

Just tryin to get stronger

Posted by truth929 - 21 Apr 2010 03:04

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Since I am a newcomer on this site, (but certainly not with these struggles) I figured that I should introduce myself. Too make a long story short, It's only very recently that I realized that I was trapped and enslaved to some of my desires. When I finally came to this point, I looked back in retrospect and realized that for the past four years or so, my life has been leading this circle of acting out, guilt, regret, swear I will never even think about doing it again, then falling again and round and around we go. For some reason, I could go a few weeks clean but then out of nowhere I would suddenly become overwhelmed and the clean streak ends. For so long I figured I needed some more mussar or more effort in my avodas Hashem. For so long I tried so many different tactics in order to cut it out, but somehow down the line my mood would get down and back to the ol' habits. Having these drives and seemingly uncontrollable and demanding needs put me in the worst mental states. I found myself depressed and anxious which just made everything worse. A few weeks ago, I told myself that "I want out of this" – I just can't handle going through this all the time and I need to get help. Ironically, just saying that to myself, giving up in my own mind helped me out a lot as I felt relieved. Almost for the first time in so long I was being honest to someone, ended up being myself. For the past two weeks I have been doing a lot of reading with the handbooks, forum threads, 90 day charts etc... And I honestly feel better just by being able to associate with people who understand and who have gone through similar challenges. I am trying to take things day to day but I am desperately seeking advice on how to proceed slowly but diligently. I have been trying to take the chizuk e-mails seriously and am trying to make connections here to discuss things with people on this site. I still feel as if any day now I will feel overwhelmed and then I will act out, but I know I can't think that way. I'm trying to "surrender" and let go but it's tough. Anyways, just wanted to get out there and say hey.

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger

Posted by briut - 14 May 2010 16:27

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Dov, I really like the thought about balancing on a 2x8 IN THE AIR versus one ON THE FLOOR. For me, that's SO TRUE. So if I can just IMAGINE myself being grounded (however one might interpret that), the "struggle" is really just gym class and not circus act. Wow.

Thanks. Gut Choidesh, gut Shabbos Koidesh....

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger

Posted by Dov - 14 May 2010 17:50

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[silentbattle wrote on 14 May 2010 15:22:](#)

Dov - but in SA, don't you say how many days sober you are?

For about three years I didn't. I'd just introduce myself and say , "...and I am grateful for today's sobriety"...till my sponsor suggested I start saying my date (Feb 28th, 1997) in order to encourage newbies that it really *is* possible. If it seems that it is becoming a problem for me, it won't matter what my sponsor thinks, and I'll stop saying my date at all, again!

Funny thing once happened when I knew I was something like about 2 years sober: I shared in a meeting that I was still sensitive to and powerless over lust and that I saw selfishness and unfairness in my own behavior toward my wife. OK. Big woop. So, after the meeting, this guy gives me this twenty minute lecture about how he is sober for a month now, so he needs to tell me that selfishness really bad...and warned me that if I didn't quit treating my wife like crap, I'd be in big trouble...he also reminded me that the reason I was still having problems with lust was probably because of my selfishness, anyway.

I sat there the entire time, thinking "this just *has* to be *Hashem* talking to me here, cuz *this* guy is a lunatic. I'd better shut-up and listen closely," and just thanked the rather angry-appearing fellow. The very fact that I had a *terrific* temptation to tell him something like, "Hey chump, G-d has so far helped *me* stay sober twenty times longer than He has helped *you* be sober, so I must be doing *something* right, so **shut the hell up!**" meant to me that I had better **just shut the hell up.**

I had not started announcing my sobriety date yet in those days, or this newbie would probably have chewed *before* he bit me...maybe not! It was just funny, though. I wonder how many *real* wet new guys this fella has turned off by his 'shoving your face in it' methodology, and I hope I never do that to anyone.

Thanks, bye!

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by truth929 - 16 May 2010 17:48

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Fellas, thanks for the support. Interestingly when I act out, despite the horrible regret, I actually start feeling better the next day, it's like the anxiety/depression is gone and I'm ready to begin again. Scary but that's what happens. Question - when the feelings come that you NEED this very badly - at that moment it seems impossible to say no - what does one do in that situation, I don't know if just laughing and saying "I don't need this right to make me feel better" is going to work for me. For me, I feel that I just don't have a way out. when those obsessional crazy feelings start.

In any event, I am starting a new job shortly in a new office with a whole new set o challenges, going to start re-reading the manuals and e-mails to get stronger.

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by silentbattle - 17 May 2010 03:25

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Obviously, the idea is to avoid the fight entirely, but sometimes, that takes some tricks, when things get close - and I think that everyone needs to find the bag of tricks that works best for them.

For me, imagining the situation where I'll be tempted, helps - I imagine myself being tempted, and in my mind, I picture myself getting up and walking away. I do this a few times, so when I actually find myself being tempted, I've already built into my head the response of walking away. Doesn't mean it'll be easy, but it gives me the option of another script to follow.

Along the same lines, have something to do when those urges hit - make sure you've got something you can get away to do, whether it's going for a walk, reading a book, playing a game, etc.

