

IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual support

Posted by boruch - 20 Jan 2009 19:22

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Firstly, a word of introduction. Let us first all agree on what ought to be beyond reasonable discussion.

A) Rabbi Twersky is a zoche umezakkeh es horabbim, he has helped an overwhelming number of Frum Jews. We should all stand in awe of the number of frum Yidden that he has helped. He solidly and exclusively advocates the 12 steps.

The 12 steps is Worldwide the single most effective tool in countering alcoholism and many other addictions. Be very careful if you want to argue with success.

C) People usually do best with a system to change and the 12 steps is a highly developed system that has been practiced by millions over many decades with significant degrees of success.

D) We live in a World which minimizes the role of Hashem and the 12 steps follows the Rambam's prescription. The Rambam says that when you have a weakness in an area you do well to go to the other extreme. In a World full of kochi ve'otzem yodi --- the self-destructive illusion of being a "Master of One's own Destiny" the 12 steps are a vital and absolutely necessary counterbalance by going to the other extreme and focussing on man's powerlessness and G-d's all-powerfullness.

**Secondly, the purpose of this post is not to create controversy.**

**The purpose of this post is not to debate philosophy.**

**The purpose of this post is not to prove any point or win any argument.**

It should be reasonable to assume that anyone on these forums should have more important

things to worry about than any of the above.

This post is to help and support those who have significant difficulty with the 12 steps and have come to realize that the fault **does not ,as some would insinuate**, lie with either themselves or the way they have tried to implement the steps. This is the place for mutual support and the search for a better way.

Next a word of caution.

IF either the 12 steps are already working for you or if you have just started the 12 steps then this post is not for you for two reasons.

1) Providing excuses, chas vesholom, for anyone to stop doing what works for them to experiment with something else is not what this post is about. Chazal say "Ein sofek motzei midei vaday" --- an unproven approach is no substitute for an approach with a track record. Please do yourself a massive favor and go back to the 12 steps and ignore this thread.

2) If the 12 steps is working for you, then you should rightfully be a believer and as we say in Yiddish you will no doubt be "a geshvoirener chossid" -- or sworn afficionado. As such the chances are very strong that you will see any discussion of an alternative to the 12 steps as one of:

- a) Apikorsus -- Heresy
- b) Meabed atzom ledaas -- Willful self-destruction
- c) Daiyos Kozvos -- fundamentally misguided thinking
- d) Zich-op-narren -- self deception

If any of a) through d) approximate your attitude to discussion of a non-12 step approach then please do those of us who fundamentally disagree with you a big favor and ignore this thread.

You may sincerely believe that you are trying to be mekarev us but I warn you of the potential harm that you could bring on your cause of promoting the 12 steps. By refusing to accept the possibility of another approach you will almost inevitably come across as dogmatic, unthinking and yes, even brainwashed.

But even worse and far more serious by engaging us in debate you are taking a chance, however slight, that by engaging us in discussion you will chas vesholom find your own resolve weakened and none of us here on this forum can take any risk of that.

Chazal say, "Al taamin be'atzmecho", don't trust yourself. If you could trust yourself you would never have landed on this forum in the first place.

Please, Lema'an Hash-m -- for Hashem's sake, don't take any unnecessary risks whatsoever.

If we who believe that there is another way are really wrong let us learn from our own experience.

IF YOU REALLY DO BELIEVE IN THE 12 STEPS, THEN DON'T PLAY G-D. CHAYECHO KODMIN, YOUR OWN SAFETY COMES BEFORE OURS. LET G-D SHOW US THE RIGHT WAY. FOR THE SAKE OF ALL OF US PLEASE PLAY IT SAFE AND LET HASHEM HELP US.

However if you feel, as do many like-minded from Yidden struggling with addiction, that the 12 steps are not a good fit and/or that you have given them a good try and you have found that they do not work then you will gain strength from being able to freely share your reservations and discuss alternatives with those who will not tell you in stereotypical, patronizing, judgemental and cult-like fashion, "The 12 steps always work, it's just you, you didn't do it right".

