

Sholom's Mindfulness Recovery Path

Posted by tiefster88 - 22 Feb 2018 17:19

Hi everybody,

I am posting on this website for the first time. I have tried a few different methods in the past to recover. The highest quality for me was the mindfulness app programs for addiction by Judson Brewer.

In the past I was sober using this program for months and didn't have to struggle with difficult cravings as much. However after so many weeks I lost the emotional push to keep up with the program. Other things came up in life and this got pushed to the side. Eventually a craving came along and knocked me over.

This time I am going through the program again in combination with a Taphsic neder. I hope that posting my insights of the program on here can help me with my program and staying sober. If anybody else reads it and gains something that can help them then that would be a great bonus.

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Re: Forward Movement

Posted by tiefster88 - 17 Jul 2018 17:41

An example: Somebody who works hard on GYE and manages to get sober for 90 days but then loses it and acts out.

He could beat himself up and say it was all a waste of time and that he is hopeless and then keep acting out until he can't take it anymore, or he could look at this "failure" as a teacher and learn from it and realize that he is growing. He can then get right back into it and then start going sober again.

I can tell you that my 3 weeks sober now mean way way more to me than my 4 months before

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Re: Forward Movement

Posted by mzl - 17 Jul 2018 18:35

I see. I think I have seen this in the past under the name "positive suggestion" or "reframing." I agree that it's a good idea.

I don't think it's that easy for people to learn about themselves that way. Often the problem is what some people around here call honesty, they don't learn because it hurts too much.

But I agree that an attitude of curiosity and the stubborn refusal to protect one's self image by using guilt etc. is the only way to learn anything. That is how I learned to peel away my addiction successfully. But I don't really think I figured out how to do it on my own. I think Hashem told me how to do it after I banged my head against the wall enough times that He got tired of waiting.

There is also the question of how quickly people learn in practice, and whether they and other people get hurt in the long wait.

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Review of Mindsets

Posted by tiefster88 - 19 Jul 2018 12:47

We can ponder these questions to see if we understand the ideas about mindset:

1. What is fixed vs growth mindset? How does this relate to worldview? Are you more of a fixed or growth mindset person?
2. How does growth mindset relate to 2nd gear?
3. What does growth mindset feel like in your own direct experience?

4. What type of effort do we need to use to be in growth mindset?
5. Is it possible to train our brain to turn toward difficulties instead of turning away from them?
6. Does growth mindset count sliding backwards as forward progress?

We can start to incline our minds in the direction of growth. No matter how bad the circumstances seem to be in any moment. Why? It's like a charging of 2nd gear. Whenever we reflect on 3rd gear moments when we surfed out a craving to act out, it feels good to do this and it motivates our brains to do this again. It's like turbo-charging 2nd gear.

If we get energized every time we stumble at something without getting discouraged this can provide a lot of power. Instead of "Oh man I'm a terrible person I can't believe I fell!" It becomes, "Wow, I learned a ton about myself from that fall".

We become open to anything that comes our way. We welcome any hardship because we get to learn something. We fall off the wave and get back up with a big smile on our face because we just survived that wild ride and we grew and learned something from it.

Part of the mitzvah of Yichud Hashem is realizing that there are no forces of opposition to Hashem. If you think there are forces of opposition preventing you from growing, then you lack the awareness of the oneness of Hashem.

There are aspects of our personality that are refined when we learn how to deal with falling. All of this is ultimately meant to help us grow, not to get in the way of our growth. Every circumstance in life is meant to bring us closer to Hashem.

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Re: Sholom's Mindfulness Recovery Path
Posted by tiefster88 - 22 Jul 2018 14:25

As a conclusion to this growth mindset avoda, I wanted to share with you an inspiring section that I saw in Tanya, Iggeres Teshuva, which I am learning now for the first time. Chapter 11:

"because He desires kindness and He is gracious and merciful- so he is abundantly forgiving, immediately when you ask forgiveness and atonement from Him, without any doubt or shred of doubt in the world"

"human nature is such that if one person wrongs another and then asks for forgiveness, and is forgiven, but then he repeats the offense, it is very hard to forgive a second time and certainly a third or fourth time, but G-d's nature is such that there is no difference between forgiving one time or a thousand times, since G-d's attributes are not finite and limited, but rather without end, and compared to infinity there is no difference at all between a small or a large number for in His presence everything is considered zero. Therefore He removes our sins every year, a sinner may confess his sins annually in the al chet even though he regressed and repeated the offenses, he may still confess over them again on Yom Kippur the following year and perpetually each year. And not only every year, but every day."

