



*For over 25 years Rabbi Eckstein has been providing specialized treatment programs to addicts the world over, making him one of today's foremost experts on recovery. His groundbreaking work at Retorno Rehab Center in Israel has given rise to an innovative method to learn and practice the 12 Steps through horseback riding and bicycle riding. In eight sessions, you will come to understand how the 12 Step program can help you—and others—break free from the clutches of addiction and lead a life in which you once again have free choice. Go on, it's your move.*

# It's Your Move:

## An Inner Journey Utilizing Horses or Bicycles Based on the 12 Step Program

by Eitan Eckstein

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EITAN ECKSTEIN  
IT'S YOUR MOVE  
AN INNER JOURNEY UTILIZING HORSES OR BICYCLES



BASED ON THE 12 STEP PROGRAM

**It's Your Move**  
**An Inner Journey Utilizing Horses or Bicycles**  
**Based on the 12 Step Program**  
**Eitan Eckstein**

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To my dear wife Sarah  
and to my beloved family  
for sharing in my idea  
and being with me on the journey

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## The Retorno Method

### “The Compass of Life”

#### Introduction

“Rabbi Eckstein, you’re going to love this. It finally clicked. I *finally* understand my problem. I discovered an accurate definition for addiction! Listen to this...”

Ronny, a fighter pilot in a military reserve unit, is married with three children. He came to Retorno for treatment because of his uncontrollable use of amphetamines. These were readily available to him at any time in kiosks that sell party paraphernalia 24/7.

It’s not easy to treat a pilot. His high intelligence coupled with his ego makes him adept at protecting himself with denial, concealment, and escape from his problems. He’ll do anything to avoid coming face to face with his greatest enemy—himself. And so, when he presented himself to me, swift as an F-16 and as dazzling as the sun, my curiosity was aroused.

“Listen, Rabbi. Since starting treatment at Retorno three months ago, I’ve been plagued by a question: What’s the difference between use and abuse? Today I finally got it! It’s the difference between dizziness and vertigo. Both of these conditions are dangerous for a pilot, but they are essentially different. With dizziness, a pilot knows he has a problem. With vertigo, he’s absolutely sure he has no problem.

“Substance use is like dizziness. In the early stages of use, I knew I was a fake. I lied to everyone—my wife, my parents, my friends and my unit commanders. But I knew I was doing something wrong. However, at some point I stopped feeling bad about what I was doing. Instead I grew confident about my actions and my direction. I had every reason, every excuse to live in a world of drugs and lies. For me, it was the real world.

“Today during a group session, one of the group members, a successful lawyer, tried to convince us—that is, convince himself—that his *wife* is really the one who needs treatment, and he can’t understand what *he’s* doing at Retorno. This reminded me of an incident that occurred one day during an exercise when our fighter jets were training over the sea.

“At one point, I wanted to distance myself a bit from the sea, so I pulled my plane upward— but without checking my instruments. Suddenly I heard my commander shout that I was diving into the sea! This was the first time I ever experienced vertigo. I was certain that the lights twinkling

underneath me were fishing boats and the lights twinkling above me were stars. Nevertheless, I followed protocol; I ignored my feelings and checked my instruments which told me that down was up and up was down.

“I remember the difficulty in acting against my internal reality. To disconnect from what you believe and give control over to a power greater than yourself. It’s scary. It’s hard. It’s insane. But it’s the only way.”

That talk with Ronny prompted me to redefine Retorno’s method as a journey. If you think about it, addiction of any kind is not actually a problem. Addiction is a solution—a misguided solution for life’s unsolved problems; a solution that, over time, will itself become a difficult problem, one that is complicated and sly.

Retorno’s definition in terms of a journey has been instrumental not only for addicts, but for anyone who wants to do more than just drift through life. It’s for those who want to fulfill their potential, to learn to pay attention to themselves and others, to learn to face challenges and difficulties, to learn to let go when needed. It’s a philosophy for anyone who wants to live life to the fullest.

