

Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda

Posted by Steve - 07 Dec 2009 21:36

Letakein and maybe others couldn't get back on clearly, and wanna know what went on. Duvie & Shimi, I hope you won't mind, but here's what I can offer (it may not be an exact summary as) :

We got thru the white pages Up to "Natural Law," but most of the discussion was back and forth among many of us trying to resolve issues we had with the difficulties of step 4. Beside the pain and fear of slipping or falling because of it, the biggest concern voiced was that we felt we were reverting back into selfishness by dwelling on these, afraid we were undoing our hard work to get here. Shimi basically said (and this is my paraphrasing, not verbatim) that nevertheless, ~~much as a record of my reaction. Hope I don't bore anyone.~~ we must validate those feelings even if they come from selfishness, because without facing them openly, they will continue to haunt and own us, making our freedom impossible to achieve.

In dealing with that, we discussed that NOW there is a big difference in revisiting these feelings that we had thought we had healthily buried. Part of the answer to our question about reawakening the RID we tried to get rid of, and to be protected from it's effect this time, is the idea we spoke out on the call that we **HAVE GONE THRU STEPS 1-3 ALREADY**. That's the diff between now and earlier. We have HKB"H's power behind us now. It is not up to us, the success never was, so we shouldn't be afraid of failure. And we have the power of our fellowship and the chevra with us. We are not the same people as we were before we started the call, or when we lived thru those experiences we resent. We have grown, we are bigger now.

We are not looking into the past and those feelings in order to climb back into ourselves - we are doing to COME OUT AND GET CLEAN, once and for all. Is it selfish to want a better life? I don't think so. It's only selfish if I don't want it for anybody else.

I also saw from today's call that I'm shortchanging myself by trying to do step 4 without feeling the pain. Shimi reminded us we are on a mission to learn to feel again, not to run away from real life and escape. So I'm not listing my hurts in third person anymore. And if I see the resentment comes from selfishness, well, **Dang nab it** I'm only human, and I'm gonna report the past and validate my former feelings, THEN deal with the mussar later. There are some on my list that **I DESERVE** to be angry at, the manipulating little b**tards, then there are the ones that sound down-right stupid to me when I voice them (like resenting the fact that my wife won't rub my feet), but they'll ALL be there.

At the end of the call, there was a wonderful word that Shimi used to explain the catharsis at the end of the White book story we read. "The Toughest Act in Town." That word was "**Closure.**"

I really took to Shimi's point - choosing "closure" by courageously allowing ourselves the vulnerability of "surrendering our fear and pride," instead of doing what we thought was "safe," and burying our feelings (which just leads to resentment). And the way to closure seems to be thru humility, like the man in the story, by connecting with humanity.

What that means to me, to help me get thru Step 4, is that once I get thru the first two columns in which I **MUST** feel and allow myself the release of that hurt, once I begin the third and forth columns, then I'll be using humility and honesty to examine objectively how I did "react to the world" in the past on each part, and evaluate how it was good or bad for me in the end. Maybe I can stop reacting like that small hurt child, and stop being a demanding egotist (even if my feet hurt), and have a new outlook on life so that I can choose how to react in the future in better ways. I think that's part of the freedom, and the "being a man" that we seek.

I think we are all sensitive enough to tell in our own hearts if a particular reaction brings **closure**, or falsifies it with **more burying and denial**. So the **brutal honesty thingy** will be put into a lot of practice now.

Well, that's my take on today's call. Anyone wanna add (or subtract) please join in!

Anywho, I look forward to the day when I will own my past so much that I can actually thank HKB"H for putting me thru the worst of it, cuz it's made me who I am today, and I like to think I'm more sensitive because of it, tho far from perfect. And maybe that's part of His plan for me, cuz I need what I've lived thru to do my job in this lifetime.

"see" y'all tomorrow!!

Steve

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Re: Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda
Posted by letakain - 07 Dec 2009 21:46

Thank you SO MUCH!

i see what you mean about it being different after steps 1-3.

it's wierd to just reverse my hiding feelings that i've done my whole life. being allowed to feel hurt and humiliation and anger and resentment is the opposite of what i've done my whole life.

i trust the program.

i've jumped and now i'm midair watching my life flash by with every hurt.

The wind stings my eyes but it's also exhilarating.

Hashem, Please help us all to be able to face this and to turn into better people because of it!

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Re: Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda
Posted by imtrying25 - 07 Dec 2009 21:55

[letakain21 wrote on 07 Dec 2009 21:46:](#)

i've jumped and now i'm midair watching my life flash by with every hurt.

The wind stings my eyes but it's also exhilarating.

Hashem, Please help us all to be able to face this and to turn into better people because of it!

You should know letakain that from all the people on this forum i gain so much chizzuk from you. Your attitude is just awesome. Although you havent been posting recently , and i know for good reason, when you do it really is mechazek me. Thanks.

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Re: Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda
Posted by Steve - 07 Dec 2009 21:58

letakein -

did u get my email thru Guard about how I was finally able to share your Falling Leaves Poem? if not, please ask him for it. I am still enamoured by that piece, and i'm so happy i was able to share it with others.

Keep up the good work. I think one day you should start a poetry section off the Home Page, and put in a collection of all your stuff from all the months you've been here.

Good luck with your list! Make sure you land in a soft place...

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Re: Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda
Posted by Tomim2B - 07 Dec 2009 23:10

Hey Steve,

Since my synopsis has already been written out, I might as well post it here anyways:

I'd like to share some of my notes on today's discussion. I don't know if we should expecting a summary in our email as we get daily. So for anyone who's been following the calls or summaries, here's something:
You beat me to it! Great job! Thanks for having us all in mind!