There actually was one time when I laughed - but for me, it wouldn't work to say "I don't really need this now." What made it funny for me, at the time, was the realization, the clear, actual understanding, that it was the y"n (or addiction) trying to convince me, and that it was *total BS!* I laughed because I thought to myself, "you're trying to convince me that this will be so wonderful, but I already know how wonderful it feels to be clean - it feels great, and nothing you can offer me will be better than that!"

That's just a few ideas - play with those, come up with your own, share them with us!

This is knowledge that you have, that can help you shift your way of viewing the situation. It may be easier to use this after you've been clean for a while - or not! Other people here have said that they've used this strategy successfully at times.

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by Dov - 17 May 2010 04:21

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How about get some guys you can call with quick little admissions of trouble so that you can then put them past you and get back to work. And instead of looking at it as a challenge to stay

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by truth929 - 17 May 2010 22:38

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Silent battle, Dov, - shkoiach those are both great ideas. Gonna try to take both of those approaches in the coming days. Thanks so much. You both mamesh made my day.

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by truth929 - 18 May 2010 20:31

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Dear Yidden, have a great shavuos. I'm starting to realize that there really is a G-d out there who really likes me and is rooting for me to win.

Quick Haarah - I personally like sports. In fact in all sporting games I root for the underdog. I honestly believe that I am vicariously living the lives of these athletes. I love watching a great, intense match-up where the underdog comes back to win in an outright war. I realize now that I need to start being the hero of my own life and defeat all obstacles in my path.

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by Dov - 18 May 2010 21:06

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Wow...and you are probably speaking for a few of us, too. Thanks, Truth man

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by silentbattle - 21 May 2010 07:50

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Very true...if we can see our lives as a dramatic struggle, it can be easier...and that's exactly what it is - we just have trouble seeing ourselves as dramatic heroes...

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by Dov - 21 May 2010 13:42

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Not arguing with Silentbattle at all, but **most** of the time I need the quiet, calm attitude that I am just another little fellow and this is my little struggle about another silly little temptation, no matter how *huge* I think they are. I need to realize that in lust, I create a mountain out of  
Certainly it should not be my goal to  
make a big freaking deal about every pretty woman who walks by me! Our goal **is** to basically be able to ignore them, no? Isn't *ignoring* more like *minimizing* the issue? Making a huge deal out of it (the image, the desire, the struggle, and the victory) will just make it a *bigger* deal in my own head, rather than allowing it to be just more road kill.

Often, when I make that desperate call for help, the biggest help is the fellow addict on the other end of the line reminding me to take it easy and remember what I was busy doing before getting lost in this nuttiness and to surrender and just let it pass. To laugh about how silly the entire "battle" in my head is! That helps me a lot. It's nice to be in reality, for a change.

In the bigger perspective, I agree fully with SB: whether I follow the lady around at the supermarket to get a better look at her, go onto YouTube just to check this thing out, just listen to the radio story about Tiger, or look into that People magazine on the table *may in fact be a huge turning point in my very life*. My behavior one way or the other will most-likely affect the quality of my avodah, marriage, and job. However, **within that struggle itself**, it is essential that I forget all that and just see me as I am right then: a sweet little guy with an another little moment of struggle that will pass and be like a wisp of fog. After the struggle is over, I'd rather not rejoice over-much, but just let it be road kill. Hashem will make me grow, don't worry. Better let it stay road-kill than give it bigger real-estate in my mind. After all, that's what it wants!

While the dramatic nature of the struggle might seem to be a great motivator, getting "right-sized" is usually even more valuable for me.

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by truth929 - 27 May 2010 11:56

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So recently I have been falling :-\ . Nevertheless, I am trying to get up and get stronger. I had an important thought about the one day at a time approach that is so crucial to getting sober. It's not about counting one day at a time. I don't see how that does anything besides for counting lots of days. But at the end of the "days" you're the same person really unchanged except for the fact that you have miraculously survived nisyonos for a length of time. You're kind of like a dry drunk. Instead I think that I have to utilize each day to find ways to improve myself in all areas. To live each day for me I think means to use the most out of each day to look at myself honestly. Personally, I need to stop focusing on the one day at a time and start living one day and then the counting will come on its own. I think.

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger

Posted by silentbattle - 28 May 2010 02:54

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Absolutely - you certainly need to grow, and just white-knuckling through each day is not enough.

However, I think that the idea behind "one day at a time" is not to just make it through - it's that all we can focus on is one day at a time - but in that day, the goal is to grow, to live life, to improve, to become a better person...I think that the 12 steps are built around this concept.

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by truth929 - 08 Jul 2010 13:12

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It's been a while since i've posted. Similarly, I have started falling recently more than usual. Coincidence?. Anyways, I wanted to ask yall seriously - how in the world can I really start working on my problem here. I've been reading the e-mails and such but I feel like I need a serious plan to make real changes in my life. Does anyone have any concrete ideas for me to begin. I want to change!!!!

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Re: Just tryin to get stronger  
Posted by Jooboy - 08 Jul 2010 15:23

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Have your tried a live SA meeting or working the 12 steps?

Whatever your program I find the most important thing is consistency. Commit to something that you will do EVERY day to maintain sobriety.

Hatzlacha in finding your path!

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