

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 - 24 Apr 2012 13:10

[ontheedgeman wrote on 24 Apr 2012 12:33:](#)

wow I haven't read these in a while, they are actually good. keep it up.

Thanks.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 24 Apr 2012 13:24

133. "I was wrong when..."

These are key words to say when making amends. It's easy to be sorry and do something again, but it's hard to say something was wrong and then do it again.

Actually, I got a different script to use for the amends from the Duvid Chaim calls. You can change the wording to fit your situation, but it should basically convey this message:

First, ask G-d for help. Then:

1. Our relationship isn't as good as it used to be...
2. and I regret that.
3. I feel like I have something to do with it.
4. What can I do to improve things.
5. BE QUIET. Just listen to whatever the other person says.

Don't bother going into specifics of what you have done--it is usually not necessary and can possibly cause harm. Don't go into the past. And, even if they start to confess their own sins to you, don't go in that direction either. Steer the conversation, "I'd like to focus on what I can do now."

I spent many years making what I thought was ammends with people, but I was basically trying to force a relationship. I was either trying to twist myself up to please someone else, or trying to pressure the other person to play by my rules of a good relationship.

Somehow, when I have just used the above formula and let things unfold, my relationships have improved in ways that I never imagined. Also, people that have been haunting me for years, after I made amends with them in this way, have once and for all finally left my head and my life. Enemies have even become welcome acquaintances.

In the program, this is essentially step 9 (though there's more to it), it is built upon the foundation of knowing that almost everything unpleasant in our lives, the pain we have suffered, is mostly the result of our own character defects. When we can take responsibility, when we can let go of our fears and our resentments, when we can look people in the eye who we used to run away from, then we can start to enjoy life to a much greater extent.

Real amends is knowing that the only thing I can do is clean up my side of the street. I can't control the outcome, or change anyone or anything else.

But, usually, once my side of the street looks better, the rest of the world starts to look better, too.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 25 Apr 2012 17:21

134. Who do I least want to meet today?

Ask yourself this question. Then, go right to them. Every day. You'll start to enjoy meeting people.

I found that one thing holding me back was, since I spent so much time in my head weaving complicated thoughts and ideas, I thought that every conversation is supposed to be very profound and complex. I find that there really is a value in just letting people know that you wanted to say hi and ask how they're doing.

Also, I used to be really afraid to talk to people unless I could plan out the entire conversation in advance--what will I say, how will they respond, and then what will I say to that, etc. I have become more comfortable to just say hello and then just let a conversation unfold on its own.

Another thing that was holding me back, I think, is that I didn't know how to get out of a conversation. I'd feel trapped once I said "hello" to anyone. I have learned to say, "It's been nice talking to you, I've got to go." My reason for leaving does not have to stand up in a court of law as a fully justified reason of something that is absolutely more important than this other person.

It's enough of a reason that I want to go now and do other things, whatever they may be.

Also, making calls to friends from the program, "Hi, I'm about to act out," or "Hi, I'm feeling all stressed out and I'm about to look at p*rn," after a while, makes it much easier to open up a little bit to anyone else and feel comfortable about it.

Another thing that was helpful was putting aside my ego and accepting that other people don't have to agree with me (and that I'm not likely going to be the one to convince everyone to agree with me). For example, I don't have to discuss the merits of being religious, or the problems of not being religious, with secular relatives. I don't have to argue about the best learning method with everyone in my Kollel. It doesn't make for a good relationship to always pick on that sore spot. Rather, there's plenty of common ground to choose, and plenty to say about it.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 26 Apr 2012 18:24

135. Traffic Sobriety.

You sort of make a game out of avoiding walking into people while you're also looking down. I think the idea is that by focusing on getting out of people's way, you take your focus off of who is there and what they look like.

136. Do whatever your sponsee refuses to do.

(If you happen to be a sponsor). Also, this applies to the forum--you ever post a message to someone, and it seems obvious to you what this fellow needs to do for his recovery. Yet, he just keeps arguing with you or denying it. You think, IF ONLY HE WOULD JUST... So, you do it instead!

