

why am i still falling?

Posted by startingrecovery - 17 Jul 2013 12:52

Hello people! I don't post often but now that things are getting more serious Im trying to visit GYE more regularly.

(This may sound like im going off on a bit of a tangent, so bare with me.)

Over the last month or so, I have discovered so much (most of it down to the help of my sponsor), and I've learned a lot about myself. i.e. what is causing me to fall, the nature of it, how to react differently in situations, and picking myself up afterwards, etc. And i have been working on different things, such as being positively clean, as opposed to being negatively abstaining. Thanking Hashem regularly, and ask Him to help me, (my whole mindset has changed in that manner). Visiting the forums, etc.

All these things together have really helped me, I feel i have come so far from where i was two months ago, and that I'm so close to 'happiness', a big breakthrough, like a big long stretch clean that will help me prove to myself that I can do it. But now i face a different issue. Each time after about a week clean, the whole severity of acting out, all the things i told myself after last time i fell, about how its ruining my life etc, seems to fade away very fast. I'm sure people can relate to that, and your thinking 'yes my friend, join the club. That's called the Yetzer Hora'.

In other words what I mean is the actual desire to act out isn't so strong, i decide to fall only because 'why not?'. I made a sort of 'plan of action' for next time this arises, that was even when I'm clean to appreciate the benefits of it, positive programming so that when the need does arise, my subconscious thought is 'i can do this', and also, that in such a situation, i will visit GYE and give chizzuk to other people.

but this morning i fell, and I'm not going to cry about it, but it is really frustrating. After all this, I have become so much happier and whole as a person already, i feel like I'm on the borderline of a breakthrough, yet I'm still falling.

I'm trying to get in the habit of 'making friends' here at GYE. i have been reading about peoples struggles and successes a lot recently, (siyatadishmaya, great posts! I can relate to you) and so what I'm asking you guys if anyone could help me is, why am i still falling? and what works for you?

Thanks!!

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by Dr.Watson - 17 Jul 2013 14:04

Hello starting recovery,

I can only talk from my own experience but I fully understand what you're saying. The feeling of being clean can make us forget how strong the yetzer horah can be and we can become complacent. This happens no matter how many times we've fell for it in the past. I started to focus on this area about 15 months ago and at the start I could not get past 3 days. After a few attempts I got to 5 days and was very pleased by that progress. Eventually after some huge struggles I got to 2 weeks, and slowly I've been able, with Hashem's help, to improve and stay clean for longer periods. The level of 'cleanliness' during those periods has also become better, b"H.

What I'm saying is that I understand and have been there. Progress can be slow sometimes but as long as you don't give up, you will improve. Remember that some days are easy and some are hard, but it's in the hard ones that you find progress. Every time you are faced with this challenge and you struggle and succeed, you are becoming stronger in this area. As you become stronger you will find yourself winning more of the battles, getting stronger each time. Don't be disheartened by the occasional failure, look at your successes and your improvement. It's about progress not perfection.

Next time you're confronted with this yetzer hora, just remember that it's in these situations that progress is made, and it's davka when it's so very difficult that Hashem is cheering on the most. Avoiding the aveiroh when it's really difficult is what gives Hashem unimaginable nachas, and puts you in the category of mekadash shem shomayim baseser, along with Yosef Hatzaddik.

As for a practical method, I can tell you what I've been doing, but you have to decide for yourself if you're ready for that. I have made a taphsic neder. This is what I wrote elsewhere:

The last time I 'binged' I felt very depressed and I called GYE for support. The tzaddik who I spoke to introduced me to the taphsic method. I thought I knew about it and was doing it but he told me a better way to do it. Here's how it works: You make 2 knasos, one big one small, for example \$1 to tzedaka and \$100 to tzedaka. Then you make a 'get out clause' or tnai, this is something that you will do before falling, for example say a perek tehillim, go for a walk, do push-ups etc. These are things that make you pause and give you time to think.

OK, so you have your 2 knasos and the t'nai, so you make a promise to Hashem that the next time you fall you will do the big knas, UNLESS you first do the t'nai, in which case you'll do the small knas.

For example, you get the urge to look at porn so you head for your computer. Then you remember that you'll lose \$100 (big knas) if you look right now, much easier on you if you first walk around the block (t'nai) and then if you look you'll only give \$1 (small knas).