## **About Retorno**

I established Retorno in 1990 while I was in Mexico, serving as the rabbi of a community. During my stint there, I discovered a bizarre link between good kids from families from the upper socioeconomic strata of society and addiction. Until then I wanted to believe, like many others, that addiction was a problem of distressed neighborhoods. In Mexico, a holistic-systemic model came into being that integrates all the relevant fields dealing with addiction—education, prevention, outreach, and treatment.

There are many treatment methods to deal with addiction, including individual therapy, group therapy, support groups, coaching, and therapeutic communities. At Retorno we combine all of these methods, both for outreach and treatment. Our outreach department runs various workshops and courses, attended by approximately 15,000 students, teachers, soldiers, officers, parents, and professionals annually.

Additionally we have an outpatient center for addicts who do not require full inpatient services, combining individual therapy together with consistent support by a 12 Step counselor and support group meetings.

Today Retorno has branches in 12 countries around the world. Retorno’s flagship program is the therapeutic community in Israel with full inpatient services. The adult program lasts 7 to 9 months, and the youth program lasts 14 months. There are altogether more than 100 people being treated in these programs at any one time.

In addition, Retorno’s Center for Advanced Learning trains educators, counselors, parents, and community activists in order to widen the network of professionals and laypeople who can do outreach. Courses include the Twelve Steps program, life coaching and NLP, and a Western horseback riding instructor’s course.

## **The Journey Begins...**

Every journey is guided by a map and compass. When we have a clearly defined destination and are determined to reach our goal, it's unlikely that we will get lost and fail to reach our destination—as long as we know how to read a map and a compass.

Hundreds of individuals, adults and youth, who have come to Retorno for treatment have lost their way. What went wrong?

People seeking treatment at Retorno don't necessarily come from dysfunctional environments. Most of them, at least outwardly, are managing their lives normally. They include doctors, lawyers, businessmen, soldiers, and military commanders. Something went wrong along the way. Instead of realizing their ambitions, they found themselves seeking treatment for addiction. Without a doubt, this was not one of the goals they had set for themselves on their map of life.

When it seems we have used our navigational tools—our map and compass—correctly, what can make us lose our way and end up at a destination far different from the one we planned?

### **The Magnet Phenomenon**

In general, if we have a clearly defined goal and use our map and compass correctly, there's no reason why we shouldn't reach our destination.

Outside influences can divert us from our course—influences that can cause “dizziness.” In other words, we were aware of these influences but for various reasons decided not to take them into account or to ignore them altogether. In contrast to these influences, there are far deeper influences that we can describe as “vertigo.” The problem with these influences is that not only are we unaware of them, we are entirely sure they don't even exist.

Toward the end of a military officer's course in which I participated, we were divided into teams of three. Each team was equipped with a map and a compass, and we were supposed to reach a given destination. At one point, my two teammates and I were bent over a map, holding a compass and trying to determine how to continue our journey. Our commanding officer approached us and smugly commented, “Guys, what are you doing? Look, you're trying to read the compass under a high-voltage wire!” The magnetic field of the electric power line was diverting the compass needle to a false North Pole.

Many years have passed since that exercise, but the lesson I learned still resonates. A person holding a stuck compass knows his compass is faulty and that he can't rely on it. But when the needle sways and then fixes on a certain direction, it *appears* that the compass is calibrated, that it can be relied on to lead him to his destination.

This is essentially the same illusion that Ronny the pilot experienced as vertigo, when he was upside down and mistook the stars for fishing boats and the boats for stars.

### **The World of Addiction**

According to the laws of physics, every empty space seeks to fill itself.

Imagine a compass that whose base has been damaged. It's dented inward and can no longer stand stable on a flat surface. Any material that will stabilize the base of the compass by filling this void will remain there. If the material filling the void has magnetic properties, the compass will seem as if

it's finally balanced and stable, but in reality the magnetic substance will divert the needle from the true North Pole to a false one.