I have had this happen quite a few times. Also, I find that when I post an idea that I have realized, often an opportunity comes up soon afterwards to put it into practice. Then I'm thinking, "I just wrote all about this, I can't NOT do it!"

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 27 Apr 2012 08:37

I LOVE THIS ON:

137. Rescuer, Victim, Abuser

These are three dysfunctional roles that an addict plays, and it's a cycle:

RESCUER. First, we see someone that we can rescue! So, we go ahead and rescue them. Perhaps in our marriage, when we see our wives are disturbed, this plays out that we try to be extra helpful. All our wives need is our help, and then we make an extra effort to be helpful. We're going to rescue our wives so they can finally be happy!

(We also might try to rescue our parents, our siblings, our children, our peers.)

VICTIM. After all we've done, we expect that our wonderful kindness will be reciprocated. Why is my wife still upset? She's so ungrateful! I'm so unappreciated! I'm just being controlled by her now, with nothing in return! Oh, I hate this! I'm being stifled, manipulated, etc.

ABUSER. There's only so much of that abuse we can take. After a while, we snap. We retaliate. We scream and yell. We insult, we swear. We perhaps get violent against inanimate and also animate objects. Perhaps we take it out on the kids (don't they deserve a little harsh discipline every once in a while to keep them in place?)

So, we need to realize that it's not our job to solve other people's problems. (In fact, trying to manage other people's emotions may very well be an excuse for ignoring our own). We can't control them, and we are not responsible for their moods. I should, of course, be helpful and responsible with other people. However, my goal is not to fix anyone through that. If my wife is upset, it's not my job to make her happy. I should not be cruel and inconsiderate. However, I can be considerate and even empathise without getting sucked in to her negative emotions. I can be calm, despite this. If I make a responsible and reasonable effort to help her out, or just to empathize, and she remains upset, that's OKAY!

I think, realizing that we are responsible for our own thoughts and emotions, and it's okay that other people have their own thoughts and emotions which are beyond our control, is a big factor in getting out of this destructive cycle.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Apr 2012 16:20

138. Pray together.

I don't remember what this one means exactly. Simply put, praying together with other people is a beneficial thing. Not only the shmonei-esrei, but more informal prayers at more informal times. It's not uncommon to end a phone call to a program buddy with the Serenity Prayer, or something like that.

Also, according to my notes on this one, apparantly it is recommended to imagine as if you are praying together along with that person that you have negative feelings towards. I guess I can sort of relate--on rare moments of clarity I have noticed that the shmonei-esrei is in the plural, and I have had in mind to include other people in my prayers and to realize that we are praying together. Also, at times, that thought that we declare at the beginning of Yom Kippur, that it's permitted to include evil-doers in our prayer services, comes to mind (when there's someone in shul that I have difficulties with). And, it is generally a powerful and a positive experience.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Apr 2012 15:04

Time for yet another summary:

IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

[Forgiveness and Amends](#)

132. Forgive them all (step 8.5)

133. "I was wrong when..."

134. Who do I least want to meet today?

135. Traffic Sobriety.

136. Do whatever your sponsee refuses to do.

137. Rescuer, Victim, Abuser

138. Pray together

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Apr 2012 15:13

Friendships

139. Work with another SA (or GYE person).

Help each other, share with each other, challenge each other.

One advantage with a one-on-one relationship is that you can share things, and spend time discussing things, which often isn't possible in a public group or forum--either because of the personal nature of the discussion, or because it's hard to develop one idea and give it a chance when lots of people get involved.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 01 May 2012 20:17

140. Stick with the winners.

If you spend time with relapsers, you're likely to relapse.

Look not only for the length of sobriety, but ALSO the quality of sobriety.

At times when I feel like my recovery has been at its weakest, I realize I haven't spent enough time with people who are significantly healthier than myself.

