

Leap of Faith

Posted by authenticaved - 15 Aug 2024 01:51

I've been holding back from posting for a little while. Holding back because:

- I don't want this to feel like social media (which I avoid), and because
- lurking already takes so much time, so I worry how much time I'll end up spending on here if I *also* become someone who posts a lot, and because
- a couple people who know me might be able to identify me from my writing style/content.

But at this point I think my feelings of *????* *????* of what this place and this community is doing for me, (and the incessant nudging of a few lovely people ;) outweighs all those reasons.

I won't finish, but I'll start:

I'm relatively newly married but came in with already a good deal of work in these inyanim and a lot of *????*. Nevertheless, when I saw a bit of pleasure-seeking mentality starting to creep in to my marriage, even in a small way, I saw it as a big red flag. And when I saw my struggles not totally disappear despite baruch Hashem feeling genuinely fulfilled in a healthy marriage, I saw it as an even bigger red flag. Eventually that brought me back to GYE, a site I had been on before, but led me to explore the forums for the first time. "Wow, there are people on this wacky forum who write with such maturity, such clarity!" I was eating it up. Feeling inspired, I reached out, and got on the phone with one of the heili(gye) tzaddikim on here, **letting the dam break inside me** and letting it all pour out. He also got me on the phone with his mentor, from whom I got to hear "the shmooze" and talked it out, etc.

The results of that one decision that day were:

1. some concrete take-home *??????* which I have repeated to myself over and over again (things like: intimacy is the cake...; it never said on any death certificate "cause of death: lack of ...", vchulu vchulu),
2. the realization that the human connection made possible by this place is by far its (and our) greatest asset in this battle, and
3. ultimately, a real paradigm shift that makes this feel like a true rebirth, and has me believing, for the first time in my life, that **???? I actually am capable of being 100% squeaky clean.**

I kept in touch with them and they supported me through the critical period, I even met them both in person (!), and slowly, recently, I've reached out to a few more chevra who each offered their own awesome perspective and beautiful neshama to connect with. Wow, what a holy nation. What a zechus to get to know you. And we're only getting started...

So now, a short while later (though it feels like a lifetime has passed), I'm writing this for a few reasons. I want to publicly thank the chevra who I have had the privilege of connecting with so far; I want to say hi to the chevra who I have yet to shmooze with; and I'd also like to break the ice and have this thread where I can possibly post in the future and connect more; but lastly, and most importantly, I want to encourage anyone lurking to **take that leap of faith and reach out to someone – anyone – whose posts speak to you** and who seems like a healthy person. I've left out the usernames of the people who I first spoke to (though you may see them in the responses to this thread) because, ultimately, *you're* reading posts on here, and *you* can tell who's writing resonates with you. Choose your own adventure.

You're probably tempted to just stick to reading posts, and for good reason. From reading the posts you will find chizzuk, some good ideas, and maybe a laugh. Also, reading posts is safe and doesn't demand much of you. But when you make the move and get on the phone (I highly recommend starting with *67 if you're scared like I was), you will find so much more than you could ever imagine.

Yes, you'll find validation, understanding, and someone to relate to. But more than that, you will find people who will cry with you, laugh with you, feel your pain and celebrate your joy. You'll find people who will be patient with you when you're only ready to discuss a fraction of what's on your mind. You'll find people who will call you out when you're being too hard on yourself, and **who will believe in you before you've even gotten to a place where you can believe in yourself**, thereby gently pushing you **towards yourself**, towards the true, inner "you" that you've always dreamed of revealing.

It doesn't take very long. This is your chance to hear the shofar in a few weeks and, for the first time, not feel quite so startled.

I'm rooting for you.

AE

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by amevakesh - 15 Aug 2024 05:05

Beautiful first post! It was an honor and privilege to meet such a thought out and authentic eved like yourself. Someone who will no doubt inspire many many people in the future. T'was a wonderful hug(s)!

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by Muttel - 15 Aug 2024 06:45

They spoke on the phone nary 23 days ago

An immediate connection to grow and grow

Bound by mutual respect, kinship, and desires

To be inspired and Leap higher with a spiritual fire.

*What **Authentic** work put in day after day*

*To be a true **Eved** Hashem and make the great strides stay.*

They took the next step, meeting one on one,

A surreal experience began a relationship that's been loads of fun.

AE, what growth and dedication you've shown,

To be enshrined with a mentorship crown when you so recently thought you were alone,

Just as Hashem as helped your tremendous kochos shine heretofore,

May you always be zoche to help others kick this habit forever more.

Go on and take your strengths and talents,

Shine and glow with grace and perfect temperament,

You'll do your share in bringing our King near

So that very soon the Grand Shofar we will all hear.

With a heart overflowing with pride and brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by chosemyshem - 15 Aug 2024 20:44

Yasher koach on the post. And thanks for the encouragement to reach out to someone whose

Keep on authentically trucking!

