if act out in this way then you reset your sobriety) is different than GYE's bottom line. GYE includes deliberately watching pornography in its bottom line while SA only includes masturbation (to finish) and sex with others. Of course SA includes *progressive victory over lust* which says we must abstain from all forms of lust from porn to second looks on the street to a few seconds of fantasy. The reason why the SA bottom line doesn't include porn is two fold:

a) If we constantly reset our sobriety especially in the beginning it will be much harder to get into solid sobriety time and get over that early hump of acting out and stopping over and over again.

b) Masturbation releases large quantities dopamine in the brain and is a much more powerful drug (scientifically) than watching some porn. We first get ourselves out of the more potent drugs and then work on the smaller ones. This not to say we advise watching porn in the beginning as we will see in number 2 of **The 18 Wheeler** we need to stop feeding the obsession right away. This is just to say that we don't reset our sobriety for watching porn without masturbation.

2. There is a difference of opinion among SA Old-Timers if we move up our bottom line to include other actions of lust as we progress in sobriety. There are those who say that the bottom line always remains the same, while others assert quite forcefully that we move it up with time. This issue is probably decided for each SA member by his individual sponsor. Roy K., the founder of SA, reset his sobriety when he was 28 years sober to 18 years due to an action of lust that he took at year 10. He did not reset it at the time that he took the action at year 10 only later. If he would have reset it at year 10 would he have stayed sober? Who knows. Guidance on this is always given by a sponsor.

3. The point of the 12-Steps is not to stop acting out, but work on the reasons behind our acting out. We act out due to a level of insanity, an obsession to the unreal, our inability to deal with our emotions, our defects of character, and a deep spiritual emptiness and hunger. The 12-Steps works on these things and completely remakes the person into a new and better version of himself. The main point of the steps is not to get us sober, but to *keep* us sober and to give us recovery (relief from the problems mentioned above).

4. Do we get sober (for a week, 2, or 3) and then work the steps, or do we work the steps in order to get sober?

Again it depends who you ask, some sponsors will say that you must get some sobriety time under your belt first before starting to work the steps. We do this by going to many meetings, participating in fellowship, making tons of phone calls, using the 18 Wheeler, and in general just "white knuckling" it. Those who are of this opinion believe that it is only possible to properly work the steps when we are not drunk on our drug. Other sponsors will say that you need to work steps one, two, and three *in order to get sober*. These sponsors agree that working the steps while sober proves much more effective, but they hold that the first 3 steps will get us sober in the first place.

**** "White Knuckling" refers to just using force and willpower to stop.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler
Posted by elya k - 27 May 2025 02:02

The 12 steps is a spiritual journey to accept that where I am today is where I am supposed to be. I cannot change the past and I cannot control the future and live every day for today. I get rid of resentments in step 4, get rid of negative character traits in 6,7, make amends, take inventory and help others. Therapy on the other hand explores the link between childhood experiences, trauma, abuse, how it leads to addiction. In order to heal we have to heal the trauma which causes us to have low self esteem, feel lonely, feel we're not good enough. Or if we grew up with no rules we feel entitled to act out when we feel lonely, angry, hungry or tired.

The goal is emotional sobriety, not just stopping acting out. Emotional sobriety is living a life of serenity, knowing what tools to use when there are bumps in the road and accepting reality, instead of wallowing in fantasy.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 28 May 2025 10:37

[elya k wrote on 27 May 2025 02:02:](#)

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Thank you, very well said.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 30 May 2025 12:22

Here is **18 Wheeler** number two, IY"H I will post comments on it in the near future.

2. Stop feeding the obsession. This meant eliminating from what was under my control all printed and visual materials (these days internet) and other symbols of my tyranny. I had to stop feeding my lust by looking around, in my use of television, movies, and music; and by using and listening to the language of lust.

