

Sholom's Mindfulness Recovery Path

Posted by tiefster88 - 22 Feb 2018 17:19

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Hi everybody,

I am posting on this website for the first time. I have tried a few different methods in the past to recover. The highest quality for me was the mindfulness app programs for addiction by Judson Brewer.

In the past I was sober using this program for months and didn't have to struggle with difficult cravings as much. However after so many weeks I lost the emotional push to keep up with the program. Other things came up in life and this got pushed to the side. Eventually a craving came along and knocked me over.

This time I am going through the program again in combination with a Taphsic neder. I hope that posting my insights of the program on here can help me with my program and staying sober. If anybody else reads it and gains something that can help them then that would be a great bonus.

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Being Kind to Ourselves

Posted by tiefster88 - 11 Mar 2018 12:29

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When trying to recover from an addiction we can be extremely hard on ourselves. We have a hard time accepting ourselves. We beat ourselves up for not being able to deal with our lust. We compare ourselves to others.

We are all so good at self-hating. We mess up then we fall into the Review and Regret. Beating ourselves up is made up through the same type of habit formation that sets lusting in motion. There is some perverse reward we get from this. Maybe it's just some sense of control because we are the ones beating ourselves up. And this keeps us coming back for more.

The loving-kindness meditation (I'm not going to write it out here) can help teach us to go easy on ourselves. We make ourselves feel worse and more contracted by judging and beating ourselves up. This may help us move more towards expansion.

It can help us to accept others and ourselves, as we are, and learn from it. It's a capacity that we all have and can draw upon at any time. A genuine well wishing that we offer to ourselves and others. We learn to see clearly when we are doing the opposite- judging ourselves. This gives us a contrast so we can see what we actually get from self judgment and if we can see the judgment is not helpful even painful. It helps us to drop this and build the kindness more because kindness feels better.

There are 3 parts:

1. Loving-kindness praises to help you stay centered.
2. An image of the person that you are sending loving-kindness to.
3. The feeling of kindness that might arise in your body as you do this practice.

This also may be another reason about why a technique that I read about on GYE works so well. When someone feels the temptation to stare at a woman with his eyes and continue lusting after her, he davens to Hashem for that woman, for her health, happiness, nachas from children, good marriage and relationships etc. This helps people with their cravings a lot.

One of the reasons this could be working is because when a person is triggered by a woman he gets a craving, if he were to continue lusting after her, he would be feeding that craving and the brain will just come back for more. So if he well wishes this woman or davens for her wellbeing he is taking his mind off the lust and instead tapping into this feeling of kindness which feels like a warm expanding sensation in the body. This basically replaces the beginnings of cravings that he was feeling before. Instead of the being consumed by the uncomfortable craving that our body wants to get rid of by lusting, we now are full of the great feeling of kindness which fills our body with an expanding warmth.

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### Our Inner Screaming Child

Posted by tiefster88 - 12 Mar 2018 12:25

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We can explain lust with the Moshol of a screaming child. A child screams because he wants something and you as the parent want him to stop screaming. All your child wants is a lollipop.

Think of your lust as the child's tantrum. The lollipop represents the anything we reach for when craving lust to make ourselves feel better.

But what should you do? Yell at the child? That might make the screaming worse.

Gag the child. That will stop the screaming in the short term, but you know what will happen as soon as you take the gag away.

You could just give him a lollipop. Congratulations, You've just taught your child to scream for lollipops. You have just taught him that screaming is a good way to get what he wants.

What might you do instead. Here is a novel concept. **Just let him scream himself out!** What?

Have you ever seen a child scream forever. Sometimes they scream so long that you think their head, or your head, might explode.....but it never does.

What happens instead? Eventually the child gets tired and stops.

Let's unpack this metaphor. We are not talking about the first trigger of lust when a woman walks by or a thought pops into our head. We are talking about the first reaction after the lusts hits. Our craving may feel so uncomfortable that we may want to do anything to make it go away. The screaming in the moshol is that uncomfortable feeling of craving and the behavior or thinking of lust is the lollipop. The reward or result is the temporary stopping of the screaming.

