

My Framework-Driven Approach

Posted by Hawk3579 - 22 Feb 2023 04:12

This is my first post. I have been reading the forum and watching the GYE chizzuk videos for years. I've thought that I'll wait until I have been clean from GYE and GYA (Guard Your Actions, my term for not masturbating) for a long period of time, perhaps a year, before posting what's worked for me. I said to myself: who am I to post? I'm no rabbi, I'm no Tzadik.

So, let me begin by saying that this post is by no means meant to imply that these things have fully worked for me, to the point that I am fully clean. However, what is important is that these tools have helped me at different points and in different ways. I feel that if this post is helpful to even one person, it will be worth me taking the time to write it up.

I've been developing a concept called my Framework-Driven Approach. Basically, doing a post-op after something goes wrong and really asking myself: what were the conditions that led to that action? I think this is much more important than simply analyzing the end result.

To use an analogy, say a basketball team was playing terrible defense, and they wanted to improve their chances of winning. They come up with a solution: why don't we just put a lid on top of the hoop, to prevent the ball from going in? While technically this may work in the short-term, this misses the point (no pun intended). If you aren't playing any defense, the other team will find a way to score, one way or the other.

Bringing this back to our topic, I think if we simply focus on the end-result and say "I won't do this again", we are attacking the result but not the root cause of the problem.

So, what's been the biggest contributor to my problems?

For me, I think the biggest issues by far are when my normal schedule is thrown off, and/or when I have too much free time. Could be because a chavruta canceled on me, or my wife is out of town, or I finished up my work earlier than expected, or a combination of these things, or something else. The point is, I wind up with "extra" free time, and free time leads me to start thinking. And once I start thinking, I get in the ring with the Yetzer HaRah, and I inevitably lose.

I think the key thing to think about is what the Kotzker Rebber said: "I want people to refrain from wrongdoing, not because they fear sin, but because they don't have the time."

That's the key: to stay busy, so you don't have time to even be thinking about these things. I think once I start thinking about ways to get improper thoughts out of my head, it's almost already a step too late.

I need to find actual backup activities and things to do when my normal schedule gets thrown off.

If I think too much about GYE stuff, it dominates my life and I end up losing. I am best when I don't let it work me up and I treat it like it's not there.

Now to be clear, everything I'm writing above is regarding GYE. I think this is a battle that every man needs to face regardless of his sex life. However, I personally think (and I'm sure many will disagree with me) that GYA cannot be viewed in isolation from one's sex life. But maybe we'll leave that topic for another time.

Anyway, getting back to the topic at hand, it's all about setting up frameworks to better prepare and assess situations. Does it mean we'll never fail? No. But the hope is that it means we'll go farther between falls, and our next fall takes place at a higher level. And the idea is that at least in theory your fall is not random. Either you fell because you didn't follow the framework, or the Yetzer HaRah used some crazy tactic to trick us.

Oh, my wife is out of town this week? My ears should perk up, alarm bells should be going off. I should make sure to be extra vigilant this week. Maybe in extreme circumstances you need to establish extreme rules. What if we said that when the Mrs. is out of town, we will not bring our phone into the bathroom. Seems totally doable, right? Just gotta get some magazines/newspapers/books for reading material.

Or maybe we'll say after X time at night, we make sure to just go to bed (nothing good happens after midnight anyway).

In some of my post-ops, I realized that sometimes when I masturbated, I had been watching some inappropriate content on YouTube earlier in the night. This isn't content that I was necessarily even seeking out, but it was often shorts that popped up, and I watched them, and I think they had an effect by seeping into my brain subconsciously. One change I've made is deleting the YouTube app and installing the TED app. I felt I still needed something like YouTube, but specifically not a podcast (which I like), but a set of videos that are scrollable and accessible but also educational and high brow. The TED app has been great for that. It's amazing how just deleting an app can make a huge difference in your life. It's all about making these little tweaks that can potentially have big effects.

Another thing I find very helpful is journaling. It's definitely not something I do every day or even every month, but I find that it is useful for a few things:

1. Sometimes there are some thoughts/emotions you want to just get out but don't necessarily want to tell to another person
2. I like to actually write out goals for myself (not just GYE, but overall Avodat HaShem goals) and check-in from time to time to see how I'm tracking against those goals, and anything I need to course-correct to keep me on the right path
3. Looking back at prior journal entries gives me chizzuk, seeing how I dealt with different

situations/emotions in the past

While this post has been about what has worked for me, I thought to also include a short list of things that haven't worked for me. If these work for you, please feel free to disregard!

- I've found streaks to be counterproductive. I would get so caught up in the streak, it would create an immense amount of pressure, and I would be overly consumed with "keeping the streak alive". It also made the inevitable fall that much more difficult and depressing.
- I'm not a big fan of filters. I found that I was spending my time trying to figure out ways to get around the filters. I also would install apps that wouldn't even be detected based on simple browser filters.
- On that note, I think one of my biggest mistakes was to apply a strict definition as to what pornography is. There was a period of time for about three years that I hadn't watched any porn, and I even remember bragging to a friend about it. Meanwhile I was watching tons of inappropriate content on YouTube and Instagram that wasn't technically "porn." It took me a while to realize that the key question should not be whether something is technically porn, it should be whether this is something that God would approve of and brings me closer to God.

In closing, I hope this was helpful. Let's stay strong, stay positive, and most importantly, stay busy!

P.S. Please do not take offense if I do not respond to your PMs or forum posts, I am still experimenting with how much or little I want to be using and contributing to the site.

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Re: My Framework-Driven Approach
Posted by Markz - 22 Feb 2023 04:46

Overall a great post. I love it.

Thanks for sharing.

KOT

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Re: My Framework-Driven Approach

Posted by Yosef Hamevakesh - 22 Feb 2023 10:25

First of all Welcome to the posting crew!! It's really a big step, and be"h it should be a tool that will now help you to come clean.

Secondly, it sounds like you're pretty observant of what circumstances and situations lead up to your falls which is also a big deal, because it'll help you to avoid what triggers you and you can end up with a clear plan on how to keep winning.

Third, it sounds like you've come to the understanding that this fight isn't an all or nothing. You gotta keep fighting the battles, even though you may have falls along the way. The fact that you fell, doesn't mean that you failed, it's a normal part of growing higher (The fact that I didn't understand this made think I was hopeless and kept me depressed for years). This understanding can make a difference in the fight like the diff. btwn night and day.

In regards to what you said about streaks and filters, I would like to humbly state my opinion here:

Streaks are a great tool if you use them properly. Watching the number go up every day can be a huge boost and a reminder to what you really want and that your growing. Another thing which they can be a helpful for is that you can celebrate when you reach x amount of days. If the streak is something that you're obsessing over, than you might be right that it's not for you right now. But if the streak isn't the focal point, rather just a boost that's running in the background, it can help a lot.

In regards to filters, I think that for most of us, it's practically impossible to stay clean without one. We higher our chances of staying clean when we have one. I personally am very careful that I don't have apps which I can access content that my filter won't read. Also with probably any real filter you can easily block installing new apps which will have bad content.

Filters aren't foolproof, and if you find yourself constantly looking for ways around it (yes, it's normal and we've all been there), maybe do what HHM suggested me and many others: Get Webchaver. This step pretty much put a stop to my looking at bad content instantaneously.

Either way, Keep On Trucking.! We're happy for you to join the forums live, and hope that you stick around. Every one of us here gives everyone else chizuk, so we're happy that you decided

to open up ?????!

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