You will gain strength from those who can show you that the finer nuances and subtleties of the claims of the proponents of the 12 steps are not as well thought out and immutable as their proponents would have you believe. You will gain strength from reading that beneath all the dogma there is a small amount of sloppy, complacent and unthinking conformism.

In the non-Jewish world there are many who doubt and criticize the 12 steps for all the wrong reasons. They feel uncomfortable and don't want to acknowledge the role of Hashem. This makes it difficult for a religious person to doubt the effectiveness of the steps. Don't they believe in Hashem?

Secondly the Frum Jewish World is very conformist (generally a very good thing) and since the most well-known and public face of addiction therapy is Doctor Twersky and he is totally devoted to the 12 steps it is very difficult from a Frum Jew to explore and advocate another approach.

And yet there is a silent and very significant group of Frum Yidden who for many reasons, most legitimate, are deeply skeptical of the steps and their place in Yiddishkeit.

This thread is your place.

So as a way to validate our beliefs and feelings let's begin with a possible framework within which to see the 12 steps from a "non-12 step" Torah perspective that simultaneously acknowledges the contribution of the 12 steps and yet sees the steps for what they really are, just one approach.

Just as many Roshei Yeshiva, Chassidishe Rebbes and Gedolei Torah who were contemporaries of HoRav Shimshon Refoel Hirsch insisted that as important as Torah Im Derech Eretz was for the Jews of Germany it was not a mainstream approach and was only a "horo'as sho'oh", an important method for those times, so too, many feel that Rabbi Twersky's approach and the 12 steps are a "horo'as sho'oh", but should not be allowed to stifle more traditional approaches that are more mainstream (if this shocks you, you were warned, please refer back to the reasons above why you should not have been reading this post).

But most importantly, if you feel as I and many others do, that the 12 steps are unduly monopolizing the discussion, stifling discussion and shutting down dissent, and that the proponents of the 12 steps are fundamentally unable to acknowledge and accept your feelings then this place is for you.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by boruch - 22 Jan 2009 09:45

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[guardureyes wrote on 21 Jan 2009 20:52:](#)

"The million dollar question is whether I want enough."

This is the real truth. Not even as far as starting this movement, but as far as quitting yourself.

We are in full agreement on this one.

[guardureyes wrote on 21 Jan 2009 20:52:](#)

You might find Chizuk e-mail #339 on [this page](#) an eye opener. it's from the Ba'al Hasulam. I also gave you two other links before on this issue, see [here](#) and [here](#).

So although it seems surrender goes against the concept of free will and hishtadlus, it is not. They work hand in hand. A frum Yid has to live with Emunah that goes beyond logic. In so many areas of Hashkafa, we are forced to reconcile with seemingly contradictory ideas. (For example, Hishtadlus vrs. believing everything is from Hashem). We have to live every minute as if BOTH are true. And somehow, they ARE.

That's not the point. Of course there are apparent contradictions. And of course there are resolutions. But all that is beside the point.

The issue with the Surrender is just one of many of the gaping wholes and gaps left open by the 12 steps. Let's look at the first few steps.

Step 1 should NOT be now and should NEVER have been about powerlessness. People are not ready to acknowledge powerlessness until they have first taken full responsibility on every level.

Step 2 should NOT have introduced the concept of G-d being able to restore sanity before we realized that although we cannot play G-d's role we have the ability to play our role in regaining sanity.

Step 3 then goes straight into Surrender. Those who have done well on the 12 steps say that the Surrender step is transformational. What they don't take into account is that it's the hardest step and can take a very long time and the whole 12 step process doesn't work well until then. And many people are never able to make the 12 steps work for them for that reason. Now had the steps first introduced the elements of personal responsibility and reaffirmation of one's ability to play one's own role the Surrender step would not have been necessary at all (for reasons I will discuss later) and at the very least would have been much easier after the empowering messages of personal responsibility and potential for achievement.

The truth is that I have two approaches to the 12 steps, one partisan and one non-partisan.

