

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 - 22 Jan 2012 20:35

I think it's very important to add a word of caution about this rigorous honesty:

There's this tendency among addicts once we're really far along in recovery--like after about 3 days clean, our longest clean streak since we hit puberty, to finally spill all the beans to our wives; to finally stop hiding and tell her every thing we've ever done since we were six, and everything we've ever thought, and just how hard it is to keep our minds off all the other women in the street, and to admit just how out of control we are about these crazy fantasies in our heads, and to cough up the truth about all the p*rn we've ever looked at and all the m*sturbation we've ever done, and that we were heading straight to jail or to die a horrible death from some horrible disease, but thank G-d we found out just in the nick of time and now we're in recovery and working a solid program (and aren't you proud of me!)... but dear wife, of course you understand it's nothing personal---I've got a sickness, an addiction, it's not my fault at all and there's nothing I could do about it, and of course I love you, etc.

But, too much disclosure too soon to the wife DOES FAR MORE DAMAGE THAN IT DOES ANY GOOD!

As you move along in recovery and have significant clean time, and really start to change inside, and really start to become more patient and more considerate and more helpful towards your wife, she will appreciate it. Just clean up your side of the street without any gorey confessions to your wife, and she will notice that something has changed and she will appreciate it without knowing any specifics.

I don't understand how people, because they're afraid their wives will find out, can't manage to make the Duvid Chaim 12-step calls, or attend SA meetings, or even post regularly on GYE. Yet, these same people spent hours and hours and hours doing all sorts of things that their wives shouldn't know about--and somehow they managed to do it without that same worry.

YET, if this is your problem, it might be necessary to tell your wife the BAREST MINIMUM in order to get some breathing space to get yourself into a recovery program. Be creative, and don't be too specific, and ask G-d for help; you'll think of some way to do it without scaring your wife. SPEAK TO SOMEONE ABOUT IT FIRST--SOMEONE WHO IS MUCH FURTHER ALONG IN RECOVERY THAN YOU ARE.

If you are not yet married, I think all the above may apply instead to you and your parents--especially if you are still living under the same roof.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Jan 2012 13:11

46. Talk in detail to sponsor.

47. What am I not telling my sponsor?

Ask yourself this question and then, whatever it is you have been reluctant to tell your sponsor, **TELL HIM!**

You might ask, "How is this any different than rigorous honesty with program buddies?"

I think the difference is as follows: Since the sponsor, even more than program buddies, is someone who guides you through the steps of recovery, and since one's relationship with one's sponsor is probably more regular than one's relationship to program buddies, then disclosure to one's sponsor usually is more humbling than disclosure to other program buddies because it carries with it a much higher level of accountability and follow-up work.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 24 Jan 2012 12:33

48. Over my dead body--what's mine?

What's that one thing we're not willing to change--that one thing that we can't give up or even think of doing for the sake of recovery. THIS is what's preventing your recovery. DO IT!

I can't make those Duvid Chaim phone calls because that's BED TIME for the kids and my wife can't manage without me!

I can't go to that SA meeting because I can't possibly miss my evening seder!

I'll never speak to so-and-so again even if I really ought to make ammends with him.

I'll never step foot in their house ever again no matter what!

I really need to attend meetings but I can't because it's in a church basement.

I can't go to meetings because someone might recognize me there!

...for example.

And, I'll add, a lot of these things which hold us back in recovery, ironically, are of no concern whatsoever when we're in pursuit of our addiction.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 25 Jan 2012 14:41

49. Am I done with lust?

Decide. Are you done yet?

50. Am I in or out of SA (or, for the forum, GYE--both anonymous, but not synonymous).

Are you a full participant, or just a spectator? Do you just show up once in a while, or are you a regular? Be of service, and make it a priority.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 26 Jan 2012 19:12

51. Openness.

Inside and outside need to be the same.

How is this different than "rigorous honesty" mentioned above? I think the answer is as follows:

"Rigorous honesty" means not to withhold my dark secrets from my program buddies and from

my sponsor. Now, besides that, addicts tend to suffer from schizophrenia--on one hand we're an honored and respected member of our shul and community (and believing that we are), but on the other hand we're sitting around looking at p*rn and m*sturbating and feeling like dirt (and also believing that we are). This confuses us and causes a lot of angst.

Yet, there's a more subtle form of schizophrenia I think addicts suffer from, if my own experience is at all typical. We tend to be grandiose; in other words, we blow our perception of ourselves and of reality out of proportion. We can't just learn Torah for a seder or two each day; we immediately imagine ourselves to be the next Gadol HaDor in the making. We can't just work and earn a respectable living and be happy with that; we immediately imagine ourselves to be the world's best at whatever we are doing. We cannot accept ourselves for who we are; we cannot accept--or perhaps even perceive, our actual limitations. We are paranoid to reveal any weaknesses to others (because even though we may have weaknesses, we don't really want to believe that we do, and we certainly don't want anyone else to believe that we do). So, we believe ourselves to be much more than we really are. And, we portray ourselves to be much more than we really are.

