

Are there side effects to the 12 Steps
Posted by charlie1 - 10 Jul 2014 14:53

Shalom

I am a litvak learning in a Brisker Kollel. I was an utter sexoholic and have been clean for 60 days thanks to the 12 steps (I have recently started step 4 with a sponser).

I KNOW THAT IT WORKS AND I WOULD NOT FOR ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD GO BACK TO MY PREVIOUS LIFE.... BUT.... I have noticed that I have less of a drive to get things done (like getting to yeshiva on time, being makpid with my amud yomi) - and my mind runs to "loving god" rather than doing Hazara of a difficult shiur.

Christianity - preached to leave the mitzvot and surrendered to a loving God . ?is this what is happening to me.

My real question is: Since the 12 steps work - are they applicable to everyone should Reb Chaim be doing the steps? or is his avodas Hashem Lechatchila and mine Bedeved

Am I suffering from the side effects of the 12 steps

Charlie1

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Re: Are there side effects to the 12 Steps
Posted by cordnoy - 10 Jul 2014 16:48

First answer: I don't know.

second answer: No! You are sufferin' from the syndrome of thinkin' too much. Just do what you have to do when you need to do it, and if you don't, don't beat yourself up about it and just do it at the next possible moment.

This is what's called acceptance and livin' in the moment.

Great news about how youre doin' so well; that's great!

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Are there side effects to the 12 Steps

Posted by Pidaini - 10 Jul 2014 16:51

Rabbi A.J. Twerski has a book called "Self-Improvement?! I'm Jewish!!" in which he explains that the 12 steps are all tools that are also brought down from our own Torah Giants and they were put into a combination that has proven to be successful.

There may be things that they preach in 12 step groups that come from christianity, I wouldn't know since I haven't been to meetings, but in essence there is nothing in the 12 steps that is against our tradition.

Regarding your title "are there side effects?", I have experienced side effects, I've actually become a more diligent learner, spend my time much more productively, I am more friendly at home and in public, and I'm sure I could add many more side effects to working the 12 steps.

As for your question, I think that you can address it the same way you address any of your other defects. I found by me that the reason that my learning got better was because I saw it as an

extension of what Hashem's will was, which is, btw, the basis of the 12 steps. I stopped learning because I wanted to learn (which was also why I wasn't learning so well, because there were other things I wanted to do as well) and started learning because that's what I'm here to do!!

KIT!! KOP!!! KOMT!!!

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Re: Are there side effects to the 12 Steps
Posted by charlie1 - 10 Jul 2014 17:07

Thanks I do appreciate your feel back.

on refelction I believe that the reason I was so makpid about sedarim was because it was also an escape (addiction_ a awy of getting away from difficult interpersonal relationships to numbing out to escape the pain of the sex addiction.

Yes I have also benefited (I mentioned in one of my other replies that last week my wife said "she has never looked at me with such loving eyes since our wedding" and we have been married for 10 yrs. I have been much more calm/ loving and inputing with my children.

As I said my concern was the lack of a "thrust" in my actions that I previous had. but that could as you mentioned been since I was living in the future rather than the past.

I gues io have a fear to turning into a hippy talking about love of Hashem rather than dikduk hamitzvos

Dovid

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Re: Are there side effects to the 12 Steps
Posted by chesky - 10 Jul 2014 19:25

Hi and thank you for sharing.

i identify with your issue a lot and in the three years I have been in SA I have discovered that it is not uncommon for frum people to feel this way.

I think that it is difficult for us to understand why a Loving G-d would care so much about whether you put your lockshen on Shabbos in a Kli Rishon or a Kli Shaini. (Incidentally this is a problem many irreligious Jews I meet in EY have. They say that it is enough to be a Yehudi Balev). Most of us cannot handle contradictions, so we have to decide - and so sometimes we scrap dikduk bemitzvos as a result. However in truth it is poshut that there is no stira, but that is another discussion.

The issue of whether the 12 Step shtims with Torah has been argued extensively on this website. (It was one of Dov's pet subjects). Some take the attitude that the main thing is what works, while others have more trouble getting round the problem.

For me the main point was and is what you wrote in your lost post. That a lot of my Yiddiskeit was coming from my addiction. I was using it to escape or to calm myself or for emotional masturbation. Again, that is not to say that I did anything wrong, but it means that in order to recover I have to beware of previous addictive behaviors.

If for example I am late for daavening and I feel that HaShem is really angry with me, so anyway I am going to gehenom and so i might as well masturbate (a bit exaggerated, but you get the point), or if i daaven intensely to "make up" with HaShem, then today I realize thankfully that these are obsessive thoughts which i am powerless over. I can share them, get them out and as a result i am more in touch with myself and have a more meaningful and (hopefully) more emes relationship with HaShem.

May he grant us a day of sobriety, sanity and serenity

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Re: Are there side effects to the 12 Steps

Posted by moish u.k. - 11 Jul 2014 14:28

Dear Reb Charlie,

I can identify what what you are experiencing.

Working the 12 step program makes me start to view my life objectively. It also teaches me to be brutally honest with myself

I suddenly find that my learning, davening and doing mitsvos are being exposed as not "real", i.e. that i have been doing them for the wrong reasons.

Externally i have been going through the motions, but internally i have been spiritually dead. This is all part of the double life i have lived in active addiction.

The process of letting go of the old ways practicing my yiddishkeit and starting to acquire a new spiritually meaningful approach (which is all part of my recovery) can initially feel that i'm going backwards.

As an example, i have started to speak to Hashem in my own words, in a way that i feel connected to Him like never before. At the same time i am finding that my davening has become a struggle. It can feels external, with no meaningful content. Like i'm talking to a wall in a foreign language.

The process of making my davening a meaningful connection takes time and patience. I am doing a bit at a time.

I hope this helps.

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Re: Are there side effects to the 12 Steps
Posted by charlie1 - 14 Jul 2014 17:41

Thank you for your responses Chesky and Moish

The Gommora says drag the yeezer Hara to the Beis Hamidrash- I understood that to mean that you have an energy if left it will turn negative and redirected it can be pointed towards hashem and fire in torah and mitzvot - I feel like the 12 steps and created a third way by extinguishing the fire - (I do not think I have added anything - perhaps kust reached more clarity in what particularly my issue was)

But Adaraba once a person has surrendered to Hashem and all his rozon is hashems rozon then mimala every action he takes will be ultimated directed to hashem and once he realises that hashem wants him to serve him with fire then again it is just a question of surrendering his apathy and laziness. Then one could argue he wil be the source of his OWN fire rather than just redirecting.

What do you think

Charlie

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Re: Are there side effects to the 12 Steps
Posted by chesky - 14 Jul 2014 19:37

I didn't quite understand what you wrote.

All I can say is that the 12 Step program comes way before "shlepping the Y"h to the B"H".

It is a program for addicts who admit that they cannot manage their lives on their own.

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