This is the way I understand it, see here for more details:

guardyoureyes.com/the-gye-program/20-tools/item/tool-10?category_id=278

The point is that this is a habit. A habit is when the impulse to do something is followed immediately by the action without any thought. To break a habit you must start by slowing down this pattern and giving yourself time to think it through. Even if you then fall, at least you're starting to break the 'autopilot' and gain control over yourself. Every time you do it you become stronger and further separate the impulse from the action until they are not connected at all. Then it becomes much easier to control the urges.

I hope this helps. Just remember, we are human, we are not perfect, and if we can still try our best to serve Hashem, that is what Hashem truly cherishes. Hashem truly cherishes you.

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by cordnoy - 17 Jul 2013 14:47

welcome again and it should be bhatzlachah

is there any time beteen the moment you decide "why not?" and the moment you fall?

if yes, can you think of things to do in between?

are you in control during that time?

I have found that when those feelings arise (which have been few since joining) I come on this site and shmuz around.

What could work for you?

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by AlexEliezer - 17 Jul 2013 19:58

Develop the habit of immediately surrendering any lustful thoughts to Hashem. Just verbally say, "Hashem, please take this thought from me. I don't want to lust. I surrender my lust to you."

Not only when an obviously lustful thought comes, but also when the idea to act out (look at porn, masturbate) comes. Surrender these thoughts as well.

I also can't help wondering just how clean you really are during your "clean streaks." Are you guarding your eyes and mind vigilantly, or are you peeking and sipping a little here and there. This can add up, and make all the difference.

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by gibbor120 - 18 Jul 2013 01:10

Hi startingrecovery,

I agree, that it sounds suspect that you fall only because of "why not?". You mentioned a sponsor, are you going to live meetings? What advice have they given you? Is it a sponsor from a 12 step phone conference? What advice has your sponsor given you?

Have you done a 1st step inventory? Have you written all the facts of your acting out history?

You say "All these things together have really helped me, I feel i have come so far from where i was two months ago, and that I'm so close to 'happiness', a big breakthrough, like a big long stretch clean that will help me prove to myself that I can do it."

It sounds like you have not done the 1st step if you are trying to "prove to myself that I can do it". 12 steps is about admitting that I cannot do it. I need help.

Don't worry about proving anything or having a clean streak. Worry about staying clean today and surrendering to Hashem. The days add up faster when you don't count them.

I'm glad to hear you are doing better! Please keep us posted!

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by startingrecovery - 18 Jul 2013 13:44

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@Dr.Watson: thanks for your reply. I see what u mean about how i need to realize that each struggle has its lasting improvement on my habit. I just need to acknowledge that at the time of thinking about acting out. that seems to be my issue. at the moment I would rather keep away from the TaPHSic method. last year i had a run in with it, when I thought i would be clever by making a shvua without a scapegoat, and after a week i broke it. i still feel terrible about it.

@Cordnoy: there isn't really any specific time span in between the thoughts, and the falling, its more of a mindset, which i suppose i could do something about.

@AlexEliexer: on the street i can say i have been guarding my eyes far better, but i haven't gone cold turkey in all the other areas as i gather from different posts that you have. its certainly honorable, but i dont think its for me. at the moment i am cutting out anything which is prone to having 'seductive' scenes in it, certain tv shows etc. i actually have a feeling that this mindset of

falling came on in the afternoon the day before, when i had watched something with relatively lustful scenes in.

@gibbor120: its skeptical, from GYE, he's been helping me out, someone to talk to whenever needed and even when not, and helping me find myself a bit. i dont go to meetings or anything, i would say now while im chatting online and reading posts on GYE etc, is probably my highest point of involvement here. Im trying to make it more of a regular thing to join in etc, as this is apparently one of the biggest points of recovery. the 'first step inventory', this exercise of writing out my whole lusting history is something which i am really considering doing. im not exactly sure of the dynamics of it (how it helps, what to do, etc), but as i started studying cognitive behavior, i have a good feeling that it will be significant.

as i came to the realization last night, that based on what i see, even some members who have thrown themselves into meetings, and 12 steps etc, also still fall. the significant thing is that any slip ch'v will change us for the better and make us stronger.

thanks people for all your advice! keep it coming! i feel like people are there reaching out for me!

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by Pidaini - 18 Jul 2013 14:57

[startingrecovery wrote:](#)

on the street i can say i have been guarding my eyes far better, but i haven't gone cold turkey in all the other areas as i gather from different posts that you have. its certainly honorable, but i dont think its for me. at the moment i am cutting out anything which is prone to having 'seductive' scenes in it, certain tv shows etc. i actually have a feeling that this mindset of falling came on in the afternoon the day before, when i had watched something with relatively lustful scenes in.