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by eerie - 18 Aug 2024 05:39

Welcome to the club! For most people, I would welcome by telling them how lucky they are, how posts speak to me reaching out is the greatest thing, etc. but you did that all. So all that's left is to wish you loads of

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by authenticaved - 06 Jan 2025 22:55

Hey, it's been a while.

For a couple reasons it's been a challenging tekufa for me recently. BH I just hit 180 days and you'd think there'd be some excitement leading up to that which would make me behave (GYE even gives you a virtual medal!). But I've had more slips, and more rough slips, in the last few weeks than I had in the few months before that. And trust me, there were some bumps in the road then, too.

Here are some semi-organized thoughts I've had about the journey recently:

1. It's not about the streak. I say this again and again to myself and I still don't fully believe it, but I'm trying. It is about the paradigm shift, the relationships, the real lasting change I see in myself, all of which would still be here even if this streak ends. The way I bsD have evolved myself as a person cannot be negated by one bad day.

2. The people on here care about me. I have been leaning on some of my friends from this site (at least the ones I can still easily get in touch with despite my time zone/phone number changes). That's beautiful! and I am so grateful to have the special help of GYE heroes when I need it. How many people do you know from off this site who you can call while in the shower to get out of a bad situation? My list is pretty short, and I'm willing to bet most peoples' is empty.

3. Knowing that they care makes a crazy difference. I was recently having a real nisayon and texted a friend and we got on the phone for a second so I could hear his voice. I couldn't stay on the phone though, and I wrote to him "if I don't text you 'clean' in 7 minutes call me".

Now, mind you, I was in the heat of the moment when I called him. But when I heard his voice, it's like a balloon inside me started to deflate. *He cares.* Still, shortly after we got off the phone I had a strong taiva again and was ready to act out. Woohoo! But I thought to myself "whoa, I better not get involved here, he's gonna call me in a couple minutes."

There was a recent Vayimaen that spoke about how Yosef survived by picturing his father, and how we can survive by picturing all those people that care about us and believe in us. In that moment I pictured this guy, smiling at me ear to ear. *He believes in me.* It was powerful. "But is that healthy?" I wondered afterwards.

I think the answer is yes. It doesn't feel like I'm doing this for someone else. It's just that knowing you believe in me, and knowing that what happens in my "private" battle matters to you, helps me be my best self and see past the intensity of the moment. I don't think that's called being too dependent or doing it for the wrong reasons, I think that just showcases how my friends can help me actualize what I want so badly for myself, from the deepest parts of me. It takes a village.

L'chaim, L'chaim. To 180 more!

AE

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by authenticaved - 13 Jan 2025 23:59

I am slipping A LOT lately. Nearly falling. Feels like I've forgotten all the big yesodos from day 1 and the important lessons I (thought I) learned along the way. If I've really got this "paradigm shift" and am living "lasting change" or whatever, why am I acting almost just like the guy I used to be?

Is my life easy and perfect? No. But is my life in crisis and full of top-shelf tzaros? NO! So why am I acting out so much?! A slip here and there, I can hear. We're not expected to be perfect. But this seems like the return of a chronic problem, the resurrection of an old habit, and just one fall and he'll be back at the helm in gantzen.

Writing to you from the cliff, peering over the edge, eyes staring straight into the black abyss. At least there's good reception here!

AE

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by iwantlife - 14 Jan 2025 01:19

Hey there autheniceved! Kudos for the honesty. Not 100% what your trajectory has been, but if it's like mine, I cruised to till around 90 days with the help of HHM and many friends here. I felt like a different person. Finally back in control. And to a large extent I was. But then came the slips. First one, then the next, they started to snowball, downhill till I too was teetering at the edge of Porn Abyss. BH a friend pulled me back, literally at the last minute. I *think* I'm on steadier ground now. A few things that got me back on track:

- A slip is just that, a warning sign to get up and make a u-turn ASAP, but *not* a fall. Don't let the YH convince you that "Oh here you go.." . You already know, falling **isn't** inevitable. If you listen to him, you'll just keep on slipping, feeling worse and worse all the while.
- For me, once I cracked 90 days, the streak didn't really motivate me. I've replaced my focus with smaller **goals**, like no YouTube for a week etc, avoiding certain internet use, more related to yellow behaviors, now that I've pushed back the red behaviors.
- With regard to the last point, I have a good friend that I check in with about the above goals, he in turn sets his own goals with me, essentially **accountability buddies** for each other.
- Once I did the above for a few weeks, I no longer felt like I was in "slip-mode", which is very empowering, similar to the feeling I had during days, 1 - 90. **I felt like I had control again.**
- Lastly, I started getting serious about reading TBOTG. It's time to stop playing defense,

and go on the offense. I think it's the only way forward for me, and the greats here swear by it!

I hope something here works for you! Don't forget, you **aren't**? the same person as you used to be, and also, these are deep deep habits, it's normal for them to resurface. Not a ??????! Feel free to reach out! You got this!

With much love,

iwantlife

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by cleanmendy - 14 Jan 2025 02:03

Your posts are so so inspiring, you really dont give in. You persevere through every slip and fall.

