

Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by E-Tek - 17 May 2012 23:00

Editing this post with info from my original thread by way of introduction.

Hello all.

I've been lurking for some time now, I figured I'll give a shout out. The name of my game is shpiegel- I'll just tell you all what I've been telling myself, to better affect myself. Introductions later, I really have to run to seder soon.

R' Leib Kelemen says over (B'Sheim Omro, don't forget!) that R' Chaim Vital writes: He was have a conversation with his Rebbe, the Arizal, and he asked him why the Arizal keeps saying that he (R' Chaim Vital) has a special neshoma. "We, who do not reach the toenails of the previous generation, can't possibly be considered special compared to those that have come before us."

The Arizal answered, because in every generation it is far more difficult to do the right thing, because of the forces arrayed against us, we cannot judge ourselves by our accomplishments. Rather, if we are anywhere near the previous generations in our activities, it means far more than it appears to mean, because the fight is tougher. On that scale, concluded the Arizal, you have a special neshoma.

Concludes R' Leib- in our generation the fight has become nigh on impossible. But if we realize how much we accomplish by simply considering ourselves part of the fight, and a kal v'chomer if we are succeeding to any extent at all- well then, Moshiach should be here any day!!

We are the generation to bring Moshiach, there's no doubt about it. And the proof is what we are up against.

Okay, and now to introduce myself.

I'm twenty(mumble) years old, and I've had this addiction since I was 14. When I was 16 or so, I learned it was bad (although if I had been honest, I knew from the start it wasn't quite right). I made several conscious efforts throughout my teens to stop, without very much success. Emotionally, I went from determined to depressed to ambivalent. About two years ago I started making more efforts on a very basic level- More of the "what" in Yiddishkeit than the "why". This path seemed to work for me- I took my intellectual knowledge I had gained and used it to make a long-term decision to physically remove myself from, well, everything. And all of a sudden, I found I was able to think straight. (I know, this phenomenon is common here.) I made an absolute ton of small steps to keep myself headed in the right direction, and the sum-total of all those has made me a different person. The most fundamental of those changes is a day-to-day, personal, emotional relationship with the Rebono Shel Olam.

I found out about the website a little less than three years ago, and kept it in my inbox until I was ready to work on myself. (It takes a certain emotional maturity to make a commitment, no? I was still a kid.) Started working with some success before I got a chance to start lurking here, but this site seems to be turbocharging my efforts.

I have not finished the handbook- I'm reading it slowly and deliberately. During the zman I spend less time working on this and more time keeping too busy with good things. Use the

Yetzer Hora's ANTI-THINK device against him, and all that.

Hatzlocha to all! Thanks for listening.

I'm posting to get some hugs, basically.

I'm lucky in that I'm sending my computer in for repairs, so I'll have some breathing room. I'm also going to focus on the handbook material, and think about a nusach for Taphsic. There is my parent's K-9 and password computer, so I'll be on, but not more often than daily.

Sigh... Sheva Yipol Tzadik Vokom, eh? The difference between a Tzadik and a Rosha is how many times they get up after falling... So here's for a new count. The old one netted me 4 days. That's about average for a serious try, but not for one I make in the States. So there is that. So, I fell big time today...

Thanks for listening.

Meir

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Re: New count

Posted by E-Tek - 24 May 2012 23:39

Thanks very much! ;D

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Re: New count

Posted by E-Tek - 29 May 2012 22:13

A gutten Isru Chag, everybody! I'm back for an update.

I fell a total of three times- once on Thursday, I'm actually a bit bewildered about it, and two on Shabbos that came as a result. Clean since then, B"H.

I think I'm too focused on the fight... I'm still working on my plan to beat it, and of course, on asking Hashem for help- It will take some work before it becomes habit.

Meanwhile, here's my renewed kabalos:

Until & including Motzei Shabbos B'Haaloscha

-Not including situations not foreseen when taking on the kabala, provided the kabala is amended to include that situation

A. Prevention

Not to use a computer -before seder

- Past 3:15 for the duration of 2nd seder
 - Past 10 *Motzei Shabbos with nap, until 11
 - Not in the bathroom (the was obvious, but I'm not leaving loopholes)
- The same goes for other electronics.

Breaking this clause invokes a \$5 Penalty or skipping Bein Hasdarim, within 72 hours of chol.

