

BreakingFree's Recovery Thread

Posted by BreakingFree - 10 Mar 2010 19:35

Laying the Foundation for Permanent Change

Workshop Lesson 1 - Day 1 (<http://www.recoverynation.com/recovery/m1w1d1.htm>).

Important notes on topics discussed in this lesson:

- The absolute need to rely on guidance in our efforts to combat our addiction.

- Addiction as not being a fate.

- The need to challenge ourselves to throw away our misperceptions and misinformation about our addiction that we have accumulated to this point in our lives.

- Change is not only possible, but it's an absolute. It's either up or down.

- While simply "passing through life" (without making a positive commitment to change) is bound to lead the addict to absolute destruction, commitment towards positive change will bring to a life that one simply cannot comprehend with words. Not a perfect life, but a genuine life. One based in reality. In courage. In integrity. A life where the person that you are, is the person that others know you to be. Where love and acceptance are real, not illusions.

- 3 different types of motivation (a. motivation stemming from the desires of others, b. motivation stemming from the consequences of the addiction, and c. the motivation from no longer wanting to live such a lifestyle) and the role each of these play in recovery.

- This program is not about playing off of the initial euphoria most addicts feel after first making the decision to recover. It is about showing you how to change yourself--permanently. It is about empowering you to take control of the rest of your life, no matter where you're starting from.

- Commitment as a "key" in recovery.

- Passive vs active recovery.

- The tendency for some in recovery to become "addicted to recovery" that their lives become consumed by their recovery efforts, and their recovery infiltrates every aspect of their lives. While absolute commitment is essential in recovery, it's important that there be a transition away from "recovery" and into "health". In the workshop, once our values have been identified and our goals prioritized, we will be guided towards a balanced, peaceful transition--free from the destructive behaviors associated with addiction.

Day 1 Exercises:

A. It was stated that there are three keys to establishing a successful foundation for permanent change in early recovery. These are: 1) actively committing yourself to change; 2) not allowing guilt/shame to sabotage your commitment to change; and 3) allowing yourself time to change. Consider where you feel you are in relation to each of these recovery keys? Briefly share your thoughts in your recovery Thread.

A. 1) Actively committing yourself to change: The thoughts that come to mind are not only that of "active commitment" to change, but also the commitment to "actively change" (proactive recovery vs passive recovery). I am aware that the lessons - the intellectual side of things - are only one half of the workshop, and that in order for real change to occur, the lessons must be supplemented by the practical applications found in these exercises. Just reading all the material contained in these lessons is not considered "doing" this workshop. Both in my commitment to "actively change", and in my "active commitment to change", putting a special emphasis on the practical side of things is key! It's this momentum, focus on proactivity, and consistency, that I wish to carry throughout the workshop. That's where my commitment lay!

2) Not allowing guilt/shame to sabotage your commitment to change: I'm prepared to evaluate my guilt and determine if it's healthy guilt that will push me forward in my efforts, or if this is the kind of guilt that acts only as a deterrent. Not allowing guilt to sabotage my commitment to change is a huge demand of myself, but I feel that this is absolutely necessary in my recovery and transition into health. I can either feel that guilt and shame, or I can recover!

3) Allowing yourself time to change: While I understand that patience is crucial and that true and lasting change takes time, this is something I need to work on. At the moment, there are certain pressures in my life that demand a swift recovery, and I am aware that it's these very pressures which in the past have acted as a major pitfall towards me. I must maintain a healthy expectation of myself and of my progress all throughout this workshop.

B. Beyond an active commitment to change, another important factor in determining your ultimate success is your motivation for that change. Look deep inside and list at least ten to fifteen reasons why you seek to permanently change your life. Don't stop at three or four obvious ones, really examine your life and what is important to you. List these in your recovery thread.

B. * I want not to be an absolute idiot.

* I want to remove negative and destructive forces from my life.

* I want to learn from my past mistakes.

