

Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 07 Dec 2011 21:33

I attended an SA workshop with lots and lots of tools for recovery (about 100 or so). I hope, little by little, to share them here on this thread.

Some of them are very simple and might even seem silly (but may surprise you--and work if you try them), and some of them are very deep. Some of them you may have heard of before, and some of them not.

Take whatever you find helpful, and leave the rest--maybe someone else will find it helpful. I can't say that I have tested them all personally, either.

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I posted this on Jan 1, '12, but thought it would be appropriate to add it here at the beginning of this thread, too:

I could have easily cut and paste the whole list of recovery tools into a post all at once and left it at that. However, I thought that by posting only one each day, it would give people a better chance to digest them and implement them (and remember them) to some extent in their lives. Also, in posting one at a time, I see it is giving me a chance to reflect on each of these tools and appreciate them much more.

So, if you are joining this thread now that so many of these tools have already been posted (and more yet to come, BE"H), I suggest you will have the greatest benefit by reading this thread slowly, just one or two tools each day. There's no hurry.

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--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by jewish jew - 03 Jun 2012 10:15

Thanx Elya point number 160 really helps me. I have done it before you posted it.

And thank you for the 400 AA slogans I'm in middle going through them (I find reading through a lot of them at once takes out the deep/er meaning in them, so I'm doing it slowly and going over some of them more than once)

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 03 Jun 2012 13:31

164. Increase your awareness of your perceptions and motives.

Duvid chaim says that, in the course of his 12-step calls, if this is the only thing you gain out of it, then it's enough!

At first, you notice when you're about to act out and, being aware of what you're doing, you can take action to avoid acting out. But, after a while, you start become aware of increasingly subtle motives, and increasingly subtle states of that feeling of restlessness, irritability, and discontent (which, left alone, will compel a person to act out). You become more aware of the subtle workings of your ego trying to manage life on your own terms.

And, the earlier you catch these things and deal with them in a healthy way, the less you feel compelled to act out.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 06 Jun 2012 14:26

165. Talk, feel, trust

The line I heard that sold me on the 12-step program was from something I have seen labeled as, "The Newcomer's Welcome Statement," or something like that. One thing it said was that, in the course of our addiction we have learned the rules for life, "Don't talk, don't trust, don't feel." Something clicked for me--this disease is about isolation. I have been isolated my whole life, unable to talk, trust, or feel. I thought I needed to just read some Dale Carnegie books on public speaking, or just improve my self-confidence. My inability to talk was a direct result of this illness. And therefore, healing from this inability to talk, trust, and feel, will be the result of recovery.

And, that's what is happening. I have a new group of friends and acquaintances with whom it's safe to share my innermost and darkest thoughts and feelings. I have come to trust them. And, as I start to dislodge these clogged up negative emotions--especially guilt, fears, and resentments, then positive emotions that I don't remember feeling much of before also come to the surface.

You can't just suppress your negative emotions and keep your positive ones; it's a package deal. As a result of hiding the negative, we have also lost the positive. When we start to uncover the negative and bring it into the light, the positive side also comes back to life.

Accepting ourselves for who we really are--both the good and the bad (and taking responsibility for who we are, rather than hiding from our true selves out of guilt and shame), I think is what helps most to move this process along.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by tehylimzugger - 06 Jun 2012 16:33

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 06 Jun 2012 14:26:](#)

You can't just suppress your negative emotions and keep your positive ones; it's a package deal. As a result of hiding the negative, we have also lost the positive. When we start to uncover the negative and bring it into the light, the positive side also comes back to life.

I never really understood all this talk about negative feelings, now i'm beginning to understand.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 07 Jun 2012 14:50

166. The Ramban's Letter.

Since avoiding resentments and developing humility are a key to recovery, I find the Ramban's letter is a good reminder for staying on track.