Imagining ourselves to be what we are not--more than what we are, ironically, I think is a major source of low self-esteem. We NEVER accomplish what we IMAGINE we are supposed to; we can't, because it's not realistically within our capabilities. Yet, we don't admit this, so we are forever disappointed and depressed.

But when we can be honest with ourselves ABOUT ourselves, and then when we can be OPEN with other people about who we REALLY are, when we can accept our limitations, when we can see our TRUE capabilities honestly and live life accordingly, then FEAR that other people will discover our faults DISAPPEARS. ANGER at ourselves for not amounting to MORE and MORE disappears.

This ANGER and FEAR about such a crucial point--our identity, is a huge source of that Restlessness, Irritability, and Discontent (RID) which causes us so much pain and drives us so often to our pain-killer drug of choice, to acting out. When we rid ourselves of THIS RID, we can be happy in our own skin. And, this happens to be very good for our recovery.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by gibbor120 - 26 Jan 2012 19:37

BLESS YOU ELYAH! I think you may have just uncovered a riddle for me. Dr Sorotzkin talks about people with low self-esteem needing to have a feeling of grandiosity as a counter balance. The lower the self-esteem, the higher the feeling of grandiosity.

He illustrates this by telling about a patient that had the lowest self-esteem he has ever seen. One day the patient reveals that he sometimes feels he is higher than G-d himself. The patient expected the Dr to be surprised. Little did he know that the Dr was not surprised in the least and was actually expecting the patient to say something like that!

What I haven't quite understood is the play between feelings of low self worth and feelings of grandiosity. Maybe I still don't. But something you said struck a chord. You said that our grandiose feelings lead to our low self-esteem. If we believe we are greater than we actually are, we feel low when we fall short (which is inevitable due to our unrealistic standards).

I think it may actually be a circle. Feelings of inferiority are unbearable to us, so we start imagining that we are greater than we actually are, which leads to failure since we are not in reality on the level that we "imagine". That failure leads to feeling even lower, which makes us imagine that we are yet higher.... and the circle continues... until the bubble bursts and we are forced to confront the fact that we are quite ordinary.

Once we accept that REALITY - we begin to accept ourselves - our plain ordinary lowly selves. Living with reality, and accepting ourselves as we are, is the key to proper self-esteem imho.

Am I making any sense?

The basic idea is that if we can accept the **truth** about ourselves - we have the key to self-esteem. Maybe that's why admitting the truth about ourselves to someone safe - is the key to recovery? It just aint real until we can openly admit it. As long as it's safely locked in our own heads, it just isn't real.

So *really* it's simply a matter of **truth** vs **fantasy**.

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 27 Jan 2012 07:23

Thank you Gibbor. I'm glad that was helpful.

One thing I should also add--we have to appreciate that the TRUTH about ourselves, that we do learn Torah and have a certain proficiency in learning and manage to learn whatever amount and on whatever level we do, and that we do have a job and are earning an income and are supporting a family (or that we don't have a job but that may be beyond our control and we are being responsible and resourceful enough to at least keep on looking for employment) IS STILL SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF AND HAPPY ABOUT! It's okay we're not the Gadol HaDor or the richest person alive.

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 27 Jan 2012 07:30

52. Ask for feedback.

Check out your ideas and opinions with other human beings. We addicts tend to live entirely inside our own head. We devise plans and believe them to be flawless; of course we will be successful if we follow these plans. This is true regarding our efforts specifically to recover from lust, and it is true regarding our efforts to deal with life in general. I know that I have had some plans that I thought were great, but even just by SHARING these plans with other people (even before they say anything) I get this funny feeling like I'm not exactly thinking straight. Talking things out with another person has that power. Thinking things in your head, for some reason, doesn't.

53. Ask for reality checks.

This is similar to the previous tool, but I think it relates more to your perception of others. "I've got this feeling that you're avoiding me, is that true?" (This tool is especially for program buddies. With extra tact, it's a good tool to use for life in general--Or, to be safer, tell a program buddy "I've got this feeling my kid hates me; do you think this is true?").

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Jan 2012 17:45

54. Willingness.

For the sake of recovery, this is synonymous with "obedience." Be willing to follow a program (in other words, discussing the steps and trying to understand them is not DOING them! DOING them is DOING them.) Are you willing to follow instructions? Are you really willing to change? Or, as Duvid Chaim often puts it, "Are you coachable?"