I must say that AlexEliezer was one of the first people to respond to my "introduce yourself" post, and I thank him from the bottom of my heart, for he put me straight into realizing that there is much more to lust than just porn or even nontzius sights. Any look that triggers that lust feeling is part of our drug (I think most of us can feel that feeling when it comes). It's not possible to stay clean if we are allowing ourselves to look at any female figure that brings us lust (**even our own wives!!!**). We have abused our rights, and have lost our license to look at things that normal people (maybe) can look at!!

Hatzlacha Rabbah in figuring out what really works for you!!!

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by gibbor120 - 18 Jul 2013 17:03

[startingrecovery wrote:](#)

the 'first step inventory', this exercise of writing out my whole lusting history is something which i am really considering doing. im not exactly sure of the dynamics of it (how it helps, what to do, etc), but as i started studying cognitive behavior, i have a good feeling that it will be significant.

I'm not 100% sure how it helps either, but I know I felt much more calm and able to accept myself as a result. I could talk about my acting out and live to tell about it. People did not hang up the phone and call me a menuval, but listened to me and shared my burden. It helped me to let go of some of my perfectionistic demands of myself and accept things as they are. I did it on dov's phone conference. You can join and dov will explain it. I'm not sure what they are up to, but a new cycle starts every few months. A new one should not be that far away.

I would be happy to discuss it with you. PM me if you'd like to talk on the phone.

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by chesky - 18 Jul 2013 19:52

[startingrecovery wrote:](#)

In other words what I mean is the actual desire to act out isn't so strong, i decide to fall only because 'why not?'.

I identify with this a lot.

The question I asked myself is "would I rather not be acting out?"

if the answer is yes, then the next question, "so, why m I still doing something which i would rather not be doing?" just because "why not"?

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by gibbor120 - 18 Jul 2013 22:27

I think what you mean is that it has become so habitual, and you have become so desensitized, that you do it even when you don't have a strong urge. There is very little holding you back (*hutra lo*), so you find yourself masturbating apparently for "apparently" no reason.

For many people it takes their wife or kids walking in on them to shock them back to reality, or some other shocking event like the boss finding out, or some other major embarrassment or financial loss... run in with the law etc.

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by davewave - 22 Jul 2013 21:41

Its not so much what yoyr writing. I learned in therapy that when you write you use use the front (ratiinal part) of the brain. When you have an urge the back animalistic part takes over. So by sittung down and writing youre bringing back that logical sense.

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by gibbor120 - 22 Jul 2013 23:25

[davewave wrote:](#)

Its not so much what yoyr writing. I learned in therapy that when you write you use use the front (ratiinal part) of the brain. When you have an urge the back animalistic part takes over. So by sittung down and writing youre bringing back that logical sense.

VERY interesting. I suppose that's one reason why calling a friend and talkin it out helps too. As long as it's in our brain, we can rationalize. Once we say it, we realize how foolish it sounds.

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by startingrecovery - 23 Jul 2013 15:23

@chesky: thanks for that! never thought of it that way. if there's really no reason why not, then why if i was given an option of a big red button to push which would turn off my lusting would i then jump and push it!? obviously i know there is something wrong. only thing is, Y"H is very good at making me forget what it is when he needs me to, and also rationalizes that "yes, its wrong, but is it that bad that its worth fighting and making yourself crazy for?"

@gibbor120: i once had one of those experiences which made me snap back to reality. one of the many times i have told myself "never again". and then guess what? a week or two later i was right back into it!

@davewave: yeh i see what you mean, like gibbor120 says, it makes your realise how foolish it is. did u do this exercise with your therapist?

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by chesky - 23 Jul 2013 17:09

So basically you are doing something which you are rather not be doing, which you do not even have an urge for, just because "why not". That sounds like you have lost control. No?

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Re: why am i still falling?

Posted by gibbor120 - 23 Jul 2013 20:27

[startingrecovery wrote:](#)

@gibbor120: i once had one of those experiences which made me snap back to reality. one of the many times i have told myself "never again". and then guess what? a week or two later i was right back into it!

It obviously was not "hitting bottom". I don't mean getting a reality check. I think many of us have experienced that. I mean getting to a place where acting out is just not an option any more, and we will do (almost) anything to get better, because getting worse is just not an option.

When we get to a point where acting out is painful enough, there is no choice any more, we are *forced* to do what it takes to get better.

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