To translate this analogy to the world of addiction, the blow sustained by the compass can be sexual abuse, denigration and humiliation, fear, trauma caused by a threat to safety, or any significant factor that can cause emotional pain. (It is difficult to quantify the severity of the blow needed to inflict significant emotional pain because the scale is unique for every individual.) The emotional pain creates a void in the person's inner world, a void that causes suboptimal functioning. A person experiences this as a sort of incessant buzz in the head that is truly maddening. In order to quiet this noise, the void needs to be filled. And it is successfully filled, by a "magnetic substance"—not once but numerous times.

Take this example of an incident that occurred in Sderot, a town in southern Israel not far from Gaza. The people of Sderot suffered for years from rocket attacks from Hamas-controlled Gaza. The many casualties were injured or killed in full sight of the men, women, and children who tried to carry on with their daily lives as if all was normal. Obviously, the alarm and stress was traumatic—and ongoing.

It was a quarter to eight in the morning. The school bus, on its way to a Sderot school, was filled with the sound of laughter, chatting, and music leaking out from the earbuds of MP3 players. Just another ordinary day.

Until air raid sirens forced the driver to bring the bus to a screeching halt, shouting, "Everyone out! Run for cover!"

This was no drill. All the students rushed out of the bus and ran in different directions—all except Sarah, who remained firmly planted to the bus seat as if she had grown roots.

The driver, who could see her from his own sheltered place, called out, "Don't try to be brave! Run!"

But Sarah was not being brave; she was mortified. From the shock and fear, she had wet herself. How could she bring herself to leave the bus in that state? Two courageous friends climbed up into the bus, covered her with a shirt, and found shelter together with her.

The story should end here, just like it did for all the other students. But for Sarah the story had only begun—not just a story but a whole "movie," as she herself would later describe it. From that day on, Sarah began a steadily decline. She was ashamed to leave her house. She refused to go to school, sure that everyone would laugh at her and talk about the embarrassing incident. The only one she confided in about her burning shame was her pillow. Even the social worker's home visits didn't help.

Several months later, Sarah's parents managed to convince her to go with them to a relative's bar mitzvah. "Only on condition that we sit at a side table," Sarah stipulated, and her parents gladly arranged this. At one point during the evening, she was left alone at the table while everyone else was celebrating on the dance floor. Sarah was thirsty, but all the soda bottles on the table were empty. The only available drink was one glass bottle filled with a transparent liquid. Sarah was so thirsty, she poured herself a full glass. She almost choked on the drink that burned her throat, but suddenly, as if she had waved a magic wand, she felt nothing: no more pain, no more frustration, no more self-blame or shame. It was the most wonderful feeling ever.

After that, Sarah began to change. She resumed her old routine of school, friends, and extracurricular activities. Sarah's parents were delighted that they'd convinced her to go to the bar



mitzvah, since apparently it had contributed to all the seemingly positive changes that had taken place.

But Sarah's reality was quite different.

No one knew except Sarah that what helped her out of bed was an amazing "psychologist" who is a master at helping people, adolescents and adults, cope with their problems—a "psychologist" by the name of Dr. Vodka.

Three months later, Sarah went with her friends to Retorno for "Hug Day"—a day of workshops dedicated to the prevention of addiction. At the end of the day-long seminar at Retorno, it dawned on Sarah that she was probably addicted to alcohol. This liquid solution that until now had helped her had itself become a problem. She would lie for it, steal for it, and trade anything for it. But it betrayed her. It had begun to demand more and more of her. She had no strength left—and so she was ready to seek help.

In our terminology, Sarah's compass received a huge blow on the school bus that fateful day. The void that was formed then was filled with a magnet called vodka. This magnet caused the compass needle to deviate, creating vertigo in Sarah's world. She began to change—to behave in ways that her own personal compass had not permitted before the incident had occurred.

Of course, this description is still too simple. There is no doubt that Sarah's inner compass was very sensitive—perhaps because of a predisposition, or perhaps because the blow she absorbed at the time added to an accumulation of other blows from past incidents. Only in treatment, which in itself is not an easy journey, can suppressed memories arise into consciousness after being buried under a mountain of history.

