

Scared and Confused

Posted by unstoppable - 19 Dec 2012 19:01

I'm having a difficult time right now. I met with a potential sponsor today and I'm getting nervous to work the program harder. It's scary for me to commit to an intense regimen. It feels like I'm totally admitting that I'm a sexaholic and am totally powerless over lust. I feel like I'm going to be stuck in this crap for the rest of my life and will always have a name on me of being a sex addict. I feel like maybe I should just try to hide it again and live like that. I'm confused and scared.

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Re: Scared and Confused

Posted by Dov - 19 Dec 2012 19:27

Hey, chaver, your feelings are not strange at all. And I presume you are taking this step

There is a very interesting idea the dog trainers teach us. It's that right before a new skill is exchanged for an old one, the subject will make a last blazing effort to retry the familiar, old one. They call it the "Extinction Burst".

The cusp of change is probably the most uncomfortable place a person can be. Admit these concerns to your sponsor and you may find out he felt that way, too!

I'd like to respond with my own experience regarding each one of the concerns you wrote of, but will do that in the next post, bl'n, as I am at work now and just on a break.

Shalom friend,

Dov
because you see how 'great ' hiding it has worked for you till now...

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Re: Scared and Confused

Posted by Snow - 19 Dec 2012 19:49

Hi there -

Your wrote: "I feel like maybe I should just try to hide it again and live like that. I'm confused and scared."

Some things I have heard at SA meetings which I have found helpful & maybe you will too:

"I acted out enough. I stopped acting out & it is as if I got a coupon for 8 hours more a week of my life"

"Go ahead, go back out there.....we will still be here if you want to come back".

and as a former sponsor once when I almost acted out "Are you done?"

So....it really is up to you. If you came to a meeting & are speaking with a sponsor...chances are you need this.

As they say in SA....."if you think you have a drinking problem, you have a drinking problem."

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Re: Scared and Confused

Posted by What Should My Name Be? - 20 Dec 2012 04:05

Keep Climbing

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Re: Scared and Confused
Posted by Dov - 20 Dec 2012 04:06

It is not an intense regimen, it is a program for living free of your chains, that's all. There is no time clock and no race. You can move at a slow pace if you feel you do not need to freedom just yet, don't worry. I was a slow poke at first, but when life actually began to change to the better, I started working a bit harder.

Not a big deal, really.

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Re: Scared and Confused
Posted by nederman - 20 Dec 2012 16:08

[unstoppable wrote:](#)

I'm having a difficult time right now. I met with a potential sponsor today and I'm getting nervous to work the program harder. It's scary for me to commit to an intense regimen. It feels like I'm totally admitting that I'm a sexaholic and am totally powerless over lust. I feel like I'm going to be stuck in this crap for the rest of my life and will always have a name on me of being a sex addict. I feel like maybe I should just try to hide it again and live like that. I'm confused and scared.

If this is your recovery method of choice then you are not stuck.

If you really don't believe in the idea that you have no choice but to lust I can show you a

method which is based on the idea that you do have a choice but you just don't believe it yet. It takes about three weeks.

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Re: Scared and Confused

Posted by Dov - 21 Dec 2012 05:08

Misrepresenting the 12 step program is not the way to teach or share your experience, nederman. And it is not the way I prefer to help people who are experiencing a vulnerable time in their lives. Sharing your experience is great, but saying that the program is all about powerlessness is like saying that the Torah is all about sin. Torah lifts a Jew above sin *when he uses it* - and recovery lifts a sick person above his illness *when he uses it*, too. The 12 steps does not try to teach anyone that they 'have no choice but to lust'. And even if it *did*, it is clearly about freedom from lust obsession and not about bemoaning any weakness. All the sober people I know in recovery know that. And anyway, SA is not about stopping drinking - it is about staying free of drinking by living a different sort of life - a connected and integrated life. That's why after the 1st, none of the steps refer in any way to drinking or not drinking, as I point out repeatedly. Sure, the GYE 90-day chart crowd might see the usefulness of any tool as 'its ability to get me to stop' - but that is so short-sighted a view, and it really feeds into the problem itself. That's why I ask people to let go of their 90-day chart thing and to stop counting the days.

CBT may be an effective tool for that short-sighted holy grail of *stopping the drinking*...but the AA's discovered that drinking was only a *symptom* of their problem: separation from people and G-d was what had to change. CBT has nothing to do with that. In fact:

When Albert Ellis layed the foundations for CBT, he did that as a man who percieved the religious mindset as crippling and saw it as *the problem itself*. He was a staunch atheist (as I reference at the end of this post) and the attitude of 'freeing' people from the fetters of their dependency on G-d and others was the foundation of his work. The ancient Greeks (y'vonim) were the fathers of his theory, as discussed in The Philosophy of CBT (<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Hbmb8rOUbl0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=CBT+and+atheism&ots=SJVktWcKJc&sig=NfSbcD3av2Cx7MzmwV3lwM9Ymk8#v=onepage&q=CBT%20and%20atheism&f=false>)

As you know, CBT is based on the idea that *only you* give anything meaning - not G-d, but you yourself. That is a Torah concept? I think that Ellis saw the guilt in the world, and labeled it 'religion' itself. So he wrote the book "Sex Without Guilt. I saw that book years before recovery - and knew that I did not want atheism and 'freedom from G-d-dependence', no matter how bad

my sexual pain was. I believed that reading his book on my own and trusting my brain to tease apart the atheism deep in the attitudes of Ellis would be a tall order for me - a Jew already in turmoil with what I thought was my 'yetzer hora'.

In the program I came to see that my problem was exactly what I knew in my heart all along - just crazy. The program is not a place that teaches this - it is just the only place we are safe enough to actually admit it! Kind of funny, but sad, too. But you seem to see that attitude as a cop-out. Attractive to the gayvoh we may have that our intelligence can get us out of *anything* (for we can really trust **nobody**) - but it is just not true. Recognizing our individual limitations is not necessarily copping out. The Torah that Ellis laughed at is actually full of limitation-acceptance: a Jew has no ability to eat treif and stay spiritually intact the way that goyim can and do; a non-Cohen has no ability to stay safe in the K"K or doing the avodah; and it is not a woman's place to do some mitzvos.

You expressed to me that you prefer CBT to the 12 step program because you believed the answer had to come from Torah not from outside it (I guess 'outside it' means 12-steps, to you). I remind you that Ellis - the avowed atheist - is totally against Torah. In contrast, the concepts from the Oxford group that led to the spiritually secularist 12 step program, are at least *based* on Torah ideals. And it can be argued (as many do) that they are filtered out of Christian misunderstanding and very much in line with Torah.

In *early* recovery, the program offers the problem-drinker/luster a very safe place to come to terms with his total failure at controlling and enjoying lust the way that others around us seem to be able to. AA does not teach them that - its members teach *themselves* by drinking enough! 12 step meetings are a place where it's not shameful to admit that unlike other good people, *we* do not win this fight on our own. Denial of this is a problem everybody recognizes...I feel that encouraging a totally secular approach of self-reliance can feed into this denial and delay help for suffering families. And it teaches them a way to allow Hashem to help them win freedom from their chronic lusting problem. It will not work for a non-addict, for a non-addict can control and enjoy lust if He wants to, just as the average person can enjoy drinking alcohol.

You make it out in some of your posts that AA/SA fosters dependency on others to keep us sober, so we go to meetings to save us from our need to act out. That's not true. After a person is sober for at least a while and starts to work the steps, they begin to have a spiritual awakening. By the time they go through the steps (even imperfectly), they discover that life is really not all about lusting vs not lusting. That there is a real life here to be lived. And that G-d and people are a big part of it. They use the steps to be part of real life - and the struggle with drinking or lusting is nothing but a distraction from the real life they have.

As far as I can tell, CBT is farther from any Torah source and from Torah ideals than 12 steps is.

Do you have friends? Suggesting CBT for these (possible) addicts seems to advocate self-reliance above all else. Where does friendship fit into that *process*? Any tool that reinforces isolation as a solution to problems I see as just playing into the hands of *what the frum sex addict has been doing all along*. Avodas Hashem as it is described in the Torah and mitzvos is all about friends and needing people leading us to helping people. I wrote a couple of posts about Kibud av vo'eim and that issue.

