

12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle

Posted by eli613 - 13 Dec 2017 07:32

Dear Friends,

I am a struggling sex addict who lives a perfectly normal *frum* life with a wife and children. 52 days ago I started attending SA meetings in order to get more help with recovering from my sex addiction that has plagued me since my early teenage years. My forms of acting out used to be masturbation and porn, but in recent years I graduated to visiting massage parlors. Before SA, I came on this site occasionally and it has helped me stay clean for small periods of time, once for 87 days! The SA meetings are helpful, I am learning a lot about what it will take to recover and the human interaction is very encouraging and gives me a new sense of accountability. I recently found a sponsor who has been really helpful in guiding me towards the 1st steps of recovery. I committed myself to going to a meeting at least once a week for 90 days even though it is very hard for me to make the time to go to the meetings. I always have to make up an excuse to my wife who I love dearly and has no idea about my sex addiction that something came up, or I had to work late in the office, etc.

Last week, I felt very tempted to act out, I told my wife I was going to hang out with some friends, I left my friends early and I went out bar hopping by myself with some secret hopes in mind, I got very drunk and thankfully I was very unsuccessful. I felt like garbage the next day. I spoke to my sponsor the next day, and he told me that this is considered "cruising" and I should add this to my middle circle. He said I shouldn't consider this a relapse but if I did it again we would have to consider moving this to my inner circle. It's really strange to me, since I never hung out in bars before and I was never interested in flirting with women in that way, yet I feel like this is my new obsession. I am worried that perhaps hearing other *goyim's* forms of acting out has stirred up some new creativity in me. I am worried that I am tempted to act out in even worse ways than I would have acted out before. I don't find myself struggling with porn or masturbation or wanting to visit massage parlors, but today when I was driving somewhere with my wife, my mind kept wandering as to when I might be able to sneak out at night again to hang out at a wild bar. I am having a stressful week at work and I am working overtime and I haven't even been able to attend a meeting this week. I hope to attend a meeting this *motzei shabbos*. It really helps me when I can share my struggles at the meeting, so I am glad I had GYE to share it with tonight.

Thanks for listening.

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle

Posted by yosef10 - 14 Dec 2017 01:55

Were always listening, you just got to speak. It seems like you have a lot of stress in your life, aside from your "struggles". This is the stress that no one can escape, everyone has these issues, even non-addicts. Its also very hard to deal with because the normal course of life is something you can't escape. Being that i have stress also (still do), it was suggested to me that i SMILE and BE HAPPY WITH YOURSELF.

How? Great question.

The smiling part is easy, set a reminder on your phone, and when you see the notification, just do it. At first it may seem forced, but as we know, shelo leshma turns into leshma (not sincerely turns to sincerely). So this worked for a little while.

The second thing is pretty hard to do. I was really upset with myself for falling, even after being clean for 85 days, it still burns me that i did so much bad. I disliked myself and felt like dirt. Something that was suggested to me was to look into the mirror, look at my face, look myself in the eyes, and say whatever needed to be said (i.e.. your a good person, Hashem loves you, your doing your best, you can beat this). It may seem weird, but i was surprised that i was so disgusted with myself that initially, i could even look at myself, because i felt like garbage. Now, with some work, forcing myself to look and say these words every so often really help.

In summation, just be happy where you are. Its a commandment **?Ivdu es Hashem BESIMCHA**. Even if you have falls along the way, just know the journey is never over. You seem to be putting in all the necessary Hishtaglus, and thats all Hashem, and yourself, can ask of you. I wish you Hatzlacha in all that you do, keep pushing forward. Have an amazing Chanuka, and KEEP POSTING.

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle
Posted by eli613 - 14 Dec 2017 05:23

Thank you for your encouragement Yosef. Today was a rough day, I spent a lot of time browsing websites and looking for a way to act out, I was unsuccessful (Boruch Hashem). I still feel like I am under the spell. I realized this morning that I was feeling quite stressed about a few different things and suddenly my impulses got the better of me. Sometimes, I feel like it's easier to act out and start over again than to keep struggling with wanting to act out. It just takes over my mind. I know this is a wrong way to think, but my mind is playing tricks on me.