* I want to no longer look at the external, objectifying others.

* I want to live life through a healthier, brighter paradigm - one in touch with reality.

* I want to live life by "what can I do for you?" as apposed to "what can you do for me?".

* I want to reconnect to myself.

* I want to regain my sensitivity to life as well as to relearn appreciation for the things that appear simple.

* I want to return to the pure and innocent "me" - as much as possible.

* I want to really be able to relate to people.

* I want to see lightness in my life.

- * I want to enjoy “life”.
- * I want to be able to laugh and cry.
- * I want to become closer to G-d.
- * I want to feel inner sanctity and true spiritual purity.
- * I want to be “*shayach*” (to being Hashem's servant) again.
- * I want to be a man my wife deserves.
- * I want to be a good and faithful husband.
- * I want to have “earned” the complete trust of my wife.
- * I want to be a good and honorable father.
- * I want to be a decent man who earns his respect.
- * I want to rebuild the relationships I've cut off while engrossed in my personal darkness.
- * I want to be whole inside.
- * I want to have positive feelings about myself.
- * I want to feel at peace with myself.
- * I want to respect myself.
- * I want to be able to look in the mirror and love myself.
- * I want to look back on my life and be proud, happy and contented with who I was.
- * I want to fully appreciate myself.
- * I want to remove the weighing forces of guilt and shame from my life.
- * I want to rise above slavery to my compulsions.
- * I want not to be guided by instant gratification and temporary pleasures which will do me much harm.
- * I want not to be guided by my own selfishness and ego.
- * I want to no longer live in fear of my addiction taking me over the edge.

- * I want not to hurt others, take advantage of them, put them in situations of discomfort, or in any way breach someone else's personal boundaries or value system.
- * I want to be a non-victim in life in general.
- * I want to be emotionally stable.
- * I want to learn how to manage my emotions when life throws me a curveball.
- * I want less confusion in my life and in my mind.
- * I want to get my life back in order.
- * I want to "feel".
- * I want to feel free.
- * I want to come out of my shell and live life without reserve.
- * I want to build a better future.
- * I want to live a life of meaning and purpose.
- * I want to live proactively.
- * I want to live my life to a fuller potential.
- * I want to live by my values.
- * I want to grow.
- * I want to be happy.
- * I want to no longer engage in any behavior that I feel I'll need to hide.
- * I want to stop living a double identity.
- * I want to be honest, real, and genuine to myself and others.
- * I want my heart and my mouth to be in sync.
- * I want to love in a healthy way.
- * I want to take my mind off of sex and lust.
- * I want to transition into healthy living without without carrying around the "fear" of my addiction at play.

C. One of the most powerful skills you can develop in establishing a foundation for permanent recovery is to come to see your addiction within the scope of your life span. In other words, to not just see your addiction as it is now, but to look across the span of your life to see the role that addiction has played in your development. Much of this will be explored throughout the workshop, but to put yourself in the right frame of mind to develop such a perception, do the following:

Find a picture of you when you were a small child. An innocent child. For those with early childhood sexual abuse issues, do not mistake this abuse for a lack of innocence. You were absolutely innocent. It will be hard to derive the full value from this exercise without an actual picture, and so, if it is just a matter of needing to find one...wait. Wait until you have the picture in your hand. If such a picture does not exist, try envisioning a moment in your life when you were 3, 4...perhaps 5 years old--but only do this as a last resort. The power of this exercise lays in your ability to look into the eyes of your own innocence--something that is just too hard to do through memory alone.

Now, with the picture in hand, look into that child's eyes. Feel his/her innocence. How vulnerable you were. How trusting. Recognize the lack of addiction in your life...and the desire for little more than love, compassion, teaching and support. Think of the trauma that child has faced throughout his/her life. Think of the times when he/she has felt alone. Confused. If you feel like it, cry for this child. Allow yourself to feel love for this child. Do whatever you must to emotionally connect to this child because it is for this child that you are now reclaiming your life. It is this child who has lost its way, and you are the one now showing the courage to guide it back to health.