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Jan 2012 12:47

55. Do what I don't want to do.

This builds character. Perhaps you need to work for an employer instead of being self-employed. Take a cold shower instead of a hot one. Etc.

Notice that feeling you get every time your wife (or parents or anyone) asks for help--sort of like the feeling you get when someone scratches a chalkboard with their fingernails. THAT'S a good indication that you just found something that you don't want to do, and an opportunity to do it.

56. Clean the toilet.

This is in line with the previous tool, but very specific and particularly humbling. You know when you enter a public restroom and you avoid that first stall because it's wet or messy? Well, go in there and take a huge wad of toilet paper and clean it up.

If you're not on that madreiga yet, take a couple of paper towels and dry off the wet counter by the sink.

This tool is also applicable in your own home; don't leave that mess for other people to clean up (especially when YOU'RE the one who made that mess!).

--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Jan 2012 12:41

57. Pray out loud.

This is not referring to the shmonei esrei, it is referring to spontaneous prayer--and often, in your own words. It need not be anything formal or anything complex. A simple, "I'm powerless,

please G-d help me," will do.

58. Read the "Litany of Humility," (a prayer for humility) which is as follows:

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From the desire of being esteemed,

Dear G-d deliver me.

From the desire of being loved...

From the desire of being extolled...

From the desire of being honoured...

From the desire of being praised...

From the desire of being preferred to others...

From the desire of being consulted...

From the desire of being approved...

From the fear of being humiliated...

Dear G-d deliver me.

From the fear of being despised...

From the fear of suffering rebukes...

From the fear of being calumniated...

From the fear of being forgotten...

From the fear of being ridiculed...

From the fear of being wronged...

From the fear of being suspected...

That others may be loved more than I,

Dear G-d, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I...

That, in the opinion of the world,

others may increase and I may decrease...

That others may be chosen and I set aside...

That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...

That others may be preferred to me in everything...

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should...

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--Elyah

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Jan 2012 12:51

It's time for another summary:

IMPROVE RELATION WITH SELF

EMERGENCY TOOLS

1. Short prayer, "I'm powerless, please G-d help me!"
2. Move somewhere else. (Get away from the trigger!)

3. Pick up litter.
4. Sing (or hum) a favorite tune. Or listen to music.
5. Call someone from the program or the forum NOW. (Or post)
5. Get to a meeting AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. (Get to the forum)
6. When you're angry: Ask yourself, "What am I ashamed of right now?"

HAVING A PROGRAM

7. Participate in the fellowship of the program.
8. Take the Step Zero questionnaire.
9. Admit complete defeat.
10. Answer the 20 Questions found in the White Book (pg 8).
11. Get a sponsor.
12. Treat your sponsor's suggestions as orders.
13. Work the steps (all 12 of them!).
14. Have a daily program (but not one's own).
15. Read the "Just for Today" card every morning.
16. Live in the solution (and not in the problem).

MEETINGS

17. Don't lust, and go to meetings.
18. Home group.
19. 90 meetings in 90 days (temporary measure).
20. Start a meeting.
21. Take on a commitment.

22. 5 meetings a week (regular program).

23. Telephone meetings.

24. SA Net.

25. Step 1 meetings.

26. Check meetings.

BASIC SELF CARE

27. Zero tolerance for lust.

28. Avoid all known triggers--people, places, and things.

29. Abstain from all mood-altering chemicals.

30. Avoid emotion-rocking activities.

31. Abstain from sugars and white flour.

32. Write a Pornography-free certificate.

33. Dump sexualized clothing.

34. Know clearly: What is sex with self?

35. Find yourself clean forms of entertainment.

36. TV and Movie abstinence.

37. Ask yourself, "What am I feeling right now?"

38. Early to bed, early to rise...

H.A.L.T. (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired)

39. Keep phone beside bed.

40. International phone numbers.

41. Healthy food

42. Moderate exercise

43. Accountability or filtration software

INTENSE EGO DEFLATION

44. Get out of self

45. Practice rigorous honesty

46. Talk in detail to sponsor

47. What am I not telling my sponsor?

48. Over my dead body

49. Am I done with lust?

50. Am I in or out of recovery (SA, GYE)?

51. Openness

52. Ask for feedback

53. Ask for reality checks

54. Willingness

55. Do what I don't want to do

56. Clean the toilet

57. Pray out loud

58. Litany of Humility

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Re: Additional tools for recovery

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 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.

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

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Re: Additional tools for recovery
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 01 Feb 2012 20:10

...about "take a different road": Sometimes instead of taking a whole other road, all you have to do is cross over to the other side of the street to avoid walking directly behind someone who is a trigger.

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