Big Steps
Posted by Shlomo24 - 21 Oct 2014 17:59

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i came to israel for y"t and i am staying here, im going to be going to yeshiva here also.

Why did i switch? well i came here and i was hooked up with a bunch of guys who also have ssa just like me. that is something that i never experienced in america, simply because of logistics and availability. i israel there is a whole support group of guys who are willing to reach out and connect with each other. its amazing.
hey whats up yall? im in israel now, permanently

additionally, because the gay rights group has a much smaller contingent here, many therapists openly say that they can change ssa. something that i would say is close to nonexistent in america, b/c u could lose your job from saying that, especially if the media finds out. i started going to a therapist who specializes in ssa and so far it has been awesome.

another reason is that in israel the general atmosphere is an atmosphere that is dedicated to torah and growth in yiddishkeit (at least in yerushalayim). i personally see that the level of tznius is much higher here. in america it has become normal for women to wear skirts above the knee, i am not sure who made up that garbage halacha. in israel the percentage of women who are untznius is sooooo much lower.

also, i have started going to sa in israel. what is unique is that i would say 97% of the members are frum, not just that, in fact most of them are in yeshiva/kollel and look like yeshivish guys.

basically, the feeling i am getting is an overwhelmingly positive one. with a lot of seyata deshmaya i have arrived here. i actually have to thank gye, because i would have never gone to sa if not for gye. also i made contact with someone who has ssa through gye and he was the one who gave me the original numbers of other guys that i could talk to.

KOT! YTC!

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Shlomo24 - 06 Aug 2018 05:10

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stillgoing wrote on 06 Aug 2018 04:27**:**

Shlomo24 wrote on 06 Aug 2018 03:57**:**

Thank you for your response. Again, I never said I support living a homosexual lifestyle. Let's move on from that.

Secondly, simply because their are psychological reasons for the development of sexuality does not warrant a legitimate reason to try and undue those things if the method is harmful. Conversion therapy was exceedingly traumatic for me. The majority of Western psychologists agree that conversion therapy is harmful, I can't see how you support such a tactic. Additionally, all this is assuming the therapy works, which in my case, and (in my experience) most cases, does not. So essentially we are taking a very strong risk, one that will probably lead to trauma and no change, but because it's theoretically possible we are taking a risk. To me, that sound uneducated and illogical.

That's my main issue with how GYE treats homosexuality.

Hi Shlomo.

FIrst of all, thank you for your response. That is what makes dialog possible.

You referred several times to the fact that western culture does not approve of conversion therapy. Do you not think that western culture is biased? There is a tremendous massave push in this country that you are aware of as well as I , to completely normalize all gay lifestyles. In many ways, the campaign is over, they've won, and have now moved on to try and normalize the trans 'community'. This is the same western culture that fought tooth and nail in the supreme court to require all states to recognize gay marriages. They filed suits against several bakeries who wouldn't made wedding cakes for gay marriages. This is the same western culture that is so vehement against conversion therapy. I hardly think that this western culture has any credibility in this matter.

You, on the other hand, have first hand experience that conversion therapy was not only not helpful - you even found it harmful. I would never sugget to you to do something that you've found to be harmful. Everyone and every situation is different however. Perhaps I would like to try conversion therapy. I know that you would not recommend it, but would you not tolerate it? If I wanted to marry a man, you wrote that you could tolarate me, so why not let me go on my own journey and accept me with the choices that I make?

sg

In short:

A) I'm here to discuss facts, not theory.

One I know to be harmful (and have vast experience/proof to back that up) and one I don't know to be unhealthy (plenty of married gay men seem to be happy and plenty don't... I've never been married to one so I have no experience) so I don't really have an opinion.

The asterisk to all of this is that I don't get into religious debates. So that's not something I'm discussing, I'm purely talking psychologically.

I posted a lengthy reply... And the website crashed. Perfect timing _____
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Re: Big Steps
Posted by ehrliche.bochur - 06 Aug 2018 12:56
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Re: Big Steps
Posted by JoyOfLife - 06 Aug 2018 13:22
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I'm no expert on these topics but just to throw my 2 cents in - perhaps you didn't go to the right

therapist? From my experience most psychologists are not good at actually helping another person make a change in their life and those that are good are not always the right one for the person who is seeking their help because of personality difference or style of psychology. Regardless Hashem should help everyone here to overcome our yetzer haras to each his own

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 06 Aug 2018 14:04

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ehrliche.bochur wrote on 06 Aug 2018 12:56**:**

Shlomo24 wrote on 06 Aug 2018 03:57**:**

the.guard wrote on 05 Aug 2018 16:29**:**

Dear Shlomo, thank you for your post. I agree with almost everything you wrote besides for one thing:

I am a full believer that everyone has a choice to live their lives the way they wish to, so long as they aren't hurting others.