My partisan approach is to express my own opinion in the most outspoken way. In my personal and partisan opinion the success of the steps is not due to the steps at all but almost despite them. The success of Alcoholics Anonymous lies firstly in the group therapy but most importantly because AA was the only group that really cared for Alcoholics and went the distance for them. As far as the steps themselves they derive from a little-known crackpot fringe Born-Again Christian sect. The best proof that the steps are far from ideal is that if you would take the opposite of each step, one at a time and work with those opposites you would get better results than you would with the steps as they are today as I will demonstrate beginning today on the Wall of Honor.

My non-partisan approach is that the 12 steps never pretended to be a be all and end all and there is plenty of room for complementary approaches for even the most fervent adherent of the

12 steps. In that spirit while the posts on this thread will include partisan opinions the majority of my posts elsewhere will be almost entirely non-partisan and will openly invite and welcome all participants in the 12 steps alongside non-participants be'achdus to work with new material that will only enhance their existing results.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual support  
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jan 2009 13:37

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I'm also an example of someone who broke free without the 12 steps. (I understand that the key to the success of AA, is their insistence on breaking the cycle, with no excuses. Someone please correct me if I'm wrong)

Personally I have been wondering if the 12 step system short-changes people. I get the feeling that a frum Yid that goes through it, has a decided disadvantage as far as realizing his full potential is concerned. This is just a feeling, I can't prove it.

On the other hand: I used to think that anyone that goes to R' Tvi Meir regularly (Sholosh Seudos by him is in many ways, like the kind of meetings that boruch described) has whatever he needs for wining the battle (That's most definitely been my experience).

But now I'm wondering if it really depends a lot on the person. Maybe some people really need a more interactive thing, like the "groups".

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jan 2009 17:11

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The main and most central theme of the 12-Steps is surrender to Hashem. All that really means is that we recognize that WILL POWER alone is not enough in this struggle. We need Hashem to take over our lives. And we need group support.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual support  
Posted by battleworn - 22 Jan 2009 17:32

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Rabeinu Guard, if you meant to answer me, I wan't to clarify. I wasn't talking about the main theme, I was talking about their secret to success. If those two things are not the same, then we can understand boruch's claim they their success is not a result of the philosophy of the 12 steps.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by boruch - 22 Jan 2009 19:34

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[guardureyes wrote on 22 Jan 2009 17:11:](#)

The main and most central theme of the 12-Steps is surrender to Hashem. All that really means is that we recognize that WILL POWER alone is not enough in this struggle. We need Hashem to take over our lives. And we need group support.

Guard, none of us are here to argue, as the Medieval Christians proverbially did, about how many angels could fit on a pinhead.

Worse still, if we were to be drawn into protracted discussions of the 12 steps much of the discussion would no doubt be diffused on questions of meaning and semantics rather than questions of substance.

So for example, we could, if we were foolish enough, debate long and hard what the phrase "Hashem taking over our lives" does or does not mean directly, what it suggests and what it implies.



But a far more relevant and telling question is why anyone would talk about "Hashem taking over our lives" before we have even attempted to state that "We are ready to take over our own lives".

I have said it once and I'll say it unflinchingly again. The Mishna in Avos prefaces "Uchse'ani Le'atzmi Moh Ani?" --- If I am for myself what am I? with a necessary premise --- Im Ain Ani Li Mi Li? --- If I am not for myself who am I. We first need to convince ourselves clearly, verbally and unequivocally that the pre-condition for any and all Divine Help is that we first accept total responsibility.

As with anyone in a position of responsibility we do not have to personally perform all the implementation and in terms of our fight with addiction we will never be able to fully implement without Hashem --- but before we try to involve and even attempt to invoke Hashem for the implementation we must first unequivocally state and fully verbalize, as Hillel did, that implementation aside, the responsibility for beating our addiction is fully ours.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jan 2009 19:53

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Taking full responsibility for recovery is not arguing with the 12-Steps. That is part and parcel of the 12-Steps, as you can see in these notes on the very first step on [THIS PAGE](#). Read the notes on the first step carefully. You will see you are in complete agreement.