Thank you for inspiring me.

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by cleanmendy - 14 Jan 2025 02:19

Your posts are so so inspiring, you really dont give in. You persevere through every slip and fall.

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by authenticaved - 18 Jan 2025 23:24

So, this past week, after 190 days clean, I fell. Oy, tatte.

Yes, it's sad to think about what happened. It's tough seeing that counter at a single-digit number. I try not to think what my wife, chavrusas, etc. would think of me if they could see the CCTV footage.

Warning: Spoiler!

But on the other hand, I'm noticing that I'm also a little relieved. And I don't mean that it "took the edge off," in the way I might have used to think about it. I mean that as the months went on and the number kept climbing, it almost became an ever-growing Jenga tower, each layer of bricks weighing heavier on the foundation and threatening to make an even more dramatic mess upon falling.

Thoughts like, "the first streak is the only pure one," "you can only get this high once, better not screw it up," "falling will reveal that you haven't really changed," etc. were weights I carried every day. Falling is allowing me to put those weights down and set myself straight. *I have* really changed. I *can* still do this. I fell and the tower didn't come crashing down.

Did I get a bruise? For sure. Maybe even a sprained ankle. But am I up and swinging again? Hell yeah. Til' my last dying breath.

AE

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by chaimoigen - 18 Jan 2025 23:38

Here's a warm hand.

Yeah, authentic change isn't defined by external markers, but by the internal ones. If you are maintaining a streak by the edge of your fingernails, but teetering on the brink every day, that's not the cleanliness that you're looking for.

And conversely, if you had a fall, but nevertheless get back up on the horse, and work on **offense** -on those internal lessons that helped you become the man you are today and will keep on developing. If you get into a place internally where you are healthily growing and in connection with what you *really* want. If you're keeping to cleanliness and Tahara not to maintain the streak but because it's your *Razon*: The you're certainly deserving of the moniker Authentic Eved.

Hang on, you're a good guy. You can (continue) do(ing) this!!

Chaim Oigen

(ps. It's still worthwhile to pay extra attention and put in extra effort for the first little while after the fall, because there's poison in your blood and heart for a while, and it's easier to fall again, which isn't what you want).

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by Muttel - 18 Jan 2025 23:52

190 days of purity

remembering our hours long talk in the shiva asar betamuz heat,

your sincerity, clarity, and ability

shining through as you stepped up with strength and humility

one fall doesn't define you at all

i know you'll pick up and continue to roll,

I bet you already need directions

don't know where to find it

or where it's residing.

AE, the love I feel for you is deep and strong,

I look forward to see you beat the damned beast and prove him wrong!

Muttel

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by authenticceved - 28 Feb 2025 14:22

The beginning of this week was rough for several reasons. Stress, triggers, unexpected disappointments (I thought he was a meikel!), the works. Was feeling very vulnerable to the YH and almost got in the "falling is inevitable" mindset. It's crazy looking back from how I'm doing as the week comes to a close, it genuinely feels like the beginning of this week must have occurred a month ago.

I'm coming out with one or two ????? that I hope to have time to write down on motzei shabbos, but for now I need to at least express my ???? ????.

Thank you to Hashem for showing me a shining example of how a tough beginning doesn't have to translate into a train wreck of a week, for guiding me through the ups and downs, for investing in me time and again despite those ups and downs.

A heartfelt thank you to the chevra from this site who I leaned on this week. You empower me to be my truest self, and offer your valuable time and listening ear. **Above all, I cherish our friendship.** I am so fortunate to have found this site to have been found on this site. Thank you.

Wishing everyone a Gut Shabbos!!

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AE

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Re: Leap of Faith

Posted by authenticived - 01 Mar 2025 23:16

One idea that came out of last week I wanted to share:

This place attracts a lot of people who are shteigers by nature — Always looking for the next step, another midda, another madreiga. I don't know about you, but I find it so disheartening when I have to do something that makes me feel like I'm moving backwards.

I don't want to ask for help in a way that I haven't needed to in a long time, for example. I guess the internal narrative is, "I'm past that, I'm above that... Or at least I should be... I better be..." That's what my idea of progress looks like. If I still need that crutch that I used to need, then that means I haven't been going vaiteir, right?

One night last week, I called a friend and stayed on the phone while I showered. Ok, maybe it was two nights. Listen, I just didn't trust myself, and as much as I wanted to hold on to the narrative about "where I'm holding," I wanted to walk out clean even more.

But when I reflected on the experience, I realized something. It is so much harder to ask for the same exact help now than it was before. The nisayon of needing to ask for that help 200+ days after having my eyes opened was one I wouldn't have been able to handle earlier. So, if asking for help on day 5 vs. day 50 vs. day 500 are three challenges of completely different calibers, then that means I've just been faced with one of my most difficult nisyonos to date. And I swallowed my pride, put on my big boy pants*, and called a friend. That's something to feel good about, not the opposite. That's progress, not the opposite.

*figurative pants; I shower in a onesie, much more comfortable.

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