If you are referring to non-Jews, then I guess you are right. But for Jews, we don't have a choice. Hashem lifted Har Sinai over our heads and threatened that if we don't keep the Torah, we will be buried underneath it.

Here are GYE's views on Homosexuality (in a nutshell):

- Having SSA is similar to someone who would be attracted ONLY to married women, i.e. single women don't attract him at all (if such a thing was possible). We must empathize with such people because they have struggles that most men can't even imagine. We must give them support and show them love and understanding.

- Having same sex attraction (SSA) is not a sin.

- **Acting on** SSA desires ***is*** a sin

- Some people are born gay and cannot be changed.

- Some people develop SSA due to external life factors and can change, i.e. through therapy or other ways, they can learn to have normal straight desires.

- Some people develop SSA due to external life factors and still CANNOT learn to have normal straight desires (as Shlomo claims is his case).

- If a person **can** learn to change and develop healthy normal sexual desires, that would be great. After all, since acting on these desires is a sin, if one can change and learn to marry and have a normal family, why wouldn't they do that? That is why, everyone who has SSA should attempt therapy. Because they can never know if it will work for them or not, and they'll only know by giving it a serious try.

- If they cannot learn to change, either because they were born that way, or because conversion therapy or other types of therapy doesn't work for them, then they can still learn to ACCEPT themselves as they are, with no shame, and simply work on controlling their desires in the same way any normal man needs to work on his desires for married women, i.e. by avoiding desire as much as possible, etc.. Such people can still get married and lead normal lives, like Shlomo said, with the right support and attitude.

Conversion therapy was exceedingly traumatic for me. The majority of Western psychologists agree that conversion therapy is harmful, I can't see how you support such a tactic. Additionally, all this is assuming the therapy works, which in my case, and (in my experience) most cases, does not. So essentially we are taking a very strong risk, one that will probably lead to trauma and no change, but because it's theoretically possible we are taking a risk. To me, that sound uneducated and illogical.

FOR YOU it did not work. But therapy helped many people to change from SSA to normal life. I read stories by many people who changed and live happy with his wife and children. Again you believe the authority of Western society to tell you what is right and wrong when western society believe it is okay to change his son to woman and abortion. C"V we look to western society for authority. If someone is extremely unhappy and depressed about his attractions with men and he wants to change it. He has freedom to get help. If SSA therapy helps some people, who your to tell him he can not get help? Maybe conversion therapy did not work for you. But this conversion techniques helped me to get married and have children. If someone told me there is nothing I can do about this attractions conversion therapy is not option and I must accept be ho*ose*ual I would end my life. It is better choice than to kill the father every day with shame by son who is ho*ose*ual.

Are you "cured"? You never think about men anymore? or did you just learn to cope with the feelings and to feel more like a man so that you could have a genuine relationship with a woman?

That was the problem with orgs. like JONAH. They promised the impossible, making one's innate attractions completely disappear and replacing them with something else. And they used untested, weird and abusive methods, administered by untrained and unqualified "coaches" many of who were themselves former(?) SSA strugglers who claim that they were cured.

The psychology behind their method does have a good scientific basis, and when used by a real trained therapist there is a pretty good success rate in helping people to accept themselves, cope with the feelings, and live the life they truly want to.

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Markz - 06 Aug 2018 14:15

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J.o.l in my experience, seeking the right therapy is not like looking for the right ingredients at the grocery store, which can be flipped in the wink of an eye.

Now, the main issue one may have had is shlomo's acceptance of someone that's gay. I'm not translating for him, but I think shlomo has training in coaching, and empathy for gays is the only way to reach and coach such a person to a better life. He did not condone acting upon ones desires.

He said the mindset of Homosexuals is not accepted by many, which pained him and I totally hear what he's saying.

Each man has to know his strengths

and weaknesses and contribute to society with all Gd gave him.

Can someone change his makeup? Possibly. Until then life must go on, and don't beat him up - please!

Guys, let King Shlomo live on, he's doing a lot better than years past.

Read his previous recent posts, and let peace reign!

KEEP ON TRUCKING!!