In the real world if our child really needs something like they need their diaper changed, if we keep giving them lollipops to stop them crying, it wont make their wet diaper go away. We have to be aware of what's going on. And if we aren't in the mindset to be able to figure out what our own inner child needs we will keep feeding it in ways that aren't nourishing. We will keep those habit loops going and miss the opportunities to heal on a deeper level.

This is a critical point. Assuming that his needs are met, what does a child get from screaming for a lollipop for a long time and not getting one?

He or she learns that this isn't a very effective strategy. What will he do the next time he screams for a lollipop? Likely, won't scream as loud or as long, because he didn't get rewarded the last time. He learns that screaming doesn't get him what he wants.

It might be hard to take this screaming the first couple of times but this is the only way to teach your inner child this important lesson. The more you do this, the more you have a well behaved child.

The same is true with lust, the more you get curious about what cravings feel like, the more you bring a kind curiosity to the urges to do something to make this craving go away, the less of a pull these urges have over you the next time. You start to break the lust habit loop. You are more in control to get, your actual needs met, instead of actually feeding these urges.

For example, instead of habitually beating yourself up, you can stop and see if you need some comfort and care, and if that's the case you can offer yourself some loving-kindness in that moment. That is true nourishment.

Mindfulness is about being fully aware and turning towards our experiences, without trying to change them. It's not that we can force the craving to stop. Instead we notice that we don't have to be sucked in by them. We can get curious. We can pull up a chair and watch the craving show. And by watching we can start to notice something really important. That these feelings come and go. Using that kind gaze of curiosity ask yourself "what do these feel like right now?"

You can identify the feelings and you can watch them come and go, instead of reactively reaching for the fix. By watching them, we can choose not to act on them. Each time we do this the cravings of lust have less and less control over us. We realize we don't have to feed them. And the more we get curious about them, or even breath into them using the breathing exercise, the easier this is to do.

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Chazara

Posted by tiefster88 - 13 Mar 2018 12:59

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This program is about a long-term and sustainable change in our relationship to our emotions and ourselves. Unfortunately there aren't any quick fixes when we have laid down habits for such a long time. But taking it one day at a time we can do it. Each step we take builds the momentum for the next one.

We set goals

- Long term - to achieve something in the long run such as not being full of lust cravings
- Short term- like breathing into cravings, body scan, help break training into bite size pieces so we stick to it

We broke the lust cycle down into 5 stages, so we realize that this is all happening automatically inside of us and we can be mindful at each stage of the process to break the cycle

- Trigger
- Why
- What
- How
- Results

We talked about what lust cravings are and how they got built up with the habit loop process

- We see we are habitually dealing with lust cravings in ways that don't fix the problem in the long term
- With mindfulness, if we can turn towards our experience of craving, instead of running away, we can see what it's like if we add a different fuel, curiosity.

We got to know the triggers of cravings

- They can be external
- Also internal, and can build on themselves

We practiced the Body Scan meditation

- By building a curiosity of what's going on in our body we build an awareness of the territory of our own experience
- Can improve our ability to concentrate because we are practicing bringing our minds back to a specific object when they wander

We explored what the science has to say about lust

- By knowing what brain networks get activated during lust it can help us to map out what we feel like

Learning to use our capacity for love to be kind to ourselves and others

- Lovingkindness is naturally rewarding- When we are truly wishing well to ourselves and others, that warm expanding quality of our experience feels good.
- This reward feeds back to train our brains to do this more
- Doesn't depend on external factors or positive self talk
- Just pull out loving kindness and rest on how it feels in our body

Moshol of screaming child

- Another way to look at habit loop
- Helps us to differentiate between needs and wants
- The moshol can be helpful to think about when we have cravings

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Re: Chazara

Posted by Markz - 14 Mar 2018 01:14

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Gr8posts!

Keep them coming ;-)

Your posts are a little long for my standards, but if it works for you and you're working it, and not sweating, then cool!!

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Three Gears of Mindfulness for Addiction

Posted by tiefster88 - 14 Mar 2018 13:21

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Thanks Markz! It's good to know that people out there are reading at least part of what I am writing. Sorry they are so long but that is just each module of my recovery program. I try to write them shorter but it is such good stuff it is hard to shorten it too much! Most of the stuff I am just transcribing from the program but some stuff is just from me. From now on I think I will write my own stuff in blue to differentiate.

