

How do you put this behind you once and for all?

Posted by siyatta - 09 May 2024 21:01

There are people in this group who have managed to put this whole thing behind them. I personally envy you! How do you do it? Is there something I'm missing? How come some of us keep coming back to the same struggle and others have seemingly moved on?

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?

Posted by redfaced - 12 May 2024 02:53

[siyatta wrote on 09 May 2024 21:01:](#)

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The only answer is ODAAT

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?

Posted by siyatta - 12 May 2024 14:20

[redfaced wrote on 12 May 2024 02:53:](#)

[siyatta wrote on 09 May 2024 21:01:](#)

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Care to elaborate?

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by redfaced - 12 May 2024 16:40

[siyatta wrote on 12 May 2024 14:20:](#)

[redfaced wrote on 12 May 2024 02:53:](#)

[siyatta wrote on 09 May 2024 21:01:](#)

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The only answer is ODAAT

Care to elaborate?

I don't think there is such a thing as once and for all . Hashem didn't give mere mortals, the power to destroy the Yetzer Hara. He will always be there trying to trip us up. Like the "???? in "???? says, "?? ?????? ?????? ?? ??? ??????."

That being said, our job is not to destroy the Yetzer Hara. All we can do, is take it one temptation at a time. **One Day At A Time.**

I'm pretty confident that everyone that seems like they put it behind them, didn't just wake up one morning, announce to the mirror that they were done, and Boom - success. It's a struggle of ups and downs, with 2 steps forward and one step backwards (sometime its the opposite 2 steps backwards and one step forward)to get to that point

But yes, it does get somewhat easier with time.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by eerie - 12 May 2024 18:50

[frank.lee wrote on 11 May 2024 23:03:](#)

Rav eerie, can you explain this, I'm not sure I understand.

And the less intense you see the change, the the greater your chances of being successful

What I'm saying is, when a person has this idea that they are gonna have to change everything in their life, they will feel a tremendous anxiety that will hold them back from taking the necessary steps. So, yes, there will be necessary changes. But don't label them with such intense labels, and then your resistance to change will be lowered.

Positivity is a necessary ingredient for success. Seeing the gradual process painted in bright colors, taking it ODAAT, beH you'll be successful.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by chaimoigen - 12 May 2024 18:52

There are a lot of great points here.

And far more inscribed in hearts-blood throughout the forum.

(I would perhaps a try reading Vehkam's thread"Work in Progress", the "Gardener of Grodna"

in BB Forum, Eeries thread "It's all in the name". "Dov Quotes" (in Markz signature) and Cordnoy's thread "Tryin.").

Some additional thoughts:

1. One day at a time is a critical concept. But there's more to it than meets the eye. It doesn't just mean breaking down the struggle to small manageable segments. It means that it's easier to truly **want** and **wholeheartedly desire** to be completely clean for **today**. And then we try again tomorrow. There's more, but please think about that.

2. In order to have a significant commitment to stop, and to take the steps and make the changes it will take to break free, you need to understand why you **really want to stop living this way**. Not just that you "know you have to stop". So what are your motivations to stop?

3. To really get to that point, there's another deeper point to think about.

I think it's very important to understand your motivations for acting out. What are your triggers? What makes you go looking for negative stuff? What's does the P&M **DO FOR** you?

Is there by any chance there a part of you that uses this stuff? That maybe doesn't really want to stop? Being honest with yourself and getting an understanding of what's going on inside is very valuable.

Because you won't be successful in clearing your environment always from everything. And, like a guy once told me, even when there are no phones, tablets, or computers around, the **person** still is here, all alone with himself.

If there's a part of you that has gotten used to fixing loneliness, or anxiety, or pain with stuff that numbs and distracts, it's important to try to understand.

That part does not have to define you, or make the decisions. But understanding what's really going on, to my understanding, is really important. Just one of the things that has worked for me, with Hashem's help.

Here's a warm hand, there's a lot of hope here

Chaim

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?

Posted by siyatta - 19 May 2024 15:08

I'm going to add one more point to the motivation piece. This is based on what I read in TBOTG.

Successful motivation to change involves not just the feeling that "I need to change" but also the motivation that "I want to change". (Perhaps R' Chaimoigen was saying this in point #2)

Feelings that can spark such a change include a surge of strong positive motivation and healthy ambition, or the guilt and clarity obtained from hitting rock bottom. The most effective transformations combine both — the person is shaken up but is also excited to do something about it and become great. (pg 103-104)

This seemingly is similar to the concept of ahava and yirah, we need the combination of both, avodas Hashem can't be only based on yirah.

Personally, to me it's seems that cleaning up this avera is more than just an isolated area of avodas Hashem but rather an all encompassing tikun that affects my whole shleimus. I feel like it involves my overall tafkid in this world and if I can't overcome it, then in a way I've failed my purpose in this world and if I've succeeded than I've achieved my purpose.