My working the steps of SA and learning some humility from people, helped me see that my problem was not my yetzer hora at all, but *me*. My thinking had to change, as well as some basic beliefs I had accepted over the years. I had been living all those years isolated in my brain - that had to change. Yet you keep calling using other people as a tool to break the isolation, "dependence on others" and imply that it is teaching weakness. It's neither. It's just a tool for freedom from lust one day at a time, and for a great life.

In my addiction, I truly believed that honesty was the *worst* policy and that G-d knew worst, while I knew *best*. I basically trusted nobody but myself...though it was clear that I was my own worst enemy! This knot is so typical for the frum addict. And so, the program has as its main goal and focus: being useful to G-d and others. Not sobriety, chas v'Sholom, but growing up into what it calls 'sanity' (see the 2nd step).

In contrast, CBT seems to be just about one thing: "Feeling Good". (Hey, it sells.) But that is not the goal of the Torah. In Torah, feeling good is a *tool*, not a goal. It is an *indicator* of true surrender to truth and to G-d, not the big prize. Torah, like 12 steps (which is derech eretz), focuses on our usefulness to G-d and His people. To be integrated with the entire briyah. Wholeness. We may not get that fully in the program by the time we die - but we will not get that fully in Torah, either. Torah does not sell perfection - but it teaches us how to die trying. We do our part, and Hashem does the rest. We trust Him. And that is recovery as I know it, as well. I will always keep growing up in sanity and serenity - so I go to meetings. And as imperfect as it may be, my recovery flows out into my marriage, family, friendships, and (I hope) Klal Yisroel. If I were all about 'not lusting', I could still be a happy clam using meds, therapy, or whatever - and miss out on all this. Gevalt. Thank G-d I found SA.

Two references for you:

Existentialism (at least atheistic existentialism) does not argue that meaning does not exist, only that it does not exist out there in the real world. All meaning is human-constructed. You have complete freedom to interpret events however you like (a freedom that some find nauseating.)

CBT similarly places interpretive control in the hands of the individual. The premise is that thoughts lead to emotions (which lead to behaviors), and we can learn to control our thoughts—even if they've become habit. We're not at the mercy of an emotional system automatically placing valuation on experiences.

from <http://lornareiko.wordpress.com/tag/atheism/>

and

The Enlightened Atheist

An interview with Albert Ellis

Albert Ellis, a seminal thinker whose work on thought processes provides the foundation of cognitive psychology, is the only mental health professional to publicly rebut David Larson's work. We asked him to explain his thinking.

Q. Do you think there's a God? A. I became an atheist at 12 and still think, in all probability [voice rising], that there is no God, just as there is no Santa Claus, fairies, or angels. I found out in sixth grade that the world was created in billions of years of evolution. That knocked off my Sunday-school view that the world was created in seven days. So I said this is horseshit. And I stopped thinking about it.

Q. What about people who believe in God? A. Anybody who's an absolutist is an anti-scientist and takes things to nutty extremes. Religionists practically all do that underneath, but there are all kinds of religionists. The real bigots are off the wall, like in Iran.

Q. Isn't religion mixed with politics there? A. You're right. I think it's a basic disturbance, but of the people who have the disturbance, many more pick religion than atheism or skepticism, and religion exists because of this disturbance. Religion is just drive!

http://www.celebatheists.com/wiki/Albert_Ellis

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Re: Scared and Confused

Posted by nederman - 21 Dec 2012 08:21

[Dov wrote:](#)

Misrepresenting the 12 step program is not the way to teach or share your experience, nederman.

I am sorry but if you are going to slander me like that in public you need to spell out exactly what it is that I am misrepresenting. I can quote you the White Book where it says that the addict is not free to stop. Since he does stop with the group it obviously means that he is not free to stop without the group. This is your stuff, you are supposed to be an expert about this.

AGAIN: THE WHITE BOOK SAYS THAT AN ADDICT IS NOT FREE TO STOP WITHOUT THE GROUP.

I can even dig up old posts where you yourself wrote that you are incapable of stopping by yourself.

And it is not the way I prefer to help people who are experiencing a vulnerable time in their lives.

Sharing your experience is great, but saying that the program is all about powerlessness is like saying that the Torah is all about sin.

I never said "it's all about" anything. I said it's based on the belief that the addict has no choice without the group. The White Books says it. You read what I wrote and you thought to yourself "oh my G-d, is my program all about powerlessness?" I didn't even say the word "powerless". I said the addict in SA has no choice without the group, which is what the White Book says.

Are you really comfortable with SA literature or are there things that you would change? Nothing wrong with starting your own 12-step program.

Torah lifts a Jew above sin *when he uses it* - and recovery lifts a sick person above his illness *when he uses it*, too. The 12 steps does not try to teach anyone that they 'have no choice but to lust'. And even if it *did*, it is clearly about freedom from lust obsession and not about bemoaning any weakness.

What does the Torah have to do with the 12-step program? Didn't you yourself say that 12-step teaches derech erez (I can quote you on that?)

I never said the word "bemoaning." You are mind reading and labeling.

Of course it's about freedom. It's freedom through acceptance. But in order to accept you have to believe. If you don't believe that you have no choice when left to your own devices how can you ask for help?

All the sober people I know in recovery know that. And anyway, SA is not about stopping drinking -

Now you are misrepresenting SA. SA is also about stopping drinking. Are you going to convince someone to join SA by telling them that no part of SA is about stopping drinking? I think not. It's sobriety *and* recovery.

it is about staying free of drinking by living a different sort of life - a connected and integrated life. That's why after the 1st, none of the steps refer in any way to drinking or not drinking, as I point out repeatedly.

The steps build on each other. SA is about *all* the steps. Also, SA contains a lot more literature than just the text of the steps. And sobriety is mentioned many times.

There can be no doubt that sobriety is very important in the 12-step program.

Sure, the GYE 90-day chart crowd might see the usefulness of any tool as 'its ability to get me

to stop' - but that is so short-sighted a view, and it really feeds into the problem itself. That's why I ask people to let go of their 90-day chart thing and to stop counting the days.

And I agree with you. I can dig up an old post I wrote in which I said that I wouldn't be counting any more and where you agreed with me, which means you read that post.

CBT may be an effective tool for that short-sighted holy grail of *stopping the drinking...*

You have not a shred of evidence to believe that. You have never recovered through cognitive therapy, and you have a strong interest in disqualifying it because you have experience in SA and not in cognitive therapy. So you should not trust your judgement in this area. In fact you are misrepresenting cognitive therapy.

but the AA's discovered that drinking was only a *symptom* of their problem: separation from people and G-d was what had to change.

You have no evidence to believe that. You just think it's true because it *feel/s* true. It's called emotional reasoning.

CBT has nothing to do with that. In fact:

When Albert Ellis layed the foundations for CBT, he did that as a man who perceived the religious mindset as crippling and saw it as *the problem itself*.

Except that the Mesillas Yescharim says that you have to consider the pros and cons in order to win over the yetzer ha-ra, and he quotes a pasuk in the chumash that says that the rulers over the yetzer ha-ra say "let us enter into an accounting."

He was a staunch atheist (as I reference at the end of this post) and the attitude of 'freeing' people from the fetters of their dependency on G-d and others was the foundation of his work. The ancient Greeks (y'vonim) were the fathers of his theory, as discussed in The Philosophy of CBT

(<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Hbmb8rOUbl0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=CBT+and+atheism&ots=SJVktWcKJc&sig=NfSbcD3av2Cx7MzmwV3lwM9Ymk8#v=onepage&q=CBT%20and%20atheism&f=false>)

So what? Bill Wilson was a drunk, but he helped a lot of people too. Cognitive therapy is about skills, not beliefs. You can use cognitive therapy to help you be better (or worse!) at anything you want. It's like a training program.

As you know, CBT is based on the idea that *only you* give anything meaning - not G-d, but you yourself.

I don't know what meaning is.

CBT is based on the idea that your behavior is based on your perception of the world, not on the reality of the world, because you will never know the reality in all its facets.

That is a Torah concept?

Yes, that is why when someone dies a Jew says "Baruch Dayan ha-emes". Because he knows that his perception is not 100% correct and Hashem knows why it's best that the person died.

I think that Ellis saw the guilt in the world, and labeled it 'religion' itself. So he wrote the book "Sex Without Guilt."