I also had to stop living only and always inside my own head. That's one of the great fringe benefits of going to a lot of meetings. Most of us sexaholics really live on the inside of our heads; we're seldom in the real world.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler
Posted by kavey - 01 Jun 2025 14:12

[azivashacheit101 wrote on 30 May 2025 12:22:](#)

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Love this

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Re: The 18 Wheeler
Posted by azivashacheit101 - 04 Jun 2025 16:02

comments on the second of The 18 Wheeler:

1. Many of us think that we will first stop acting on the the big fish such as porn and masturbation and then move on to smaller things such as street lust, YouTube lust and the like. While it's true that stopping the bigger things are much more important, we must realize that taking in any lust whatsoever is still feeding the obsession and making it more and more difficult to remove ourselves from it. We must give up and surrender lust altogether. (we will IY"H discuss surrender later) This does not mean we will never lust again or that taking in a little bit of lust is a reason to just give up and go act out; it means that the more we give up lust and stop taking it in the better and faster we will heal.

2. Living inside our head- This is one of our biggest problems yet very difficult to explain to the one who is still inside his own head. Until we have gotten out of our head for a bit and seen what that felt like, we cannot understand or realize how much we are eating ourselves up on the inside by living inside ourselves. Only after spending some time in SA do we realize how far we have come and how much better, good, and free we feel.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler
Posted by azivashacheit101 - 08 Jun 2025 13:41

Here is the 3rd of **The 18 Wheeler**:

3. Participate in the fellowship of the program. I don't know of anyone who can stay sober and free of the obsession of lust without such a fellowship. I couldn't. *Fellowship* is where the action is, where the magic is, where connection is, where feeling *part of* is.

At first, all I could do was *attend* meetings. Then I followed the suggestion of getting involved in the mechanics of meetings: setting up, cleaning up, holding jobs such as literature chairman, treasurer, or secretary. Getting involved made me feel I could be *part of*, instead of *apart from*-my old nemesis. Later, I would be able to go out for coffee, start meetings with others one-on-one, and begin the painful but necessary process of growing up by coming out.

While what is written here mainly applies to addicts who are members of SA, non-addicts can also use this tool to a lower degree. The next post will IY"H speak to that.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler
Posted by azivashacheit101 - 09 Jun 2025 13:26

SA fellowship is extremely important. While the actual meat and potatoes of the program are the

12 steps, fellowship has many benefits including but not limited to:

- Getting out of our own heads
- Bringing our lust to the light (in other words speaking about it clearly and not hiding "*light kills lust*")
- It helps us get sober
- It helps us stay sober
- It reminds us what acting out did to us when we see newcomers still suffering
- It helps us do the work as a group instead of alone
- It keeps us on top of our game and reminds us to actually work the program
- Sharing our emotional pains and discomforts instead of medicating them with porn and masturbation
- Sharing our defects of character and shortcomings which break the power they have over us
- Keeps us from getting lonely and sinking into despair
- Helps us help others which in turn keeps us sober
- Helps us internalize how insane our acting out is when we hear ourselves speak it out to another

There are many other benefits to participating in the fellowship of the program which makes it a crucial part of recovery.

GYE members who are not addicts (and also the ones who are addicts and did not yet come to the realization that they will not get sober without actually joining SA in person) can still use this tool to a smaller degree. There are many members who read posts on the forum but do not post on it themselves. Those people would greatly benefit if they come out of their shells and actually start posting. You will join the GYE family and feel *a part* of rather than *apart from*. People benefit from posting about their own struggles and also by helping others such as by leaving encouraging comments and giving helpful advice.

Those who are already posting on the forum can benefit to an even greater degree by posting in other ways. If you mainly post your own struggles (both lustful and in general) continue doing that but also consider starting to help others by leaving encouraging comments, thank yous and karma plusing. Those who are mostly helping others will benefit greatly by starting to post about their own struggles and bringing it to the light. Don't only post about sexual struggles, but also all emotional and life struggles which lead us to act out.

Many people on GYE privately exchange phone numbers and speak on the phone on a regular basis. Those who are really serious about changing their behavior should really consider doing so. (You won't die from risking your anonymity.) Privately message those who have posted many times on the forum and gained a bit of your trust and start making phone calls. Phone calls are a complete game changer and the benefits are enormous!