B. Temptation (Before anything on this list, I will

*Visit the GYE forum for 30 consecutive minutes

*Listen to a shiur for at least 30 minutes

*Hop on a bike and do one circuit of Prospect Park)

-Temptation constitutes going to a questionable site deliberately, or staying for more than 20 seconds

or watching a VIDEO not in the presence of family or friends

or opening a picture with the intent to gain pleasure from it

or m***

If I transgress this without doing something on the list, I undertake to do one of the following within 72 hours of Chol:

-Skip a Bein Hasdarim

-Do the Prospect Park circuit twice

-Speak to my Rebbe/Mashgiach for advice, including telling him what happened and why (explicitness not required.)

Also, I undertake to shower after m*** before davening or learning, if during the week.

More soon, IY"H! Thank you for listening.

Meir

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Re: New count

Posted by E-Tek - 29 May 2012 22:19

It bears repeating that I have little control over when I can post, because my computer is out and, my kabala limits use.

Thanks for understanding.

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Re: New count

Posted by obormottel - 30 May 2012 23:48

Meir, how are you TODAY?

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Re: New count

Posted by E-Tek - 01 Jun 2012 17:50

Yesterday?

Terrible.

Today?

Optimistic.

More details later.

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 10 Jun 2012 23:00

Hello everybody, and it is great to finally be back. I would like to share what has been happening over the times my computer was away, and some other thoughts.

In the past week and a half or so, I had about three fall 'periods'. I think the problem is motivation, not sure... Either way, I did some written work on Step 1/2, and I felt much better. This streak was going to be the one, I told myself. Boy, am I bigheaded.

So, my computer came back.... and the fellows at ASUS had wiped it.

No webchaver, no K9. It was almost too much. Luckily, the net at my Shabbos destination had a locked internet, and before I went to get the password, I managed to install webchaver.

I pat myself on the back, and surfed some quasi-legal trash. I turned off the computer for Shabbos feeling vaguely dissapointed in myself that I couldn't stop myself from doing that.

The place I stayed had some gamer's magazines. I looked for shiktzas in them, but did not act out. Same goes for the sci-fi he had on the shelf (which I no longer read for my own benefit). I found some tantalizing scenes, but again, stopped myself from acting out.

To be fair, the main reason I stopped myself was my kabalos.

So ends that.

Motzei Shabbos I realized my takanos had expired. I (blank blank blank, for all you computer illiterate folks) and pulled up the real bad stuff, until 4:30 or so AM, slept in, and did it again. I haven't done things like this in at least 6 months... After seder today (not the one I missed, the other one) I got Webchaver and K9 up, and here I am.

Oddly enough, I feel satisfied. Before GYE, I had no tools for this fight. Now, it took me three days in a downward spiral. There is proof that GYE has helped me make progress. But I am still in this, and I will IY"H take steps (pun intended) to make this mishap useful to my future.

I love you all, heilige yidden.

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 11 Jun 2012 00:04

Hashem gave me a chance to run my own life. I muffed it.

I had no interest in learning, because I felt I was no good at it. I couldn't keep a chavrusa because I couldn't hold myself to sedarim. I enjoyed and got high marks in secular studies, though, which gave me enough self-worth to fudge high school, but when I got to beis medrash, even that dissapeared. I wasted my day (part of the day at first, by 3rd year most to all of the day) playing video games, reading books (& sometimes filthy books, though I tried to avoid a chillul Hashem by using the self-checkout system. How considerate of me)... Later I got a computer (without my parents' knowledge, thought they found out eventually), and movies added themselves to my repetoire. The Rosh Yeshiva tried to get me to keep it home and out of the dormitory. I would listen for a month or three, then it would come back. (I owe my life to the Rosh Yeshiva for not throwing me out, books and computer notwithstanding.) The low point was when I discovered how to illegally download movies. I would watch two or three a day... And the filth on the net? It just happened gradually. I became apathetic to, well, everything, and I started indicating to my Rebbeim that I wanted to go out and work. (What else could I do?)

I could've ended up anywhere- a two-faced hypocrite who maybe could've started a family and gone out to work... More likely to commit suicide by the age of 40, or a divorcee if I couldn't take it, and creating yet another dysfunctional "frum" family. That was where I was headed, though I didn't know it, and I only discovered this now, after intense chesbon hanefesh and GYE, two and a half years later.

But Hashem didn't give up on me. I learned about other ways of living, breathing Yiddishkeit. (And I ignored it, too. But I filed it away for later use.) And a combination of factors led me to listen to the Rosh Yeshiva when he suggested I go to Eretz Yisrael. I told him he was crazy. He agreed, but insisted. I even made him agree to foot the bill if I came back early, before agreeing to go. But there, away from nearly all my distractions, I changed into someone who could conceivably live a life free from hypocrisy. But, no one (not even myself) has any explanation for this change, how it happened, except that I had no hope that it was possible, so Hashem showed me that it was.