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle

Posted by Markz - 14 Dec 2017 05:28

Eli you have some friends to call? Have you spoken with dov?

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle

Posted by eli613 - 14 Dec 2017 05:40

I only make it to SA meetings once a week, and I go to different meetings in different places depending on when I can make it. So, I haven't yet really developed any strong relationships with people who I can call. My sponsor is sort of busy and it takes it him time to get back to me usually. I am pretty discreet with my bad habits so I don't really talk to my regular friends about my hidden life problems. I have never spoken to Dov, but I have read a lot of his articles, he is an inspiration.

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle

Posted by yosef10 - 15 Dec 2017 03:01

Remember keep smiling. Lately I've been with a lot of stress, and its been rough. B'h (although I've lightly thought about it), i haven't acted out on it b'h. i don't know how, maybe its the success I've had, or the way I've been abstaining, i don't know. Thinking about it its %100 a miracle. During the day sometimes i just feel miserable, and the work doesn't stop. Obviously I'm not an adult, plus the fact that i don't have any real responsibilities, so i can't say i feel the way you feel, but i can sympathize with it.

Stress is terrible, it can ruin a whole day, a whole week, a whole year etc. As addicts an easy way for a "quick out" for the stress is to fall. But as we know, immediately after, we feel worse, and even more stressed than we originally were, its a terrible state to be in for everyone.

?Being that its nearly to escape the stresses of life, we need to learn different ways to cope. Do you have any hobbies, do you enjoy any sports, do you like family time. This experience is a great time to learn about yourself.

You have to not only learn to be happy, but also to learn how to deal with non-happy times.

CONTINUE TO POST. We all need it. Use the light of the candles to light up your spirit, you are breathing today because Hashem decided you have what to add to the world, and to yourself.

Do your best to enjoy the rest of Chanuka, YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle

Posted by tzaddik212 - 15 Dec 2017 05:03

Hi Eli

I read your post, and i am hearing your struggles and how tempting it is, and you don't have a way to get rid of it.

well i can share with a tool that helped me. i made up with a friend that before i want to act out i need to make a call to him, and to discuss why and how i want to act out, and then i can go ahead, and act out. what i really gained that i had discussed it, i realized that it is not worth it.

Let me share with you another perspective of my addiction. my addiction needs oxygen to live on. the oxygen of my addiction is comprised of 2 elements. 1. secret. 2. deception.

1. Secret. I tend to keep it a secret, and that is when i start the cruising and the thrill starts to build up. once i expose it to my trusted friend, then it is not anymore a secret, and loses momentum, and t loses its intensity.

2. Deception. My addiction always deceives me, and it tells me how urgent it is for me to act out. and it is a lie. It is always lying to me. by me making this phone call and to talk to my trusted friend, i realize that it is not so important for me to act out.

These are my tools Eli, if you need more of those, feel free to reach out to me.

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle

Posted by Markz - 15 Dec 2017 05:43

[tzaddik212 wrote on 15 Dec 2017 05:03:](#)

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle
Posted by eli613 - 17 Dec 2017 06:52

Thank you Tazdik! These tips are helpful. I wish I can find a friend that I can feel comfortable enough to call. I will attend more meetings and hopefully find somebody that can be a resource for me.

I had a very rough Friday, I was very nervous about this coming Sunday. I have a few hours tomorrow that I am going to be away from my family and it will be very easy for me to act out if I want to. On Friday I was feeling like I had no way out. Boruch hashem today I felt a lot different, I attended another meeting this evening and I feel like I can survive through tomorrow. I will *daven* hard in the morning and try to make a plan so that I don't fail and leave it up to *hashem* to do the rest.

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tzaddik101

Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle
Posted by tzaddik212 - 17 Dec 2017 17:47

Hi Eli

I hope youre doing fine today.

Well i felt Horrible to share my story and my struggles with someone here on GYE too. I felt shamed and a real fool. after all for the last few decades i am living a double life. on one side, i am that respected guy, which so many people have respect for, but on the other hand i felt horrible by my deep dirty secret within my soul that i was carrying around for decades. I had to make a choice, do i want to live an honest productive authentic life, or do i want to continue my dark life. and i paid the price of uncomfortability for the sake of the decision that i want and need recovery more, so i did it. It is your choice. I cannot keep it to myself anymore, i had to humble myself, and i am so grateful i did it. I am at day 91 today. if you send me a private message, i can share with you my email, so we might keep up.

