

Navigating the ocean of my life

Posted by amevakesh - 17 Apr 2024 10:21

For the past 267 days, there have been sunny skies, calm winds, the boat's been steady, with nary a thought to the pirates that lurk beyond the horizon.

However, clouds are gathering, waves are getting choppier, and worst of all, a cry from the barrelman in the crow nest, "Pirates ahead"!!! I've been warned.

As they get closer, thoughts are swirling through my mind. I hear their evil whisperings in my head. "You thought you were off our radar, not so fast." Will they succeed in overtaking the ship I've put so much effort in constructing?

They're faster, sneakier, and more cunning than I, and I know that once they come too close, I'm doomed. But, I have an itch that needs to be scratched, a void that has to be filled, and I'm having a difficult time doing so.

But one thing I've learned here at GYE. There's safety in numbers. So I'm sending out a call to my fellow mates, can anyone help me out in how to overcome these Bein Hazmanim pirates?

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life

Posted by amevakesh - 22 May 2024 02:33

[gye365s wrote on 21 May 2024 15:16:](#)

Your post reminded me strongly of the story of the half-eaten cake - only 4 minutes, recording on Torah Anytime linked here:

torahanytime.com/lectures/239335

The more you want it, and even more so if you've already taken a "bite", the more precious it is

to Hashem when you give that moment to Him.

Thank you for the chizuk!

Wow!!! That was mind blowing! I don't believe I've ever heard that story before. Thank you so much for sharing!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by amevakesh - 23 May 2024 03:09

[Heeling wrote on 21 May 2024 19:34:](#)

My friend,

The summers are definitely very hard. I live in not such a Jewish neighborhood and it's not fun. Some Jewish neighborhoods, can be tough too.

But we know that a lot of it is just a mask. If we would get to know them we would not want to look at them (Example: The woman from the house next door to me). I like the idea of applying Rav Birnbaum's approach but for us, it's a bit more than that, I think. Beauty is subjective. It takes a lot of work. A lot of sweat. With a decent amount of tears. But it's all nonsense, it might be shiny but it's most likely just a piece of plaster covering up some damage.

No, it doesn't mean that all beautiful-looking human beings are miserable people but it also doesn't mean that they are as beautiful on the inside as they appear on the outside.

A little deeper than that, I think that a big part of our 'looking' is due to us feeling that we are missing something. Even if we do not want to marry that person or even engage in a conversation, therefore we don't really care about their middos or personality - we simply want to look because it's attractive, it looks shiny, and fancy. Did you ever walk or drive on the street and notice people driving the same make & model car as you or do you only notice cars that you would like to drive? Speaking for myself I only notice cars that I would like to drive and it's those cars that make me want to look at them again. The same goes with women. Lots of us feel that we are missing something from in our marriage or that our wives don't fit some categories we would like for them to fit into. But if we would only appreciate what we have and work on loving and feeling attracted to what's really important in life, it would be a big help.

This is just some two cents I tell myself. Take it or leave it.

Dear Dr. Heeling,

Thank you for your insight on how you approach the fight against the YH, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to clarify my own approach, by contrasting it with yours. If I had to sum up the differences between your approach and what I'm proposing, I'd say it's defense vs. offence.

The way I understand what your saying is that the curiosity to look, stems from the need to have that which we don't. So, in some minimal way, by looking, I can partake of something which is essentially not mine. To this, we must remind ourselves that the eye catching, glitz and glamour is only external, internally it's not as exciting as it seems. All in an attempt to convince ourselves out of desiring something which was not meant for us. (Please correct me if I misunderstood you.) I might add, that even if it is as exciting on the inside, the approach would remain the same, recognizing that if it wasn't given to us, we don't need it, it wouldn't be good for us, and therefore ultimately we shouldn't even really want it. (see ??? ???? on the ???? of ?? ?????)

I believe that this is a basic fundamental strategy primarily rooted in what I would classify as defense mode. Meaning, that in a perfect world, if an individual's wants and desires would be the way they should, he wouldn't be pulled by the outside lure of temptation. When the YH comes to attack by waving his colorful merchandise in front of our eyes, we stave off the attack by internalizing into ourselves the ideas that you put down so beautifully. Just like by a physical illness, when the bacteria attacks, the good Doctor "heals" the patient with medicine, so too, when the spiritual bacteria threatens, Dr. "Heeling's" advice will restore the soul to the way it was meant to be, by fending off any outside unwanted invaders.

What I was proposing based on the story of Reb Shmuel, I believe is a different method of combat. There's a phrase in sports "the best defense is a good offence". Instead of doing battle to restore the soul to it's original state, perhaps it's possible to take that want or desire and give it up to ?' as a ?????. When temptation beckons, and says "don't miss out, you'll never get a chance like this etc.", one can answer right back by saying "I'll never get another chance like this to demonstrate my love for Him by turning away". He take the very argument of the YH and channels it into ????? ?'. It's viewed through a prism of opportunity, almost to be looked forward to, rather than a dreadful ????? that he must pass. After a successful battle, the feelings he experiences are of exhilaration and triumph rather than relief. Encounters with the YH become opportunities for growth, to be cherished forever.