What is it? It's a letter that the Ramban wrote to his son. You can find the Hebrew in almost any siddur. You can find the English on Google, as I did (well, I just found the Hebrew on Google, too) (I just took a quick look here, but I don't vouch for the accuracy of the text here or of the translation):

Hear, my son, the instruction of your father and do not abandon the law of your mother. (1) Accustom yourself to speak all your words with gentleness to all people at all times. This will protect you from anger - which is an unfavorable trait that brings people to sin. And thus said the our sages of blessed memory:

Whoever becomes angry all types of Gehinam have power over him (2), as it states: Remove anger from your heart, and eliminate evil from your flesh (3) - and the evil that is meant here refers to Gehinam, as it states: And also the wicked is destined for the day of evil. (4) And when you free yourself from anger, the trait of humility will enter your heart - for this is the finest quality of all favorable traits. As our Scripture says: The heel of humility is the awe of Hashem. (5) And through humility you will gain upon your heart the trait of awe. Because you will always know in your heart where you came from, where you will go and that you are delicate as a worm or a maggot in your lifetime and even more so at the time of death. Remember before whom in the future you will give a reckoning and an accounting for your deeds - before the King of Kings. As it states: The heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. (6) - how much more the hearts of men. (7) As it is states: Do I not fill up the heavens and the earth? says Hashem. (8)

When you contemplate all this, you will fear your creator and you will be guarded from transgression. And with these qualities you will be happy with your lot [in life].

When you accustom yourself with the quality of humility - to be reserved before all men and to fear before G-d and from transgression -then will the spirit of the divine presence and the radiance of His Glory rest upon you and [you will gain] life in the world to come.

And now my son know and observe, that the one who is haughty in his heart over his fellow creatures, rebels against the Kingdom of heaven. Because he glorifies himself with the royal

garments of the Kingdom of heaven, as it states: Hashem reigns - he is clothed in glory. (9) And what is there for a person to make his heart haughty?

If he has wealth - it is Hashem who declares poverty and bestows riches. If it is because of honor, doesn't too belong to Hashem? As it says: And the riches and the honor comes from You. (10) And how can one glorify oneself with the honor of his Creator.

And if one glorifies himself because of his wisdom: He removes the speech of the trusty and takes away the wisdom of the elders. (11)

It is found that all is equal before the Omnipresent, because with His anger He makes the haughty fall, and with His will he raises up the fallen. Thus lower yourself and Hashem will raise you.

Therefore I will advise you how you should be accustom yourself to the trait of humility - to act with it always. All your words should be said with calmness, and your head should be bowed. Lower your eyes down to the ground, and direct your heart upward. And do not stare at a person when you speak with them. Each person should seem greater than you in your eyes - if he is more wise or wealthy than yourself, it is upon you to honor him.

If he is needy and you are wealthier or wiser, think in your heart that you are more obligated in your deeds than him and he is more meritorious than you when he does good deeds. Because if he transgresses, it is unintentional, and if you do, it is deliberate.

In all your conversations and all your deeds and your thoughts, at all times, think in your heart as if you are standing before the Holy one blessed be he and that his Sh'china (divine presence) is upon you, because His Glory (Honor) fills the world. And let your words be said with fear and awe like a servant who stands before his master - and act with timidity before all men. And if a person calls you do not answer with a loud voice - just respond with calmness as if you are standing before your mentor.

And be attentive to learn Torah with diligence so that you can fulfill it. When you rise from your book - reflect on what you learned -if there is something that you can incorporate into your daily life. Search into your deeds in the morning and night - and thus you shall devote all your days to in repentance.

Remove from your heart all your worldly preoccupations when you pray, and prepare your heart before the Omnipresent, blessed be He. Purify your thoughts and reflect upon the words before they leave your mouth. Thus you shall do all the days that your breath remains, with each and every thing, and thus you will be spared from transgressing. Through this your words, your actions, and your thoughts will be proper. Your prayers will be meritorious, clear and pure, meaningful and accepted before G-d, Blessed be He - as it states, You will prepare their heart and You will cause their ears to hear. (12)

Read this letter once every week and not less - to apply it and you will walk after Hashem - May He Be Blessed - always, so that you will be successful in all your endeavors and you will inherit the world to come that is hidden for the righteous. And every day that you read this letter, whatever that you desire in your heart will be answered by heaven... forevermore. Amen.

Selah!

