

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 Eye.nonymous - 06 Feb 2012 20:19

Time for another summary (I think I'll just summarize the most recent section from now on, until the end):

ON THE STREET

- 59. Take a different road to avoid triggers.
- 60. The SA (or GYE) salute.
- 61. Custody of the eyes.
- 62. Paving stones and rooftops.
- 63. Flick your eyes to the top left.
- 64. Shake your head.
- 65. Snap the elastic band.
- 66. Don't breath through your nose.
- 67. "G-d, may I find in You what I'm looking for in that woman (etc.)"
- 68. "G-d, take away my lust. I pray for her (etc.)."
- 69. "G-d, please take away this image (or fantasy)"
- 70. Bookend risky situations.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 08 Feb 2012 15:57

IMPROVE RELATION WITH SELF

DECISION MAKING

71. What's my next right action?

Ask yourself this question throughout the day, instead of running all day based on habit or impulse. And, the LAST right action you can do is to go to bed early.

72. Rushing is not sober.

Sober is peaceful and serene; you can let things happen on G-d's time instead of trying to squeeze instant results out of life the way that you and your ego would like them to happen.

If I remember correctly, I think I read once in a footnote to Even Shleima (by the Vilna Goan), to paraphrase: The Yeitzer Tov is calm, whereas the Yeitzer Hara can be recognized because it is accompanied by a burning sense of urgency.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 09 Feb 2012 20:50

Some more questions to ask yourself:

73. What would my sponsor do?

74. What would my sponsor say?

After a while you get a feel for this. For the forum, you might be able to ask yourself, "What

But, if you actually CAN ask your sponsor, don't rely on your own opinion of what they might say.

would Dov say?" Or 400004.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Blind Beggar - 10 Feb 2012 08:10

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 31 Jan 2012 12:41:](#)

IMPROVE RELATION WITH SELF

IN THE STREET

60. The SA (or GYE) salute.

This is a salute where, instead of having your hand sticking out like a visor, you have it down in front of your eyes--like you're saying the Shema. If you feel too silly doing this, what I do sometimes is rub my temples (that's the sides of my head) with my thumb and index finger as if I am suddenly suffering from a major headache--the rest of my hand covers my eyes.

--Elyah

I love this one. I'm going to have to try it out. Now, where can I find an triggering woman to practice with.....

The other day, I was waiting for an elevator and I saw a very attractive woman at my 8 o' clock (behind me on the left). I couldn't see properly but I could have turned around. Instead, I focused on the elevator doors and she was gone. That evening I heard Dovi of the Shmiras Einyayim shiurim say in the name of Rabbi Chaim Vital z"l that the most precious moments of our lives are when we are overcoming nisyonos. Felt great.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 10 Feb 2012 08:10

75. Take an action of love.

"We can't think our way into right acting, but we can act our way into right thinking."

--AA slogan, if I'm not mistaken.

Or, "You can't heal a sick mind with a sick mind."

The more we THINK about what's wrong, the more we try to analyze ourselves, the more we try to figure out the cause of our lust or of our bad mood--especially all on our own, generally

the WORSE things get.

But, when we make an effort and take an action to do something helpful, considerate, and unselfish, it can often put us into a better place mentally, too. It doesn't have to be something dramatic--like donating a kidney. Even a small action (and, perhaps, especially a small action) will do the job.

And, you probably all know the famous statement of the Sefer HaChinuch, to paraphrase, "Our thoughts follow after our actions." We might not be able to control our thoughts, but we can control our actions (much more easily), and THROUGH THAT we can control our thoughts.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 10 Feb 2012 08:12

[Blind Beggar wrote on 10 Feb 2012 08:10:](#)

I love this one. I'm going to have to try it out. Now, where can I find an attractive woman to practice with.....

Hopefully you will already have your hands over your eyes so you won't see any.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Blind Beggar - 10 Feb 2012 08:54

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 31 Jan 2012 12:41:](#)

IMPROVE RELATION WITH SELF

IN THE STREET

59. Take a different road to avoid triggers.

Sometimes when there is an attractive woman on the street and I have a possible detour in front of me I think, "If I take a detour, I'm just going to see another woman on that street, so what's the use!" Ever get that thought? But, in the end of the day there's a DEFINITE trigger in front of us, and what we may find on the next street is yet UNCERTAIN. I think, when we take the action to avoid a DEFINITE trigger NOW, we get extra siyata d'shmaya to help us not to look at the trigger on the other road should there happen to be one.

--Elyah

Elyah, this is number 2. Look:[Eye.nonymous wrote on 08 Dec 2011 14:48:](#)

2. Move somewhere else.

This tool is self-explanatory. If you're drawn to the computer, get up and get away from the computer. If you're drawn to a lady on the street, cross the street, or take a detour.

I've sometimes thought, "What's the use of taking a detour? After all, I'm just going to see ANOTHER woman on THAT street!"

But, even so, it's worth the detour. Here is a definite trigger on THIS street, and the presence of a trigger on the side-street is still doubtful (assuming it is doubtful, and not a sidewalk in front of a woman's clothing store, seminary when school is getting out, etc). I think when we move ourselves away from definite triggers, even if we are faced with another one that was doubtful, we get Divine assistance to overcome the challenge. On the other hand, if we remain in the presence of a definite trigger while we have an alternate route available, we don't get that Divine assistance.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 10 Feb 2012 09:55

[Blind Beggar wrote on 10 Feb 2012 08:54:](#)

Elyah, this is number 2. Look

...I guess that would be once for each eye!