### **Retorno's Method**

How do we know if a person is suffering from dizziness or emotional vertigo? In other words, how do we know the difference between casual use and abuse, and how can we motivate someone to seek treatment if he is, indeed, an addict?

### **Diagnosing Vertigo**

The line between use and abuse is razor thin. When do we reclassify someone who is a user—of the computer, alcohol, gambling, drugs or other behaviors—to someone who has crossed the line and become an addict?

To offer a simple yet focused definition, we can say that every time our hand reaches for something to which our brain does not agree, that is addiction. Therefore, statements such as, "I found myself by the refrigerator," or "I woke up in the morning next to..." demonstrate addiction.

In order to understand how this happens, we must understand what addiction really is. If use is caused by will, then addiction is fueled by need. If a person suffers from an itchy, annoying mosquito bite, he will scratch the bite continuously, sometimes even until he draws blood. To an observer, it appears that the person has gone mad, as if he is purposely inflicting harm on himself. If asked about his behavior, the person will explain that scratching relieves the itch. In other words, scratching is actually a need, without which the person will suffer.

As explained above, the connection between force and free choice to begin treatment is a mesh of delicately interwoven threads. At Retorno, this is at times blatantly obvious: A juvenile offender arrives, led by three armed policemen straight from a guarded prison to alternative detention at Retorno. After all the pertinent paperwork is signed, the handcuffs are removed, and the police cruiser disappears. The adolescent is left in a community whose gates are not locked even at night, and that has more breaches than official entrances and exits. This is practically an invitation to escape, and there are many who do so. And yet 90 percent of runaways come back of their own volition. Though he is not punished (at Retorno there are no punishments), the escaped addict does have to face the consequences of his actions. He may be told, “We cannot help you” and be suspended from the group. What’s amazing is that a youth who has been locked up for most of his life in all sorts of educational and treatment institutions is often, for the first time, afraid of the harsh consequences he’ll suffer—that of being denied reentry! He will usually be found camped outside Retorno’s gate in a makeshift tent for two weeks or more until he is finally given another chance. (His return to Retorno actually depends on whether or not his group agrees to reaccept him.)

This pattern of escape and return—which often happens several times during the initial phase of treatment—demonstrates that a person knows, deep inside, that he has a problem. And when he feels that someone understands him and there’s a real chance to get help, he can unearth those hidden parts of himself and open himself up to treatment.

### **Creating Trust**

The most important stage in the first meeting with the addict (we call him an addict even though we are still in the clarification stage) is building trust. As we have pointed out, for years the addict has built a wall around himself—to protect himself, but more importantly to protect his addiction.

Because no one understands him, including some of the professionals to whom he has been sent more than once, he must learn that we are different. We share that from our experience, many things have been said out of a lack of understanding of what the addict has gone through: “You are not living up to your potential.” “You’re not trying hard enough.” “Look what you’re doing to yourself.” “You’ve ruined the whole family.” The common denominator of 100 percent of individuals that come to Retorno for treatment is their above-average intelligence and their high level of sensitivity. This is, of course, in addition to the hurt they have all experienced. We don’t judge him, and we do not want to take his addiction away from him. (At this stage, that would be like taking crutches away from an accident victim during rehabilitation.) We do not want him to feel bad; we want him to be relieved of his suffering. We want him to be happy.

By relating examples from our own experience, we try to get the person to evaluate his own situation, to ask himself if his use/abuse has provided what it promised, if it has helped him forget his pain, frustration, and loneliness.

### **Family Intervention**

When an addict is not interested in meeting us because he’s afraid he’ll be denied the use of his own “cure,” we employ a technique called family intervention. All family members who participate in this intervention write a letter that he or she reads to the addict during a session. The hope is that during this session, hearing the heartfelt words of his family members, the addict’s rigid position will shift in some way and he will be influenced to accept treatment. In case this intervention does not bear

the expected fruit, there is no choice but to push the addict one step further by creating an additional limitation, such as cutting off financial support, threatening divorce or separation, etc.