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by the.guard - 06 Aug 2018 14:41

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Shlomo24 wrote on 06 Aug 2018 04:03**:**

Why do I have no tolerance of conversion therapy? Because, in my experience, I have seen how those practices traumatized me and shamed me. Not only me, but countless others as well. Additionally, I have rarely seen the "therapy" work within the hundreds of people that I am aware of went through it. So just like you wouldn't be tolerant of letting children walk in the street alone, even though they might make it to the other side, so to I am intolerant of conversion therapy.

I don't think that's fair. Everyone has the right to try whatever therapy they want. Conversion therapy does work for some people with SSA, so just because it was harmful for you, doesn't mean we need to discourage it. We can simply warn people that it may not work for them, and it might even traumatize them, but it may work for them and then it will all be worth it. And then we can step back and allow them to choose what they want to do. It's like Chemo for cancer. Chemo doesn't always work, and it can even be harmful, but if there's a chance it can work, who wouldn't try and save themselves?

See the videos here: gye.vids.io/tags/359dd3b619b0/dealing-with-ssa

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by mzl - 06 Aug 2018 14:48

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As long as conversion therapy doesn't get endorsed by a rosh yeshiva who listens to a trusted doctor, and then everybody thinks that if conversion therapy doesn't work for you it's because you didn't do the program.

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by mzl - 06 Aug 2018 14:49

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I think the comparison to chemotherapy is really apropos because one day we will view chemotherapy as absolutely nuts.

Like bloodletting.

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Shlomo24 - 07 Aug 2018 05:27

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(I'm not replying to anyone in specific because this message is for everyone)

I've already made my points, but I will repeat the most important ones. I don't plan on repeating myself again, and if no one changes their viewpoint, so be it, I stated my truth.

People think of "Western Society" as this big scary monster. It's not. Nothing gets outlawed because people don't like it, it gets outlawed because of data and research. The fact that the majority of Western Society has deemed conversion therapy to be illegal based on statistical research should be enough reason for anyone to say that the practices are dangerous. Additionally, as Gev referred to, while there may be basis for Joseph Nicolosi's research on homosexuality (PSA: if you don't know who he is than you probably shouldn't be having this debate with me) his theories are like Communism; it works on paper and not in reality. (I didn't make up that line about Communism, I was told that by a licensed, respected, frum therapist). Additionally, many of those who practice the "therapy" are, as Gev also alluded to, beyond under-qualified. Journey Into Manhood, the retreat that I attended, is staffed primarily by completely unlicensed workers who simply have done the retreat before. To give an example of the practices, I hit a punching bag with a baseball bat that was supposed to represent a friend of mine who bullied me. I also spoke to a guy there who wore a tichel on his his head and he was supposed to be my mother. What? That should scare anyone off from it. Another issue with conversion therapy is that many times minors are forced into it. I was not forced, thank God, but I can fully attest to the damage that it wrecked when I was in such a pivotal place of development, between the years of 16-19.

I cannot emphasize this enough, but the vast majority of people I know who went through the conversion therapy process achieved little to no change in their sexual attractions, and in the research I've done, that seems to be par for the course. Countless people who were "ex-gay" (which is what the goal for conversion therapy is, essentially) are now "ex-ex-gay" and have openly expressed how they were fooling themselves and they continued with their practices simply because they thought there was no other option. (For them, that meant living as gay men, for this conversation it does not mean that).

As a Jew who cares deeply for other Jews, it baffles me how conversion therapy gets supported. It means that for an incredibly slim chance of "change" we are willing to put vulnerable souls into unsupported practices that very well may lead to trauma and other issues. If chemotherapy didn't work, we wouldn't do it. But it does work (I've actually worked for a rather famous tzedakah that deals with cancer patients) and that's why we do it. The statement isn't "for some" conversion therapy doesn't work, it's "for the vast majority" conversion therapy doesn't work.

Additionally, while conversion therapists will say that they have "nothing against" gay communities, there was a whole lot of gay bashing that went on in my experience. Data actually shows that in communities that are homophobic (and conversion therapy is the epitome of homophobia) the rates of homosexual sexual activity are higher and riskier. Which I find ridiculous because when I asked a Rabbi why frum communities are so homophobic, he said "because we want to stop people from being gay." I don't even need to asterisk that by saying "in my experience that's not true" because it's just actually not true. (If you are so inclined, do a search on Google Scholar about that topic and see how many results there are, all showing the same results).

Someone mentioned that maybe I went to the wrong therapist(s): I went to two of the most highly sought-after therapists in the Jewish world. I only got "in" because I had a lot of pull.