Maybe I'm giving it more weight than it deserves, but it does seem like truly defeating this yetzer hara involves getting close to Hashem in a real way (12 steps 101), overcoming a number of difficult midos challenges and going against my nature.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by jackthejew - 19 May 2024 18:40

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Very true! To add on a secular example of this:

A while back, I was listening to a panel discussion from former porn stars who now advocate against the industry. They were discussing how hard it is to escape from the industry. One of

them said, "The common denominator among all the people I know who have successfully left is that they didn't only stop making porn. They started to live very different lives from what they had even before they came to the industry."

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?

Posted by vehkam - 19 May 2024 20:29

[siyatta wrote on 19 May 2024 15:08:](#)

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Maybe I'm giving it more weight than it deserves, but it does seem like truly defeating this yetzer hara involves getting close to Hashem in a real way (12 steps 101), overcoming a number of difficult midos challenges and going against my nature.

If I can just suggest a tweak...it's not all or nothing. The goal is to do what you can to overcome. If you try to overcome then you have not failed your tafkid. Regardless of the perceived outcome.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by amevakesh - 20 May 2024 13:22

[siyatta wrote on 09 May 2024 21:01:](#)

There are people in this group who have managed to put this whole thing behind them. I personally envy you! How do you do it? Is there something I'm missing? How come some of us keep coming back to the same struggle and others have seemingly moved on?

[siyatta wrote on 10 May 2024 14:00:](#)

I don't think that what works for one person will automatically work for another but I'm trying to find certain commonalities, the tzad hashaveh, that worked for some across the board. We all discuss the same tactics over and over yet I see a big difference between myself who keeps coming back to this vs some who seem to be past this.

Fascinating discussion. One that I've given a lot of thought to when I was first finding my way around these forums. When I noticed the same thing you did, that there are 2 groups, one that somehow breaks free, and one that keeps on going in circles, the question you brought up started bothering me to no end. I desperately wanted to be part of the first group, but I could not see a clear difference between them. They both wrote about the same things. There are people in both categories that have reached out to others, whether it was through these forums or on the phone. Both have tried the ideas of ODAAT, different methods of accountability, WebChaver, Taphsic, white knuckling, willpower, and all the wonderful ideas this website is full of, some have met with success others not. There are loopholes to everything, yet every one of these methods have some people that used them successfully to break free. I even found a thread from way back (the name of which eludes me right now) (He just updated for the first time in 2 years, it's called "Fifty Years" by Dovid824 in the What works for me section) where the writer was steeped in ?? ??? ?????, yet writes there that he decided to break free, but all of the conventional methods aren't going to work for him. He writes there that he thinks that all he needs to do is make a commitment to stop and he thinks it will work. How many have tried that

successfully, and failed miserably? Lo and behold, he broke free. He details his progress by years (maybe by 100's of days I don't recall) not days and every year on his anniversary, he checks in. Another case in point, Vehkam's thread where he writes that for him (and I've seen this by others as well) putting on the filter was not what he needed to do. For the average person trying to break free, this is imperative, why for him not? It takes a giant of a man like Vehkam to have the self awareness of knowing exactly what he needs to do, but this only makes the question stronger, why did it work for him and not for so many others. In short we see different methods working for some, but not for everyone. What lays behind the one's that are successful? This question plagued me to no end, I thought long and hard about it, until I reached what I believe to be somewhat of an answer. (In no way am I challenging the insightful answers of the previous posts, this is just what I came up with. It helped for me, so I thought I'd pass it on.)

I'd like to preface my conclusion with a well known story of Reb Moshe ??". He was once given a ride, when he entered the car someone closed the door on his hand. Reb Moshe didn't flinch, no reaction whatsoever. When the car rounded the corner and was out of sight ?? asked the driver to stop so he could extricate his hand from the door. Let's analyze this story a little. Superficially, we see the ????? of Reb Moshe's ??? ??? ????? that he was even able to overcome physical pain in order not to shame another Yid. Very possible, but if that was the case wouldn't there be at least be a knee jerk reaction, a cry of "ouch". Perhaps not, maybe he was so refined and so in control of his emotions, that he was able to control himself to that extent. However on a deeper level there's a lot more to the story. Reb Moshe, through years of ????? and ????? ?????, perfected and polished the essence of his soul to such a level that his ??? reflected what a human being is capable of attaining. His sensitivity and care of a fellow Jew were honed to such a degree of perfection that it was more painful to him cause another Yid embarrassment, then to experience the pain of a physical hand injury. Choosing not to react was instinctive, there was no deliberation on his part about what was right or wrong to do. He was "merely" going with the less painful option. (I believe I heard this beautiful insight on a recording from R' Akiva Tatz) This wasn't a one time story, it was a manifestation of the value system that he managed to incorporate in to the fibre of his soul. What a human being can attain!!!