The following true story is just such a case.

When Retorno opened in Mexico in 1990, families slowly gained courage to contact our hotline which was widely publicized in all the community newspapers. One evening, I received a phone call from the individual manning the hotline. He informed me about Morris, a Jewish father of three girls who was addicted to cocaine and gambling, lying unconscious in the American Hospital in Mexico City after he had slashed his wrists. Morris's parents requested that someone from Retorno come to provide support to them and to his young, confused wife. I arrived at the hospital in less than an hour and was confronted with a painful scene that I was to encounter time and again in my work. There were many questions, many guilty feelings, much anger, and endless suffering.

I asked if I could go into the room to see Morris. His father replied, "What for? He's unconscious."

I suggested that as a rabbi I wanted to give him a blessing. He agreed, and I entered the room alone. Before me lay a young, handsome young man in his early thirties whose enjoyment of life was over. Morris was unconscious, his arms bandaged and bound to the sides of the bed.

Perhaps because he and I were alone in the room, I let myself to speak freely. "Morris, this is Rabbi Eckstein. I know you can hear me. I also know you didn't really mean to commit suicide, because otherwise you would have cut your wrists much deeper. You wanted to make a statement that it's so hard for you, and that you're suffering, and so I'm here to help you. I can help you get out of this mess."

Unbelievably, Morris opened one eye and then the other and looked around the room. When he was absolutely sure that he and I were alone, he looked at me and asked, "Do you promise?"

"Yes," I assured him, "I promise."

Until this day, Morris's family is convinced that I used some Kabbalistic incantation to bring him out of his many days of unconsciousness.

This was only the beginning of my exhausting "romance" with Morris, or more to the point, with his illness. After several months, he promised to be a good father, a good husband, and a model son. Twice a week he met with a psychologist. But the addiction that festered inside him slowly took over his life and his family's life once again. Morris abandoned his wife and children, who occasionally got word of him through friends who saw him drinking and "sniffing" himself to death. He urgently needed to be admitted to Retorno's therapeutic community, but convincing him of this was a problem.

So we arranged an ambush.

A good friend of Morris invited him to his fancy penthouse apartment. When he entered his friend's living room, he was alarmed by the sight of ten people sitting in a circle, waiting for him—his parents, brothers, wife, his two older daughters (we requested that his youngest daughter not be present), one of the psychologists from Retorno, and myself.

"What is this, my birthday?" Morris asked angrily when he realized he had walked into a trap.

"No," answered the friend who'd invited him, "this is no party. The people sitting here love you and are worried about you. Each one of us has written you a letter we want to read to you."

"I'm not interested," Morris answered, heading toward the door.

“You have no choice,” his friend said, dismissing his remark. “The key is in my pocket. You have two choices: listen to everyone, or to jump out of the window from the tenth floor!”

With some choice four-letter words, Morris sat down and said, “Get on with your nonsense already.”

Each person in turn read his or her letter out loud, in a voice choked with tears and sorrow. Just about everyone in the room was filled with emotion—except for the guest of honor. Morris sat in his chair, unmoved, as if he were watching an Argentinean soap opera.

When the round of letter reading came to an end and everyone had spoken, Morris turned to his friend and asked, “Now, kind sir, are you finally ready to open the door for me?”

His friend glanced at the psychologist from Retorno who then looked at me, as if I were David Copperfield hiding a magic wand in my pocket.

I wasn’t.

But events take on a life of their own, one that often takes us by surprise. Just behind Morris’s two older daughters was a doorway. And inside this doorway stood a five-year-old girl, Morris’s youngest daughter. The two older girls had ignored the advice of the psychologist and brought their younger sister, knowing how important she was to her father.

The girl held a letter in her hand, which she had written in her own handwriting, and said, “Just a minute, I also wrote you something, Daddy.”

