

Tired.....

Posted by NathanfromNY - 03 Aug 2020 04:16

Let me start off with the irony of this post....I'm actually having a good day. Really not having the temptations that usually follow a good shabbos and all of the downtime of the weekend. I've been chilling out, listening to music, watching a few shiurim on line,(the light ones that are more about inspiration and not the halachig concepts or chumash /gemorah that takes a lot of mental energy to follow) Tisha B'av is behind me and over all I think it was a productive one. However, mentally I am tired. A lot of time and effort has gone into my spirituality as of late. We have had the whole isolation carona period where our lives were turned around. I have had most of July aggressively working on guarding my eyes and my thoughts. (soul searching looking at the roots of why i do what I do and what my triggers are) We had the 3 weeks and all the emotion dedicated to that.

Yet now, as I relax a bit I'm looking ahead and realize Rosh Chodesh Elul is just around the corner now I let out a little sigh. I know this is the Yetzer Horah talking. In the past there is a part of me that enjoys this time of the year due to the spiritual high I get. I also know that this year I am optimistic that it will be good as well. It's just the fact that I need to recharge. Which means it is time to switch energy from being on the offensive mode to the defensive protection. Shimiras Enayim is a full time job, keeping oneself from being impure is a constant battle. Even now when the urge is minimal I know that this is the crucial time to be careful of what I see, what I think and ultimately what choices I make

So one last thing...why am I sharing this.....I don't know. I think that it is because I don't want to be alone. This lack of energy/motivation is scary because I know logically it will pass, but emotionally I don't want to be cut off from the enthusiasm of change. I have lived too much of my life passive and don't want to go back.

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Re: Tired.....

Posted by Dave M - 03 Aug 2020 13:10

[NathanfromNY wrote on 03 Aug 2020 04:16:](#)

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Hi Nathan - I very much relate to what you are going through. I was thinking this morning that perhaps the reason we get "tired" and exhausted after a while of fighting the Y'H is because one can go a whole day of guarding his eyes, but not feel special. On a personal note, every time I look away, I dont feel that euphoria of victory. I know that my life is better and more rich because of it. But at the same time, it can get mentally draining. I agree that Covid-19 plays a big role here. I have been more isolated and have felt the loneliness factor as well, which can drag one down. Does anyone want to share what strategies they use to keep the momentum going and to really feel and appreciate each victory everyday?

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Re: Tired.....

Posted by Grant400 - 03 Aug 2020 13:34

Does anyone want to share what strategies they use to keep the momentum going and to really feel and appreciate each victory everyday?

We all know the feeling of waking up in the morning after a day of misbehaving or not accomplishing the way we wanted or hoped for. It's that horrible mixture of guilt, self loathing

and a desire for more. After a clean day when you wake up, think to yourself how good you feel in contrast to how you felt in the past after being unsuccessful. That feeling of freedom and normalcy, of just plain not feeling horrible can be a small taste of the victory you search for. Sometimes the feeling doesn't just happen by itself, we must search for it by looking at how we would've felt had we behaved differently.

Let's use a neutral example. Every taa'nis when I wake up I think to myself " I really don't appreciate my daily coffee enough- what I would give for a sip..." then when the next morning dawns I wake up and without thinking mechanically prepare a cupa' joe and drink it, yesterday's mega appreciation all but forgotten about. But if I would think one day, about how much I wanted and would've enjoyed this coffee on tisha b'av suddenly I would have a higher level of appreciation for my simple steaming mug of coffee.

So to sum it up: Sometimes the appreciation only comes when we remember how it felt when it wasn't like this. By remembering the negative we can make the mundane actively feel positive.

Grant

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Re: Tired.....

Posted by Dave M - 03 Aug 2020 13:41

[Grant400 wrote on 03 Aug 2020 13:34:](#)

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Grant

Grant - As always i appreciate your wisdom. The horrible feeling, as well as a the "bigger picture" of knowing that our lives are much better and happier is the biggest motivating factor in my staying clean. But at the same time, the day to day struggle can get exhausting. Even on a smaller scale, I feel that the fight would be 'sweeter' if every time I'm driving down the street and noticed an attractive lady jogging, etc. and I so badly want to look, but I turn a way, I would get that sense of victory, the fight would be more rewarding.

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Re: Tired.....

Posted by Grant400 - 03 Aug 2020 14:09

Exactly. I don't mean like you wrote "knowing that our lives are better and happier ", but rather like you wrote "the horrible feeling". What I'm saying is that there can be an immediate sense of victory every time. Each time you don't make a "follow up" appointment with the female jogger the sense of victory can be how you avoided the negative feelings you would've had, had you indulged. That thought is much simpler than a feeling of victory on account of yiras shamayim. Unless this is also unrealistic....?

P.S. Thank you for your kind words.

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Re: Tired.....

