

Good intentions

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 19 Apr 2012 21:34

Hi everybody,

After almost 6 months of observing this forum as a guest, I finally decided to introduce myself (...painfully shy - even in anonymity). I'm not a youngster - over 40 years on the roller coaster; so obviously my addiction started long before the internet. Like many of you, I've tried and failed over and over, but B"H never gave up. Until finally Hashem helped me discover GYE. I had a good streak of 168 days which ended this week (still not ready to say "f-e-l-l"). I am starting again be"H. The following is my 3-point plan, based on what I learned on this forum.

I am using a Mishne in Pirkei Avos to remember these 3 points:

Im ein ani li mi li - I must avoid all forms of lustful images and thoughts at all times.

Uchshe'ani le'atzmi moh ani - I must surrender my lust to Hashem and pray and ask for his help.

Ve'im lo achshav eimosai - Forget about yesterday or tomorrow - one day at a time.

Looking forward to meet you

MT

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 Oct 2013 01:12

I saw a vort on last week's parsha from a holy rabbi - geared towards old-timers:

Q: Why did Hashem wait until Avraham was 99 before commanding him to do brit milah?

A: Hashem wanted to teach future generations that one is never too old to start being a shomer habrit.

MT

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Dov - 22 Oct 2013 02:25

Thank G-d my problem was not and is not a '*shmiras habris*' issue, no matter how desperate some people I have come across have been to frame it as such to me. All the years I saw it that way, I got sicker and sicker and worse and worse.

I am a sober sexaholic, plain and simple. And I know many other sober ones like me, as well as many more suffering ones who are *not yet* sober. So many of them are held tightly into the old, sick holding pattern of 'obsession painted holy', 'the Nuclear Reset Button', and other excuses to fight and stay sick...and it is all based on BS. Fear, shame, and ignorance. Those are b'ochreinu. And all of them can be tools of 'kedusha', nebach.

Seriously!

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Dov - 22 Oct 2013 02:28

BTW, I have a sweet vort from a few parsha's ago, actually two. One about recovery and one about marriage that has nothing to do with addiction recovery directly...

Should I post them here?

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by tehillimzugger - 22 Oct 2013 16:16

Dov, with all due respect [and that's a LOT!]. Whether you choose to view it as a bris issue or not is your choice, and perhaps your choice is a valid one. The fact remains that it IS a bris issue.

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 Oct 2013 17:47

[Dov wrote:](#)

Thank G-d my problem was not and is not a '*shmiras habris*' issue, no matter how desperate some people I have come across have been to frame it as such to me. All the years I saw it that way, I got sicker and sicker and worse and worse...

Dear Dov,

Welcome to GYE!

The GuardYourEyes Program in a Nutshell:

GuardYourEyes uses a unique approach to help people, by recognizing that there are many different levels in the struggle for “Shmiras Ainayim” and “Shmiras Habris”...

(Perhaps you're on the wrong forum?)

Hatzlacha

MT

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 Oct 2013 17:49

[Dov wrote:](#)

BTW, I have a sweet vort from a few parsha's ago, actually two. One about recovery and one about marriage that has nothing to do with addiction recovery directly...

Should I post them here?

Whatever ya say, Dov!

MT

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Dov - 22 Oct 2013 22:06

To my friends MT and TZ, I want to say that *of course* masturbating compulsively is a bris issue, too. But my point is that there are a huge number of guys for whom seeing their struggle as what it is not, is the *main* thing holding them in the problem. I meet guy after guy who keeps using porn and sex with himself and does not get clean because he *insists* on seeing the entire thing as about kedushas haBris.

There are many sweet chassidishe guys and yeshivishe guys I can connect you with on the phone who will tell you that the big change came for them when they finally realized that their religious problem was actually not mainly a religious one. In other words, that their issue was *not* really that they are resho'im. Now, they may have indeed been resho'im (and may still be, depending on your definition of that)! But they came to see that this was not the issue, as I will be"H explain.

Now, for many sweet, good yidden, it sounds crazy to say that "being a rosho is not your main problem". It sounds like one is saying goodness doesn't matter, c"v. Not true.

Yes! Their (our) behavior was bad. Very bad sin. But once they realized that *it was also crazy and stupid* from a totally Derech Eretz perspective, they were able to quit and get into recovery. And in recovery they are. And life is amazingly changed. And they are clean - or at least cleaner than ever.

