

1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 22 Oct 2009 05:26

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howdy gentlemen.

I've been lurking around this site for about a month now (thank you anonymous yid for emailing me!) and i figure its finally time i post a bit about my experiences.

i just made it to level 3 in the 90 day journey. i'm 14 days clean! a record for the past 12 months, yishtabach shemo ;D ;D ;D

my main problems seem to be the r"l standard P and M issues. i'm in my lower 20s, single, in college.

steps i've taken that are working great so far:

1. working through the 2 handbooks
2. stepping out of the room and praying for 10 seconds if inappropriate content appears on my screen, no matter how it got there.
3. daily emails
4. daily 5 minute seder in Esah Einai, a new sefer on shmiras enayim
5. prozac (been on for a year)
6. weekly appointment with therapist, discussing this among other issues
7. keeping the door open when web surfing in room by myself
8. internet filter
9. praying for help with these issues, for myself and klal yisroel
10. helping a friend work out his issues in these areas

11. reading through these forums and seeing holy jews in much worse situations break free!  
what a geshmak to see how much hope there is!

12. keeping track on the 90 day program

13. trying to watch my eyes outside in general

ok. holy cow. thats a long list. this is really my number one priority right now. and its working!!!

here's where i can use some advice:

historically, i'd fall 1-2 times a week. getting to a week clean is a challenge. when i do get there once in a while, i tend to fall on that very day. sometimes i'll tell myself "wow! you've made it a whole week! and you're feeling totally in control!" and shortly after, i'll fall.

last Tishrei, i went a whole month clean (first time in over 5 years!!!!!!!!!!) and fell like on day 31.

i've come up with 2 possible explanations for this pattern of falling after milestones:

1. i feel like i'm in control, so i let down my guard, allowing the yetzer to strike.
2. i feel like i've accomplished something, so i 'reward' myself with pleasure

so how do i combat this pattern?

i've made it 2 weeks now pretty bump-free, yishtabach shemo. probably because of the constant chizuk i'm getting throughout the day (see list above).

here's my fear:

i'll hit 30 days, and fall back. c'v. or maybe even 90, and fall back.

how do i break this pattern? anyone with similar experience?

thank you so much. i love all of you. and i pray that you'll all break free.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 29 Dec 2009 23:53

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[imtrying25 wrote on 29 Dec 2009 23:12:](#)

Hows my very loving brother b'ahava doing?? We miss you bro.

I miss me too.

I'm not in control of my life right now. (Don't give me that 'let go let god' stuff right now. it hasnt been helping lately.)

I'm depressed.

Acting out (its about as bad as its ever been) is a symptom right now.

I wish I felt better. I pray that God would just make me feel better.

But nothings helping.

I'm just sulking around feeling bad for myself. When was the last time I did anything useful with my life? I can't remember.

My bed time keeps getting pushed back later and later.

7:30am last night. AM. It was light outside.

I'm full of so much discontent with myself. I keep looking for an easy out, and there is none.

Music? no.

movies? no.

acting out? no.

wasting hours and hours in front of the internet? no.

I'm coming off the best 2 months of my life.

And this is the lowest I've ever felt.

I'm sorry.

You guys are trying to help.

But its not working. its not your fault. dont feel bad for me. enjoy your lives!

These feelings have been here for a few weeks, but I always managed to feel better the next day, convince myself that I'd snapped out of it, that I was back.

I'm losing hope now.

I can't figure this out.

I've tried everything and nothings helping.

I'm sorry. You guys shouldn't have to deal with this. I don't deserve you.

and dov, i'm sorry dude. but i cant focus on avodat hashem right now.

i need to get my head straight right now.

i dont think i've ever placed anything above avodat hashem (b'shita) in my life before.

thats how f\*\*\*ed up i' am right now.

thanks for asking about me. i've been totally numb to the world since shabbat.

but i'm crying my eyes out right now.

at least i can feel SOMETHING.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by Dov - 30 Dec 2009 01:21

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[b'ahava wrote on 29 Dec 2009 23:53:](#)

[imtrying25 wrote on 29 Dec 2009 23:12:](#)

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Hi.

What RATM wrote is so precious.

I have felt horrible before, and have placed many things before avodas Hashem many times,

even since getting sober.

Sometimes I need to just do what's best for me. Trouble is, when I'm ill, I can't see what could possibly be good for *me*!

Sometimes it's nice just to see that my emotional state is so terribly affected by acting out. At least it's not over something relatively meaningless like losing a game, falling on my face, or having bad diarrhea. It's nice to know my sick heart is at least has *something* like the right priorities...

There ain't no easy way out, really. Sorry. I love you, and so do many others, but there is still no way for anyone to do it for me. No easy way out for me. I am an addict. Something's gotta give.

It doesn't seem to work at all when I ask Hashem to "take it away so that I will not have to give it up!".

It feels like I need to let go of part of **myself** to get free. Sometimes it's the expectation of happiness today. Sometimes it's something else.

I have faith that if I work a real program I will get better and stay sober today with Hashem's help. And I do it with hopes that I'll do good for something and someone, someday. I have faith that that day will come.

Sometimes we just have to hurt. You are not alone in that, as long as you share it. Please keep sharing it.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by the.guard - 30 Dec 2009 13:37

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B'ahava, not much to add to these beautiful replies...

Have you considered being evaluated by a psychiatrist for depression medication? Millions of people around the world take this kind of thing. 1 out of 5 people probably suffer from depression, and getting sober in such a state is almost impossible. The meds can take off the edge of the bottomless "void" you feel when not getting your "fix". It can be a life-saver, while now - in depression - you are like "treading water" and are bound to get tired after a while. Side effects are really negligible today. I would look into that (if I am reading into your post what I think I am). Ask about SSRI medication.