The point I think you are missing, is that the first step says "**will power alone, is not effective in dealing with the complex problem of sex addiction**". You seem to disagree on this point, and **I hope you prove me wrong**.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by boruch - 22 Jan 2009 21:02

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[guardureyes wrote on 22 Jan 2009 19:53:](#)

Taking full responsibility for recovery is not arguing with the 12-Steps. That is part and parcel of the 12-Steps, as you can see in these notes on the very first step on [THIS PAGE](#). Read the notes on the first step carefully. You will see you are in complete agreement.

We are only both in complete agreement that it's in between the lines over here <http://www.guardureyes.com/GUE/12Steps/12StepsExpl.asp> as subpoint 5.

My response to you is very simple. If Hillel thought that it were good enough to leave Im Ain Ani Li Mi Li to a subliminal meaning he would not have put it in the Mishna. So the very same way that step 3 is not buried somewhere down deep inside some other step as a self-understood subpoint neither should full responsibility be anything less than a step in it's own right and a step that precedes the surrender step. 12-step author Bill W didn't know better than Hillel[/quote]

[guardureyes wrote on 22 Jan 2009 19:53:](#)

The point I think you are missing, is that the first step says "**will power alone, is not effective in dealing with the complex problem of sex addiction**". You seem to disagree on this point, and **I hope you prove me wrong**.

Guard, I can very easily prove you wrong in a matter of minutes but not in the way you expect. If I thought that willpower alone will deal with sexual addiction then what on Earth have I been wasting my time with these last days on these pages? And where has my willpower been for these last 38 years? Why have I only discovered willpower 3 days ago? Why have I paid out hundreds of dollars for multiple licenses of specialized monitoring software if willpower alone is the answer?

So let me say it very clearly, willpower is just that, it is willpower. Nothing more and nothing less. And willpower alone is rarely a reasonable implementation. You could will yourself to win the

Lottery but if you had not bought a lottery ticket, then even 10,000% willpower won't bring you any closer to winning. Yes, for some small things willpower alone is enough. But not for most.

And one thing is absolutely certain, I, for one, don't have anything near the necessary willpower to deal with an addiction this tough using willpower alone. If I did, I wouldn't be here on these forums.

And the truth is that I believe in the very opposite. I believe that if I had anything remotely like 100% willpower to break my addiction I would not use willpower alone but would do **absolutely everything** that I need to do to break the cycle of addiction, all the steps that I have already taken, such as putting multiple protections in place, placing serious limitations on my behavior, posting regularly in these forums, involving myself in a path of practical, step-by-step full and genuine Teshuva and Torah growth, trying to inspire myself and even others and more.

And, on the other hand. if I discover that I am not prepared or ready to do even one of these things, then you can bet that's a lack of willpower. There is no surer sign of a lack of will than the reluctance to go the distance.

So let's make it real simple. The same way that we agree that we all need to take full responsibility, we should be able to agree that we need to strive for full willpower. Not as a substitute for action, but as motivation to ensure that we really do everything we need, to break our addiction.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by the.guard - 22 Jan 2009 21:51

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I, for one, don't have anything near the necessary willpower to deal with an addiction this tough using willpower alone.

we need to strive for full willpower

If you don't admit powerless and surrender to Hashem, **where will you get the willpower to strive for full willpower?**

Again, I hope you prove me wrong!

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual support  
Posted by Elya K - 22 Jan 2009 22:43

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Admission is precisely what we need to do to get the shame and guilt OUT. It's a Jewish concept called

Viduy. When you can be honest with others and not get criticized like we did in the past, we start to

heal.

Baruch, I am only challenging you to keep the conversation going, it's not personal, at all. If it is I'll make an amends like it says in the 10th step :D

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by boruch - 23 Jan 2009 11:40

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[guardureyes wrote on 22 Jan 2009 21:51:](#)

I, for one, don't have anything near the necessary willpower to deal with an addiction this tough using willpower alone.

we need to strive for full willpower

If you don't admit powerless and surrender to Hashem, **where will you get the willpower to strive for full willpower?**

Again, I hope you prove me wrong!