We can think of going through the program like riding a bicycle or driving a car. Have you ever tried riding your bicycle or driving your car up a steep hill, but were in the wrong gear? It can feel like a quite a struggle. This is why vehicles have gears in the first place –low gears help us get up hills and high gears help us gain speed and momentum once the lower gears get us going.

We can look at moving through the program, as having three gears.

**First gear is all about recognizing our habit loops**, and seeing the different components really clearly –trigger or behavior or result/reward. For example, what triggered my craving? What did I reach for to quiet my craving? Did we think lustful thoughts. What was the reward. What did I get from lusting? Or was it a lustful thought that jumped into our head that got us caught up in a craving and then a lust thought snowball? Thinking can be the trigger and the behavior!

The more we can recognize all of our different habit loops and name the different stage (trigger, behavior, result) we are in, the more quickly and easily we can step out of them.

If we are in autopilot that is like moving in reverse. First gear is all about simply seeing our habit loops this gets us moving so that we can now shift into **second gear: disenchantment**. Here

we explore the outcomes or reward part of our behaviours or thoughts. Our habit loops are so habitual, that we might have long forgotten what the actual reward is that we get from them. By actual reward we mean everything that comes as a result of getting lost in a lust thought stream or doing something to make ourselves feel better.

To explore how rewarding our rewards are, **we ask the question: what did I get from this?** and drop into our immediate experience to see what the effects or results of our thoughts or behavior actually are. How much better feel? How long did this feeling last? Am I feeling guilty? What did I get from getting caught up in a ball of lust thoughts?

When we see clearly what we actually got, all the feelings, the emotions, the thoughts that come from fantasies or acting out, our brains start to re-calibrate around how rewarding the reward actually is, beyond scratching that itch of craving that we're just trying to get immediate relief from, we're clearly seeing that it isn't as good as we remembered. When we let ourselves really experience the actual effects of our habits, we become less and less excited to do this again because our brains are getting re-calibrated about what the real results are- right now. Over time, the more we see this, the more disenchanted we become with this behavior. Not by beating ourselves up, but just by noting it. This is how our disenchantment builds. That's second gear. Our car is picking up speed.

Now that we've more clearly seen our actual rewards that come from lust and are not excited to continue these thoughts and behavior, we have enough speed to shift into **third gear where we can focus in on craving itself**. We're ready to start using the practices such as RAIN and Noting. Using RAIN, we drop into a curious awareness and note what is happening in our bodies when we are having a craving so we can ride out that craving instead of feeding it. Each time we do this, we strengthen our mindfulness skills.

**Now the next thing is really important.** Many people have come to the program with the old habit of trying to control or force their behavior or even trying to think their way through a problem. They shift into first gear no problem as they start to recognize their habit loops. Then try to force themselves to ride out their cravings. This is like trying to shift from first to third gear. What happens? It doesn't work. They didn't have enough speed so their car stalls. And they try it again and again, and then start wondering what's wrong with the car instead of asking, do I know how to drive this thing? Don't fall into this trap!

Be patient. **Make sure you know how to shift between first and second gear**, taking your time to really see if you are disenchanted from your behaviors on an experiential level, knowing this in your bones, rather than on a thinking level such as –I know this is good for me, if I just



push it a little more it'll work this time. We have to truly be disenchanted from our old behaviors. Not excited to continue in our old habit patterns. This is really critical.

You'll know if you've got enough speed to shift into third gear. How? You'll try shifting, and the car will either get into third and pick up more speed, or stop. If you feel like you're in the wrong gear, a big hint here is checking your mind state. Is it open and curious, or contracted, closed down, trying to force things? If it's trying to force things, drop back into second gear, and explore those rewards a bit more. The open curious attitude will build that disenchantment that allows you to pick your speed back up for that smooth shift back into third gear. And then you're off!