I'll say this also: My primary purpose for existing on this website is to try and help those who are struggling. If you want to talk to someone, you can contact me at my info below. Who you are and what your beliefs are do not affect me, I will try and be there for you regardless. You may

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by lionking - 07 Aug 2018 06:43

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Shlomo24 wrote on 07 Aug 2018 05:27**:**

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hate me, but I'll still love you

Shlomo,

I haven't commented at all on your posts, since I know nothing about the topics under discussion.

Your last paragraph deserved more than just a Thank You. It was pure gold. You have constantly been an inspiration for me.

Thank You!

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Workingguy - 09 Aug 2018 03:10

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Shlomo24 wrote on 07 Aug 2018 05:27**:**

(I'm not replying to anyone in specific because this message is for everyone)

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"because we want to stop people from being gay." I don't even need to asterisk that by saying "in my experience that's not true" because it's just actually not true. (If you are so inclined, do a search on Google Scholar about that topic and see how many results there are, all showing the same results).

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hate me, but I'll still love you

Shlomo,

I, and many of the guys here, really love you too. I missed seeing you around; it’s so nice to see you!

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Trouble - 24 Mar 2019 21:08

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Shlomo24 wrote on 19 May 2016 13:03**:**

I just went to a meeting that was all about sharing experience, so here goes:

Deterioration:

5 days ago I was on top of the world. I hadn't touched myself in 9 months and I could probably count on one hand the amount of times I took actions of lust. I was helping others and successful, doing well in college and decent in yeshiva. I was taking care of myself pretty well and enjoying life. I had a lot of luxuries in my life, a smartphone, a car, a laptop and the ability to be independant.

Just 4 days later I was a different person. My addiction took over and I was very rapidly deteriorating. I acted out with 3 men anonymously over 4 days. I wasn't eating or sleeping like a normal human. My schedule was completely out of whack. Ironically, I did schoolwork, but that is because of my perfectionism. I can't let myself get anything less than an A. I crossed lines in terms of sexual behavior, my life was consumed by the pursuit of my next fix. I was acting out even though I didn't want to. I may have drank something that wasn't kosher, but I didn't care. The unmanageability of my life was extreme. I couldn't have yichud with myself because I was acting out, day or night. I needed to sleep in my sponsors apartment, (to the embarrassment of myself to his apartment mates, whom all knew something was up), because I couldn't be alone at night. He had to take my keys and phone, because they were dangerous for me at the time. I needed to check in with another addict every 15 minutes throughout the day because any time to myself was an opportunity for me to act out. I had no self, I was completely taken over by addiction. This is what is called being an addict, so if you are one please help yourself before it gets to where I got. And if you aren't, you may not want it to progress. Which leads me to my gratitudes.

Gratitudes:

A lot of people have really came through in special ways throughout my relapse. I would like to thank you all for your support, even though I was spiraling away. Specifically Mark and BigMoish. Moish is my 15 minute check-in partner and Mark had some really sweet posts. Gevura also. Sorry if I'm leaving anyone out. I also owe my sponsor a great debt of gratitude. He took me under his wing, completely pro bono. He made me dinner because I wasn't eating. He made me a bed on his couch and set up my linens. He gave me pajamas. He drove me to and from meetings. He took time out from his day to speak with me and let me express myself,

and also tell me what I need to do to stay sober. He took my keys and phone because he knew they weren't good for me at the time. I really am so grateful to him, I was crying last night thinking about it. I'm also grateful to God for sticking with me and keeping me alive at this moment. There's no reason I should be here, not based on the actions I was doing, it's purely out of love for me. It's surreal to have people care for me and help me out with no intention of a payback from me. I can't even fathom it. It's antithetical to how I live(d) my life.

That's all for now. I don't have much internet access for the time being so you may not hear much from me.

Peace Out.

Although there are always differences, in my recent spree, where I had not acted out yet, I was reluctant to reach out to certain fellows, for I thought that they might talk me out of it. There were some, who I thought would talk me out of it (and they did help somewhat) that I did reach out to, so I'm not sure what that means.

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Workingguy - 25 Mar 2019 14:36

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The last post made me happy- because I saw that Shlomo gave it a thank you; haven't seen him in ages! Shlomo, great to see you!

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Shlomo24 - 26 Mar 2019 19:17

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Good to chat as well. I get emails when someone posts on my thread. Hope you're well

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Re: Big Steps
Posted by Markz - 26 Mar 2019 20:01

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Hi!

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