Until that conclusion, they could not stop sinning, at all, and were mostly getting worse.

And telling them that their recovery 'is really just Teshuvah dressed up in plain clothes' is just as silly as thinking that an addict says he or she is an addict just to kill the guilt that depresses them and makes them sin again. It's missing the point entirely.

Finally, a moshol:

There are many things that are ossur and *also* dangerous and unhealthy. But when Chaza"I say **chamira sakanta me'isura**, does that mean that there is no issur? No. There is surely still issur -

but their point is that the sakonah is far more relevant than the issur, even though sakonah is a *secular* issue (and so it is distinct from 'issur').

Same thing here. There is vadai pure evil and hence issur itself in sex and lust addiction - unlike alcoholism. And for the normal Jew there is Teshuvah for the issur. But for the addict, there is no Teshuvah, for Teshuvah will not work. For the addict there is sakonah. He is sick and will not get well. The illness **overrides** the issur aspect completely. *Sakanta chamirah me'isura*.

You may think this a stretch, but I don't: The Ba'al Shem Tov used an emphasis on *simcha* and *kabolah* to raise the downtrodden masses of his time. What about telling them to learn a little more Torah? What about "*Hafoch boh v'hafoch boh dekula boh*"? What about "*ki heim chayeynu*"? No, that would spell churban. He dealt with the sakonah of the times in his way. And see the rebirth that came from it.

Many addicts in recovery discover that the sakonah must be the **only** focus - for the addict has crossed into sakonah from issur. His sanity and future are in the balance, unlike the sinner. That is his 1st step.

I think it is a tragedy that some people in recovery tell non-addicts that "you must come to believe you are powerless and addicted". They are not. There is issur and non-addicts need to fight and fight! But addicts are the ones for whom that does not work. Their own stories - not the pontification of others - must tell them this. They (we) are failures, and eventually see that. They alone, need to depend on G-d and cannot. And that is all the 12 steps are for. Letting go and getting a G-d.

The drinker and masturbator both play G-d in their addiction and lifestyle, no matter how religious they may be, though they do not see it.

But a normal person just sins.

This seems like a very fine hair to split, but it is the difference between recovery and more of the same garbage, for so many I meet. And I have been meeting at least one new guy a week now, on the phone - just on GYE. And nearly all tell the very same sad story. I am not making this up.

'Chizzuk' will kill them, their families, and their future - if they are addicts.

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 Oct 2013 22:33

I hear you, Dov (and I've heard it many times before). But what do you suggest for people who struggled with these issues and found the 'chizzuk' approach to be very helpful? Should they start their own private forum for like-minded individuals, or should they just shut up and let Dov explain it his way, and eventually they may end up needing Dov's approach?

I hate getting into such discussions, but you confuse me time and again. So please maybe you can straighten out us 'queer' individuals.

Sincerely

MT

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Dov - 22 Oct 2013 22:34

And whatever GYE says it is, it is far more than that. There are at least 30 guys I know so far who are cleaner than ever and whose lives are different, who will tell you that they owe it all to GYE. For they never would have found recovery without this place.

But in the same breath they would tell you that they would have foundered completely, had they remained here.

No shame in that, is there?

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 22 Oct 2013 22:42

(Our emails may have crossed each other so I am resubmitting my question.)

I hear you, Dov (and I've heard it many times before). But what do you suggest for people who struggled with these issues and found the 'chizzuk' approach to be very helpful? Should they start their own private forum for like-minded individuals, or should they just shut up and let Dov explain it his way, and eventually they may end up needing Dov's approach?

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Sincerely

MT

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by Dov - 22 Oct 2013 23:56

[Machshovo Tova wrote:](#)

I hear you, Dov (and I've heard it many times before). But what do you suggest for people who struggled with these issues and found the 'chizzuk' approach to be very helpful? Should they start their own private forum for like-minded individuals, or should they just shut up and let Dov explain it his way, and eventually they may end up needing Dov's approach?

I hate getting into such discussions, but you confuse me time and again. So please maybe you can straighten out us 'queer' individuals.