--Elyah.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 04 May 2012 08:35

141. Stay in the present

I remember some poem that goes something like this:

The past is history
The future is a mystery
All we have is now
And that's why it's called the present

When we're stuck in the past, we usually end up with resentments (re-playing those events that were not to our liking).

When we're stuck in the future, we usually end up with fears (worrying that tomorrow won't turn out the way I want it, or afraid what will happen tomorrow and that I won't be able to handle it).

But, there's nothing we can do about the past or the future. These are included in "Accept the things I cannot change."

But, the present is something, in some respects, we have the power to do something about. When we focus on what we can do at the moment, and there's actually something we can do, I think it produces a very healthy feeling.

Also, often we fail to enjoy the pleasures of the moment because we're not consciously in the moment--we're floating around in the past or in the future. So, when we can focus on NOW, we can enjoy it much more.

Another point about staying in the present--stay in reality. We may start daydreaming or fantasizing about all sorts of things we would like to do now. But, we should rather focus on what we actually are doing now, and on what we actually can do now.

Part of being an addict is that we have a hard time dealing with life. But, I think part of the reason we don't cope well is simply because we're not HERE! If we get out of the past, the future, and the fantasy, that alone makes it much easier to function a lot better.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by tehillimzugger - 04 May 2012 08:41

Since you like being cross-referenced [do you do this to see if we're listening?]
[Eye.nonymous wrote on 21 Feb 2012 12:51:](#)

I heard a poem which I don't know if I am quoting correctly:

Yesterday is history
Tomorrow is a mystery
All we have is today--
That's why it's called "the present."

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Blind Beggar - 05 May 2012 18:54

I found this quote:

"Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God, which is why we call it the present."
? [Bil Keane](#)

Who's Bil Keane? I don't know either.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 07 May 2012 14:33

142. What you think and what you feel and what you do...

Okay, this takes a little explanation. The full version is like this:

What you think, and what you feel, and what you do, and what you say
is more about you and your history than it is about me.

And,

What I think, and what I feel, and what I do, and what I say
is more about me and my history than it is about you.

This tool is about EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES. We're not responsible for other people's feelings, actions, thoughts, or words. We are, however, responsible for our own feelings, actions, thoughts, and words.

We tend to spend a lot of time feeling guilty about things that we're not responsible for, which is not healthy.

When we can separate ourselves from other people, it is a lot easier to stay calm in the midst of chaos.

This comes into play, I think, especially in marriage. I used to feel responsible if my wife was upset--I must not be doing a good job as a husband (even when her upset was not related to anything I had done). So, I thought it was my responsibility to stop her from being upset. But, she's entitled to her emotions, whatever they may be.

And, I must say, sometimes I am trying to be considerate and thoughtful, but for some reason, my wife is still upset by my efforts, "If you REALLY wanted to help, you wouldn't wash the dishes--you'd decorate the kitchen because that's what I really want you to do!" I don't have to fill myself up with guilt for my lack of ESP (but I can try to ask my wife in the future what I can help with before I spend some time helping).

All this does not mean to be cruel and unsympathetic. But, it does mean I don't have to feel responsible for the way other people feel.

Also, in dealing with people in general, I don't have to figure out how a conversation is going to go before I call someone or speak to them. They are free to say whatever they want, and the conversation can unfold on its own.

This tool is useful for self-defense, too. Sometimes someone asks you a question that you'd rather not answer, or starts to discuss a topic that you'd rather not discuss. You are not under oath to keep to the topic at hand. You can change the topic, and you can even say, "Sorry, but I'd rather not discuss that."

I have found that, having an increased level of maturity to stop a conversation when I no longer want to be a part of it, has made it a lot easier for me to talk to people in the first place.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by jewish jew - 07 May 2012 15:01

If only i could do the 142. advice in day to day life it would be good!

I normally get my wife to ring up any company because i am always scared of a conversation. the same is when i meet a new person i have to force myself to meet them because i am scared of a conversation that i don't know in advance (when i meet them it is usually not bad at all)

keep up the good work!! (this is the first time reading this thread but i have already read a whole lot and really liking it)

bye JJ

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