

Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 16 Feb 2024 20:28

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Hi everyone! I've been lurking on the forums for a few weeks now, but I think it's time for me to finally post here. I was inspired by many of your stories here, nodding my head when I felt like I was reading about my own struggle, and shaking it as I read things that made my story pale in comparison. I've held off writing anything publicly, for I have a deep (perhaps unreasonable) fear of being identified. Ultimately though, I think posting here will help me, so here goes.

I'm in my thirties, B"H happily married with a few kids. I learned in the standard yeshivish yeshivas, then in kollel for around 10 years before leaving to go to work. Since I was around 12, when there was internet w/o filters, I've struggled with P & M. My go-to method for the past 20 years always involved heavy reliance on filters, which usually meant I was clean till I found a weak link (there always is one), or got my hands on an unfiltered device. This lead to a lot of despair, which lead to more watching.. you know the drill. Years of watching with no end in sight. Recently, I became aware of the **habit** aspect of watching P, and started to notice my triggers. It's almost always a way to escape stress, and could be something as 'stressful' as not getting enough sleep the night before.

Then I found GYE. I started the Flight to Freedom, only watched the videos w/o doing the work, which initially helped, then led to complacency, then a fall. So I went back to the beginning, and I'm determined to do the program properly. I'm hoping to get chizzuk from fellow GYERs this time around as well. I also would love to get some input on the best way to approach filters. If all devices were filtered and filters were foolproof, I wouldn't be posting here today. My job, (like most in 2024) has me using a computer for many hours of the day. Although I have a good filter (Gentech) as well as accountability (Webchaver), while they slow me down, If I'm determined I can get around both of them. That leaves me with a speed bump at best. Which means I need to work on myself so that slowing myself down does the trick? I'm a bit lost, and would love to hear your thoughts.

Though my story is pretty standard, and many of you here have climbed much taller mountains, for me this is my Everest, and still feels insurmountable. One thing I know though (and I must've told myself this 1000 times), I'm sick and tired of falling, and I want life!

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by upanddown - 17 Jan 2025 00:24

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[iwantlife wrote on 16 Jan 2025 19:53:](#)

***iwantlife sat on a wall,***

***iwantlife had a great fall.***

Not sure how this story ends, but I swear there are more words to that rhyme...

Sad at the moment,

iwantlife

That's so upsetting.

The YH is so mean... Takes such a good and strong guy like iwantlife, lurs him into a trap and then snap! Just horrid.

I'm so sorry for you.

But you as a person have not changed. A fall is just a signpost. It shows you the correct way forward.

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UpAndDown

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 20 Jan 2025 04:39

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BH closing out day 3! I've got more to say, but for now just finishing what I started, (hat tip to some of the poets above and beyond):

***iwantlife sat on a wall,***

***iwantlife had a great fall***

***YH wants him to feel small***

***Convince him he's in a deep stall***

***Silly YH, he's got some gall-***

***iwantlife is already standing tall***

***His fall behind, shells and all.***

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 29 Jan 2025 19:25

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## **The Anatomy of a Fall and a (iyH!) Recovery**

Ok folks. I've been feeling increasingly unproductive this morning as I sit at home with my flu-stricken daughter getting nothing done, so instead of doing something regrettable, I'll post an update. BH I'm coming up on 2 weeks clean since my fall from a (first-ever!) 180 day high. About that. It wasn't fun. It made me sad. I really wanted to be counted among those of my dear friends here who have started the GYE/HHM/Friends/Brothers program and rocketed straight up, fall-free for 180, 360, 600 days etc. So to fall was a crushing disappointment.

That said, I've come to appreciate a few things about my fall:

First, comparing progress to others is somewhat futile. Who's to say we have the same daily internet or other trigger exposure? I, for one, sit in front of a computer for much of the day. Who's to say we have the same level of habit for this stuff? I, for one, have been struggling with P & M since around the age of 10, and I'm now over 30 years old. Who's to say we've had the same incidental life stresses during that time, be it related to parnasah, sholom bayis, health or otherwise. I've had a little of all of the above. So while none of these absolve me of my choices, they definitely contribute to differing outcomes.