Oh, one more thing. Along this journey we're all going come across all sorts of hills and valleys. Some days we're driving up a big hill. We're in first gear and that's ok. We can't force it into third; **we simply have to recognize that today is a first gear day.**

Don't worry, as you keep driving, your skills will grow and strengthen no matter what gear you're in. Over time as you gain speed and learn to shift and then drive more and more in third gear, you'll have enough speed and momentum to even drive up those hills in third gear. At this point, nothing can stop you.

So keep these gears in mind as you go through the program, checking in as much as possible to see what gear you're in. Don't force things. **If you're struggling, first check to see if you're in the wrong gear, or trying to shift from first to third too quickly**, and then simply downshift to second or first. Don't forget, no matter what gear you're in, you're moving closer to your goal. Enjoy the ride!

Note: My personal feeling is that in my situation right now having just come out of a particularly painful bout of lust, I have enough disenchantment from my behavior that I can ride out cravings. I cannot stomach the idea of lusting right now. I am not going to feed the cravings today. But I know this doesn't usually last. The main pitfall in the past for me was that I lost my disenchantment later when I forgot how painful the results of lusting actually are. The lust obsession slowly persuades my brain that maybe a little lusting with my glass of milk will be OK ;-). Therefore my plan is to maintain my disenchantment with some "retro-active second gear" which is a concept that we will be learning about later, so that I will retain the ability to ride out my cravings in the future. Also if I C"V do have a lust fantasy I can use second gear in that case to maintain disenchantment of lust, although I want to ride out any cravings to have these fantasies because they don't do me any good and they just lead to more bigger cravings to act out.[spoiler][spoiler]

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Re: Three Gears of Mindfulness for Addiction  
Posted by ieeyc - 14 Mar 2018 13:44

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keep em coming!

  

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What does a lust craving feel like?  
Posted by tiefster88 - 15 Mar 2018 14:27

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Thanks ieeyc for the encouragement.

I just had a craving a couple of minutes ago to read something that would have for sure contained a lot of VERY triggering stuff! There was a certain fact of life I was curious about, that happens to be very triggering. I just had to know all about it!

I was started paying attention to my feelings. The feeling of craving is a quite a bit more elusive and harder to pin point than the feeling of anxiety for example.

But firstly there was the feeling excitement where the adrenaline instantly started activating my sympathetic nervous system, preparing my body for "action" with the fight or flight response. This adrenaline rush felt like the contracting feeling of excitement in my chest.

Then I felt this emotional feeling all down the back of my throat. It was a lot more elusive but it is definitely there for me at the start of a lust craving. I don't know what that feeling was in scientific terms, maybe some dopamine flowing in my brain somewhere, maybe something else.

I didn't have long to investigate though because the feelings seemed to die down pretty quickly.

I didn't feel that I had that impulsive craving anymore. I still had thoughts that maybe I should check the info out though because I was "going" to check it out before. But I realized that it was probably blocked to me anyhow and decided to post here instead.

Another thing I realized is that reading triggering information is probably the main way that I end up getting back into acting out. I am not going to go straight back in to looking at inappropriate images right away! That would be disgusting! I am above that now. But just some forums to fulfill my curiosities about some important facts of life would be OK. It's just words. Even Torah has some quite triggering stuff for me in it. And then once I am reading that stuff there are crazy cravings and I am already in it anyway so why not just look at some inappropriate images and maybe a couple of videos once I am at it.

Maybe my Taphsic should cover triggering written material. But it is really hard to define. I only look at really moderate stuff, and I could find triggering material on any news website. (I love telling myself that and other people so that I can feel better about myself and this thought also leads to more acting out "Aw it's not so bad what your looking at, not even shmutz. They would put that kind of thing up on a billboard in front of children in certain states you have not even been to, so don't worry so much) Maybe we could say intentionally reading any triggering content. But it seems hard to define for me.

**Has anybody else ever had this issue with how to make gedarim against written material which is not even meant to be inappropriate but they find triggering? Maybe I should leave this open as a place where I can work my program?**

**I wonder if anyone else gets this feeling in their chest or back of their throat, or what kind of other bodily sensations other people get at the start of a lust craving.**

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Difficult Shabbos  
Posted by tiefster88 - 17 Mar 2018 22:50

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Gut Voch,

Shabbos was probably the most difficult day for me so far. I was thinking in the morning "Phew at least I have stopped acting out now for good. I can't see how I would ever go back to that. I am not even thinking about lustful things anymore so much, so there is no way I could get all the way to acting out"

But I remember from previous times that when I start thinking like this, it doesn't end well.