References: (1) Proverbs 1:8, (2) Nedarim 22a, (3) Ecclesiastics 11:10, (4) Proverbs 16:4, (5) Proverbs 22:4, (6) Kings I 8:27, Chronicles II 6:18 (7) Proverbs 15:11, (8) Jeremiah 23:24, (9) Psalms 93:1, (10) Chronicles I 29:12, (11) Job 12:20, (12) Psalms 10:17.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 08 Jun 2012 07:19

167. Torah.

Can't ignore the fact that Torah, somehow, in some supernatural way, has a purifying and uplifting effect on us. I saw somewhere, I think it was in the Sheilas and Teshuvos of the Nodeh B'Yehuda, an incident where a bochor was boarding in someone's home, was having relations with the lady of the house quite frequently, and in the end married her daughter. After a couple of years of this, he was doing teshuva and wanted to know if he needed to inform the husband, which would forbid his wife.

The response began, first of all, saying how, despite everything, it may very well be in the zchus of this buchor's learning that he was able to eventually turn around and do teshuva.

I would also add that, as Torah observant Jews, we have noticed that something is wrong much earlier than it would take someone to notice who is not Torah observant. If we're looking at women on the street and touching ourselves a bit and can't stop, we know something's wrong. I think, without those pages of the shulchan aruch we are so familiar with, it might have taken us much longer, and we might have had to sink much further and lost a whole lot more, before we decided we need help. In fact, our standard for what's wrong is so high that we can come in here totally obsessed and yet truly wonder if anything is really wrong with us after all.

Now, more specifically about learning Torah: I would say that we have to be careful **HOW** we learn Torah. It is very easy to use Torah learning to sink more into our isolation, to escape responsibility even more while feeling fully justified, and it can feed our egos like nothing else can.

The **process** of learning is as important, and perhaps more so, than gaining mastery of the material. Overall, learning Torah should make us more open-minded, more able to consider someone else's point of view, and more tolerant of other people. Also, it should make us more

considerate of other people, and more capable of making balanced and mature decisions.

In short, if you are learning by yourself most of the time because nobody else is quite right for you, or if you are going through chavrusas like a laxative addict through toilet paper, if your wife just had her third child in three years and desperately needs your help but you're nowhere to be found in the house at any time because you're always too busy learning (hiding in a sefer), then your Torah learning is probably not contributing to your recovery and may very well be hindering it.

I also want to add--there's a lot of debate on this forum whether recovery can be achieved strictly through Torah sources, or whether we have to rely on non-Jewish sources. I have put a lot of thought into this, and I'll say this: After each fall I have had, I tried to examine what was missing in my recovery that led me to fall. Where was I weak, what was I lacking. On my last fall (nearly a year ago), I realized that, although I was on these 12-step phone calls, I didn't have enough actual people in my own time-zone that I could speak to and meet with. It was the fellowship, the real human support, that was lacking. So, even if the text of the Mesilas Yescharim truly does contain everything I need to stop masturbating (and even if I truly was wise enough to extract all this information on my own and apply it correctly on my own), I WOULD STILL BE LACKING THE SUPPORT, which is a major ingredient to recovery. Even if I join a mussar vaad, I can tell them, "I have a nisayon with the yeitzer hara," but I can't tell them, "I feel like a demon possesses me and forces me to masturbate nearly every time I step in the shower." And, it is such specific sharing with people who have similar experiences which has been most helpful to my recovery.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 08 Jun 2012 15:02

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 08 Jun 2012 07:19:](#)

I would also add that, as Torah observant Jews, we have noticed that something is wrong much earlier than it would take someone to notice who is not Torah observant.

Mesilas Yescharim says (Ch. 5), that Torah is the most important ingredient for Zehirus - being

cautious in avoiding negative practices. And he explains, "For a person's YH is truly very strong within him, and without the person realizing, it becomes constantly stronger and takes control of the person. And if one would not learn Torah, which is the antidote created specifically against the YH, the darkness of materialism will become stronger within him step by step, and he will not realize until he is sinking in the evil and extremely far from the truth, so much so that he may not even think of seeking the truth. But if he learns Torah, when he sees its ways, and its commandments, eventually it will automatically arouse within him an awakening which will lead him to the correct path."

Amen kein yehi ratzon!