Also, have you considered therapy? We need professional help sometimes. We can't do this alone.

And of-course, why not join a live SA group? If you do that, you might not need the meds **or** the therapist!

B'ahava Rabba,

Guard

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by bahava - 31 Dec 2009 05:55

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Hi guys.

Thanks for checking in.

I've been feeling a lot better for the past day and a half, thank God.

I slept over at a friend's house; it was nice to just get away, to get into a new environment.

And my sleep pattern is getting better. And I'm praying better.



There was no click (yet) like Rage described. And I'm cautious to say "I'm back" considering the roller coaster I've been on for the past 10 days.

Today was a good day. And that's good.

I'm just taking it one day at a time for now, trying to climb out of this depression.

Maybe in a couple of more days I can start to think about teshuva.

And Rage, you were right. Doing something proactive is helping. I added a couple of gray-area sites to my blacklist until I'm more stable.

Reb Guard, as far as the professional help goes, I have weekly appointments with a therapist, and I've been on Prozac for a year and a half.

Actually, I had been feeling so great over the past couple of months that I was planning on weening off the medication starting in January. But given what I've been going through lately, that's not a good idea.

Thanks for all of your help;, GYE.

This really would have been so much harder without all the support.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by bahava - 31 Dec 2009 06:01

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Also,

I saw a great clip from Craig Ferguson, a late night talk-show guy, talking about how he got his

life back from alcoholism. I don't know much about alcoholism, but you guys were right. The parallels are there.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by Kollel Guy - 31 Dec 2009 07:39

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Hey Bahava, I think you have to change the thread title to "TWO steps forward, one step back"

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by Dov - 31 Dec 2009 23:00

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[b'ahava wrote on 31 Dec 2009 05:55:](#)

Maybe in a couple of more days I can start to think about teshuva.

At the risk of being a real pain, I feel the need to say this sort of again:

Consider setting aside what you refer to as teshuva for about 3-6 months - Elul, perhaps, and spend all the time till then purely and only doing the azivas hacheit part of that mitzvah.

People don't realize how much work is needed till we are back on our feet for real. So many pick up where they left off in trying to be mesaken things as soon as they get the mirage of safety: "I haven't done xyz in a *week*".

This stuff takes longer than that to sink in. Besides the possibility that our entire relationship with Hashem needs an overhaul before going to teshuva w/o it *itself* triggerring us back into using lust again. I have seen that happen a bazillion times. (a bazillion is a lot)

Take it easy. It's OK right now, with Tatty. He loves you *right now*.

Sorry for being preachy, maybe, but I'm tired and hungry.

Gotta go.

Hatzlocha!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by imtrying25 - 31 Dec 2009 23:48

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We love preachy Dov!!!

b'ahava, happy to hear your feeling better. Good move for adding those "grey sites". It wont hurt you, i promise. Keep on rolling bro. And with love.!!!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 01 Jan 2010 05:17

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Thanks for the encouragement everyone.

Dov, I'll think about your advice. I've had mixed experiences with some of the stuff you wrote about. I'll write about that later, bl'n.

Here's something I need to talk about right now.

My mother's father passed away today.

He lived in a different country, and I never met or even spoke to him.

I don't really feel sad (at least not yet) about this.

Nor, as far as I know, do I have any halakhic obligations here.

Here's the problem:

I'm just starting to climb out of depression.

I'm trying to keep a light mood. And I'm listening to a lot of upbeat music (with headphones).

So yeah, I feel a little guilty. My mom is going through a tough time right now. And I try to be there for her.

But I can't let myself sink back.

Am I being totally selfish?

This is really quite a complicated and delicate situation, so please give me some advice.

Love,

B'ahava

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by silentbattle - 01 Jan 2010 05:51

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First of all, just had to say that no matter what, we're here for you - and you'll ALWAYS deserve us.

I think that depending on your relationship with your mother, you can balance being there for her with doing what you need to do. But that doesn't mean that you can't listen to your music.

And I'd give you one major criterion - don't do anything that you think will pull you down, or make it harder for you to stay on top. because if you're falling, you definitely can't hold anyone up. So do things in a way that works for you.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by bahava - 03 Jan 2010 01:17

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Howdy.

Just checking in.

Not feeling crappy anymore. That's good.

But not living in simcha yet either. Going out tonight to relax a bit.

It's funny, my mother and grandmother keep approaching me, asking why I look so down.

And they're the ones sitting shiv'a.

Maybe I should fake it for their sake.

Hope to be fully back soon.

Thanks again everyone.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 02:29

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Stay with us, bro!

I could be wrong, but I don't think that "faking misery" is what you need right now. You can certainly spend some time showing empathy, and talking to them, or even helping out to make things easier for them.

But right now, get living!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by bahava - 03 Jan 2010 03:41

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[silentbattle wrote on 03 Jan 2010 02:29:](#)

Stay with us, bro!

I could be wrong, but I don't think that "faking misery" is what you need right now. You can certainly spend some time showing empathy, and talking to them, or even helping out to make things easier for them.

But right now, get living!

I meant faking being happier, to help them.

They want me to be happy.

Anyway, I kind of feel like this right now. Corny, I know.

It's like forgetting the words to your favorite song

You can't believe it

You were always singing along

It was so easy and the words so sweet

You can't remember

You try to feel the beat

It goes like this:

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 03:50

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Ah, my bad.

I think you need to be yourself, and work towards being happier - but you can smile a bit more, i find that anyway, that sometimes helps me feel better.

In what way do you feel like that song?

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