

Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 06 Oct 2009 16:41

I think I need a thread where I can post about myself and organize my thoughts. I hope that the act of revealing my feelings can help me control them. I didn't think "I'm new" was a very good title, so here is the new one.

This morning I thought about my new entry on to this forum. How would it help me? I could simply lie my way out of my guilt, couldn't I?

I concluded that if I posted honestly, and got into the habit of doing so, I wouldn't lie. My entire purpose in joining this forum was to have a place where I could be honest, and finally reveal the bits of my life that I couldn't tell anyone.

Even as I write this, even the anticipation of finally telling the truth to real people, takes weight off my shoulders.

My first thread detailed how I joined the forum, and how I felt. This is my real physical story.

I was a very curious child. I'm still curious. I can't stand not knowing. When I hit 13, I became curious about biology. I knew that there were things I shouldn't know, but the concept of "shouldn't know" is even now a difficult one for me. If something was hidden I had to find it. I looked up what I wanted to know in dictionaries, textbooks, medical websites. Then, when my curiosity was satisfied, something else took over, posing as curiosity. None of these things had photos, just descriptions. Wouldn't I understand what I was looking for better if I had photos, or videos? I knew I shouldn't, that it was wrong, but... how could it be wrong?

Well, I understood it, then, intellectually. Naturally I wanted to understand it physically. Curiosity, right? It wasn't.

There were no longer any revelations, just sin; I had lost control. I began my fight a few months later, and accumulated a legacy of failed battles for 4 years.

I am now 17. I know I have to beat it now, or it will only get worse. I know it's time to make a real commitment to winning, and I know that I can't push it off.

My y"n tells me that I'm young, and that I can afford a few more years of foolishness. I tell him that I can't. If everyone's jumping off buildings, should I follow them? No. They can walk with broken legs their whole lives. I have to bandage what wounds I have and heal.

That's my story.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 28 Dec 2009 03:17

Thank you all for your kind words of support and especially Momo, since there's nothing like a rainbow to brighten up the day.

To R' Kollel Guy; the conversations with my y"n are not exactly voluntary... It's more of like some shady man in a ratty trenchcoat walking out of the blue into my path and saying "Psst! Hey you, kid! Would you like some endorphinal satisfaction?" and then proceeding to block the path out. I've got to smooth talk my way past him.

As to the plan of action: yes, I have one that involves various things like walking out of the room and engaging myself in reality for a change. Generally speaking I tidy up. A clean room leads to a clean mind. (Not that keeping my room or my mind clean is an easy task. In fact, I probably have more success in keeping my mind tidy than my room...).

Also, to silentbattle, I do have a plan of healthy (or relatively healthy; many are done while sitting in a chair) activities to engage myself in reality rather than fantasy. Also, I like reading books (provided they don't have any objectionable parts) since regular fantasy is actually a lot more appealing to me than the other kind.

Yet still, I don't have an answer to my question, probably since I didn't express myself lucidly. I will try to phrase it a bit more clearly now. By means of explanation: I am blessed, thank G-d, with youth and good health, which leads me to sometimes have no need for outside stimuli to become entrenched in bad thoughts. I have, in days of rather awful insanity, found, I kid you not, trees and tables to be arousing. If there are any more vanilla objects to look at (except perhaps a brick wall), I don't know what they are, and closing my eyes is probably a worse option. These days, by my estimate, I have a 50%-70% chance of falling. I literally cannot control myself. Such days do not happen often, but when they do, is it acceptable to take upon myself for a given span (in this case, until Pesach) to allow myself to fall physically when extremely tempted instead of risking falling visually as well? I cannot trust myself in such situations, and I do not want to fall into viewing p^{***}, which will almost definitely lengthen the fall cycle. I will continue in this fashion until Pesach, or perhaps 50 days (a point at which I have determined by my previous clean streaks that it is actually difficult for me to resume viewing p^{***} (though I ended up doing it anyway)) at which point I will try to avoid falling in all situations. The point of this endeavour is to "divide and conquer" the addiction by doing away the part with which I'm not as tied first, thereby removing the roadblocks to removing the second part. Is this acceptable, or must I fight for all or nothing??