I have never read it. I have only read books by David Burns. I am afraid that Ellis and Beck may be boring. I like Burns because he is very practical and easy to understand. And he also says the same things that are said in the Mesillas Yescharim. And he is not an atheist.

Maybe you are the one who has some preconceptions about cognitive therapy, because Ellis left a bad impression on you and you are generalizing. Maybe you were not born with infinite knowledge and you could use some more reading?

I saw that book years before recovery - and knew that I did not want atheism and 'freedom from G-d-dependence', no matter how bad my sexual pain was.

I don't want it either, but Judaism says that if we sinned or not it was our choice. On the phone you told me that sexual addiction is not a religious problem. For me all problems are fundamentally religious problems because I believe that the Torah is the blueprint for the world, so it does actually encompass everything. I just learned some cognitive skills to help me actually *do* the Mesillas Yescharim.

In my view of the world sexual addiction is a sin and cognitive therapy teaches you skills so you can do teshuva and also be happy and successful as an frum yid.

I believed that reading his book on my own and trusting my brain to tease apart the atheism deep in the attitudes of Ellis would be a tall order for me - a Jew already in turmoil with what I thought was my 'yetzer hora'.

Good thing you didn't do it. Instead you read Bill Wilson who believed he fundamentally had no choice. Did you know that Christians actually *believe* that? It is a fundamental belief of a christian that G-d sent them his only son because the Jews could not possibly keep all the commandments? You felt confident that Christian writing would not influence you negatively? Or maybe you just stopped worrying about it because you were so happy you got sober and this *must* be the only solution to addiction because it's the one that *you* found?

In the program I came to see that my problem was exactly what I knew in my heart all along - just crazy. The program is not a place that teaches this - it is just the only place we are safe enough to actually admit it! Kind of funny, but sad, too. But you seem to see that attitude as a cop-out.

No, you used the word "cop-out" because you are afraid that it might be a cop-out. I didn't say it's a cop-out. The White Book of SA says that the addict is not free to stop (all by himself.) I can get you the quote.

Think about what you say at the meetings: "I am powerless over lust, etc." I heard you the many times that you said that powerless doesn't mean he has no choice, it means you cannot *use* porn like healthy people, fine. But think about it: what does that mean? Let's say you use it, and you are on drink number N. If you cannot *use* it that means *you have no choice* but to masturbate *after that point*. I think you do believe this, but you don't seem so happy believing it, and I am beginning to think that it's because rationally you think it's not strictly true.

I think ChaimCharlie who was here and went into SA had the right attitude. He said that he doesn't believe he is really "powerless" but for all intents and purposes he is. Why does it bother you?

Attractive to the gayvoh we may have that our intelligence can get us out of *anything* (for we can really trust **nobody**) - but it is just not true.

I never said I had gayvoh. You are reading my mind there. Really the only way you could know for sure if I have gayvoh is if you ask me, but you never asked me. You should have asked me and instead you guessed.

I find cognitive therapy pretty humiliating. When I found out that I was just a very gullible person and the yetzer ha-ra was just pulling the wool over my eyes (that I did have a choice, and without a group,) I felt pretty low, and I still do. I was happier when I was in SA because I knew that I had an important job to do, which was to shoulder the burden of this addiction and to be sober at any cost.

Recognizing our individual limitations is not necessarily copping out.

Oh, so now you recognize them. That means you believe that your choice is limited. I don't any more. I believe that your choice to be tzadik or rasha is not limited.

The Torah that Ellis laughed at is actually full of limitation-acceptance: a Jew has no ability to eat treif and stay spiritually intact the way that goyim can and do; a non-Cohen has no ability to stay safe in the K"K or doing the avodah; and it is not a woman's place to do some mitzvos.

You expressed to me that you prefer CBT to the 12 step program because you believed the answer had to come from Torah not from outside it (I guess 'outside it' means 12-steps, to you). I remind you that Ellis - the avowed atheist - is totally against Torah.

I have never read Albert Ellis. I have only read books by David Burns and he is not anti-religion. He is not even anti-AA because I found a case in one of his books where his patient goes to AA. And in other book (an earlier one) he speaks at length about how to recover from addiction using only cognitive therapy.

In contrast, the concepts from the Oxford group that led to the spiritually secularist 12 step program, are at least *based* on Torah ideals. And it can be argued (as many do) that they are filtered out of Christian misunderstanding and very much in line with Torah.

I think so too, I think that AA is a step up for a Christian because he admits that he has no idea what G-d is really like (and they don't,) and that it's a process of discovery, but they still kept the belief that they had no choice. The White Book says that an addict is not free to stop all by himself, I can get you the quote.

The Talmud says that a person has a choice to be tzadik or rasha.

In *early* recovery, the program offers the problem-drinker/luster a very safe place to come to terms with his total failure at controlling and enjoying lust the way that others around us seem to be able to. AA does not teach them that - its members teach *themselves* by drinking enough! 12 step meetings are a place where it's not shameful to admit that unlike other good people, *we* do not win this fight on our own.

There is never any shame in weakness. Shame only comes from betraying your own moral standards. The concept of "honesty" in SA is just acceptance. Honesty occurs when you acknowledge something that hurts.

Honesty is when a Jew says "I am not sick, I just find porn much more interesting than yiddishkeit." When a person cannot admit this it's because deep down he believes that porn *really is* better than yiddishkeit. But it's not true. For a yid with a wife and kids and a great Torah education *porn objectively is not better than yiddishkeit*. Cognitive therapy just allows him to see that, and then the problem is just gone.

Denial of this is a problem everybody recognizes...I feel that encouraging a totally secular approach of self-reliance can feed into this denial and delay help for suffering families.

It says in the Chumash that the rulers over their yetzer ha-ra say "let us enter into an accounting." So it's okay with Hashem but it's not okay with you?

And it teaches them a way to allow Hashem to help them win freedom from their chronic lusting problem. It will not work for a non-addict, for a non-addict can control and enjoy lust if He wants to, just as the average person can enjoy drinking alcohol.

Do you even have an unequivocal definition of what an addict is?

You make it out in some of your posts that AA/SA fosters dependency on others to keep us sober, so we go to meetings to save us from our need to act out. That's not true.

I don't make out anything. I write my opinion and you process it in such a way as to reawaken all your own insecurities about SA.

After a person is sober for at least a while and starts to work the steps, they begin to have a spiritual awakening. By the time they go through the steps (even imperfectly), they discover that

life is really not all about lusting vs not lusting. That there is a real life here to be lived. And that G-d and people are a big part of it. They use the steps to be part of real life - and the struggle with drinking or lusting is nothing but a distraction from the real life they have.

And they never stop going. It's a treatment, whereas cognitive therapy is a cure.

As far as I can tell, CBT is farther from any Torah source and from Torah ideals than 12 steps is.

It's because you don't understand it. You have never even become sober through cognitive therapy. Stick with SA.

Do you have friends? Suggesting CBT for these (possible) addicts seems to advocate self-reliance above all else. Where does friendship fit into that *process*?

I accept people as they are. I don't dictate how many friends they should have. The Torah says that you have a choice to be tzadik or rasha, unrelated to friends.

ATTENTION SEX ADDICTS: MAKE SURE YOU FIND OUT HOW MANY FRIENDS NEDERMAN REALLY HAS BEFORE YOU TRY ANY COGNITIVE THERAPY THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE.

Any tool that reinforces isolation as a solution to problems I see as just playing into the hands of *what the frum sex addict has been doing all along*.

The cognitive method for healing sexual addiction does not reinforce isolation because isolation is not the source of the addiction. In fact, cognitive therapy offers many effective and lasting remedies (as opposed to insight therapy) for interpersonal problems, such as inferiority complexes, etc.

Avodas Hashem as it is described in the Torah and mitzvos is all about friends and needing people leading us to helping people. I wrote a couple of posts about Kibud av vo'eim and that issue.

It's not *all* about that. It's all-or-nothing thinking. Avodas Hashem is about *many* different things.

My working the steps of SA and learning some humility from people, helped me see that my problem was not my yetzer hora at all, but *me*. My thinking had to change, as well as some basic beliefs I had accepted over the years. I had been living all those years isolated in my brain - that had to change. Yet you keep calling using other people as a tool to break the isolation, "dependence on others" and imply that it is teaching weakness. It's neither. It's just a tool for freedom from lust one day at a time, and for a great life.

It's both. It's dependence on having *some* meeting to go to *and* a tool for recovery.