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle
Posted by eli613 - 18 Dec 2017 07:01

What a disaster! Oy! Hashem why have you blessed me with these challenges? I woke up today with the best of intentions, I went to shul and davened with kavana, I came home and half hour later my mind started playing tricks on me. Anyway it was a long day and I just came back from acting out. I feel relieved that I probably won't think about doing it again for a little while. But I feel like such crap. I can't believe myself.

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle
Posted by MayanHamisgaber - 18 Dec 2017 07:51

Sorry to hear you are having a hard time

Nice to hear that you won't be doing it again for a while but do not get down about it forget the past and focus on today

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle
Posted by eli613 - 07 Jan 2018 08:47

I am 19 days clean today. I am attending weekly SAA meetings and I am *davening* every day with *kavanah*. I found a sponsor and I am talking to somebody from GYE on a weekly basis. I am trying to learn from my previous relapses to make sure I don't relapse again. I have a few stresses in my life right now, nothing too crazy, on a holistic level things are going well and I have a lot to be thankful for. I just need to make sure that I don't let myself get too stressed out that I start thinking about acting out. I can't sleep tonight, but I feel safe from acting out tonight. I am trying to do everything I can to stay sober and to continue my recovery. I failed so many times in the past, so I am nervous that when I get my next lust wave I may not have all the tools I need to help me through it. But I am learning that this self awareness that I am quite vulnerable is part of the recovery itself. Anyway, just wanted to share this with my friends on GYE. a gutte voch!

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle
Posted by tzaddik212 - 07 Jan 2018 15:46

Hi Eli my buddy.

Honesty is an important tool in recovery. But what worked for me was, the Humility to Hashem, and the unassuming of the future. letting go of controlling my recovery, was an important tool, to achieve recovery.

I know only one thing, that no mater what, i do not act out. when i feel uncomfortable, i call my friend, and i am not exposing my secret in my mind. i call him up, and share with him my demon, and usually i do not need to act out afterwards.

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Re: 12 steps of SA - my newfound struggle
Posted by serenity - 07 Jan 2018 16:13

Welcome Eli!

Welcome. I'm a grateful member of SA and my sobriety date is 3/19/2015. I'm glad to hear you share. When people share it helps me stay sober. One thing that is different here (for better or worse) is that there is feedback on your shares or as it would be called in a live meeting "cross talk". So if your posting here you may want feedback. If not then just let me know and I will shut up. You had an amazing insight in one of your shares above. You said it almost seems easier to just act out and get it over with. You said you felt "relieved that I probably won't think about

doing it again for a little while." Dov has an article entitled nuclear reset button. This admission demonstrates an honesty and self awareness that many never find. You mentioned your sponsor didn't get back to you enough. You may have discovered this by now but the way program works is that it is your responsibility to get through to your sponsor and many sponsors will never call you. Some have a policy to reach out only if they don't hear from you for 2 or 3 weeks just to see if they are still your sponsor. I had a resentment against a sponsor for not calling me back then I learned that's not his job, so I can relate. I can also relate to you because I'm in AA and used to do the bar hopping thing. There is no way I could stay sober in SA while drinking alcohol. You mentioned that it is hard to get to meetings because they are far and you have to make excuses to your wife. I have to want to work program as much as I want my sex fix. If I'm willing to spend a day or a night acting out then I have to be willing to spend a day in program. If I'm willing to make excuses to my wife to go bar hopping then I have to be willing to find a way to get to meetings. People think the meetings are magic. The magic is in the lengths we go to get to meetings and the willingness we demonstrate to work a program and to be of service to others in the program. I find that if I spend half the time and energy working my program as I spent acting out then I'm in good shape. Just half. You are free to call me anytime. You can email me at gomu2serenity@gmail.com for my number. Remember when you reach out you are helping me and helping you. It's you working your program, it's not you reaching out for help from a human being.

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