Well, that was quite lengthy... I hope someone has the patience to read it all...

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 28 Dec 2009 05:01

I'm still a novice at this, but I can share my thoughts. Our goal is not short-term, our goal in this fight is ALWAYS long term. How can we become better people and serve hashem in the best way possible?

To that end, I think it's GREAT that you've planned out your alternatives in your mind. I recommend that you rehearse those plans, so that when you're tempted, you switch onto the alternate track immediately.

So, I think that your battle plan is a good one - focus on one thing at a time, and set priorities. However, I think that you can try for both. You may find yourself astonished at your capacity for success!

I would say that although your #1 goal at this point is to get out of the habit of looking at porn, you should also try to stop being mz"l.

And yes, some days are extremely difficult. And trying to push those thoughts out of your head can be almost impossible. So what about letting them slide out, and focusing on something different? instead of pushing the thoughts away, let them stay where you are, while you ghost

Go for a jog, play a musical instrument, get involved in things that will take you somewhere else for a little while - a break from your fantasies.

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by silentbattle - 28 Dec 2009 05:02

out of the room, on to better things.

GNAG!!

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by lamed vavnik - 28 Dec 2009 06:17

good luck rebbe were all in this together!!!! :D :D

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by Kollel Guy - 28 Dec 2009 11:47

[NotAlone wrote on 28 Dec 2009 03:17:](#)

I literally cannot control myself.

When I think back to the days when I was your age, I was the same exact way. Once it hit there was no turning away. I could just hope it wouldn't hit.

In hindsight however, when I can barely remember a time when I was hit, and instead of falling as usual, I used all my strength and turned away.... It saddens me.

This might surprise you, but I believe I did have a considerable degree of control. I just didn't know any strategies, because your not allowed to discuss this with anybody, or your a menuval who has messed up problems. So basically you go around thinking that you are the only jew in the world who does this terrible aveirah, and by the time you learn it's normal, and there's a normal way to deal with it - your already stuck.

If I could talk to the myself of then, I would just tell him - Whatever you think is the absolute limit you can withstand, just refrain one more time than that. Even if you end up falling, make it your business to get into the routine of putting it off for a day. At least you didn't go down without a fight.

And I agree with your logic of falling without viewing p**n. You have to see p**n as cocaine. A tiny bit could get you hooked for life.

You see for me I did the opposite. I said "I'll view it but not mess up, because chazal say the reason you shouldn't think about it - is so you shouldn't come to keri." I don't know why it didn't occur to me that seeing it alone is a d'oraisha, but in any case, gradually I grew out of my y"n for mb, namely when I got married, yet my "solution" still remained strong.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by the.guard - 28 Dec 2009 13:00

The point of this endeavour is to "divide and conquer" the addiction by doing away the part with which I'm not as tied first, thereby removing the roadblocks to removing the second part. Is this acceptable, or must I fight for all or nothing??

These very questions are discussed and answered beautifully in the translations we did on the book "[The First Day of the Rest of My Life](#)". Right click and "SAVE AS" to download it...

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 29 Dec 2009 00:12

I think that answers my question, R' Guard. Thank you very much. I will continue as planned.

Thank you for your words of advice, silentbattle, I hope that technique will serve me well. By the way, what does GNAG stand for?

Kollel Guy, thank you for the information and suggestion. My rather complex criteria for what constitutes "extenuating circumstances" do in fact include putting it off for a day. Hopefully such extenuating circumstances shall not occur.

Thank you all!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 29 Dec 2009 00:26

Go, NotAlone, Go!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by Kollel Guy - 29 Dec 2009 05:19

[NotAlone wrote on 29 Dec 2009 00:12:](#)

Kollel Guy, thank you for the information and suggestion. My rather complex criteria for what constitutes "extenuating circumstances" do in fact include putting it off for a day. Hopefully such

extenuating circumstances shall not occur.