There's a story with a Alte Hungarian Rav that illustrates this point. Before the war he lived in the cosmopolitan city of Pest. After the war, he immigrated to Eretz Yisroel where he settled in ???????. One of his Chassidim overheard him reminiscing about how much he misses the "???" of Pest. He was bemoaning the fact that now in ??????? he didn't have the opportunity to demonstrate his love for '?' on such a consistent basis.

To be clear these 2 ?????? are not mutually exclusive. Every army needs good soldiers on defense and good soldiers on offence. They can and must work in tandem with each other. Each player individually will occasionally need to change his usual modus operandi to different situations. Sometimes the Defenseman will be called on to go on the offensive. Sometime a soldier on offence will be called upon to defend. A good soldier is one who displays versatility, and can adapt to different situations with different skills. Some of us will naturally gravitate to the good Doctors ????, for others the thrill of actively beating the YH at his own game will resonate. There's no right or wrong, the more tools we have at our disposal, the better our chances of success become.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by Heeling - 26 May 2024 16:32

Beautifully articulated my friend, I love how you took it apart with such detail.

Yes, both ways are correct, and we might need both for different scenarios. But I think that the way that you proposed is somewhat not dealing with the core disease, because instead of channeling that feeling to lust, to the YH. You channeled it to love for Hashem. Very nice but the lust is still there, you just gave it a pacifier until next time.

Versus, the way I proposed was dealing with the disease more directly, I think. When that feeling comes up, you talk to yourself and try to dismantle that feeling instead of redirecting that to something else.

My friend, I think they are both very good tools to have. and together let's keep on plowing.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life

Posted by amevakesh - 28 May 2024 16:56

With great hesitation I share something that's been on my mind, for the past few years. It's one of the reasons that made me feel like a hypocrite, and prompted me to register with GYE in the first place. In a way GYE has been one of the best things that has happened to me. However regarding this one point, it has actually made me regret a certain action I did even more. I hope the ??? won't judge me too harshly for it.

A little bit of background. Since I was a child, I was always very curious. As I grew older, I did not have the good fortune of having someone explain the concepts of ??? to me. I was educated by my friends in 7th grade. Being the curious teenager that I was, I made the most of the Television set at my grandparents home that I could. There were many opportunities that I had, and I took full advantage. My parents were more Yeshivish then my grandparents, and if they would have known what I was doing in their house, it's doubtful they would have let me go there in the first place. I thank ?' that I grew up before the internet was common, therefore what I was exposed to had its limitations. BH I never crossed the line in to porn. Fantasy, books and lust in general were a big problem. It came and went over the years, sometimes for months I'd be better, sometimes worse. A roller coaster of ?????.

As I grew older, I eagerly devoured anything and everything I could find in the ????? about different topics. Some of it scared the living daylights out of me. Unfortunately, a perfunctory understanding of the ????? ????? that we have, can have devastating results.

Fast forward a few years. I got married to a wonderful girl. We had our issues, some of which, in hindsight were exacerbated by my lust. Still, I never crossed the red line of P&M. I never viewed myself as someone with a problem, even though my feelings of self loathing were quite strong when I would fall. I would walk in to variety stores and walk by the magazine racks, looking out of the corner of my eye to see if I could somehow see by mistake/on purpose, but I wouldn't actually take it off the shelf. I remember one time that I actually took one off the shelf, but I was a very big ???, I wasn't someone who looked at porn, so I covered up the intimate parts, so I shouldn't ?" see. So, while I lusted, I held myself to be better than other people that had fallen in. I remember, once seeing a brochure for GYE, being fascinated by the stories and thinking, "this isn't really relevant to me, I don't watch porn".

I had many reasons for lusting, I felt that I was justified, yet whenever I was in the grip of the YH, I felt like a walking contradiction. On the one hand, I was a Shteiging as a Yungerman in Kollel, then years later a Rebbe, on the other I was dealing with a YH that I felt I'm the only one

in the Kollel/staff room that deals with these issues. Which brings me to the main part of this post. One of my obsessions was searching through browsing histories of different computers. I'm not sure what the rational behind it was. Most likely, it was in order to somehow justify my lusting, because if I could find out that someone else was engaged in the same behavior that I was, it would somehow make it less reprehensible. Anyway, one day around three years ago after everyone had left Yeshiva, I decided to check the computer in the office. Now I personally, had never used the Yeshiva's computer for anything wrong, but I discovered to my great "shock and consternation" that there was someone that was using the computer for things that were far worse than anything I had ever seen. Looking through the the browsing history, I was tempted to click on one of the sights he had gone on to, but I held myself back, after all I didn't do those things. I was filled with a sense of self righteousness. "How could someone view such filth? On the Yeshiva's computer? The gall!" It didn't take me long to figure out which other staff member it was. Unfortunately, it was a fellow Rebbe that was sneaking in to the Yeshiva during weekends and when Yeshiva was off. Now I was faced with a dilemma. What to do? I couldn't go over to him, that would be way to awkward. I couldn't do nothing and let things continue the way they were either. In my self righteousness, I viewed this person with a mixture of contempt and understanding. Lust was something I understood all too well, but the depths to which this individual had sunk to was something I looked down upon. In general, I'm really not a judgmental person at all, but this was a bit much for me, especially because I was in the same boat as him, and had never done what he had.