Posted by Captain - 03 Aug 2020 19:07

To me there's no doubt there can be a real excitement every time you win a battle. The only thing is that this perspective does not come naturally, and it's usually not taught. It must be developed. The best way by far to develop it and taste this excitement every time you win is to read the book *The Battle of the Generation* <https://guardyoureyes.com/ebooks/item/the-battle-of-the-generation>. The author's main point is that you CAN develop this perspective and enter a charged state that makes it so much easier to win and makes your life so much more enjoyable.

I'll share a clip from the book on this topic (from Chapter 25). But seriously, download the book and read it, a little every day.

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Remember, if the yetzer hara feels he must stop you from becoming excited, it must be a major weapon for defeating him. Thus, it is proper service of Hashem not to fall for his tricks. You must realize what you have just achieved so you will gain enthusiasm and feel good about your decision.

Conversely, minimizing or disregarding the greatness of these victories makes you lose your excitement for accomplishment. It causes you to feel flat. It might even make you feel miserable for missing out on what you wanted. That's why the yetzer hara devotes so much effort to stop you from feeling good about your successes.

Often, we don't realize that we are racking up priceless accomplishments at an astronomical rate. We focus on what we messed up rather than on what we got right. We even fault ourselves for our impulses, acting as if we created them. To change your perspective, do the following exercise for three weeks:

Take an index card or small piece of paper and keep it in your pocket. Tally on one line for each time you make any bit of internal push against your desires. This includes clearing your thoughts, not looking at what you shouldn't, or doing any action to beat your desires. Add a

point for each time you push, even if it is in the same situation and even if you ended up giving in. For example, if you were challenged and wanted to look at or think about something and had to strengthen yourself three times within ten seconds not to give in, add three points. (For each fifth point, draw a horizontal line across the four vertical lines to make it easier to keep track of how many points you have.) At the end of the week, see how many points you earned. Then, start again on the next line. (It's easy and it works wonders! Do it!)

Recording a point for each bit of effort will help you feel that your initial impulses are not your fault (as we will discuss in Chapter 43). You will realize that these desires come from the yetzer hara and that your job is to deal with them properly. You will stop looking down on yourself for having these thoughts pop up, no matter how bad they are. Instead, you will realize the incredible opportunity they provide, and you will focus on gaining by controlling yourself.

This exercise will also help you focus on accomplishing instead of focusing on your imperfections. You will realize that the goal of life is not to be born perfect and stay that way. A piece of wood is perfect. It never sins and has no bad character traits, but that doesn't make it significant. Of course, you must be careful not to sin, but you cannot forget that the point of life is to accomplish and to grow as a person. Rather than focusing on not becoming damaged and viewing your battles against the yetzer hara as nuisances — what a depressing way to live! — you will feel enthusiastic about your battles.

Most important, this exercise forces you to notice how much you are accomplishing every day. Every small burst of effort is a major accomplishment. Each time we push against our desires is a profound mitzvah in itself. Our gains are impressive and abundant! This exercise will keep us focused on the major accomplishments we are racking up left and right. We will feel good about ourselves and be energized over our opportunity to accomplish.

“But is it true that every small effort is a separate accomplishment?” you might wonder. “And if I end up giving in, does it really matter how many times I tried to stop myself?”

In his introduction to Sefer Shemiras Halashon, the Chofetz Chaim relates that the Vilna Gaon would quote a Midrash that says, “For every second a person holds himself back from forbidden speech, he merits a pleasure that no creature or angel can fathom.” The Chofetz Chaim notes that the Midrash does not say every month, week, day, or even minute. It says every second!

That is the reward granted for withholding from doing any aveirah when challenged. Each instant is a separate mitzvah! Every second we control ourselves is so precious — even if we give in to the same desire moments later — because that second of effort is a victory in itself! It's an act of listening to Hashem. Now imagine what we will accomplish once we gain control over ourselves. We will rack up accomplishments at an astounding rate!

Now, we can appreciate the incredible gift that life is. We have the most amazing opportunity ever! We are so fortunate.

Celebrate every victory over the yetzer hara. Pump your fist over and over in excitement, and tell yourself, “I just accomplished an act of greatness that I will take pride in forever! I just grew as a person — I feel stronger already! I acted like the person I want to become.

“I know Hashem is beaming with pride (if it could be), and it makes me feel so good! Hashem is telling the angels to look at what His beloved son — me — just did! He is so excited about what I just accomplished! He’s thrilled because He can reward me like He wants to!”

Celebrating our victories will give us the determination we need to stand up to the yetzer hara the next time he challenges us. We will have the strength to pump our fist once again and confidently declare, “I am not giving in! I want to win, and I will!” This determination will grant us the strength to overcome challenges that would otherwise be overwhelming.

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Re: Tired.....

Posted by Dave M - 03 Aug 2020 19:19

Captain - Thanks so much for this excerpt. Very practical exercise. I will give it a try.

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