The Chofetz Chaim was said to have said that he, the Chofetz Chaim, was a mechaber seforim, an author of books, while the Alter of Slobodka, founder of the Slobodka school of Mussar and the Slobodka Yeshiva was a mechaber of "mentschen", a creator of "men".

The Talmidim of the Alter, who learned in the Slobodka Yeshiva known as the "mother of Yeshivos", among them, HoRav Isser Zalman Meltzer, HoRav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel (son of the Alter and Rosh Yeshiva of the Mirrer Yeshiva), HoRav Yitzchok Isaac Scherr (son-in-law of the Alter and Rosh Yeshiva of Slobodka Yeshiva), HoRav Aharon Kotler, HoRav Yaakov Kamenetsky, HoRav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, HoRav Elazar Menachem Schach and many other Gedolei Roshei Yeshiva between them claim a majority share in Wordwide (Eretz Yisroel, US, Europe and everywhere else) Harbotzas HaTorah post World War II. His Talmidim were Gedolim in Torah and Gedolim in Mussar. In fact the Slobodka school of Mussar is the only one of the three prominent schools of mussar to have produced Gedolim in Mussar who were at the same time, the most prominent Geonim in Torah of their generation.

What was the Alter's secret? Most who know something of the Slobodka school of Mussar will

say that it was his focus on Gadlus Ho'odom -- the great Holiness and potential within man. To a certain extent there is a lot of truth in that. In fact, as far as his focus, while he is best known for his focus on Gadlus Ho'odom, he used to focus on three things, Gadlus Ho'odom -- the great Holiness and potential within man, Omek HaDin -- the profundity of HaKodush Boruch Hu's expectations and judgement on man and Olom Chessed Yiboneh -- the need to build the World through Kindness. But that too is not in my opinion the key secret of his success.

The Alter is quoted in Marbitzei Torah Umussar as saying that his goal in making Talmidim is that they should be "Smart and Good".

Most people are smart when it comes to business and academics. They are especially smart when it comes to trying to do things that are forbidden. Just look at how smart and cunning an addict becomes to satisfy his or her addiction. But when it comes to being good then they suddenly become extremely naive and they focus almost exclusively on being good without getting smart first. That's why so many fail. When Chazal say "Ain Habur Yerei Chet" -- the ignorant man cannot be a Yerei Shomayim, it is not just because he does not know which mitzvos to keep it is because he does not know how to be smart in the fight against the yetzer hora. That is exactly what Chazal say "Le'Olom Yehei Odom Arum BeYira" -- A person should be cunning in his quest for Yiras Shomayim. That is exactly what the Mesilas Yeshorim says in his introduction is the problem when Smart people do not realize that Yiras Shomayim demands not superficial and unintelligent piety but rather extreme application of all of one's mental abilities.

This is especially true with the fight against addiction. Most people initially try to fight addiction with brute force -- that is with the intelligence of a brute. They squander all of their efforts and strengths in the wrong areas. They don't fail because it can't be done they fail because it can't be done if you do it like a fool. And if you don't do it with a lot of cunning and guidance you will automatically do it like a fool.

So the problem is not at all as you claim that people lack willpower. Jews are good people and have no shortage of willpower to do good. But they ignore at their own peril the prescription of the Alter of Slobodka and the prescription of Chazal. Before you are Good you first need to get Smart. The people who try and fight the battle with goodness alone have a desperate shortage of down-to-earth, practical, ready-for-implementation Torah guidance on how to get smart in the battle against addiction.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual support  
Posted by boruch - 23 Jan 2009 11:59

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[Elya wrote on 22 Jan 2009 22:43:](#)

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Viduy. When you can be honest with others and not get criticized like we did in the past, we start to

heal.

Baruch, I am only challenging you to keep the conversation going, it's not personal, at all. If it is I'll make an amends like it says in the 10th step :D

Elya, you and Guard are almost mindlessly repeating Toras Bill W as if it were Halocho LeMoshe MiSinai.