Anyway, some of the lust pictures that I had looked at in the past started jumping into my head while I was trying to take a nap and I gave them some attention. There was this one image that I remembered. It was one that I think of as being more innocuous and "beautiful" than the other images. My mind wants me to believe that this image is not really lust and its OK for me to think about this one. I kept trying to think about it without becoming aroused. But I did. The truth is that this image is just as much lust for me as any of the other images and for me maybe even more so.

But I didn't take my mind off of it right away like I have been when inappropriate thoughts entered during the last month.

I think after a month sober the emotional resistance I had from all the suffering has started to wain. That thought of "ah at least I don't have to worry about that lusting problem" was a sign that the emotions aren't what they were a couple of weeks ago. I'm sure there is still some but I am going to have to take some big steps this week to start to fill the gap.

I am going to focus on 2nd gear over the next few days, which is disenchantment. I am going to do some retroactive 2nd gear and write it out here and try and remember all the feelings associated with the results of lusting and acting out.

?If inappropriate thoughts do enter my mind that is OK and I am going to shift my mind from the thoughts in that moment to what feelings are happening inside my body right then.

Something I was thinking a lot over Friday and Shabbos is that this whole program is all really tzur mera. But I also need plenty of ase tov. I am going to need to connect more and more to Hashem because I need his help if I am going to have a chance.

For months and months before this I had basically given up. I started to think that there wasn't really a chance of me recovering. I was thinking "Look there are loads of other mitzvos and this is just one aveira that you do. You are doing well just to be frum and bringing up your kids to be good Yidden and for your wife. Just try to do as best you can in all the other mitzvos because you have been fighting this for over 15 years and not getting anywhere. This is a waste of your efforts and time. You have wasted 100's of hours on this.

But then I started a shiur with my Rov in a sefer that is really inspirational. This sefer suggests meditating on the greatness of Hashem. I think that it was mainly because I was thinking about the greatness of Hashem in the weeks before reembarking on sobriety that I was given a big hisorerus to try again.

So I want to continue learning this sefer, over the next few weeks. And I want to continue meditating on the greatness of Hashem.

At least I know how to meditate better after doing mindfulness on and off for the last 2 years. But the truth is that anybody with a lust addiction knows how to meditate pretty well. That's a skill that you've picked up very well when lusting. If you can meditate on the greatness of Hashem as well as you meditated on all those inappropriate pictures all those years, where you put 100% of your concentration in and nothing else entered your mind for hours, then you are a pretty great meditator my friend!

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Second Gear

Posted by tiefster88 - 18 Mar 2018 09:13

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Now that we have been mapping out our habit loops for a while and noticing our triggers, lust cravings, inappropriate thoughts or acting out behaviors and the rewards or the results of our thoughts or actions and all the body sensations and feelings associated with them, we are already starting to step out of our habit loop. Our car has already started moving in first gear.

**Now we can shift into second gear- disenchantment. What is disenchantment?**

Reward based learning is based on what our brains perceive as- rewards. These rewards shape our behavior. Our habit loops that surround lust are so automatic that we might have long forgotten what the actual reward is that we get from them. By actual reward we mean everything that comes as a result of our short term solutions. The short term solutions are thinking about lust, looking at shmutz, acting out and so on.

These are the external rewards. Those rewards that come from getting something or doing something outside of ourselves in order to get temporary relief from lust cravings. For example, if I watch shmutz or masturbate, I feel better, I need something external to myself to feel better.

These are different from internally based rewards and behaviors, those that come from things like curiosity, simply being with whatever is happening and observing it with a kind, curious awareness. That awareness is within all of us, it's internal. We don't need to get something or do some behavior, beyond being aware in itself.

**To explore how rewarding our behaviors are we ask ourselves “what do I get from this” then we drop in to our immediate experience to see what the result or outcome actually is. How much better do I feel after I actually did it? How long did this feeling of release last.**

When we clearly see the actual outcomes, our brains start to recalibrate around how rewarding the reward actually is. We start to see beyond the initial relief that we get from scratching that itch of craving. And how much is this like poison ivy. The more we scratch the more it sticks around and it spreads.