"This does not fall under sinning with the intention of doing teshuva as that is only in a case where the person could have overcome his evil inclination at the time of the sin, but instead, in his heart he relied on teshuva. Since it was teshuva that led him to sin, he will not be granted the opportunity. But even then, if he squeezes and strengthens himself, overcoming his evil inclination and repents then his teshuva will be accepted"

Hope you all fast well. We can all do teshuva this year and Hashem will immediately wipe all the tears from our faces and this will be the last Tisha Be'av!

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The Big Book

Posted by tiefster88 - 26 Jul 2018 15:35

I decided I would read the big book again over the next couple of days/weeks.

I will post some quotations of the chapters that I find particularly inspiring or practical, even though the whole book is important. This is in order to give me some focus.

Foreward

"To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered, is the main purpose of this book."

The Doctors opinion

"To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking with impunity.

After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.

On the other hand—and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules."

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Bills Story

Posted by tiefster88 - 27 Jul 2018 09:39

"The drive for success was on. I'd prove to the world I was important."

"No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that bitter morass of self-pity. Quicksand stretched around me in all directions. I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master."

"They had told of a simple religious idea and a practical program of action. That was two

months ago and the result was self-evident. It worked!"

"I was not an atheist. Few people really are, for that means blind faith in the strange proposition that this universe originated in a cipher and aimlessly rushes nowhere. My intellectual heroes, the chemists, the astronomers, even the evolutionists, suggested vast laws and forces at work. Despite contrary indications, I had little doubt that a mighty purpose and rhythm underlay all. How could there be so much of precise and immutable law, and no intelligence? I simply had to believe in a Spirit of the Universe, who knew neither time nor limitation. But that was as far as I had gone." "When they talked of a God personal to me, who was love, superhuman strength and direction, I became irritated and my mind snapped shut against such a theory."

"Thus was I convinced that God is concerned with us humans when we want Him enough." "For a brief moment, I had needed and wanted God. There had been a humble willingness to have Him with me—and He came. But soon the sense of His presence had been blotted out by worldly clamors, mostly those within myself. And so it had been ever since. How blind I had been."

"There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost. I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch. I have not had a drink since."

"My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies. We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. I expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. Never was I to be critical of them. I was to right all such matters to the utmost of my ability."

"I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure."

"My friend promised when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator; that I would have the elements of a way of living which answered all my problems. Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness, honesty and humility to establish and maintain the new order of things, were the essential requirements."

"Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all."

"These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric. There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never known. There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound. For a moment I was alarmed, and called my friend, the doctor, to ask if I were still sane. He listened in wonder as I talked. Finally he shook his head saying, "Something has happened to you I don't understand. But you had better hang on to it. Anything is better than the way you were." "

"Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that."

"My wife and I abandoned ourselves with enthusiasm to the idea of helping other alcoholics to a solution of their problems. I was not too well at the time, and was plagued by waves of self-pity and resentment. This sometimes nearly drove me back to drink, but I soon found that when all other measures failed, work with another alcoholic would save the day. Many times I have gone to my old hospital in despair. On talking to a man there, I would be amazingly lifted up and set on my feet. It is a design for living that works in rough going. We commenced to make many fast friends and a fellowship has grown up among us of which it is a wonderful thing to feel a part."

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Re: Bills Story

Posted by mzl - 27 Jul 2018 10:25

It's interesting that the writer can't analyze his psyche (doesn't know why he gets a boost when he talks to other alkies) but he is flanked by someone who is analytical:

"Something has happened to you I don't understand. But you had better hang on to it. Anything is better than the way you were." "

They must have had some interesting conversations.

The doctor doesn't get it either unfortunately. That is really the key to understanding the success of Bill's program.

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Re: Bills Story

Posted by tiefster88 - 27 Jul 2018 12:12

I assume Bill was just worried that perhaps C"V he was going psychotic or something. There had been a big change in him, compared to the way he was before. That't probably why he wanted to speak to a psychiatrist. To reassure him that he was not going insane.