**Here is my challenge to both of you.**

Consciously and unconsciously, you are both taking the 12 steps as the Gospel (and I say this very deliberately and sincerely) and then after the fact you are looking for Torah sources to support it.

What would happen, if we would (on an intellectual level only) for a moment forget that there had ever been an AA, if we would imagine that there had never been a Bill W and a Big Book and if we would imagine that there had never been a 12 steps?

You know, we need to stop looking up at the creation of the 12 steps with such awe and we need to stop feeling so inadequate in it's shadow. It is not the unbelievable achievement that people think it is. How they created it is really very simple and there is no reason why we could not do the same with more success.

Just think about it. What the Oxford Program did was no great rocket science. It is no great Cosmic secret. The people of the Oxford Program looked to their Christian Born Again faith and based on their faith developed their own program to beat addiction. Bill W, based on his own experience with addiction, modified their program to create the 12 steps. They were not medically qualified. They did not have Ruach HaKodesh. Their faith is not more than our faith. Their intelligence is not more than our intelligence. Their experience with addiction is not more than our experience of addiction. There is nothing at all that they had that we do not have better.

We have to quit the inferiority complex. Let's engage in a little self-affirmation. Let's say it loudly and clearly. We are smarter and better than they were and there is nothing at all that they did that we cannot do better.

The only difference between them and us is that they used their faith and experience to develop a program against addiction and we did not.

Until now.

So, here is my challenge to both of you.

What would happen if we were to do exactly what Bill W and the people of the Oxford program did? What would happen if just as they turned to their faith and experience with addiction we turned to our faith and experience of addiction?

What would happen if we had to look deeply and honestly at Chazal without any preconceived notions, without any agendas, without feeling beholden to their program and develop our own practical, down to Earth program to beat addiction?



I am challenging both of you to, despite our different backgrounds, and despite our different attitudes, to join me in the quest to develop from the Words of Chazal and the Words of the Sifrei Mussar and from **our own experience with addiction** a new program built totally from Torah sources from the ground up, to get Smart and to get Good in the fight against addiction.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by the.guard - 23 Jan 2009 12:46

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Dear Baruch, I commend your spirit, integrity, wisdom and determination. And before I attempt answer you, I want to agree with Elya that this is 100% not personal. We are both just looking for the best way to approach this insidious addiction. Now having said that, I challenge you to invent the airplane again, from the ground up.

Look, Chaza"l say, **Chachma Bagoyim Ta'amin**. If Hashem decided that it was time to bring down to the world a program - a secret - for breaking free of addiction, and these people were given the wisdom by Hashem to find something that works, there is no point in trying to discover America all over again.

I agree that we have to get "Smart" before "Getting good", but the number one secret to the 12-Steps is "Let go and Let G-d". Giving over your addiction to Hashem. And this Yesod agrees with Chaza"l in countless places, and there is no reason to reinvent the wheel. Therefore dear Baruch, if you accept this Yesod as your core theme, I am willing to join you to create a NEW, more Jewish approach to this theme, based on Chaza"l. However, as long as you feel that willpower comes before surrender, I can't join you. I simply don't believe it will work as well for most people.

See today's Chizuk e-mail. Read it well. According to you, why does it have to get worse? Why does a person have to "hit bottom"? After all, wouldn't that just weaken a person's resolve and just lead to utter despair?

The truth is, you are right about one thing. If we don't try all we can first, we can't surrender to Hashem and he won't help us either. We have to try all we can, before we are true vessels for surrender and for Hashem's help. So yes, the first step is to take responsibility and do all we

can to break free. But as long as we haven't "hit bottom", which means that we come to the complete conclusion that willpower alone will not get us through this addiction, we can't surrender to Hashem. So it's the "chicken or the egg" kind of situation.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by boruch - 23 Jan 2009 14:01

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[guardureyes wrote on 23 Jan 2009 12:46:](#)

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You know Guard, that a sexual addict needs not only to beat his addiction, he needs to do Teshuva. Even if an addict succeeds in being free for life, if he has not gone through the minimum steps of Teshuva then he has not yet put right what he has done wrong, he has just stopped doing new wrong (which is in itself very significant but not enough). So, for example, if purely hypothetically --- without discussing the likelihood, if someone had found a way to succeed at the 12 steps but was emotionally very accepting and understanding of his previous behavior and had not regretted it in the minimum way that Teshuva requires, then he has not succeeded in doing Teshuva.