We may start seeing that our habitual behaviors aren't as good as we remembered. We might notice that they don't last that long or even that they don't always provide that relief from stress or cravings that we are looking for.

More importantly we can start comparing those externally driven rewards to more internally driven ones. To compare extrinsic - if I eat chocolate I feel better to intrinsic rewards- those that we have within ourselves, such as curiosity or self kindness. We don't need to get or do anything to tap into those behaviors and rewards. We simply have to remember that they are available.

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Hard Day at the Big City

Posted by tiefster88 - 22 Mar 2018 21:22

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I had to go to a big city nearby today. There were so many triggering woman there compared to the town that I live in. I still have a lot of lust in me and although I am getting better at not having fantasies it is still really hard for me to be shomer my einayim. I feel that "how can I miss out on these woman around me", "how can I not know and experience the true nature of the world", "why would Hashem put these women in front of me, if not for me to look at".

Also on the bus its so hard for me. I rarely have to go on the bus at home. But in the city there are woman getting on and off the bus and walking up and down the isles and there are tons of woman walking around outside all dressed in different ways. All different ages and nationalities. And the bus is jiggling me. And theres nothing else to do on the bus because I get nauseous when I read on buses.

I just wasn't prepared for the onslaught of triggers that I was to get the whole day. And this was in a religious city. In religious areas where most of the women were frum!

I literally felt that I was going to explode because I am so sensitive to lust after over a month of not acting out. But I was mindful and payed attention to my cravings. And I didn't take them as seriously as I did in the past. I didn't run to any internet cafes. And as I sit in my home at night back in my own town writing this, I notice that the cravings are gone. I didn't explode!

But I did have some thoughts when I had those cravings that maybe I should just forget all of this sobriety. Maybe I can't do it in the long term anyway. Maybe there are just too many triggers. Has Hashem maybe made this too hard for me? Can He really expect me to stay sober, when there are so many women dressed so exposedly walking around? And those were the religious women! Just wait until I go for a vacation next week in a non-religious city!

But I can't handle acting out. It just makes me so so miserable. So disconnected from Hashem. I feel like life is not worth living when acting out.

So I am going to continue working on my mindfulness and disenchantment for acting out.

I am going to try and learn about how to be dovek to Hashem as much as possible.

I am going to try and daven with much more kavanna and more mindfully.

I am going to think about how I can learn to be shomer my einayim. It seems that right now I can't surrender the right to look at women in the street. This is what I used to be like about thinking about shmutz. I used to think it was impossible not to think about shmutz all the time and control my thoughts at all.

But now through mindfulness I have learned how to focus my thoughts much better.

Now I just don't see how I can not look at every single woman that walks by.

Please Hashem send me the enlightenment that helps me work out how to do this!

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Retrospective 2nd Gear

Posted by tiefster88 - 23 Mar 2018 13:09

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I am going to remember back to a time I acted out and really feel all the feelings associated with it as part of the 2nd gear - disenchantment phase of my mindfulness program. When we really feel the feelings associated with acting out we become disenchanted with the results.

There is a link on the bottom of an article I am reading to another article with a video about shmutz.

And I just have such a strong feeling of curiosity and excitement in my body. The excitement feels like a contracted feeling in my chest and is radiating out. And the curiosity feels like a burning longing behind my throat and chest. These feelings of excitement and curiosity are much stronger than other anticipation that I get from other things I enjoy, like let's say, going to a new restaurant for the first time.

I start to think that if I can just read this article and and watch this shmutz, and see how long the shmutz was, and how the prutza felt during the filming and how she felt when watching it with her friends and family for the first time, then it will just be so exciting to fulfill the curiosity that I have and that I will become truly enlightened with this knowledge. I also think if I don't click



through to the article then I will be left with this unfulfilled curiosity and I will never be able to experience the slightly uncomfortable but exhilarating feelings that the prutza got from having to have been in a situation like that for the first time in her life.