In the opening of the call, following through on the 4th step, some of the members had shared certain awarenesses that they've noticed. We've brought up that in digging through past resentments, feeling them again, it's as if we need to go back into "our heads" and our selfish state of mind. Being that our ego is the source for our resentments in the first place, it would almost seem impossible to re-feel those feelings without putting our ego back in play. Someone brought up, that if not properly guided, this too can lead back not only to an increased sense of self, but also into dealing with full blown Restlessness Irritability and Discontent, and he requested direction in leading this away from what might be considered dangerous for the addict.

We discussed that at first glance, it may seem to the addict that he's regressing from the state he's been working on for several week. Here, for several weeks he's been working on cutting his ego out of the picture, and all of a sudden - step 4, he's crawling back into the mess of his mind! "It would almost seem that the best route would be to start with step 4, get out all the ego, and only later to move on with steps 1, 2, and 3!" - "Why do he build up to step 3, only then, to move back into this state of mind?" someone asked. How is the addict to handle such a shift?

In answering, we said that when working the 4th step, we're not walking in empty handed (as we were when we first came to the program). It's specifically since we're coming from steps 1, 2, and 3, that we're prepared to move in this direction. The reason we're able to make a "fearless" moral inventory is because we walk into this stage holding the hand of our Higher Power - Hashem, the very one we've surrendered ourselves powerless to, the one we've turned our lives over to! Since we've already done steps 1, 2, and 3, (and we continue to do them) we have been given all the tools to move forward with this! If we're standing here, we

can do this! We're ready! We have Hashem!

We further discussed how we are to view our past resentments, whether as a third party considering this to be coming from a "part" of ourselves - and not taking sides, or as digging up all the feelings that we've felt at the time, regardless if we are now aware that our resentments are ego based. Shimi indicated, that in doing step 4, if we "stand on the side" we continue to numb out our feelings and we aren't doing it properly. The point is to feel again, whether our feelings were justified or not! Only after we feel them can we then put them in perspective!

Shimi added, that in listing resentments, we might find benefit in not only listing things which openly brought up feelings of resent, but also to list things which on the surface seemed very positive but led to results which weren't so pleasant in our eyes. Someone asked if there is a point in listing life's experiences in general (including good experiences). "It would seem that if it's all about 'feeling', we should also be stressing all the positive experiences that we can dig up! Why is it specifically the bad experiences we're looking for? In an inventory, don't we go through 'everything' - both good and bad?".

To this, another member answered by refocusing our intent in step 4: Aside from feeling again, we specifically want to feel the negative aspects of our life. "Why?" So we can then remove which has been weighing us down. Thought there is benefit in seeking out the positive aspects of our lives as well, it's specifically the negative aspects we have to identify. Duvid Chaim's mashal about removing the thorns we've gotten while falling into a cactus was explained by Steve in a most beautiful way.

We read a few pages from the Whitebook where a man tells his story about carrying around a certain resentment which he had to keep covering, coating over, and drowning out with something. In the story, the man was led to numb his resentment by bingeing on food and television. In our story, with our own addiction, it's lust we turn to! The story tells us that instead of burying our resentments (which we're responsible for - because they happen in our own minds, as the story tells us.), we've got to bring them out and deal with them appropriately.

Someone asked how we are to know when it's considered drowning it out - the kind of thing we want to stay way from, and dealing with it, saying: "Can't a person bury out all difficult relationships he has with people by simply plastering a smile on his face instead of showing his true feelings? That's called dealing with it!? Inside he's still resentful and the outside is a pose! We speak about "responding" vs. "reacting", but can't our response also be numbing what we are supposed to feel? How are we to know when it's considered a healthy response?"

Shimi answered so beautifully! "When there's closure!"

What a call, Shimi! Thank you!

With love,

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Re: Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda
Posted by letakain - 09 Dec 2009 15:07

steve:

thank you so much for your email!

it really gives me strength to be good when i know i'm helping others!

every comment that someone writes on the forum or in an email about this gives me such
chizuk!

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Re: Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda
Posted by Steve - 09 Dec 2009 16:31

Letakein:

You're welcome, but I meant to thank YOU. You've got real talent there. That's one of the
greatest personalized gifts from HKBH one can get. To have a talent and develop it to help
inspire our fellow yidden or just to make them happy for a few minutes - that's called GIVING

BACK to Hashem BIG TIME!! I just know you're going to have a great life giving to people thru your poetry.

As someone wrote in my High School Yearbook:

"I hope you'll use your talents for good and not for evil."

Ok, he used to climb on top of the lockers in a straight jacket and sing. And he might have been the guy in a funny mask who robbed a local bank and then fled to canada. Seriously. A bunch of us suspected him.

But he did write that in a moment of clarity.

You know, I think I have a very strange past....

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Re: Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda
Posted by letakain - 09 Dec 2009 18:05

me 2... strange

hmm... no more college.....very tempting!

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Re: Monday Dec. 7th quicky update thingy kinda
Posted by Steve - 09 Dec 2009 18:49

[letakain21 wrote on 09 Dec 2009 18:05:](#)

me 2... strange

hmm... no more college.....very tempting!

Don't quit school!! Think of it as another "This too Will Pass..."

the gye crowd is trying to convince me to become an author, i see...

Hope you're also taking creative writing courses. There's a lot of Chachmas Goyim to learn from, and now's a good chance...

Anyway, I loved school. 5th grade was the best 4 years of my life...

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