Secondly, an all or nothing, perfectionist mindset, something I'm susceptible to generally, is profoundly unhelpful. To quote a good friend here, @yosefms, "Being obsessed about not doing something isn't that far away from being obsessed about doing something". That doesn't mean I should lose focus of the goal, which is to be clean, everyday. But it does mean that I need a balanced approach. Which leads me to my next point.

Third, as a few of my friends pointed out to me, generally, what I was doing **was** working. Accountability, both with HHM and friends, constant contact with the same, and reading TBOTG got me to 6 months. And let's be honest, if it would 'only' get me another 6 months till the next fall ch'v, I'd keep at it. 2 times a year down from 100+ times of year is incredible ROI. That said, I'm hoping that one of the main reasons I fell was that I was still missing in the positive part of this fight, having only read a little bit of TBOTG before I fell. I sincerely hope that if I had been reading it for as long as I was clean, I might've never fallen; however I'm always open to suggestions! (Vaad anyone?)

To wrap things up, I want to say a few (more) things:

I had such a fear to fall that I rationalized away many slips as "non-falls". That was wrong for 2 reasons. 1) Slips are bad, but if caught quickly are just that. They don't mean that we will fall further. They are not the end (neither are falls!), and don't let the YH convince you otherwise. 2) Be honest when you **have** crossed the line; I hope it will be easier for me to do that now that my 'perfect game' is gone with the wind.

Also, if you **do** fall, be aware that the first few days and weeks will be very hard. It's normal, and it's called a "high-risk period" in addiction science and psychology, due to things like feelings of guilt, failure, loss of momentum, and a re-sensitization to the addictive things we've been avoiding but have deep memory of. It will pass, but you need to hang tight. I've had several strong urges and a few slips over the past 2 weeks; knowing that it's to be expected has helped a lot.

**Finally**, although I'm not out of the woods yet, as the climb out of Porn Abyss is quite steep, as I just mentioned, I BH seemed to have bounced back rather quickly, as in I've been clean ever since the day I fell. **This** is by far the most heartening thing to have happened to me, as I know not everyone has this experience. While I'm not certain, I strongly believe it's because, although I felt terrible when I fell, as I always did for the past 20+ years, there was something that I **didn't** feel (ok maybe I felt for a bit, but it quieted down quickly), and that was a deep sense of ??????. Ultimately, I was clean for 6 months, and that showed me that **it wasn't hopeless, and I**

**COULD do it.** I think that is by far the most powerful tool in my toolbox, because with this knowledge, I'm truly halfway there (see my signature), and it makes getting back up so much easier. I want to thank Hashem both for this and His help in general, as well all my **dear friends** who have helped me, both with climbing and recovering; in my entire life I've never known such true friendship. We're all in this together, and only together will we beat this thing holding us back from being our true selves, which **really** want life the way it's meant to be lived.

Humbly,

iwantlife

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by jollylemur95 - 29 Jan 2025 19:37

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I can only reiterate what I told you privately:

YOU ARE A SHINING LIGHT OF INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US HERE!!!

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 02 Feb 2025 16:56

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On the flip side of my previous purposely positive, persuasive, and powerful [post](#), it's becoming clear to me that it's multiple orders of magnitude harder to get a second (and beyond) streak going than a first. I'm sure that for many of you this is super obvious. It's when that elusive-for-years promise of hope and change that GYE (truly) is, is dashed on the rocks of Porn Abyss, a feeling of discouragement threatens to overwhelm. **Not because I think it's impossible**, for after 180 days, I know I can at least do that again, and probably more. Yet in a way the long streak makes it harder, because for 180 days I was able to tell myself, "I don't do this anymore", and could point to my first ever, longer-than-ever streak as proof. And now, I can't. I've had a few close calls over the past 2 weeks since my setback (I'm hating the word 'fall' rn), and in the back of my mind, the only reason I got so close was exactly that thought, "I **do** sometimes do this, clearly". SO, I'm not sure if the goal, mindset-wise, is to get back to where I was last July, when I was off to the races, or is it something else? Would love for some direction, particularly if you've been in my shoes (size 10) and have successfully climbed to new

heights!