Either I tell myself that everything will be OK and I click on it and this whole cycle restarts or I hold myself back but thoughts about the article and cravings keep entering my mind while I am trying to do other things and I eventually given in. I will then watch tons of similar and related videos wasting hours of time that I should be working until I act out all the way.

### After Acting Out

At first I feel a deep sinking. Like a void has opened up inside of me. I feel like I am in a daze and the world around just feels so awkward. Then I become filled with guilt and embarrassment. I feel disgusted with myself that I don't deserve to be in the world. And then I start beating myself up in my mind "How could I do this again? After going through this so many times before and promising myself not to do it again, what was I thinking? Am I ever going to learn? Am I just going to be in this perpetual state forever?"

Then I can't really emotionally connect to my wife or kids. I don't have any emotional energy to deal with them. And I feel so guilty to my wife. I start to be overly nice to her to make up for what I did even though she doesn't know. Whenever she is upset about anything I think that she must have found out that I was watching something. I keep asking her if it was anything that I did that made her upset, when really it is usually nothing to do with me.

And I just feel that everything is pointless. My job is pointless and all my hobbies. Nothing has any meaning. I just have to do everything like a robot without any feeling. The only thing that can give me some respite from all these feelings temporarily is more porn. Plus I have worse cravings anyway and have already given in. So I usually watch it several times a day for a few days.

I walk around with this fear that something really bad is about to happen to me or someone in my family. An impending doom. When I lie in bed I wonder if I will wake up in the morning or I will just die in my sleep. Sometimes as I fall asleep I feel like I am dieing.

This goes on until the pain is just so bad that I can't anymore and then I try and quit telling myself I can never do this again. It's just too painful. I manage to stop and then feel better after a few days.

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Re: Retrospective 2nd Gear  
Posted by ieeyc - 27 Mar 2018 01:59

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these are really great i feel so many similarities, i feel im growing alot from these post, i wish i could delve into my emotion the way you do, thanks!

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Sharing the burden of lust

Posted by tiefster88 - 28 Mar 2018 15:28

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Thanks ieeyc. It's a great feeling to know that others have the same struggles. Hashem could have made it that only I had this addiction to lust and all those triggers, and urges and feelings. It is such a loosening of the burden that there are so many others who a experiencing almost the same thing.

For a few months I had some GYE chavrusas and really enjoyed being able to sure the burden with others. They petered out after a few months but I definitely benefited. Then I joined SA and that was also great to connect with others but SA didn't work out for me in the long term. I wasn't bottomed out enough to be able to take the program seriously enough and be mevatel myself to what my sponsor wanted.

And they tried to show me that I was going to end up getting much worse in my addiction and do more serious acting out like what happened to others there. But I didn't see that happening with my addiction. It just seems like I had been looking at the same kinda "mild" stuff online for 15 years. It wasn't getting more explicit nor was I doing more risky stuff to be able to act out.

I didn't have any brain control, nor any way to deal with my cravings. So I was just giving into my cravings in thought but not acting out because of the peer pressure of SA. I remember that being some of the most difficult days of my life. Eventually I just couldn't live like that anymore decided it was worth it to act out. It wasn't even a quick decision but more of a deliberate one.

So I kind of just isolated myself for a couple of years again. But it's nice from when I meet friends and I can share some of my burden with them.

Now I have found mindfulness and have exercised my brain to give me much better control on my mind and thoughts. I can now identify my triggers and the resultant cravings and instead of turning to lust thoughts I can curiously feel what the cravings feel like inside my body.

I have learnt from paying attention to the feelings previously associated with acting out that the negative feelings that result from lust are really horrible and whatever benefits I get from lust are short lived and only let me feel better temporarily. Therefore when I feel into my cravings for lust, I can make the right choice just to sit with my cravings with a curious awareness until they pass, like they always do.

?I do still miss the opportunity of getting out of isolation and connecting with others who are struggling. Maybe one day I will have a GYE chavrusa again or maybe when I get a stronger hold on my mindfulness I will sponsor someone who wants to go down this path.

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Re: Sharing the burden of lust  
Posted by lionking - 28 Mar 2018 17:11

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Great post! I guess the mindfullnes is really working for you, it seems like you indentified what works and doesn't work for you.

Hatzlocha Rabba!

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