Morris was obviously very surprised, just as the psychologist and I were. He turned toward me, wagging his finger, hinting that the little girl was not part of this.

The psychologist whispered to me, “We can’t let her speak. Who brought her here in the first place?”

When I saw the expression on her father’s face, I signaled to the psychologist not to interfere, and I said to the little girl, “Come, sweetie, your father really wants to hear what you wrote for him.”

She came closer to her father and read her letter: “My Daddy, you are the best father in the world. You taught me how to swim and how to fish. You took me on lots of trips and I love you very much. But you know, Daddy, my friends laugh at me and say that I have a drunken father. That’s a lie, right?” She approached her father, hugged him, and burst into tears.

Morris was shocked, and while his daughter was hugging him, he turned to me and said, “Rabbi, help me. Bind my hands, send me wherever you want. I have no more strength to suffer.” Morris was sent straight to Retorno’s therapeutic community for the next six months.

### **Meeting with a Recovered Addict**

The strongest message is one that comes from a person who has suffered from addiction and overcome it. Usually during my first meeting with an addict, after around a half hour of discussion I say, “You know what? I have an idea. Instead of boring you with my own ideas, I’d like you to meet someone who will definitely understand you better than I can,” and then I arrange for the person to meet one of our recovered patients.

Usually, about an hour later both of them enter my office smiling, and the addict tells me he understands that he has no choice but to come in for treatment. To someone watching from the

## **Preliminary Safety Instructions**

Horses used for the 12 Step Workshop must be trained and suitable for a basic riding/therapeutic level. The workshop facilitator must be knowledgeable of safety instructions and must make sure that participants have (or receive) basic training including:

- \*Guiding the horse: forward, right, left, backwards, and stopping
- \*Conducting different paces with the horse: walk, trot, and canter (never gallop!)
- \*Recognizing and dealing with emergencies such as fight, flight, rearing, and bucking
- \*Resolving emergency situations

If these skills are lacking, participants must be harnessed to a lunge-rein and depend on the instructor guiding the horse.

For ground work, participants should understand:

- \*Corralling
- \*Leading and hitching
- \*Identifying and calming a threatening or stressful situation
- \*How human body language influences the horse

When any of the above criteria are not met (whether in the arena or outside), there is a higher risk of physical injury.

## **WORKSHOP 1**

*G-d,*

*Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change*

*Courage to change the things I can*

*And wisdom to know the difference.*

*-The Serenity Prayer*

## **Introduction**

Sometimes we hear something like, “I found myself coming home with bags of clothing I didn’t need” or “I don’t know how I lost control of myself and got so angry.” It’s as if two different people are speaking. A look at Ecclesiastes explains why this is so.

King Solomon uses the phrase “me and my heart” (Ecclesiastes 7:25) to portray the two different parts of man: the “me” that thinks and makes decisions, and “my heart” that feels. In Ecclesiastes, King Solomon sets out on a journey to discover what causes a man to be happy, when the “me” allows “my heart” to lead.

This workshop will try to help us understand the existence of these two parts. The horse symbolizes the heart—the emotions (though later we will see that the horse does not, in fact, have emotions).

The rider symbolizes the “me” that thinks and makes decisions. We will also understand that when a person allows the horse (his emotions) lead the rider (the thinking aspect), we are asking for trouble. And the one who gets hurt is... the rider.

The emotional part, in this case the horse, functions between two poles, pressure and release. When the horse is pressured, it is immediately evident: he is restless, kicks, or tries to run away. When the horse is calm, he stands calmly, licks his lips, or lowers his head. In the round pen, we create pressure behind the horse to demonstrate how he flees from pressure and calms down when he experiences release. At this stage, it still appears to us that the horse suffers from the pressure, and enjoys the release, because we are projecting our own emotions on the horse; in reality the horse does not *feel*, he merely reacts to the current situation.

