

His Final Mission: Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski ZT”L On His Fight Against Internet Addiction Compiled by Yaakov Nadel Quotes

Why should a person have trouble being aware of one’s strengths? Perhaps it is because if you are aware of your potential, you may feel obligated to live up to it, and if you do not actualize your potential, you may feel guilty. It may be more comfortable to be unaware of your skills, talents, and strengths. A person may justify his indolence by thinking that he is not capable of doing what he should.¹

Step #1: We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable. Step #2: We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. This is essentially the Talmudic statement (*Kiddushin* 30b) that one’s yetzer hara increases in strength every day, and were it not for the help of God, one would not be able to withstand it. In other words, without the help of God, we are powerless over the yetzer hara. Indeed, the Talmud relates that two of our greatest tzaddikim were tempted by Satan and were actually in the process of submitting to the sin, and they were saved only by the

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intervention of God (*Kiddushin* 81a)...Our powerlessness over sin is primarily due to two factors. **The overwhelming power of the yetzer hara.** This is well described in what I consider a frightening essay by Rav Yerucham Levovitz, “The Land Is Given Over to Evil,” in which he describes the extraordinary powers of the Satan... This essay was written in 1928, long before the Satan greatly expanded his already formidable powers by means of the Internet and television!...**Our vulnerability to self-deception.** Like a judge who takes a bribe, our judgment is seriously compromised by our desires, which are powerful bribes. Without *siyatta deShmaya*, we are helpless.²

It is of interest that there is a difference of opinion between ethicists whether a person should seek to make amends if doing so would be displeasing to the victim. A man asked me to forgive him for having spread a bad rumor about me. I did forgive him, but I wished that he had not told me about this, because now I was worried about what bad rumors might be circulating about me. In such cases, Rav Yisrael Salanter said that one would be better off not asking for forgiveness, because this aggravates the person. The Chafetz Chaim, however, said that one must ask forgiveness nevertheless. I was amused that Bill Wilson had gravitated to the opinion of Rav Yisrael Salanter. “Made direct

² 61-62

amends to such people wherever possible.” The latter is an interesting qualification. What can you do when the person whom you offended has moved to another country and there is no way you can find and reach him? *Sidduro shel Shabbos* says that when you genuinely regret your action and have exhausted every possibility in attempting to personally contact the person you offended, you may assume that Hashem will put it in his heart to forgive you.³

Internet addiction is a spiritual cancer. People who have, *chas v'shalom*, cancer will undergo surgery and very difficult treatments to save their lives. If we realize that our spiritual lives and the spiritual lives of our children are at stake, we will be willing to do whatever is necessary to save ourselves and our children.⁴

There is no one who can say, “I am safe, and my home is safe.” No one is safe. And we have to have a way to help these people. Now, *baruch Hashem*, when I get these calls — and I only get these calls about five times a week — I tell them to join Guard Your Eyes. I tell the wife to join Guard Your Eyes, too (in the spouses’ division). Because the family needs help as well. The wife needs to understand what her husband is going through. And the success

³ 65 – According to Rabbi Akiva Tatz, we follow Rav Yisrael Salanter on this issue.

⁴ 280

rates that they've had on Guard Your Eyes is phenomenal—it's *hatzalas nefashos* and *pikuach nefesh*.⁵

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