- iwantlife

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by BennyH - 02 Feb 2025 18:51

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My recent fall after a 12+ year streak made me think a lot about, well, streaks.

For me, the only significance of a streak is the fact that when you break it, a taboo is broken. You feel a sensation you haven't felt in X amount of time and there is a rush. You also realize that God didn't strike you down with lightening. It's kind of anticlimactic and before you realize, you're deep into the fall for a while.

I don't identify with the issue people have of "Oh, I broke my streak so I may as well indulge for a few days before I get back on the highway." That's a pretty shallow way to look at it. And if that's how you look at streaks — as a goal in and of itself — then that might be bound to happen.

But streaks aren't intrinsic goals in yiddishkeit (I think). Sure, it could be a useful psychological tool, sometimes.

But yiddishkeit is about **choices in context**.

Every hour of every day is its own context and that context presents you with its unique set of choices. Today you made the right choice. Yesterday you made the wrong choice. For 180 days you made the right choice and then a day after that you made a wrong choice. That choice lives alone in the context of that day. It says nothing about your previous choices. You made them fair and square. And in an hour from now, you will have another choice in its own context. And time will tell how you fare.

So essentially all that a streak is is a chain of consecutive positive isolated choices. Day in and day out. Yes, perhaps the only way you were able to hold on to it is because of the social / peer pressure aspect of GYE, but that's still all that it is: a series of individual choices.

So a break in a streak says nothing about your previous choices or how you should make your choices a minute from now. It means that in this moment that was in this context, this specific set of circumstances, you made the wrong choice.

The only thing a break can do is to change the dynamic of the context in which your next choice will be made. As I've said above, after a fall, there's a new physical dynamic now, and there's now an imbalance in your level of bechira. For while you were in the streak, the pull wasn't that strong, hence the choice wasn't that hard. But once you fell and your body and mind experienced that fall, your context changed, and your choice is harder.

I think that's a more helpful way to look at streaks, and life in general. Every moment is a choice in its own context.

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by youknowwho - 02 Feb 2025 18:55

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[iwantlife wrote on 02 Feb 2025 16:56:](#)

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- iwantlife

First of all, I wanted to thank you for this and your other recent post, it really resonated with me. You brought out such important points with great clarity.

I also fell after a long streak (almost a year) and struggled mightily to get back up. Literally went in circles and started feeling increasingly hopeless, as the old, worn, familiar cycles stared me in the face.

Just sharing what I found important for *me*. I'm sure others had different experiences. For me, **mindset** was everything.

Clawing back to that clarity, the mindset of what got me clean in the first place was crucial.

I could probably fit my entire shoe into yours, but here goes

This could be a combination of things, such as, what porn does for me and why I can utilize better solutions, not wanting to be a hopelessly addicted pervy creep for the rest of my life, examining the science of addiction/dopamine, its effects on the brain and understanding how futile it is to continue on this path of destruction, The BOTG approach, etc., whatever mehalich out there that speaks to getting the mindset back.

The rest, challenging days and all, will follow. You will no longer be stuck in that loop cycle.

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by 1day613 - 02 Feb 2025 19:46

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[Bennyh wrote on 02 Feb 2025 18:51:](#)

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I think that's a more helpful way to look at streaks, and life in general. Every moment is a choice in its own context.

This is something that I've been looking into recently. According to some of the top therapists who deal with unwanted porn use the best way to look at success in this area is the number of urges one processed and worked through WITHOUT willpower. Not days gone by/day streaks. Streaks can motivate you but are no real indication of inner work. Although if one has and is doing inner work they likely will have a long streak. But from my understanding streaks are not the ikkar.

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by chosemyshem - 02 Feb 2025 21:14

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At the end of the day, streaks are an incredibly motivating tool for most people. Like any tool, if it stops being motivating you need to know when to apply it.