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Re: The 18 Wheeler
Posted by azivashacheit101 - 11 Jun 2025 14:08

The next two of the 18 Wheeler are #4 Powerlessness and #5 Surrender. Both of these are the bedrock of SA and we will spend a considerable amount of time on each of them. We will start with Powerlessness, which is really step 1 (**We admitted that we were powerless over lust — that our lives had become unmanageable**), and will include Step 1 as brought in The 12&12 and the White Book.

Afterwards I will IY"H share some of my own comments and limited ESH (experience, strength, and hope) on the subject.

We will then get involved in the concept of unmanageability which is the second half of step 1. Finally, for all of us nudnicks (myself included) we will discuss a why admitting powerlessness can still be compatible with the concept of bechirah.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler
Posted by azivashacheit101 - 12 Jun 2025 14:11

Here is the fourth of the **18 Wheeler**:

4. Admit powerlessness. At the very beginning, all I could do when the compulsion struck was cry out, "I'm powerless; please help me!" Sometimes a hundred times a day. Powerlessness was the most beautiful word in the world to me then as I was coming to experience the First Step at depth. It still is. Later I would discover that I was really powerless over *me*.

The more I had fought lust before, the more it fought back; all my willpower seemed to empower lust rather than hold it in check. Reading Step One in the *Twelve and Twelve* helped me see that my powerlessness was the "firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built" (p. 21) I finally stopped trying to stop. Only by admitting lust's power over me to others in the fellowship could I receive power over my lust.

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Re: The 18 Wheeler

Posted by chosemyshem - 12 Jun 2025 15:02

[azivashacheit101 wrote on 12 Jun 2025 14:11:](#)

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Interested in hearing where this goes.

As an outsider to SA, I always thought the powerlessness thing made sense. Clearly, I have zero self control. My struggles with porn have taught me that well.

And so but while I acknowledged that emotionally, it wasn't something I could accept intellectually. And it struck me that my emotional acknowledgment that I cannot control myself didn't seem very healthy.

The way I've come to understand this, entirely through Dov's lectures, writings, and phone

conference, is that it's ridiculous to say we are completely powerless over ourselves. That's a cop-out. He explained we are powerless over life. Life is always going to have it's things that rub us the wrong way. As addicts, our response is lust, but it's not lust we are powerless over, it's life.

And this of course makes perfect sense, since it's a tenet of our faith that G-d is in absolute control of our lives and everything that happens to us is precisely calculated and for the good. So the solution is to learn how to surrender your life to G-d's will - as made manifest by, well, your life. To stop being fearful and resentful, and to accept G-d's will with joy (to do his will as our own is not a christian idea, it's a mishna).

We also cannot control lust. That is to say, we cannot use it in measured amounts. We can't watch five minutes of porn and then walk away and forget about it like others can do. But the ikkar is the powerlessness over life?, not lust.

Does that make sense? Isn't that radically different than saying we are powerless over ourselves/lust?

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Re: The 18 Wheeler
Posted by azivashacheit101 - 13 Jun 2025 11:22

[chosemyschem wrote on 12 Jun 2025 15:02:](#)

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I believe that we are both powerless over lust and powerless over ourseves but in different

ways. IY"H some of the future posts will speak to this at a greater length.

In short we are specifically powerless lust as we cannot control and enjoy it; once we take in some of our drug we become insane and a whole new mindset takes over-we just need more and more. We also have a crazy obsession towards lust even before taking any in, and we are different than normal people.

Powerless over ourselves means we are malajusted to life, we don't know how to deal with our emotions or "life going the wrong way" so we turn to our drug to save us.

Most times we have huge egos which are killing us and making life unreasonably painful, but we don't even realize it because we are always stuck in our own heads.

Many times (not always) we are over-thinkers and constantly destroy ourselves by over philosophizing and complicating everything.

We are almost always controlling (see the post on this thread about step 3 and read the attachments from the Big Book [it's my11th post on this thread]), and feel a need to control everything from all the people and situations around us to our own minds and thinking patterns.

We cannot accept ourselves or life on life's terms and have no clue hoe to let go and let G-d,

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