In my addiction, I truly believed that honesty was the *worst* policy and that G-d knew worst, while I knew *best*. I basically trusted nobody but myself...though it was clear that I was my own worst enemy! This knot is so typical for the frum addict. And so, the program has as its main goal and focus: being useful to G-d and others. Not sobriety, chas v'Sholom, but growing up into what it calls 'sanity' (see the 2nd step).

You are mind reading. How can you be certain that I trust no-one but myself?

In contrast, CBT seems to be just about one thing: "Feeling Good". (Hey, it sells.)

As far as I can tell it's called "Feeling Good" because it's about depression. It does not explain how to best become a hedonist, it explains how to find some peace, mostly for depressed people, some of whom have been depressed for decades and get healed in a matter of weeks.

You are spitting on an excellent book you haven't even read.

But that is not the goal of the Torah. In Torah, feeling good is a *tool*, not a goal.

But the Mesillas Yescharim says that you have to weigh the pros and cons. That means you have to recognize that it's *good* for you, and you should do the *mitzvah* because it's good for you. Hashem told Avraham avinu that the Jews would come of mitzrayim with great riches, and it's brought down that the riches were really the Torah, not the gold. Therefore it's good for you and you should aspire to have it.

Plus it's brought down that the nations of the world hate us because we have the Torah, meaning they want it too because it's special.

It is an *indicator* of true surrender to truth and to G-d, not the big prize. Torah, like 12 steps (which is *derech eretz*), focuses on our usefulness to G-d and His people. To be integrated with the entire *briyah*. Wholeness.

You are just stating your personal hashkafa here. You have definitely picked up some original SA beliefs. Being useful is in the level of chassidus. You do not need to be a chasid in order to be a tzadik. It's false.

We may not get that fully in the program by the time we die - but we will not get that fully in Torah, either. Torah does not sell perfection - but it teaches us how to die trying. We do our part, and Hashem does the rest. We trust Him. And that is recovery as I know it, as well. I will always keep growing up in sanity and serenity - so I go to meetings. And as imperfect as it may be, my recovery flows out into my marriage, family, friendships, and (I hope) Klal Yisroel.

So does mine, pal. But you already made up your mind that it doesn't, haven't you?

If I were all about 'not lusting', I could still be a happy clam using meds, therapy, or whatever - and miss out on all this. Gevalt. Thank G-d I found SA.

You are mind reading. I never said that SA was all about "not lusting." And neither is the cognitive method. The cognitive method addresses all aspects of life, because cognitive distortions come up in all aspects of life. But you obviously are not familiar with the cognitive method because since it's not the 12-step program it *must* be half measures. Does that make sense?

Two references for you:

Existentialism (at least atheistic existentialism) does not argue that meaning does not exist, only that it does not exist out there in the real world. All meaning is human-constructed. You have complete freedom to interpret events however you like (a freedom that some find nauseating.)

CBT similarly places interpretive control in the hands of the individual. The premise is that thoughts lead to emotions (which lead to behaviors), and we can learn to control our thoughts—even if they've become habit. We're not at the mercy of an emotional system automatically placing valuation on experiences.

from <http://lornareiko.wordpress.com/tag/atheism/>

The Mesillas Yesharim says the same thing when it says that the yetzer ha-ra can make a lamp post look like a man and vice versa because of the darkness of earthiness.

There is no natural association between cognitive therapy and religion. That's because it does not teach any specific belief, except the belief that you can fool yourself about yourself and the rest of the world if you don't look carefully.

and

The Enlightened Atheist

An interview with Albert Ellis

Albert Ellis, a seminal thinker whose work on thought processes provides the foundation of cognitive psychology, is the only mental health professional to publicly rebut David Larson's work. We asked him to explain his thinking.

Q. Do you think there's a God? A. I became an atheist at 12 and still think, in all probability [voice rising], that there is no God, just as there is no Santa Claus, fairies, or angels. I found out in sixth grade that the world was created in billions of years of evolution. That knocked off my Sunday-school view that the world was created in seven days. So I said this is horseshit. And I stopped thinking about it.

Q. What about people who believe in God? A. Anybody who's an absolutist is an anti-scientist and takes things to nutty extremes. Religionists practically all do that underneath, but there are all kinds of religionists. The real bigots are off the wall, like in Iran.

Q. Isn't religion mixed with politics there? A. You're right. I think it's a basic disturbance, but of the people who have the disturbance, many more pick religion than atheism or skepticism, and religion exists because of this disturbance. Religion is just drive!

http://www.celebatheists.com/wiki/Albert_Ellis

Are you saying that you did not want to study Ellis because you were afraid to pick up some wrong beliefs, but you are telling me to study him? Does that make sense to you?

=====

Re: Scared and Confused

Posted by Dov - 21 Dec 2012 14:37

Good Morning!

Nederman, you wrote in a self-assured manner that my clouded opinion about what is a cop-out or isn't is *motivated* by my fears(

No, you used the word "cop-out" because you are afraid that it might be a cop-out.
) , you stated that you 'know' why I *want* to "disqualify" CBT, that I am slandering you (slander
) , you
suggest what bothers me about my own beliefs *and why* it bothers me, you accused me of
calling you a fool

Great, now you are calling me a fool.

Can you really believe in your own arguments when you need to resort to calling me names?

In addition, you write that you know why I 'process' what you write as you say I do: "because it
reawakens all [my] insecurities about SA."
sounds like a personal attack), you suggest that I think that I have infinite reasoning (

And after all this, you write that / am engaging in 'mind-reading'? Please reconsider.

Later on you write that I accuse you of having gayvoh. I regret if I actually implied that you have
gayvoh, but I was not referring to you there, but the potential SA members who have a hard
time getting into recovery. Besides, I assume that you are subject to gayvoh as most of us are.
With the tools at your disposal, are you now impervious to mind-twisting pride that most others
need to struggle with? I find that hard to believe - and so I see it as no insult at all even if I did
suggest you have the challenge of gayvoh. But if I directly implied you had a gayvoh problem,
sorry. Which makes me wonder if the concept of making amends and mechilah have any place
at all, in CBT. I am not accusing, just wondering.

[As a nice tangent off that, the Torah says we are to help reload the animal of an "enemy"
before helping relieve an animal of our "friend" of its burden, even though the tza'ar ba'alei
chayim is a factor there. In other words, Torah suggests using [i]behaviors [/i]to work on our
gayvoh or whatever other factors led us to have and harbor sin'ah. It does not rely on a mental
process alone. In fact, it seems to focus on taking actions of love that will liberate us from ill will,
rather than tell us to make 'a cheshbon' about our feelings. Action is the setting for growth,
apparently. Using seichel is great - but relying on it does not seem to be what Hashem is
demanding here. Interestingly, some rishonim learn that the sin'ah of the 'enemy' referred to in
the Torah here is a mitzvoh, here, while others learn it is an aveiroh. There are interesting
implications regarding our discussion for both sides! Enjoy!]

When I wrote "we do not trust anyone", I was not referring to you, at all, nederman, but to myself in addiction:

In my addiction, I truly believed that honesty was the worst policy and that G-d knew worst, while I knew best. I basically trusted nobody but myself...though it was clear that I was my own worst enemy! This knot is so typical for the frum addict.

I only point out that self-reliance is a comfort-zone for addicts. Yet you wrote

You are mind reading. How can you be certain that I trust no-one but myself?

I do not pretend to know if you are insecure about anything or not. But why else would you flip that as though I was referring to you? I never called you a name nor accused you of anything before.

Your way of interpreting the comments of others negatively and generalizing is a pattern you may not be aware of.

I wrote:

Do you have friends? Suggesting CBT for these (possible) addicts seems to advocate self-reliance above all else. Where does friendship fit into that process?

And you responded:

I accept people as they are. I don't dictate how many friends they should have. The Torah says that you have a choice to be tzadik or rasha, unrelated to friends.

ATTENTION SEX ADDICTS: MAKE SURE YOU FIND OUT HOW MANY FRIENDS NEDERMAN REALLY HAS BEFORE YOU TRY ANY COGNITIVE THERAPY THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE.

My question was rhetorical. You posted a while back that you have no friends.

Gevalt, nederman...we agree on a lot - and to my knowledge, nothing in what I wrote *implied* you being a fool. What's more, I do not even *imagine* you are a fool. I trust your sincerity, see your intelligence, but disagree with your opinion.