If you would like, share your experience with this last exercise in your thread.

C. Because the moment I envision is very personal to me and these feelings are so powerful, it would be limiting to put it into words. In the picture, it's that child of 8 years old - looking into the powerful gaze of the Lubavitcher Rebbe - to which I seek to connect. In this child I see purity, refinement, sensitivity, a genuine care, and a non-judging acceptance for others. This child is carefree, fun, and has happiness on his face.

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Re: BreakingFree's Recovery Thread

Posted by BreakingFree - 10 Mar 2010 20:17

Establishing a Mindset for Permanent Change

My Commitment to Change:

- I have achieved a commitment to change that is clear and absolute.
- I have committed myself to building a healthy life; not merely achieving abstinence.
- I have recognized the need to change the fundamentals of how I manage my life.
- I realize I must expand the role that values play in allowing me to derive meaning from my life.

Accepting the Past:

- I recognize that I have not lived up to the life that I set out to live.
- I accept that there are consequences from my past that I must take full responsibility for.
- I recognize that the reasons I developed an addiction are not the same reasons I've continued it.

Accepting the Present:

- I have set aside three months to prioritize building a healthy foundation for my life.
- I accept that I am a person 'under construction'--pursuing perfection but not measuring myself by it.
- I understand that denying myself my addiction will make me more vulnerable to my emotions, not less.
- I must take responsibility for managing my life in the present, not the past.
- I cannot control what other people think of me for my past; I can only control who I am now.

Anticipating the Future:

- I realize that dramatic change can take place rapidly, but it takes years to ingrain.
- I know that my future will be determined by what I do from this point forward.

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Re: BreakingFree's Recovery Thread
Posted by the.guard - 10 Mar 2010 22:01

Good stuff, whoever you are... Keep it coming!!

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Re: BreakingFree's Recovery Thread
Posted by BreakingFree - 11 Mar 2010 07:53

Establishing a Healthy Vision for Your Life

Workshop Lesson 2 - Day 2 (<http://www.recoverynation.com/recovery/m1w1d2.htm>).

Planning the next exercise which involves establishing a healthy life vision, I've prepared a general template outline covering all areas of life for anyone who would like to join me in this.

Day 2 Exercises:

I. Take at least twenty minutes to be alone. If you have a family, ask them to respect this time that you are taking. Make sure that you leave your cell phone off. That the dog is fed. That there will be no distractions. Take a walk by yourself. Sit alone on the beach.

Find somewhere secluded and then, think. Think about who you are, the life that you have led, and the life that you want to lead from this point forward. Think about your legacy. Create a vision that you would feel comfortable committing yourself to pursuing. One that, as you someday look back upon your life, will allow you to feel proud of the person that you developed into. Of the life that you led.

II. OPTIONAL: If you have someone in your life to talk with about this vision, consider talking with them. You are not looking for validation, correction, guidance...you are just moving one step closer to making this vision your reality. However, it is important that the person you choose to share this vision with not listen with a critical ear. You are in the infancy stage of learning how to perceive, develop and manage your life as a healthy adult--there is no need to reinforce your short-comings during this exercise.

III. Write out your vision. Use any format you would like. As a general rule, the more personal, the better. Post this vision in your Recovery Thread. There is no right or wrong to this vision...though it should be comprehensive enough for a stranger (in this case, me) to read it and have a pretty good idea as to what you value and the life that you want to live.

My mental, emotional, and physical health:

- Physical condition and health:

- Emotional and psychological state:

- Religious and spiritual condition:

My family and relationships:

- Parents, siblings, children, spouse, and other relatives:

- Friends:

- People I must deal with, like it or not:

My home and community:

- Living environment:

- Neighborhood:

- Hobbies and leisure activities:

My work and schooling:

- Work:

- Financial condition:

- Education:

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