The doctor reassured him that anything was better that the way he was and I assume that he was not going insane, because he would have said so otherwise.

?But the psychiatrist probably couldn't understand it because it doesn't make sense according to science that a person could get cured of a terrible chronic addiction by just forming a relationship with G-d and taking the idea to other people.

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Re: Bills Story

Posted by mzl - 27 Jul 2018 13:00

[tiefster88 wrote on 27 Jul 2018 12:12:](#)

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relationship with G-d and taking the idea to other people.

And he'd be right because that's not what cured him.

First of all he wasn't cured because without his new behaviors (like interacting with other alkie) he'd go right back to drinking. It's a treatment, not a cure.

Secondly G-d doesn't do the behaviors for him. He's the one that does the interacting. The doctor just didn't understand the logic: why do the new behaviors help you?

Frankly the doctor probably studied Freud et al who advanced theories of psychology that were really conjectures, they were not based on experiment.

I think G-d did relate to Bill differently as a result of his new behaviors, but in other ways. Sobriety wasn't one of them. I think you can see this in the nazirite. It says the nazirite is special to G-d in some ways.

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There is a solution

Posted by tiefster88 - 29 Jul 2018 18:14

"The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences* which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.

If you are as seriously alcoholic as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help. This (*See "Spiritual Experience) we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort."

"Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences. To me these occurrences are phenomena. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them. Infact, I have been trying to produce some such emotional rearrangement within you. With many individuals the methods which I employed are successful, but I have never been successful with an alcoholic of your description."*

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Spiritual Experience

Posted by tiefster88 - 30 Jul 2018 20:43

Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule.

Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the "educational variety" because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. He finally realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.

Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it "God-consciousness."

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More About Alcoholism

Posted by tiefster88 - 02 Aug 2018 09:56

"Then they outlined the spiritual answer and program of action which a hundred of them had followed successfully. Though I had been only a nominal churchman, their proposals were not, intellectually, hard to swallow. But the program of action, though entirely sensible, was pretty drastic. It meant I would have to throw several lifelong conceptions out of the window. That was not easy. But the moment I made up my mind to go through with the process, I had the curious feeling that my alcoholic condition was relieved, as in fact it proved to be.

"Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could."

Many doctors and psychiatrists agree with our conclusions. One of these men, staff member of a world renowned hospital, recently made this statement to some of us: "What you say about the general hopelessness of the average alcoholic's plight is, in my opinion, correct. As to two of you men, whose stories I have heard, there is no doubt in my mind that you were 100% hopeless, apart from divine help. Had you offered yourselves as patients at this hospital, I would not have taken you, if I had been able to avoid it. People like you are too heart- breaking. Though not a religious person, I have profound respect for the spiritual approach in such cases as yours. For most cases, there is virtually no other solution."

Once more: The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power.

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We Agnostics

Posted by tiefster88 - 05 Aug 2018 11:11

"Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God."

"Here are thousands of men and women, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. This happened soon after they wholeheartedly met a few simple requirements.

Once con-fused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they show the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life. Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They show how the change came over them. When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith."

"We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, we were a prey to misery and depression, we couldn't make a living, we had a feeling of uselessness, we were full of fear, we were unhappy, we couldn't seem to be of real help to other people — was not a basic solution of these bedevilements more important than whether we should see newsreels of lunar flight? Of course it was.

When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did."

"We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God."

"We could not prove life in the sense that you can prove a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, yet, there it was. Could we still say the whole thing was nothing but a mass of electrons, created out of nothing, meaning nothing, whirling on to a destiny of nothingness? Of course we couldn't. The electrons themselves seemed more intelligent than that. At least, so the chemist said."

"Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself.

We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us."

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Re: We Agnostics

Posted by mzl - 05 Aug 2018 17:03

I think all the talk about "some kind of G-d" I think is very productive. I think Hashem is in a hurry

to connect to people that think that He's out there but who are convinced that they don't really know what He's like. Like when Avraham avinu said "who is the master of creation?" He knew that he didn't know.

I think it's the same reason why you can't say Hashem's name except in certain special circumstances.

They really got that one right.

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