You have consistently described me and other posters here on GYE as "getting angry" and of being overcome by "sinas chinom" and other negative behaviors or motivations even when all we did was *disagree* with you. Resorting to that is just baiting, nederman.

It is back to the Hillel story I wrote about before. If you can read that as an honest observation and not as an insult, it would do more good for you and for our communication in general.

I request and suggest that you do not accuse me of insulting you unless I actually wrote something about you that seems insulting to at least one impartial person who reads it. Can you at least get the help of other people for that? Funny, there is a book about AA titled, "Not G-d". A buddy of mine in the meetings I go to says, "the main criterion for a sponsor is *that he is not me*." That says a lot about the Gemorah's "*oh chavrusa o misusa*". When we are left to save ourselves exclusively with our own brains, we are likely to lose real life. It's why I do not use a mirror to check my t'filin in the morning - using and trusting another person helps reduce my gayvoh a bit, I hope. Just a little reminder.

I never intentionally commented about your morals nor your intelligence, but rather about how I think your posts misrepresent the 12 step program. In fact, I usually read through what I write, to try and see if anything I wrote could be easily misread by a you or others as personal callous or critical. Do you do that? I do that specifically because it seems to me that you see things as personal even though they are not. That sensitivity makes communication difficult. When we spoke on the phone I got the distinct feeling that you were not even hearing some things I said. Maybe you are misinterpreting some things that people say or write. (And that is not an insult either, seriously.)

From what you wrote, I see we understand our own addiction and recovery very differently, and the 12 step program's attitude toward it even more differently. Though I do see sex with ourselves, use of pornography, and lusting as sins, it is clear to me that in the case of addicts that fact is just a distraction from the truth about them: we are sick. Perhaps the guys who come to SA have just not been saved by the CBT therapists out there yet - but many come to see that they have a pattern and a tendency and the odds are not in their favor. For all practical purposes they will act out again and mess their lives up even further if they keep relying on themselves as they have been till now. They come to 12 steps and some get sober simply by giving up the fight and changing the rules of the game by opening up to others. You wrote that this is just shaming themselves into not acting out again...sorry you see it that way. But could you at least stop misrepresenting the program that way to others?

They let go of some of their gayvoh - as you said it was humiliating to accept some of the ideas of CBT. But most of all, getting broken before they even come in the door, *by their own acting out* seems to let G-d in. They use the meetings to fan the flame and keep the honesty alive, and eventually they do not *need* to come to meetings *in order to not drink* - rather, they still need to use other people in order to make real progress with the rest of the steps so that they keep honesty, humility, and a true relationship with G-d as paramount in their lives. Normal people can do that as regular frum yidden, of course. But many addicts keep going to meetings to '12th-step' fellow addicts because we remember the tricks our minds use. It's a tune-up, for this disease seems to be one of forgetting, too. Therapy (and even CBT tools) can help with that in part, too and some use it as part of their 4th and 7th steps. (The 7th includes accepting a new way of living *after* G-d enables it. For all He seems to do is remove the defect of character, but replacing it with the opposite is **our** work, and some recovering addicts use therapy to help them do that.)

You do not seem to hear this, but to me, when the White Book talks of the addict "not being free to stop," it is not feeding a line or *teaching* a doctrine, but rather describing the experience that addicts *come into* the room with. We see our failure and for all intents and purposes it is inexorable. That you relate it to Christian doctrine is your choice. I do not. I assume that I would have only gotten worse the way I was 15 years ago, if not for some radical intervention. The SA White Book spells this out only because we have such a hard time admitting **we have failed** at controlling and enjoying lust. Then, the SA program aims to help the addict see and accept (as you mentioned you use CBT to learn) that that they have been fed a lie in addiction that they will die without lust and sex. SA's chidush for the early sexaholic is that "sex is indeed optional."

Sobriety is necessary to clear the mind and helps an addict finally accept that sex is indeed optional. And maybe that is why you were open to CBT in the first place, nederman, because you had the experience of some SA sobriety and self-honesty behind you already. I do not *know*, mind you - I just wonder this out loud. I hope you do not misread it as some sort of criticism. And I wonder: if just admitting the things you admitted in "CBT was pretty humiliating" for you as you write, then how did you get anywhere at all in SA - where we learn to admit the truth about all the cover-ups and lies we live by, by getting honest with others for a change. We all use lies in our adiction, and I think you did say you were an addict. So if CBT was so hard for you, how did you endure the humiliation SA must have been for you? *Did* you? In other words, did you *work* the SA program when you went to the SA meetings you attended at all - or did you keep to yourself what you felt ought to be private about your lies in addiction? Or did you not lie your way through life in the first place, unlike the way most addicts do in their addiction? I gather that you had produced some wreckage in your acting out career, and that usually entails a hefty bill of lying. (And none of that is an insult, either, nor an insinuation of anything negative about you - just some straightforward and honest questions. And I hope you know that, nederman.)

After starting out, the rest of the program isn't about lust at all, but all about recovery from the

sickness that sexaholism is *only a symptom* of. I have been suggested that by my sponsor and other recovering old-timers. And besides, if the goal of the program were primarily to keep us sober from drinking again, then **why are old timers quoted in the AA literature say "If sobriety is all there is, I'll not have it!"** (Twelve Steps and twelve Traditions) And this is precisely the reason that none of the steps are about beating drinking/lust. Sobriety is the ticket to growing up, that's all. One cannot really work the steps to full benefit unless he is sober while doing that - it is our experience that only staying sober enables an addict to interface with reality. Add some of our drug, and we subtly lose our good sense (our sanity), then isolation and more sanity is sacrificed to maintain our 'control'. In fact, talk of 'not acting out' is almost absent in some of the SA meetings I go to. Maybe the meetings you attended had a lot of whining in them, or hurting newcomers, or perhaps you were still focused on the negative sobriety yourself back then, so that is what you saw everything revolving around. As Gandalf said, the way we think inside dictates the way we see the motivations of others (maybe Tolkien apparently read)

Finally, I share with newcomers that when the Talmud refers to people having freedom to be either a tzaddik or a rasha, it means that we *are* allowed by G-d to eat treif, kill, masturbate, use porn, say loshon hora, etc. He warns us, but allows us to physically do them all (unless the guy has a special zechus then G-d prevents him that time somehow). The difference between a normal person and an addict is that he cannot do it. At a certain point, it is as though he is not really allowed by G-d to use his drug. This is because it makes his life unmanageable. He simply cannot afford it any more. He is as un-free to *use* his drug as he is un-free to *stop* using it! Neither works for him at all. This is a great favor of G-d's, and it is how I like to understand what I quoted to you, "Tov v'yoshor Hashem, al kein yoreh (shoot) chato'm baderech". He practically forces us to return to the path of derech eretz that eventually (since we are Jews) leads us to Torah and Himself. What zechus addicts have that G-d brings us to **have** to stop, I cannot guess.

Chassidus...naaaaw

If you understood what I wrote, great. If not, I still enjoyed expressing all this and perhaps someone on GYE will benefit from some of the things I wrote that are actually right and useful.

Hatzlocha,

Dov

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Re: Scared and Confused

Posted by Dov - 21 Dec 2012 14:39

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Re: Scared and Confused
Oh, by the way, How Unstoppable - How you doin'?

Re: Scared and Confused
Posted by nederman - 21 Dec 2012 20:46

[Dov wrote:](#)

Good Morning!

Nederman, you wrote in a self-assured manner that my clouded opinion about what is a cop-out or isn't is *motivated* by my fears(

No, you used the word "cop-out" because you are afraid that it might be a cop-out.
) , you stated that you 'know' why I *want* to "disqualify" CBT, that I am slandering you (slander
) , you
suggest what bothers me about my own beliefs *and why* it bothers me, you accused me of
calling you a fool

Great, now you are calling me a fool.

Can you really believe in your own arguments when you need to resort to calling me names?

I was actually not self-assured, because I cannot be sure of what you are thinking. However I must say the evidence is mounting because you often lose it when I state my opinions which do not agree with yours.

Upon re-reading my response I realized that you wrote "tool" (with a t) rather than "fool" (with an f,) with great relief to myself I might add. That is why I edited my message. Did you deliberately choose to respond to an earlier version, or is the latest version not available to you? (A bug, maybe?)