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 11 Feb 2012 18:50

76. If I can't reach my sponsor, the answer is "no."

And, a similar idea:

77. If in doubt, leave it out.

These are guiding principles for those questions where we think we have good motives, but perhaps our deeper motive is LUST. Should I send an E-mail to that girl I used to know? (It will be such a big kiddush hashem that she knows I'm religious now and learning Torah!)

Also, this is a good tool for life in general. The addiction usually comes along with a host of other destructive emotions and tendencies--Especially anger and resentment, which makes us inclined to be argumentative, selfish, and even cruel. Should I hurl that insult? Should I send that nasty letter? Should I finally criticize my wife about the way she makes the chollent (of course I'll say it nicely)--just to name a couple of examples.

If you're not sure, leave it out. Sleep on it, or better yet--give it a week and see if you still feel like writing that letter or putting in that complaint.

Ignoring things, however, is also harmful. Through recovery I have learned new, healthy, and mature ways to deal with such emotions without wreaking havoc in my life (basically, steps 4-9 if done with the guidance of someone who has taken this path before).

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 12 Feb 2012 13:43

78. Always have a plan, and use it.

We do better when we have a plan. We need a plan for our day, and for our sobriety. Stick to your plan, unless G-d has other ideas for you.

I spent a long time thinking that, because I was on the Duvid Chaim calls, that I'm "doing the steps," I'm in recovery, and I'm sober. The truth is, unless I'm doing the steps, I'm not in recovery. If I'm feeling anger or fear inside (which will eventually lead me to act out) I now have a set plan how to deal with it (basically steps 4 through 9). If that doesn't work, I know I have to go back to the beginning (check out that steps 1 through 3 are in order). If I don't follow that plan, I know I am not following my program of recovery.

If I have a general plan for my day, I will end up, and the end of the day, with less regrets, and with a greater sense of accomplishment. This is very conducive to sobriety.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Feb 2012 12:49

Here's another summary:

IMPROVE RELATION WITH SELF

DECISION MAKING

- 71. What's my next right action?
- 72. Rushing is not sober.
- 73. What would my sponsor do?
- 74. What would my sponsor say?
- 75. Take an action of love.
- 76. If I can't reach my sponsor, the answer is "no."
- 77. If in doubt, leave it out.
- 78. Always have a plan, and use it.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Feb 2012 13:02

IMPROVE RELATION WITH SELF

GOOD ATTITUDES

79. Abstinence from lust is the most important thing in my life without exception.

This includes family, career, and even religion. Without sobriety, we will lose all of it.

"Good attitudes," can also be thought of as affirmations you can tell yourself. Think about it: We easily believe that we are worthless good-for-nothings because "That's what my parents told me over and over again." Was it true? No. But we believe the constant criticism, though it was

false, was able to shape the way we view ourselves and the way we act (or fail to act) throughout life. Basically, it's propaganda, "Tell someone a lie enough times, they'll believe it."

Now, THIS WORKS FOR THE POSITIVE, TOO! Why not! And, WE DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE the message we are telling ourselves, either! Just pick some positive messages to tell yourself, and keep telling them to yourself over and over again. Don't analyze whether you believe it or not. Don't spend time philosophizing about WHY you don't believe it, and HOW you can get yourself to MAYBE believe it at least a little bit. If you do any of that, if you wrestle with the positive attitudes, IT BACKFIRES, and only reinforces the negative messages. Just TELL it to yourself, over and over again. Be WILLING to believe it--no matter how unbelievable it may be to you right now. Don't THINK about it much. Little by little, it sinks in. And, as you are trying to undo 20 or 30 or more years of previous negative programming, you need to give the new attitudes a while to sink in. However, improvements, small change, will probably be noticeable already without waiting too long.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Feb 2012 14:34

80. All hits are toxic; I refuse them.

If we fall short in avoiding triggers--especially the more subtle ones, it is still better to acknowledge that we are harming ourselves rather than to rationalize that such hits (like looking at tznus women in the streets) are really okay. Also, keep things in perspective--if you are now 10 day clean from looking at pornography (your longest streak so far), don't go paranoid that you can't stop looking at women in the streets. We strive for a progressive victory over lust.

81. I won't act out--no matter what.

Be prepared for when the urge strikes: Make sure you have an arsenal of recovery tools--such as a list of phone numbers, a list of activities that help you sober up, writing exercises (perhaps), etc.

And, I can't emphasize this enough--keep track of the activities and even the thoughts and moods that PRECEED a lust attack. Keep a look out for THOSE; it's easier to cheer yourself up from a bad mood than to walk away from your computer when you're one click away from P*rn (and feeling compelled to look at it). In this way you can catch yourself hours, or days, and sometimes weeks before that fully-fledged lust attack strikes.

--Elyah (I am aware that my comments put me at risk of being cross-referenced).

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 14 Feb 2012 18:50

Elyah, this thread of yours is pure gold! thank you very much for putting it together

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