So we anyway need to do Teshuva. Now the best way to do Teshiva is to use three core texts as part of the Teshuva process. Rambam Hilchos Teshuva, Chovos Halevovos Shaar HaTeshuva and the entire sefer Shaarei Teshuva of Rabbeinu Yonah. Now I guarantee you that if someone knows the secret of learning even the most complex sifrei mussar in a very practical down-to-Earth way (the single best example I can give of someone who had this ability was

HoRav Avigdor Miller who in his little known tapes of shiurim on the texts of Chovos Halevovos, Mesilas Yeshorim, Shaarei Teshuva really shows the way) then he doesn't need to reinvent any wheel or airplane, or rediscover America because in the process he will discover the right way to beat addiction.

My problem with the 12 steps is not that it's baGoyim it's that from my own knowledge of Mussar and my own experience of addiction, it's not Chochmo at all, in my opinion not only is it not smart, it's very dumb. The reason for the results are the group and the caring not the steps themselves most of which are in the wrong order or are the wrong focus.

[guardureyes wrote on 23 Jan 2009 12:46:](#)

I agree that we have to get "Smart" before "Getting good", but the number one secret to the 12-Steps is "Let go and Let G-d". Giving over your addiction to Hashem. And this Yesod agrees with Chaza"l in countless places, and there is no reason to reinvent the wheel. Therefore dear Baruch, if you accept this Yesod as your core theme, I am willing to join you to create a NEW, more Jewish approach to this theme, based on Chaza"l. However, as long as you feel that willpower comes before surrender, I can't join you. I simply don't believe it will work as well for most people.

See today's Chizuk e-mail. Read it well. According to you, why does it have to get worse? Why does a person have to "hit bottom"? After all, wouldn't that just weaken a person's resolve and just lead to utter despair?

The truth is, you are right about one thing. If we don't try all we can first, we can't surrender to Hashem and he won't help us either. We have to try all we can, before we are true vessels for surrender and for Hashem's help. So yes, the first step is to take responsibility and do all we can to break free. But as long as we haven't "hit bottom", which means that we come to the complete conclusion that willpower alone will not get us through this addiction, we can't surrender to Hashem. So it's the "chicken or the egg" kind of situation.

Guard I am afraid to say that you are too influenced by your own eventual success with the

steps, or to put it more bluntly, you are brainwashed. If you are not yet convinced, that is fine. Time will tell.

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Re: IF the 12 steps have not worked for you... let's get together for mutual sup  
Posted by the.guard - 23 Jan 2009 14:22

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Baruch, I really don't think we are disagreeing at all. You already acknowledged that we need Hashem, and I already acknowledged that we also need to take full responsibility and do all we can to stop. So what is the disagreement here? Which one comes first? I think they go hand in hand. Like I said before, it's the chicken or the egg scenario.

I am not a hard-core proponent of the 12-Steps - as in a type of "cult" thing, or Halacha Lemoshe Misinai. I just think that the core of the 12-Steps are yesodos that we all need to use, and since it has such a good name and so much success - and Rabbi Twerski backing it, we here at GUE encourage people to learn it, join groups (since there anyways aren't Torah groups yet) and use the Yesodos therein, as well as the group support it comes packaged with.

If you want to start Torah based groups, I am fully behind you. Just agree with me on one thing. As much as we need to do our full hishtadlus, at the end of the day - it's Hashem that does the fighting. Hashem Yilachem Lachem, Ve'atem Tacharishu. Lulai Hashem Ozer Lo etc...

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