In addition, you write that you know why I 'process' what you write as you say I do: "because it reawakens all [my] insecurities about SA."

And after all this, you write that I am engaging in 'mind-reading'? Please reconsider.

Is that logical to you? You are implying that if I am mind reading then you are not. Do you see an inference there? If you do, that's the problem. The truth is we could both be mind reading. In fact, I believe that all people mind-read at times (and read unsubstantiated things.)

Later on you write that I accuse you of having gayvoh. I regret if I actually implied that you have

gayvoh, but I was not referring to you there,

Yes, you were. That's okay, because what you think doesn't bother me. It can on bother me if I believe you. Since I used to have gayvoh and now I don't, it didn't bother me.

Please don't retreat from your positions. Don't run for the hills. Just stand firm and tell me what you think. It will only bother me if I believe you are right.

but the potential SA members who have a hard time getting into recovery. Besides, I assume that you are subject to gayvoh as most of us are.

I am kind of running low since I started loving myself no matter what my performance as a Jew or anything else. There is nothing special about it. I just decided that even if when everyone else is entering olam ha-ba Hashem should for whatever reason slam the door in my face I will still choose to have a good day.

As I said anyone can choose to dump their gayvoh by behaving as I described but the downside is that in order to be a good Jew you will have to make an effort to appreciate the mitzvos. Telling yourself "I am a s**t if I don't show up for minyan today" will not work.

With the tools at your disposal, are you now impervious to mind-twisting pride that most others need to struggle with?

I don't think so. Cognitive therapy is not a state. While I am working on improving some aspect of myself I am not impervious to it. I am not impervious to anything. The other day I started thinking about having an affair with a lady at work. I tried my usual method of reminding myself that I have a choice not to lust, and it wasn't working so well. I finally realized that in my cost-benefit analysis I had never considered having a real affair. So I did a cost-benefit analysis out loud on the way to work and over about twenty minutes it became apparent that I am happier now than I could realistically become if I pursued an affair. The reason I sound like a big rasha when I say that (what, no mention of sin?) is precisely because I dumped my gayvoh. But obviously I am not impervious. Hashem sets up the circumstances of my life, I just respond. If you threw me into horrible circumstances I would probably choose to do terrible things. The gemara says that you don't take your son and you dress him in the finest, and hang a purse of gold around his neck and put him in front of a brothel and tell him not to go in, of course he is going to go in. You have to prepare first.

Your very language ("impervious") reflects your belief that there is you and there is temptation. You choose to do everything you do, good and bad, and when you do bad things it's because you thought that they were good. A person who chooses every behavior doesn't think about being impervious, he thinks about what he wants to do next.

I find that hard to believe - and so I see it as no insult at all even if I did suggest you have the challenge of gayvoh.

That's because you have never tried the cognitive method. You did however witness at least one person on this forum who got better with the cognitive method. But you discount it because you have the axiom of SA which is that no other method could ever have worked. That is not an inference. It's not true. It's natural to believe that your method is the one. I have gotten sober

through a neder, through SA, and through the cognitive method so I do understand it.

But if I directly implied you had a gayvoh problem, sorry. Which makes me wonder if the concept of making amends and mechilah have any place at all, in CBT. I am not accusing, just wondering.

CBT is just skills, not beliefs. You could use CBT to ask for mechila more effectively. For example, if you ask for mechila and you don't get it, you could use CBT to get it. Or if you are having trouble giving mechila, you could use CBT to see whether it's best to be mochel or not.

The reason I am not afraid of pros and cons is because I believe that the Torah relly *is* better for me, if I look hard enough, even if only in olam ha-ba. And if I stopped believing that I would not want it any more. Some people deep down believe it's not, but they cannot face it.

[As a nice tangent off that, the Torah says we are to help reload the animal of an "enemy" before helping relieve an animal of our "friend" of its burden, even though the tza'ar ba'alei chayim is a factor there. In other words, Torah suggests using [i]behaviors [/i]to work on our gayvoh or whatever other factors led us to have and harbor sin'ah. It does not rely on a mental process alone.

So true. And CBT is just like that. For example one of the remedies for do-nothingism, which occurs in depressed people, is to get up and do anything even if you don't feel like it.

Maybe you should read some books by David Burns before you say anything else about CBT, that way you'll speak with accuracy.

In fact, it seems to focus on taking actions of love that will liberate us from ill will, rather than tell us to make 'a cheshbon' about our feelings.

In CBT these are just two different techniques in a whole array of tools.

Action is the setting for growth, apparently. Using seichel is great - but relying on it does not seem to be what Hashem is demanding here. Interestingly, some rishonim learn that the sin'ah of the 'enemy' referred to in the Torah here is a mitzvoh, here, while others learn it is an aveiroh. There are interesting implications regarding our discussion for both sides! Enjoy!]

Thanks. I have another one for you. Most mitzvos involve actions, so all the mitzvos generate beliefs. One purpose of the Torah is clearly to get us to believe what Hashem believes. Since our conscious mind is so hard to penetrate, Hashem gave us the mitzvos so we can bypass the conscious mind and get the right beliefs. That is perhaps what the Jews at Sinai meant when they naaseh v'nishmah. Meaning: "we don't really get it now, but we will do the behaviors you tell us, and we will acquire the beliefs." That just shows you why the Torah is such a great gift.

We get better even we really don't want to. That's from yours truly (but when you think about it it's pretty obvious.)

When I wrote "we do not trust anyone", I was not referring to you, at all, nederman, but to myself in addiction:

In my addiction, I truly believed that honesty was the worst policy and that G-d knew worst, while I knew best. I basically trusted nobody but myself...though it was clear that I was my own worst enemy! This knot is so typical for the frum addict.

I only point out that self-reliance is a comfort-zone for addicts. Yet you wrote

You are mind reading. How can you be certain that I trust no-one but myself?

I do not pretend to know if you are insecure about anything or not. But why else would you flip that as though I was referring to you? I never called you a name nor accused you of anything before.

I have to conclude that the reason you wrote in your criticism of CBT was for a purpose. I am just telling you that CBT does not isolate people. It's just skills, not beliefs.

Your way of interpreting the comments of others negatively and generalizing is a pattern you may not be aware of.

No, I am aware of it. I just didn't do it in this case.

I wrote:

Do you have friends? Suggesting CBT for these (possible) addicts seems to advocate self-reliance above all else. Where does friendship fit into that process?

And you responded:

I accept people as they are. I don't dictate how many friends they should have. The Torah says that you have a choice to be tzadik or rasha, unrelated to friends.

ATTENTION SEX ADDICTS: MAKE SURE YOU FIND OUT HOW MANY FRIENDS NEDERMAN REALLY HAS BEFORE YOU TRY ANY COGNITIVE THERAPY THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE.

My question was rhetorical. You posted a while back that you have no friends.

I don't think I have real friends, no. Actually, I take it back. I do have a few people I consider friends, but I don't hang out with them.

I could gain a lot of friends if I wanted to now that I have choice what to think and what to believe, but it's pretty busy at work and at home.

I guess you are kind of my friend, even though you don't like me very much. But I do interact with you a lot.

Friends are tangential to sin, which is what masturbating is. They are only central in the 12-step

program because it promotes a specific set of beliefs that are not all directly related to addiction. It has a specific flavor, a specific hashkafa. If you just want to be a regular Jew and do teshuva you can use the Mesillas Yesharim if you know how to do it. The Ramchal definitely left out a lot, maybe because it was so obvious to him, which I find explained in detail in David Burns' books.

Gevalt, nederman...we agree on a lot - and to my knowledge, nothing in what I wrote *implied* you being a fool. What's more, I do not even *imagine* you are a fool. I trust your sincerity, see your intelligence, but disagree with your opinion.

I agree. I mis-read a word.

I think you are really missing the boat here. When I state my opinion which triggers your own insecurities about SA you rattle off sixteen paragraphs to convince yourself that SA is the absolute best. You are not seeing that, but you have indeed done it several times now. Guess what? Your recovery program doesn't have to be the absolute best, it just has to be what you want. If you do have insecurities about SA then resolve them. Face them. Who knows, maybe everything will still work out well for you.

Now you got it out of your system and you want to be cordial again. But the reason it happens over and over again is because there is something you don't want to acknowledge, so it keeps rearing its head.