My Rosh Yeshiva told me later, I expected to be there for one month, and he was hoping for three. I was there NINE months straight, came home for a two month summer, and went back for seven more. Not that it was easy, but once I saw it was possible, and Hashem gave me the strength, at least I was willing. The first set, in retrospect, was a walk in the park compared to the second.

So, here I am, Meir, hitting bottom, while already heading up. Nothing, apparently, is impossible with Totty. He was just waiting for me to notice.

I've already mentioned the things I used to do/ do on occasion. After E"Y, they no longer control me. Regardless, I don't want to call this a lust addiction (although, to be sure, it IS a lust addiction). R' Tatz says in *A Thinking Jewish Teenager's Guide to Life*, 3rd chapter, that the nature of the enjoyment coming from having relations (and acting out) is a feeling of freedom, which translates as an escape (as in Mitzacheik, the shores is Tzchok, a game, where the purpose of playing IS the playing itself). There are indications to this all over the guide. Put in this light, all of my problems- books (even kosher ones), videos, games - they are all manifestations of an issue I've had since 7th grade- a tendency to escape. As a kid, I would cut school. The only difference between that kid and the beis medrash bochur I was before E"Y was the sophistication of the escape. So I'd go to a library instead of riding the trains. It's all the same.

This is why, when my parents would express concern over my books, I'd take a six month break without breaking a sweat, and satisfy them and myself that I was okay. Meanwhile, I simply replaced it with something else. An addict would laugh at the idea- no movies, but you can read what you like and look at pictures. It's the same.

In Israel, over time, I gradually allowed myself nothing- and boy did it take alot out of me. I would, at times, run out of the beis medrash and go for a three mile walk just to satisfy that urge to get away. With every activity dropped there was another fight. The only way the Y"H put up with it is I told him it was temporary, just during the zman. Since then, there has been more of a finality in that decision- I have nearly made up my mind to drop them forever. Haven't even been in a library since I got back- though I may pick up a White Book there.

Throughout this period, there were times I was working on not acting out, and times not. I made many, many plans, and I had varying success. I think I got two months at one point. And there were periods of severe depression... (I remember when my iPod stopped functioning. At the time, I was using it only for music, just like now. I was laid out on my bed for two days, crying. My iPod can now be classified yeshivish- it works up to a certain amount without malfunctioning.)

I never really got over that feeling, that desire during any period of productivity, to drop it and go do something escape-ish. But the feeling was manageable when the escape was sub-par, such as a month in E"Y when I only allowed myself to learn (whatever sefer), and at night I had this tremendous book on the history of the state of Israel. It was so dry and boring that it worked as a pastime without dragging me out of the beis medrash.

The only thing I have no control over still is lust. Does this tell me, in reality I have no control over anything, except Hashem has given over control to me in other matters and not in lust?

No. It tells me, Lo Yiyeh Lecha Elohim Acheirim!!! I HAVE NO POWER, CONTROL, ABILITY, NOTHING!! HASHEM RETAINS ALL CONTROL. What do I have? Bechira. (More information, The Six Constant Mitzvos, Artscroll. And no, I am not affiliated.) By something mundane, my choice takes place on the spot. By something powerful (and Hashem gave me a gift in that books and games are no longer in this category), my decision is to stay away. And my decision is to keep in constant communication with Hashem.

I consider it a lesson- yes, I can. After all, I did. But my part is to choose, and want, and Hashem does the rest. I couldn't even imagine where I am TODAY two and a half years ago, much less do it. My "normal" life is entirely a gift from Hashem. (He even broke my netbook Erev Rosh Hashona before the winter zman I left for Israel. I'm not sure I could've made the decision to leave it behind.)

Thank you for listening (or not. As you like).

Hatzlocha!

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 12 Jun 2012 00:29

Wow! Hashem, I want to thank you so much for allowing me to be clean today!

Please help me continue to be clean.

I know I can't do it without you.

Day 1.

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Re: New New count

Posted by obormottel - 12 Jun 2012 00:50

Hatzlocho rabbo!

Good story, reminds of a guy I once knew...

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 12 Jun 2012 19:17

So, here's what's been on my mind lately...

[Gevura wrote on 12 Jun 2012 15:11:](#)

(I wish doing it was as easy as writing it)

I've been thinking about my all-time favorite sefer, *The Six Constant Mitzvos*, based on shiurim from Rav Yitzchak Berkowitz, which (after the sefer changed my life) I was zoche to hear from him in person as well.