The human being is conditioned in such a way, that he will almost always choose the path of the least resistance. ?????? ?? ?? ??? ???? ???? ???? ?????? ?????. Man in it's perfect state has no stronger desire then to cleave to ?' through his ?????. If we could somehow experience the pleasure Rav Elyashiv (or any true ?????) had from a Blatt ??', even the biggest addict would be cured, the pleasure he would get from learning would eclipse the pleasure any indulgence in whatever gives him his fix. It takes a lifetime of work to cultivate that pleasure, it doesn't come easy, but those few who have attained it, no physical pleasure in the world can hold a candle to it. At that exalted point learning and ????? ?' becomes the path of least resistance.

Now on the flip side, if one indulges in lust and promiscuous behavior, he gets a certain level of

pleasure out of it. However, the pleasure comes with a price, that yucky feeling we are all too familiar with. The more one becomes entrenched in his ways, the greater the feelings of disgust that person has with himself becomes. Even though he wants to stop the bad feeling, he feels helpless because the “high” he experiences when engaged in the at far exceeds any guilty feelings he might have. Paradoxically his life may be spiraling out of control, but he can’t seem to break out the vicious cycles, because the more he uses the needier he becomes. After a while he needs to increase the dosage to stimulate himself, the previous dosage won’t suffice to get him to the “high” he needs. When a person quits because of idealistic reasons, whether they stem from inspiration, ???? or ????, he will have a very hard time maintaining his resolve. Inspiration wears off, and our hero often finds himself in tough situations that life may throw at him, where he will very likely revert to his past bad habits. Even different methods might only meet with limited success, because as long as the sweetness of sin is greater than the feelings of guilt, worthlessness etc. it will remain his go to pacifier for any obstacles that may arise. The path of least resistance is for him to fall back to his old comfortable ways.

At a certain point he hits rock bottom. Rock bottom is defined when the pain he’s going through exceeds the feeling of pleasure and he realizes that he’s in a never ending cycle. He comes to the realization that a pain filled life like the one he’s in is not worth living. At that point he’ll do anything and everything to climb out of his situation. Then despite the hard work ahead of him, he’s hit with the realization that the path of least resistance is for him to role up his sleeves and get to work. It’s the less painful choice between hard work and living a life he feels is not worth living. (?????, for Reb Moshe, a life where he would even unwittingly inflict pain on another Yid was not life worth living, so he made the less painful choice of having a car door slammed on his hand.) That first crack of clarity is what spurs him to make real long lasting change. This is we we can give him all the different techniques and ideas that GYE has to offer. For different people , different things will work. For someone with a full blown addiction the twelve steps might be necessary. For someone not so deeply entrenched, he may be able to use less drastic measures.

Hitting rock bottom can take place on many levels. For those that hit “rock bottom while still on top”, it might be the feelings of hypocrisy that they are presenting themselves to the public as someone who they’re not. This seems to be common among those in Chinuch positions. The torture of having a reputation as a Chashuve ????, knowing that one is viewing inappropriate material can lead one to feeling of disgust with himself, that this is not the way I can continue to live my life. For others it might be the threat of losing there reputation, for others they must sink even lower until they reach a point where they’ll lose their families. The common denominator is when the person realizes that although it’s gonna take a herculean effort to overcome, it’s still better then the alternative life. As long as a person has in the back of his mind, that in case of an emergency I can still always go back, he hasn’t reached that point yet. Obviously there are going to be some exceptions to these ideas, but this was what I cameup with that helped me. May ?' help us all taste the pleasure that a ???? filled life free from lust has to offer. Sorry for the lengthy response. Hope it made at least a little sense.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by chooseusername - 20 May 2024 14:21

[amevakesh wrote on 20 May 2024 13:22:](#)

[siyatta wrote on 09 May 2024 21:01:](#)

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Amazing and well thought out. This is giving me a lot to think about.

My initial reaction though is to push back and say that this definition is subject to the No True Scotsman fallacy. No matter who falls you'll always say, "he must not have resolved it hard enough." And in my own life my lowest moments did not lead to lasting change. When I did something so lowly I swore up and down I'd never do it again, with rock hard resolve, in a week or two that faded. And although nothing has led to lasting change for me **yet**, my cleanest times did not follow after my lowest moments.

So much amazing thinking coming out of this question. So many powerful tools: commitment, understanding, community, ODAAT. But for every tool, as @amavakesh pointed out, you'll find someone who tried it and failed.

I think it's a situation of tzaddikim sitting in a circle and pointing to different aspects of the same

thing (Taanis 31). I would posit there is no one silver bullet or tzad hashava that separates the forever clean from those who do not stay forever clean. There are various tools that can be used to get/stay clean, but what **keeps** someone clean is 1) an individual and personal intelligent choice followed by 2) maximum effort and 3) Hashem keeping them clean.