I do see that you make a lot of clarifications about SA and AA literature and/or concepts, which I think is why you are valuable to people in SA. But I think you don't want to say that there is *any* problem in that literature. I think you should. I think you should write your own book, and make your own frum SA program. Add all your insights and clarifications which make it more compatible with the Torah, rewrite some things so they do not lead to equivocations, and add your own insights. I think a lot more Jews would join your frum SA than regular SA.

You have consistently described me and other posters here on GYE as "getting angry" and of being overcome by "sinas chinom" and other negative behaviors or motivations even when all we did was *disagree* with you. Resorting to that is just baiting, nederman.

You started this discussion by addressing me, remember? So I didn't bait you. I was aware that you were baiting me and I was going to ignore you and let you cook but I decided that enough is enough. Enough of the SA intimidation. I know several people already who loved the cognitive method and do not dare write about it on GYE because that one method is not welcome here. You are just going to reply them to death to defend your own self-esteem.

It is back to the Hillel story I wrote about before. If you can read that as an honest observation and not as an insult, it would do more good for you and for our communication in general.

You addressed me, not the other way around. If you don't want to do this again then don't.

I request and suggest that you do not accuse me of insulting you unless I actually wrote something about you that seems insulting to at least one impartial person who reads it. Can you

at least get the help of other people for that? Funny, there is a book about AA titled, "Not G-d". A buddy of mine in the meetings I go to says, "the main criterion for a sponsor is *that he is **not me***." That says a lot about the Gemorah's "*oh chavrusa o misusa*". When we are left to save ourselves exclusively with our own brains, we are likely to lose real life. It's why I do not use a mirror to check my t'filin in the morning - using and trusting another person helps reduce my gayvoh a bit, I hope. Just a little reminder.

I can definitely try to read the letters more effectively so I don't read "fool" instead of "tool."

I never intentionally commented about your morals nor your intelligence, but rather about how I think your posts misrepresent the 12 step program.

And you STILL have not explained where I misrepresented it. You cannot both like and dislike your program. The White Book says that the addict has not choice if left to his own devices. That's what you believe, and I don't.

In fact, I usually read through what I write, to try and see if anything I wrote could be easily misread by a you or others as personal callous or critical. Do you do that? I do that specifically because it seems to me that you see things as personal even though they are not. That sensitivity makes communication difficult. When we spoke on the phone I got the distinct feeling that you were not even hearing some things I said.

No, I just did not agree with you and do not handle it well because you are so supremely confident that all methods but SA must be half measures.

Maybe you are misinterpreting some things that people say or write. (And that is not an insult either, seriously.)

I am subject to cognitive distortions like everyone else, but if you really want to I can go dig up all your posts in which you said something negative about the cognitive method.

From what you wrote, I see we understand our own addiction and recovery very differently, and the 12 step program's attitude toward it even more differently. Though I do see sex with ourselves, use of pornography, and lusting as sins, it is clear to me that in the case of addicts that fact is a just a distraction from the truth about them: we are sick. Perhaps the guys who come to SA have just not been saved by the CBT therapists out there yet - but many come to see that they have a pattern and a tendency and the odds are not in their favor. For all practical purposes they will act out again and mess their lives up even further if they keep relying on themselves as they have been till now. They come to 12 steps and some get sober simply by giving up the fight and changing the rules of the game by opening up to others.

Acceptance is a way to stop acting out, but it's not the only way. Change, which is the preferred method in the Torah, is another way. It's called teshuva.

You wrote that this is just shaming themselves into not acting out again...sorry you see it that way. But could you at least stop misrepresenting the program that way to others?

I can quote you ChaimCharlie where he said that commitment to the group is a motivation for him. When I was in SA it was a motivation for me too. It's not a sense of shame, it's self-esteem. I want to go to the next meeting knowing that I carried my weight. I want to say I am still sober. When I could not say that I don't think I felt shame, but the knowledge that I had a commitment to the group was the difference between surrendering and lusting.

Have you known a lot of SA people who stopped going to meetings and are still sober?

They let go of some of their gayvoh - as you said it was humiliating to accept some of the ideas of CBT. But most of all, getting broken before they even come in the door, *by their own acting out* seems to let G-d in. They use the meetings to fan the flame and keep the honesty alive, and eventually they do not *need* to come to meetings *in order to not drink* - rather, they still need to use other people in order to make real progress with the rest of the steps so that they keep honesty, humility, and a true relationship with G-d as paramount in their lives. Normal people can do that as regular frum yidden, of course. But many addicts keep going to meetings to '12th-step' fellow addicts because we remember the tricks our minds use. It's a tune-up, for this disease seems to be one of forgetting, too.

Wow. You are actually saying that SA does not need to go on forever. That's a pretty strong

statement.

How much time do you think an average guy on GYE should expect to spend in SA before he gets to that stage and he doesn't need the group any more?

Therapy (and even CBT tools) can help with that in part, too and some use it as part of their 4th and 7th steps. (The 7th includes accepting a new way of living *after* G-d enables it. For all He seems to do is remove the defect of character, but replacing it with the opposite is **our** work, and some recovering addicts use therapy to help them do that.)

I disagree. It can actually fix the addiction so that the addict can stop going to meetings. RECOVERED.

You do not seem to hear this, but to me, when the White Book talks of the addict "not being free to stop," it is not feeding a line or *teaching* a doctrine, but rather describing the experience that addicts *come into* the room with. We see our failure and for all intents and purposes it is inexorable. That you relate it to Christian doctrine is your choice. I do not. I assume that I would have only gotten worse the way I was 15 years ago, if not for some radical intervention. The SA White Book spells this out only because we have such a hard time admitting **we have failed** at controlling and enjoying lust. Then, the SA program aims to help the addict see and accept (as you mentioned you use CBT to learn) that that they have been fed a lie in addiction that they will die without lust and sex. SA's chidush for the early sexaholic is that "sex is indeed optional."

But only with G-d or with a group. Judaism believes that you have choice to be tzadik or rasha even without a group. And G-d doesn't remove your yetzer ha-ra. He actually puts it there so you can say "no" to it.

Surrender is actually just acceptance. Since your conscious mind will not accept that you like sex better than G-d, surrender is the action that makes it penetrate. But since you never acknowledge it you have to do it again, and again, and again etc.

Sobriety is necessary to clear the mind and helps an addict finally accept that sex is indeed optional. And maybe that is why you were open to CBT in the first place, nederman, because you had the experience of some SA sobriety and self-honesty behind you already. I do not *know*, mind you - I just wonder this out loud.

It was a good try but it's not true. My therapist made a quick point about surrender just being acceptance, not a miracle, and I couldn't help but agree with him, and I chose to let go of SA because it taught things that were not accurate, even though they were useful. So I went back to acting out for six months or so, then I read *Feeling Good and Intimate Connections* and I realized that there was a solution for me there that was accurate and was basically just the *Mesillas Yescharim* for dummies, so to speak. So I was able to keep my Torah belief that people have a choice.

I hope you do not misread it as some sort of criticism. And I wonder: if just admitting the things you admitted in "CBT was pretty humiliating" for you as you write, then how did you get anywhere at all in SA - where we learn to admit the truth about all the cover-ups and lies we live by, by getting honest with others for a change. We all use lies in our addiction, and I think you did say you were an addict. So if CBT was so hard for you, how did you endure the humiliation SA must have been for you? *Did* you? In other words, did you *work* the SA program when you went

to the SA meetings you attended at all - or did you keep to yourself what you felt ought to be private about your lies in addiction? Or did you not lie your way through life in the first place, unlike the way most addicts do in their addiction? I gather that you had produced some wreckage in your acting out career, and that usually entails a hefty bill of lying. (And none of that is an insult, either, nor an insinuation of anything negative about you - just some straightforward and honest questions. And I hope you know that, nederman.)

I did work the program. I also made phone calls to people, and they helped a lot. All the people at the meetings were goyim and it didn't bother me at all, I felt tremendous kinship, we had a lot of good laughs, and I would actually hang out there with them except I can't do that to them because I am not powerless and it would spoil their meeting.

The wreckage is there. Two broken marriages and broken hearts (as well my own.) Yep, I did lie to myself a lot in the name of preserving my idea of myself as a good person.

After starting out, the rest of the program isn't about lust at all, but all about recovery from the sickness that sexaholism is *only a symptom* of. I have been suggested that by my sponsor and other recovering old-timers.