We all have knowledge of what's right & wrong, to some degree. But not all of us can apply that knowledge so that we act on it. All of us here used to/still were unable to apply in in Inyonei Kedusha. What gives? Do we know it or don't we?

The fact is, intellectual knowledge is worthless.

More on this later, I'm tripping my prevention clause of my kabala (see above). I'll be back later,

bli neder, to finish the thought. Comments welcome.

B'Ahava,

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by alexeliezer - 12 Jun 2012 19:24

Agree. It's not what we know. It's what we do.

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Re: New New count

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 12 Jun 2012 19:44

[E-Tek wrote on 12 Jun 2012 19:17:](#)

We all have knowledge of what's right & wrong, to some degree. But not all of us can apply that knowledge so that we act on it. All of us here used to/still were unable to apply in in Inyonei Kedusha. What gives? Do we know it or don't we?

The fact is, intellectual knowledge is worthless.

As the GYE handbook says:

"Knowledge" we have already. Instead, we need an inner change. As we fix our spiritual condition and learn how to do Hashem's work rather than our own, Hashem gives us a reprieve from our insanity, one day at a time.

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 12 Jun 2012 23:51

So, I wanted to use a different loshon to say the same thing.

The Y"H doesn't care about our intellectual knowledge because he bypasses it, plugging directly into our emotions.

The solution, then, is to apply emotion to our fight.

That's where the battle is, that's where our efforts need to be.

On the ground, when I am tempted, the quickest way to do this is to daven to Hashem. A person is incapable of speaking to the wall- intellectually. But, if he is speaking, that implies emotional knowledge of Hashem (AleI Shur, Rav Shlomo Wolbe ZTZ"L), but MORE- it gets the emotions involved!! All of a sudden, we are back in the game because we emotionally DON'T WANT this. Except before our emotions weren't saying so, and now they are.

As well, long term, we need to acquire emotional knowledge of all the right things, so that it will change us into different people. This is the subject of the entire sefer, *The Six Constant Mitzvos*. (And here you thought it was about the mitzvos.) (I must reiterate, I am a talmid of Rav Berkowitz, who is not the author but the Torah in there is his. Otherwise, I am completely unaffiliated. Neither I nor my relatives work for Artsroll. I just like the sefer.)

More on the difference between the two kinds of knowledge IY"H tomorrow.

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 13 Jun 2012 23:18

Hello everybody, and it's another glorious clean day!

It's funny, I was feeling kind of down on the way home from Yeshiva today... and I browsed GYE and now I'm all cheerful!

A vort on yesterday's subject: ????? ??? ??? ?? ?????? ??? ?? ??? ?? ?????.

There's a shita that he was the old king with new decrees.

Asks the Kletzker Mashgiach R' Yaakov Leib, how can you say Chodosh doesn't mean new? The Torah doesn't use poetic license...

And he answers, the actions of Pharaoh proved he DIDN'T know Yosef. A man who knows that Yosef singlehandedly saved Mitzrayim from famine, and when his family came they set up in a corner and didn't bother anybody, such a man is capable of enslaving them? He didn't really know.

So, knowledge. Intellectual knowledge is not a mechayev, even if there is NO DOUBT in the knowledge. An example is a cigarette carton, that says SMOKING KILLS, and it doesn't stop a smoker from smoking it. It doesn't even stop many people from STARTING to smoke. Yet when they see a plastic lung, and watch it fill with soot, it can be very effective. What's the difference?

Says Rav Berkowitz, knowledge, true knowledge, forces action and creates emotions. His rebbe would say, you never see someone stand in front of a car and say, "Yeah, I know it's gonna hit me, but I don't feel like dealing with it now." It doesn't matter how much sleep he had the night before, how depressed he's feeling, etc. He gets out of the street.

GYE calls this knowledge "hitting bottom". When I really, truly understand that this is KILLING me, I can use this knowledge to force action. But it only happens with repetition. I can force myself to have emotional knowledge in many ways. By articulating how wrong this is to someone else, and what it does to me, did to me, and would do to me, I get it in deeper, and deeper, and deeper. I start to believe it. If I force myself to pay every time I fail, my emotions begin to internalize that there are consequences, and I regain emotional control of a sort. Now, the TRUE consequences are written in seforim- but that doesn't help me since it's too abstract and not in my face, unlike a knas. Therefore, if I've truly hit bottom I will use WHATEVER, even artificial means, to get free.

Does this make sense to anyone?

B'Ahava,

Meir

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