I'm not sure I got you here.

I think your saying that when it hits, putting it off for a day is not even an option. Correct?

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 30 Dec 2009 05:37

Erm, not exactly.

My "extenuating circumstances" are not based on spur-of-the-moment lust. They are based on several factors which point to the fact that the battle at hand will end unacceptably badly. Meaning: I can say with high certainty that I will be able to push off a major bout of lust for a day. Therefore, one of the factors before I can allow myself to fall is to push it off for a day. Pushing it off for one day, and then another day, etc. is not an option when the other biological factors are met, since, in my experience, I cannot continue past 1 or perhaps 2 days. I do not wish to push it to the point where I'll implode from exhaustion and fall to p***, but neither do I wish to go down without a fight. One of the factors in "the battle I may lose horribly" is that it is the second day of fighting the same strong lust. I cannot afford to throw everything into that battle, so the idea is to minimize my losses, so to speak.

In short, yes, I can hold out a day, hopefully. If I am still extremely bothered the second day, and some other factors are met, I will allow myself to succumb in order to save myself from probable p***. I won't try the "one day today, one day tomorrow" trick, as it will probably end badly.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by Kollel Guy - 30 Dec 2009 07:27

If your really in the situation which you describe, then the only option for you is to daven your heart out. It follows therefore that therein lies your responsibility.

R' Shimshon Pincus gives a beautiful mashal (on the subject of trials we feel are too strong for

us).

One time a doctor was given the task of managing an entire wing of a hospital. He was to assess each situation, and see to it that each patient gets proper attention.

The instructions given to him were as follows: "Usually there will be enough time for you to be able to juggle all the patients yourself. Occasionally though, we have more than expected. You will have to make that judgement though. In the event that there are too many for you to handle - push this red button, and we will send you more doctors to assist you".

So he starts his job and all is going very well, until one day the patient number starts increasing. He starts working harder, and more quickly, until he is literally running through the corridors of the hospital just trying to get to the next patient in time. This keeps up for a while, but as time went on, the work ultimately got too much for him, and he wasn't making it to the patients quickly enough.

Eventually, a few of them didn't make it, and the families sued the hospital, who naturally then went and brought *him* to court.

In court the judge asked him to explain his negligence. To which he replied frustrated "In the beginning, when there were a normal amount of patients - I did get to everyone in time! It was only after the number flew so high, that it was literally impossible for one doctor - no matter how quick, efficient or responsible he might be - to take care of all of them, that I started losing them! How can you call me negligent? I was doing my absolute best!! You should have seen how fast I was running from room to room! I didn't even give myself time to breath! I never exerted so much effort in my entire life!!"

The judge then asked him the obvious question "If you saw it was too difficult for you, why didn't you push the red button?"

My dear NotAlone, why don't you push the red button?

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by habib613 - 30 Dec 2009 07:38

KG, that's a powerful mashal

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by Kollel Guy - 30 Dec 2009 07:44

For a Jew in the world of 2009, learning R' Shimshon is like water for someone dehydrating.

Dehydration distorts your perception, and you don't realize how thirsty you really were until you have that first drink of water.

He really opens up your heart and mind.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 30 Dec 2009 13:36

Hi Notalone!

It's great to see you here - Hashem is smiling at you, knowing that you're working on growing!

First of all, congratulations on pushing things off for a day! That's certainly a victory! Do you feel the victory when it happens? Many people have trouble feeling that victory, and I think it's worth focusing on, and that good feeling can give us the strength to do more.

Also, it may help you to realize that it's not "one day today, one day tomorrow." It's one day today, one day...*today*! The next day is a new day, and it's just the yetzer hora telling you that since you held yourself back yesterday, this next day is more difficult!

And finally, a basically practical idea - if you know that the next day is going to be extremely difficult, is it possible to plan your next day so you won't have the opportunity, or as much opportunity, to fall? And once you've set it up that way beforehand, it'll be that much easier to sail through your day...

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