All we can do is give it 100% with all our chochma - use every tool we can to get clean. (Just gritting your teeth and throwing yourself at the tanks is beautiful, but stupid. Intelligent grit is required.) But then it's up to Hashem to choose our arena of struggle. There are people whom Hashem desires to have rerun the same route through the mud over and over. If you view yourself as one of those people you'll probably get depressed and not ever get out. So definitely the goal is total cleanliness. But the accomplishment of that goal is not in our hands. All we can do and all we need to do is try our hardest.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by amevakesh - 20 May 2024 15:39

[chooseurname wrote on 20 May 2024 14:21:](#)

[amevakesh wrote on 20 May 2024 13:22:](#)

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Precisely why I stuck in this line.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by siyatta - 20 May 2024 16:03

Great post. I just wish it didn't require hitting rock bottom mamash!

Maybe a person can just come to the intellectual conclusion that he **must** stop. I agree it can't just be an intellectual decision but rather one that is both intellectually sound as well as emotionally charged. He'll probably need a lot of chazara and chizuk to stay focused to get passed the hard times.

Probably getting oneself into a program or environment where it's difficult to fall is probably the next step. Keeping one's schedule busy, having a mentor to answer to everyday etc.... similar to what R' Amevakesh said, where the path of least resistance is to overcome rather than fall.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by gye365s - 20 May 2024 16:37

[siyatta wrote on 20 May 2024 16:03:](#)

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next step. Keeping one's schedule busy, having a mentor to answer to everyday etc.... similar to what R' Amevakesh said, where the path of least resistance is to overcome rather than fall.

I'll preface with acknowledging that everyone's situation is unique.

What you wrote rings true for me. Rock bottom and pain may be strong motivators to choose change, but ultimately it's about pulling everything together. The intellectual, emotional, and spiritual all combined in a commitment to always push forward. Everything can be a tool, but the success is in the fight, not the result. Purely results driven motivations are limiting to a finite victory. The goal is not a location, it is a path.

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Re: How do you put this behind you once and for all?
Posted by amevakesh - 21 May 2024 17:15

This comment, and a PM that I got require me to clarify. First of all, I would never say never. if there's one thing you can see on these forums it's this. In this battle, there are no absolutes. I'm sure that are many who have broken free even though they haven't reached rock bottom, and I'm sure that many have hit what they perceive as rock bottom, but can't seem to break free.

The point I was making is that hitting "rock bottom" is not any specific plateau, it's an awareness that the current situation is not sustainable and cannot continue. That can happen at any level. There is no such thing as rock bottom Mamash. As low as you can fall, there's still room to fall even lower. Someone watching inappropriate material, can still fall in to porn, someone in to porn can still go from screens to real people. Lives can be messed up to different degrees. Some might lose respect, some might lose jobs, some will lose their families, before they hit rock bottom, and for some even that won't stop them. I won't beleaguer, because I don't want to trigger but you get the point. Rock bottom is when a person reaches the point that he's so fed up with the reality he's in, that working his hardest is easier for him then the trajectory of his situation. Then and only then, (again there are exceptions) out of almost sheer desperation, will he be able to figure out a plan how to combat his YH. Some have enough self awareness to figure out what to do on their own. Most however can't, and need a mentor or someone with experience to guide them. Here's where GYE comes in with an arsenal of tools, mentors that are role models with tons of experience, and perhaps most importantly friends to talk to that take us out of isolation.

Having [redacted] during Davening is one of the hardest parts of [redacted] [redacted] for many. Suppose you have a Gadol that's working on his Davening, but he finds him self unable to focus on his [redacted] [redacted] 100% of the time, he finds that he averages around 95% ([redacted] [redacted] [redacted]). This Gadol is frustrated with himself that he can't seem to attain the level of concentration that he feels is necessary to be the [redacted] [redacted] he so desires to be. If the desire to grow is intense enough, and the frustration mounts, that might be considered his own personal "rock bottom". He'll then push himself beyond his capabilities, because it's easier for him to do so then live with the alternative. (Not suggesting that this doesn't smack of perfectionism, it does, but the point is true nonetheless.) This is what drives people to push themselves in any given area.

Again I'd like to stress, no one can tell you that there's no recovery until you reach rock bottom. What we can encourage you to do is to think and realize that you can hit rock bottom while still on top. Meaning, if you're not living the life you wish you could be, even if "there are worse [redacted] out there", you can still make the decision that this is your own personal rock bottom. **Don't wait for yourself to fall down till you hit rock bottom, make rock bottom come up to where you're at now.** It takes a lot of internalizing, and if your life isn't in a terrible state because of whatever your doing, it's even harder to do. But if you can come to that realization, then the real work can begin.

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