I agree. The underlying problem is the belief that everything should be the way I want it or life will not be good for me, that the desire is too strong for me to defeat on my own, and other beliefs also.

And besides, if the goal of the program were primarily to keep us sober from drinking again, then **why are old timers quoted in the AA literature say "*If sobriety is all there is, I'll not have it!*"**?(Twelve Steps and twelve Traditions) And this is precisely the reason that none of the steps are about beating drinking/lust. Sobriety is the ticket to growing up, that's all. One cannot really work the steps to full benefit unless he is sober while doing that - it is our experience that only staying sober enables an addict to interface with reality. Add some of our drug, and we subtly lose our good sense (our sanity), then isolation and more sanity is sacrificed to maintain our 'control'. In fact, talk of 'not acting out' is almost absent in some of the SA meetings I go to.

Great. So how long would you say can an average GYE guy expect to spend in SA before he is all better and he can stop going?

Maybe the meetings you attended had a lot of whining in them, or hurting newcomers, or perhaps you were still focused on the negative sobriety yourself back then, so that is what you saw everything revolving around. As Gandalf said, the way we think inside dictates the way we
)

Doesn't ring a bell.

Finally, I share with newcomers that when the Talmud refers to people having freedom to be either a tzaddik or a rasha, it means that we *are* allowed by G-d to eat treif, kill, masturbate, use porn, say loshon hora, etc. He warns us, but allows us to physically do them all (unless the guy has a special zechus then G-d prevents him that time somehow).

No, it means that you can choose whether to sin or not.

The difference between a normal person and an addict is that he cannot do it. At a certain point, it is as though he is not really allowed by G-d to use his drug. This is because it makes his life unmanageable. He simply cannot afford it any more.

In Judaism people are all the same, they all sin and have to do teshuva if they can. You have no unequivocal, measurable definition of an addict. My definition is that you are an addict if you wish you could stop. You are basically choosing to keep acting out but you don't really know why. The Torah addresses this too, in the halacha of the nazir, and the nazir is not an ideal state even though he is to some extent a kadosh.

He is as un-free to *use* his drug as he is un-free to *stop* using it! Neither works for him at all. This is a great favor of G-d's, and it is how I like to understand what I quoted to you, "Tov v'yoshor Hashem, al kein yoreh (shoot) chato'm baderech". He practically forces us to return to the path of derech erez that eventually (since we are Jews) leads us to Torah and Himself. What zechus addicts have that G-d brings us to **have** to stop, I cannot guess.

The proper way to do this in Judaism is to daven for issurim. People in the Talmud didn't host a 12-step meeting in yeshiva. When they had sins they didn't really want to give up they davened

for issurim. People still go into "galus" today to change the conditions around them so that they should see it differently and maybe that will show them what they need to understand in order to do teshuva.

If you understood what I wrote, great. If not, I still enjoyed expressing all this and perhaps someone on GYE will benefit from some of the things I wrote that are actually right and useful.

Hatzlocha,

Dov

You did it again, you got it out of your system. It's going to happen again unless you face your own reservations about SA. It's plain to see that you do not agree 100% with all the AA and SA literature because you are a frum guy. You basically already have your own 12-step movement inside, you just need to write your own literature and pick a name.

Dov, are you going to be able to handle it if I communicate with people in public posts or do I have to go back underground and use private messages with them? If I have to use private messages I will, even though it's not strictly fair, but whatever, I know how hard it is to let go of certain things.

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Re: Scared and Confused
Posted by Dov - 22 Dec 2012 00:00

[What Should My Name Be? wrote:](#)

I'm just gona pop my head in here right in the middle of the war zone, just to point out a miss understanding that seems to have taken place.

Dove wrote "Any tool that reinforces isolation as a solution to problems" - tool with a T, that was misread as fool with an F.

Do we need a temporary moderater to moderate this war? ;-)

Just saying... Now I'm gona run for my life ;-)

Geshmak! I wonder if nederman read your post and acknowledged it, if that's all it was. Thanks.

Maybe I'll read your response after Shabbos, nederman. But your pattern has been trying to pas'l what I write by reading my mind and confidently declare my insecurities or motives, then baiting me with emotionalism. Was this time different? Have you tried to make a bridge by explaining *your opinion* without 'explaining' *me* and why have mine? We will see.

In the meantime, Guard decides what the guidelines are for posting here, not I.

I have always believed and made it clear that for any sexaholic to really come to SA with a true 1st step (cuz we bring it in rather than have it taught to us), he or she *must* have tried to beat this thing for years and come up empty-handed after using enough human- and self-powers for him or her to clearly see what the Big Book describes, "That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism." And 'probably' is all that is needed, because if we had to turn over every single rock rather than resort to the program (as many of us did!), we'd be so much sicker by the end of the sad trip. It's a shame when that happens.

SA certainly does not end up to be *every* addict's solution, and neither does any other tool. Even '*Torah*' does not work for many. But I know what working this program did and does for me and I try to share it.

So please do not misrepresent it by posting that SA does not believe in bechirah (we see that recovery *expands* our bechirah), that meetings are needed forever (we see they are not), that meetings and recovery relationships are about shaming people into not acting out (they are about learning some self-honesty), and that working the program is focused on not giving in to lust (sobriety and progressive freedom from lust are just the gifts that enables us to keep giving and growing). Hey, that last line came out nicely!

Have a good Shabbos.

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Re: Scared and Confused
Posted by Dov - 22 Dec 2012 00:47

I guess all this can make a guy even more "scared and (certainly more) confused"!

Sorry my chavrusa and I ended up high-jacking your thread. I hope you are doing OK and not afraid to share here after all that, though I'd not blame you. Sorry for my (big) part in it.

Good Shabbos! (or Gut voch if u r reading this after Sh"K!)

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Re: Scared and Confused
Posted by nederman - 23 Dec 2012 06:16

[Dov wrote:](#)

[What Should My Name Be? wrote:](#)

Hey Unstoppable! Look what trouble you caused by lusting...

I'm just gona pop my head in here right in the middle of the war zone, just to point out a miss understanding that seems to have taken place.

Dove wrote "Any tool that reinforces isolation as a solution to problems" - tool with a T, that was misread as fool with an F.

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Geshmak! I wonder if nederman read your post and acknowledged it, if that's all it was. Thanks.

Maybe I'll read your response after Shabbos, nederman. But your pattern has been trying to pas'l what I write by reading my mind and confidently declare my insecurities or motives, then baiting me with emotionalism. Was this time different? Have you tried to make a bridge by explaining *your opinion* without 'explaining' *me* and why have mine? We will see.

Everyone can see that you are the one who addressed *me*. I was just expressing my opinion to somebody else, and it clearly bothers you when my opinion does not coincide with yours. I am sorry you don't like my opinions. It makes me sad because it casts doubt on your recovery.

In the meantime, Guard decides what the guidelines are for posting here, not I.

I have always believed and made it clear that for any sexaholic to really come to SA with a true 1st step (cuz we bring it in rather than have it taught to us), he or she *must* have tried to beat this thing for years and come up empty-handed after using enough human- and self-powers for him or her to clearly see what the Big Book describes, "That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism." And 'probably' is all that is needed, because if we had to turn over every single rock rather than resort to the program (as many of us did!), we'd be so much sicker by the end of the sad trip. It's a shame when that happens.

When you advise people to surrender you are helping them choose not to lust at the cost of believing that they need help. I just explain to them what they are choosing.

SA certainly does not end up to be every addict's solution, and neither does any other tool.

Thank you. I will quote you on that.

Even '*Torah*' does not work for many. But I know what working this program did and does for me and I try to share it.

So please do not misrepresent it by posting that SA does not believe in bechirah

A quote from the White Book, page 3 will settle this issue:

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 [..]

Or do you think there are some instances where SA literature is misleading?

(we see that recovery *expands* our bechirah), that meetings are needed forever (we see they are not)

How long on average can a GYE guy expect to go to meetings in order to be free of the unwanted behavior for life?

, that meetings and recovery relationships are about shaming people into not acting out (they are about learning some self-honesty), and that working the program is focused on not giving in

to lust (sobriety and progressive freedom from lust are just the gifts that enables us to keep giving and growing). Hey, that last line came out nicely!

Have a good Shabbos.

I have my opinions which are informed by my experience in SA. I read the official SA literature.

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