MT

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 10 Jun 2012 14:02

168. Is this good for my recovery or not?

This is a handy dandy question to ask yourself when you're wondering about whether or not you should do something.

169. Whatever I place my recovery in front of will flourish; whatever I place in front of my recovery won't.

Another consideration, particularly regarding our involvement in recovery. Very often we sound like this, "I can't make the phone calls, or go to meetings," or, "What if my wife ever finds out I'm in recovery," or, "I can't miss afternoon seder!" Suddenly, when it comes to recovery, we're so responsible and nothing in the world can possibly budge. However, we didn't quite make the same calculations (or, we don't make quite the same calculations) when it comes to our acting out.

Here's another AA slogan which is relevant here:

PUT RECOVERY FIRST TO MAKE IT LAST.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 11 Jun 2012 05:01

170. Humility, Fearlessness, Honesty

These are the BIG 3 traits--assets, that striving for them is a major part of recovery.

The opposite, Arrogance, Fearfulness, and Dishonesty, are traits--liabilities, which quite obviously feed our sickness.

To cleanse ourselves of these liabilities and to develop these assets, in one respect, is to change ourselves. Though, in truth, I think it is a process of just uncovering who we really are deep inside. It's not that we don't HAVE these assets. We DO, and we certainly conjure them up at time, even in our worst moments. We just need to develop them and to activate them more frequently.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 11 Jun 2012 15:40

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 10 Jun 2012 14:02:](#)

168. Is this good for my recovery or not?

This is a handy dandy question to ask yourself when you're wondering about whether or not you should do something.

Like that old Yiddle who heard people in Shul getting all excited about the Mets winning the World Series (many years ago), and he couldn't figure out what it's all about, so he asked, "Just tell me - is this good for the Yidden or not?"

MT

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by gibbor120 - 12 Jun 2012 20:43

[Machshovo wrote on 11 Jun 2012 15:40:](#)

168. Is this good for my recovery or not?

This is a handy dandy question to ask yourself when you're wondering about whether or not you should do something.

Like that old Yiddle who heard people in Shul getting all excited about the Mets winning the World Series (many years ago), and he couldn't figure out what it's all about, so he asked, "Just tell me - is this good for the Yidden or not?"

MT

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Jun 2012 12:28

171. Watch out for RID.

RID stand for Restlessness, Irritability, and Discontent--in case you didn't know.

It is these feelings that lead us to act out, and it is a lot easier to notice when these feelings are starting to develop (the sooner the better) and to deal with them in a healthy way than it is to stop ourselves from acting out when we're only a click away from pornography.

I've mentioned this idea before (and probably more than once), but I thought RID deserved it's own tool.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Jun 2012 12:30

172. BYOB--Bring Your Own Book.

This tool is helpful for when you have to ride public transportation. Take something that's really interesting and will keep your mind and eyes occupied rather than sitting around and staring at every female who enters the bus or who is walking around on the street.

Please do not use this tool when driving your own vehicle.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by E-Tek - 13 Jun 2012 19:13

For those who can't read in moving vehicles, I suggest shiurim (that's what I do during my numerous travels). This is also permitted if you are driving your own vehicle, unless you are a new driver.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Jun 2012 11:45

173. Write your old ideas

Part of recovery is discarding our old ideas and adapting new ideas along with a whole new design for living. I wrote up the beliefs and ideals that I picked up along the way and have held so dearly for most of my life--they come primarily from breath-mint commercials and TV sit-

coms. Here are a few of them:

- * If I get lucky enough to make eye-contact with the right person (usually happens while crossing a street), I will achieve instant bliss (we'll magically end up in bed together within the next fifteen seconds).
- * The goal of life and the only way to be happy is to have as much sex as often as possible with as many people as possible. (And everyone else shares this belief, too).
- * If you don't have sex, or if you don't want to have sex, something is seriously wrong with you.
- * Sex is the only thing that matters in life.

This next one isn't directly related to sex, but is sure results in a lot of that Restlessness, Irritability, and Discontent which will eventually compel me to act out for relief:

- * There's no problem in the world that can't be solved in 90 minutes or less (usually 30 minutes, including three commercial breaks).

Recovery must include letting go of these ideas, and adapting healthy ones.

--Elyah

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