Like BennyH said, perhaps the most motivating element of the streak is when it becomes a red line - I *don't* do that anymore. Losing that is rough.

Just to share my own experience after blowing my personal longest streak. I went on a good, old-fashioned binge. Part of the motivation was that yuish of feeling like I'll never really get clean. Probably some of it was the dopamine hit. After a week or two there definitely came times of "let me just finish off enjoying and I'll get back to work."

Now I'm clean again for about three weeks. B"h I'm cruising along very smoothly right now.

Here's the secret how I did it:

**Warning: Spoiler!**

At the end of the day, I think a key point is just accepting to keep on putting in the work no matter what and focusing on that.

Hatzlacha

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by yosefms - 02 Feb 2025 23:35

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Rabbeinu Hakodesh I want life,

You are awesome..... One little mistake doesn't undo any of your gadlus at smashing up the yetzer hora and being in control for all that time. Even if you spent 5 minutes or whatever looking where you shouldn't. You spent a whopping 259200 minutes in 180 days being your truly holy self. So DONT BE SILLY. You are a master of kedusha! get back out there and and give people the chizuk they need from you (especially me!)

Loving you dearly from the other side of the world

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by chaimoigen - 03 Feb 2025 01:07

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[Bennyh wrote on 02 Feb 2025 18:51:](#)

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I love every word here.

I would just add 2 cents as a cherry on top, from my perspective.

Firstly, while it's 100 percent true that a streak is a series of individual choices, I think it's also true that the individual choices that we make have an effect on the total person, and impact our future choices. In that context, a streak of consecutive choices has a cumulative positive impact of thinking, feeling, habits, and life perspectives that each individual choice doesn't have. In that context a streak is more valuable than the psychological motivation/ peer pressure aspect alone.

(That said, those cumulative benefits **do not evaporate** when the streak is "broken". However, besides for the very valuable point that Benny made about a person's level of Bechira being affected by the introduction of new factors post-fall, also, the illusion of the complete loss, despondency, post-fall binging etc can contribute to a situation where it becomes harder to salvage what's still there... )

My second point is a counter- point to my first, and I think you'll appreciate this, Benny.

A down-side of streaks is that a person changes and evolves. The person I am **today** may not be the same person who **started** the streak. And the reasons that motivated a guy when he

started may not talk to or help who he is today.

Sometimes the old reasons get stale and a guy needs to find the new reasons and motivation that talks to who he is **now**.

If your old streak got broken, I don't think the Avoda is merely to jump back up back on the wagon, right where you were. I think it's to try to find a **today** reason to begin a new series of choices that are meaningful for **who you are today** to want to make the journey to who **you** want to become.

Here's a warm squishy hand,

Hoping we all find our way I am,

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by BenHashemBH - 03 Feb 2025 15:24

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[1day613 wrote on 02 Feb 2025 19:46:](#)

According to some of the top therapists who deal with unwanted porn use the best way to to look at success in this area is the number of urges one processed and worked through **WITHOUT willpower**.

Shalom Brother,

B'vakasha, can you elaborate on what you mean by "without willpower" and why specifically that is the best metric to measure success?

Thank you! Kol Tov

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 03 Feb 2025 19:06

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Iwantlife sat up high, tall and proud

He'd bounced right back, above the crowd

Alas his celebration was premature

As he lost his balance, fell once more

It seems he has more hard work to do

To focus on today, to see it through

?One thing's for certain, that he can say

His GYE friends aren't going away..

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 04 Feb 2025 17:21

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I think I'll try to post a bit more frequently here, even if only a status update. Clearly, one-off, long winded posts aren't always necessary, nor are they necessarily the most helpful for me. So I'll share my first win. Yesterday was my 2nd fall in about as many weeks, after a blessedly long streak of 180 days. The first time I fell, I decided to fall one more time before going to sleep, cuz like why not right? Well, last night, I briefly considered it, but then BH thought, "absolutely, positively NO". Progress!

Humbly,

iwantlife!!

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