

3 years clean and counting! What I did and why

Posted by arkm4 - 03 May 2019 04:23

Hello everyone, Thank G-d, after being approximately 3 years clean I would like to attempt to spell out how I stayed clean. Not everyone will agree with my methods, but this is what I did. Please forgive me for writing a massive blob of text.

First, I asked myself: what things were stimulating my yetzer hara? Back then I was still watching TV shows online that were around PG-13 rated. I was also in college with non-Jewish women that forgot how to dress properly, and I was playing video games with images of women as well.

Over several months of hard work, I progressively switched my video games and TV for additional hours of Torah lectures online or other activities that would distract me like exercise or homework. The Torah I learned helped me tremendously, because there are few lecturers that deal with the consequences of wasting seed (Rabbi Mizrachi, Rabbi Yaron Reuven, Rabbi Alon Anava) and I would re-watch short clips every once in a while to remind myself of the punishment involved.

Another question I asked: do these images come to my mind at a specific time? I said yes! Almost always at night, when I lie in bed. This is important, and you'll see why soon. I fell many, many times (I actually lost count) but once I had removed the main sources of stimulating images out of my daily life they became less frequent in my mind over a period of a couple months.

I initially used a simple internet website blocker plug-in for Chrome to prevent me from watching TV shows, but eventually I turned it off for good. Like the Chofetz Chaim said (I'm paraphrasing): "the yetzer hara is like a crowd of people banging at your door. if you let them in, they take you over. However, if you don't answer the door, they will get the message and leave."

In addition to this method, if I felt that I couldn't mentally shake myself away from illicit thoughts, I would imagine one of three things: either the illicit image in my mind suddenly became disgusting (in my case I chose the mental image of maggots erupting from the body), or I would imagine the same thing done to my own body, or an image of what they would do to me in Gehinnom if I continued to waste seed. If for some reason I couldn't shake the illicit thoughts, then I forced myself to get up from my bed and start to walk around/go to the bathroom/release my pent up energy. I only returned to bed after making sure I was no longer aroused.

Even today (years later!) I still have the occasional image from back in the day. BH, I am able to swat it away like an annoying fly now. In addition, I continue to work with non-Jews that forget to put on clothing. This is because you have to have the right mindset in order to deal with the images that come up. This is where I may get controversy, as I describe my mindset for dealing with the images. We are all created with a yetzer hara, and we can choose to channel the energy we get into positive or negative actions. If you view the images in your head as "forbidden" you are certainly correct. However, I looked at them as "unfulfilled lust" that is being channeled at an incorrect time and an incorrect way. If you channel your energies of lust into energy/excitement for something else (in my case Torah), then you have a different mindset. To say that feeling lust is forbidden is nonsense because that is how Hashem made us, but we need to realize that the proper channeling of the lust is needed, not a complete negation of it. In more simpler terms: the thoughts themselves are bad, but the motivations for those thoughts and how you choose to act on them are under your control!

Other tricks I remember doing: similar to how the yetzer hara tricks you into hitting the snooze button every morning, you say the same thing to him! When you see an image come to mind, say to it "I'll look at you later, right now I'm busy/tired." This is what it means to be "lazy" and achieve good! Early on, I trained myself to always look at a woman's face, even if she wasn't physically attractive. In the event she has a very attractive face, learn to stare at people's foreheads when you talk to them.

I did my teshuva process without needing a phone filter, because I think too many filters make you overly sensitized to women's bodies too quickly. Suddenly your mind is starved and the first woman that looks moderately attractive causes arousal. **In summary:** the slow and steady approach I outlined above (where you remove the bad and replace with good) I think is the key to my success. Also you have to have the right mindset, where you view lust as something that can be channeled to good or bad actions. Fear of punishment is an absolute necessity but it should be together with appreciation that G-d still continues to give you another chance. Even if you fall, wake up in the morning with a new attitude "Thank G-d I'm still alive! If I'm alive, that means G-d has not given up on me, so I shouldn't give up on myself!" Depression is the #1 thing that draws people toward this sin! Don't give up!

Thanks for reading! Hope it was helpful!

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Re: 3 years clean and counting! What I did and why

Posted by Need a yeshua - 27 Oct 2019 17:09

Your post gave me lots of chizuk. I'm having issues seperating fear of punishment and appreciation for another chance. I know it logically but I'm suffering from anxiety and depression and therefore the fear of punishment is overwhelming.

Can you add any thoughts?

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Re: 3 years clean and counting! What I did and why
Posted by Here - 10 Nov 2019 18:44

I like what you wrote and your success says it all. I would like to know if you would like to work with me so I can achieve success like you. The only thing that keeps tripling me up (really me) is my wife. I asked her to shut the computer off before you leave and she just told me to do it. I think I need someone to be accountable to as I don't want to tell me wife. What do you think?

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Re: 3 years clean and counting! What I did and why
Posted by arkm4 - 04 May 2021 15:42

Concentration of the blessings is a great way to obtain appreciation for the things that G-d does for us. Think about the blessing after using the bathroom (asher yatzar). Our bodies are literally miracle machines!

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Re: 3 years clean and counting! What I did and why
Posted by arkm4 - 04 May 2021 15:44

Sorry for the late reply!

I can definitely work with you if you still need help.

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Re: 3 years clean and counting! What I did and why
Posted by Lou - 04 May 2021 19:47

thank you so much for this thread!

Not sure all the methods are applicable to me but the idea of hearing from someone that really did it as opposed to all who are currently struggling is a breath of fresh air

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