We can compare the pressure surrounding the horse to examples from our lives: work, finances, school, family, marriage, etc. We also illustrate the effect of pressure coming from an unexpected source, such as when the rider executes a rollback, in which the horse must make a sharp, sudden change of direction.

## Goals

- \*To understand the two parts, the “me” and “the horse,” parallel to myself and my emotional world
- \*To understand the difference between what I can change and what I cannot change
- \*To understand how we will be assisted by the horses for the duration of the workshop

## Introductory Exercise

In everyday life, it's impossible to separate between the pressure experienced by our emotional self and the “me,” the rider who is bounced around because of these feelings. This distinction is extremely important.

We invite participants to ride a horse while holding onto the saddle horn. Together we demonstrate the two states, pressure and release, and ask participants to describe their feelings. We practice “helplessness,” when the rider feels the horse is leading him into unpleasant situations and he must ask for help. (In real life, learning to ask for help takes much longer.) We practice the concepts that are introduced in Steps 1, 2 and 3 of the 12 Step Program, which are the building blocks:

- \*helplessness
- \*release
- \*requesting help from a Power greater than myself

## Summarizing the Exercise

When the horse fled from the pressure, we connected to examples in our own lives when we experience pressure. Pressure begins in childhood and causes us to seek escape. Initially we escape by detaching ourselves from the pressure; at a certain stage when the pressure becomes unbearable, we escape through people, places, and things.

We may think the horse escapes from pressure for the same reasons that we do: because he is sad, frustrated, or depressed. However, this interpretation is incorrect. The horse escapes because this is the primary survival mechanism he was created with, much like any other beast of prey. As soon as we understand how this mechanism works for the horse, we can make use of it to understand how we humans achieve our goals.

Because of our mistaken interpretation of the horse's behavior, the horse is actually the best mirror for man. When I ride a horse and try to make him turn and he resists, I automatically interpret this as my failure to control; this connects me to all the times in my life that I tried to make my "horse" turn and failed. When the horse suddenly bolts and I can't rein him in, I hear my father or my preschool teacher shouting at me, "You have no control over yourself, you always break things, you spoil everything..." The frustration that wells up from my lack of control over my horse (the actual horse and whatever life circumstances frustrate me) makes me react instinctively with more pressure. This pressure is unhelpful, because it causes the horse (or the frustrating circumstance) to react to me even *more* wildly. The point is to learn how to use the horse's basic traits in order to lead him gently, firmly, and easily to my goal.

At this point, the relevance of the *Serenity Prayer* becomes apparent: "Grant me the serenity to accept that which I cannot change." I cannot change the horse's traits any more than I can change my own, inborn traits. The horse will always run away from pressure. What I *can* do is request "courage to change the things I can." I can make use of exactly the same trait and harness it to my advantage.

The horse wants to turn, so let him turn! Make him turn again and again until the horse realizes that he has had enough of it, and that it's not worth his while to try to outwit me. After much practice we reach a balance, so that a mere spoken command or shift in position causes the horse to immediately obey my orders.

## WORKSHOP 2

**Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over our addiction—that our lives had become unmanageable.**

**Step 2: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore our sanity.**

**Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of G-d as we understood Him.**

### Introduction

We all have clear, lofty goals, along with an inner desire to fulfill them. The basic tools that are supposed to accompany us on the journey toward our goals are the map and the compass. Is it possible that a person correctly used these navigational tools and yet did not achieve his goal? Or that he arrived at a destination other than that the one he planned?

Sometimes, on the journey toward reaching our goals, we are faced with situations in which the compass we are holding is stuck or shows a false reading. Because the compass doesn't move at all,



*For over 25 years Rabbi Eckstein has been providing specialized treatment programs to addicts the world over, making him one of today's foremost experts on recovery. His groundbreaking work at Retorno Rehab Center in Israel has given rise to an innovative method to learn and practice the 12 Steps through horseback riding and bicycle riding. In eight sessions, you will come to understand how the 12 Step program can help you—and others—break free from the clutches of addiction and lead a life in which you once again have free choice. Go on, it's your move.*

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