Sincerely

MT

First of all, I think the non-addicts are in the majority and have always said so openly. So they can't be the 'queer ones'. But u r right: addiction and recovery *do* get the limelight here, and I may be at fault for that. But there are other reasons, like Rabbi Twerski who holds that 12 steps are for everyone, and the fact that there is so much carry-over of 12 steps ideas and Torah concepts. So it gets all mixed up. Nu. Not so bad. But that's not addressing your question/request. So...

I'm gonna level with you, MT, and hope u take it with the grace I mean it with:

If GYE were advertised as the place for "Porn-using Jews who are truly sick in the head and hopeless", only a *fraction* of the people who come here would actually make it in the door. It is *precisely because* GYE holds out sweet false hope to guys who will do just about *anything* to not be real addicts, that those who *are* addicts come here at all!

A lot of guys (some addicts, some not) come here convinced they are 'working on kedushas haBris' - *but in reality, they are just holding onto their 'Bris' so **tightly** that they keep getting in*
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We often come here in shocking denial. It takes some of us a year or two of posting, vorting, and pontificating - and masturbating - to finally break down and give up the game and *get real help*.

GYE holds out the truth: Torah, chizzuk, and experience in recovery, too. The whole

shmorgasbord is here. Who needs what? That's up to us.

To the many *non*-addicts who come here, GYE is a lifeline of chizzuk and the only place they can open up and be honest at all. True, it's done hiding behind a fake name - but that's enough for him or her! It works to break the shame and whining and start the growing up. It's only for the real addicts (sickos like me) for whom usernames are a bad thing, I believe.

For the true addict who comes here in deep denial of being as ill as any college alcoholic - and accustomed to using Torah to cover up their awkward failure - GYE starts out as nothing but a pious, new 'fig leaf'. But eventually many of them come around and wake up. I have watched many do that.

At least they are here.

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by gibbor120 - 22 Oct 2013 23:59

I think dov would agree that chizzuk does work for some people. This site is for anyone who is struggling - addict or not. However, he has seen many an addict suffer for years trying to use chizzuk and just "try harder". If chizzuk works - great. But, if it does not - it's time to entertain the possibility that one is an addict and use different tactics.

Seeing it as a shmiras aynayim or shmiras habris issue doesn't work well for many addicts. When they instead see it as an "allergy to lust", and they start using some of the 12 step tools, they begin to recover.

I know that I took a big step forward when I started seeing my problem as a lust problem and stopped focusing on the issur. Of course it is true that it's ossur, but in the dynamics and treatment of addiction it is irrelevant, and can be a distructive to the process of recovery.

Seeing it as an allergy that can destroy my life just seems to work better. I love to understand

the reasons behind everything, but here too, I only got better when I stopped over-analyzing everything and became more pragmatic. Does it work or not? For many the addiction model works when years and years [sometimes decades] of chizzuk did not help, and may have actually been very harmful.

My 2 cents.

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by gibbor120 - 23 Oct 2013 00:03

I see dov beat me to posting.

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Re: Good intentions

Posted by MendelZ - 23 Oct 2013 00:26

Here's a quick share on the topic. Skip it if you're looking for anything earth-shattering.

Aren't "normal" people who sin also addicted to self? I guess they can get by even with indulging self, but why would they want to live like that?

Whether I am addicted to lust or not, it doesn't really matter. I AM "addicted" to self-preoccupation - as are most people today. The wisdom found in the 12 steps resonates with me and I see it as true in my own experience. That is without going to any meetings or reading any official material, just what's on these threads. It fits with what I know from Torah, chassidus and what I've learned from my Rebbeim. All of that together has changed the way I look at this struggle - for the better. Thank G-d!!

Chizuk helped me. It kept me engaged in searching for an answer. Without it, I would either be dead or really depressed. I highly doubt I would have ended up in SA but I did stumble upon GYE and all of the great insights therein. Step stuff, chizuk, the sharing of struggles, the chat

thingy, etc.

But chizuk also confounded my struggle. I relate to Dov's Nuclear Reset Button idea. And at the same time I think that without chizuk I never would have had the koach or will to take a new look at things.

Should they start their own private forum for like-minded individuals, or should they just shut up and let Dov explain it his way, and eventually they may end up needing Dov's approach?

He's just trying to help those who do need his approach to actually go get the help they need. I didn't get *convinced* that I need his approach. It just spoke for itself when chizuk alone wasn't doing it. But tovim hashnayim min ha'echad, no?

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