So I did what any ?? ???? would do, I went and asked someone who by every barometer is ??? ?????. I told him the whole story, and he told me that I have to go and tell the ?????. I then told him that I myself struggle somewhat in my ????? ??????, maybe it's not my place to tell the ?????, but he told me in no uncertain terms that I must tell the ?????. So with a heavy heart, feeling like a total hypocrite, I did. The ???? was and still is a very ???? and responsible person who I admire and respect, said he'll deal with it. That's the end of the incident.

Why am I telling this story? Because for reasons I won't go in to right now, I have a situation which is not the easiest regarding ????? ??????, and as the years passed, I found myself slipping very slowly. I was crossing lines that I thought I wouldn't cross. Uncharted territories, slowly became more familiar. But the real red lines of P&M were still not crossed. As I regressed and danced closer and closer to the edge of the precipice, I was filled with a sense of revulsion toward myself. Besides for the regular feelings of hypocrisy that I had as a Rebbe with a sterling reputation, I had turned in someone else, and the difference between us was only a matter of degree, one which was getting smaller and smaller as time went on.

I believe that these feelings of hypocrisy, combined with the fear of falling in all the way, is what ultimately led me to register with GYE. Initially, I was confident that by checking in every day and recording my clean days, I would be able to build a streak like all the other heroes. 42 days later I fell hard, ever closer to the red line I was so afraid of crossing. I needed to do something drastic, which is what ultimately led after much procrastination, to pick up the phone and call HHM.

Since then, my life has been enriched with the knowledge that at least now I'm living life the way it's been meant to be lived. No, life's challenges haven't suddenly disappeared, but at least now I have a network of friends that I can share the most private details of my life and receive Chizuk when needed. I no longer am living with the feeling of being a two faced ??? that preaches one thing but lives another.

One of the many paradigm shifts that I've undergone, is that not only to not look down at people that have struggled on levels lower than I, I actually admire the strength of the ?????? ??? that have sunk to the lowest depths (sometimes through no fault of their own), confronted their demons, and are fighting the impossible fight against all obstacles. Both those that have managed to break free completely, the guys that fall and get back up again, and the guys that are seemingly fighting what they believe is a losing battle but they don't give up. So many guys here have every excuse to just throw in the towel and give up, yet they keep on trying. Every one on this site is a fighter, some are more successful some less, but if there is one message that permeates these forums, it's ?? ????. Look ' how hard people are fighting on your behalf, just in order to be closer to you. Never again will I look down on people that struggle, I look up to them. (When I give a Shmuz to my class on these ??????, I always make sure to include a line or two to the effect of "If I would be an unfiltered device, it's not a question of if I would stumble, rather how long it would take". They must be educated, given the tools and above all shown love and understanding in how to deal with this ????? in a confusing world gone insane. No ??? should feel like a piece of garbage for having to contend with the YH that ' created him with. Sorry for going off topic.)

Which brings me to the reason I wrote this post. Even though, I've been ??? with ?????? ?????? to clean up my own act, I feel terrible for what I did to that ???. I know that I asked a ?????, but I can't help but wonder if there wasn't a better way to do it. These thoughts plague me and I feel like I need to ask him for ????? which is way to awkward. He doesn't know that I know about his (hopefully) old habits. I feel like I threw him under the bus, while I, with the "holier than thou" attitude, was given the chance to recover, shame free. For all I know this ??? might be one of my role models here on GYE, and even if he isn't I wonder if there's a better way I could have dealt with it. What would I do today if I found out that someone ??? was struggling? I'm really not sure.

Why am I writing this? I'm not so sure myself. Maybe to assuage my guilty feelings toward this individual (who by the way I still respect), maybe to share the shift I've undergone over the past year, and maybe it's to raise awareness to let all ?????? of ?????? and ?????? know that they must take the necessary precautions to make sure all of their devices are filtered. No one is above ??? not even, and perhaps especially, sheltered and ?????? ??? ??????. The YH uses all of his tactics to ensnare people that were previously sheltered. Sorry for the lengthy post, it's just something I've been carrying around with me for a while.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by gye365s - 28 May 2024 17:11

[amevakesh wrote on 28 May 2024 16:56:](#)

I feel terrible for what I did to that ????.

Thank you for sharing, that was very touching.

You followed your daas Torah, and perhaps your actions saved that mechaneich's neshama!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by redfaced - 28 May 2024 17:30

[amevakesh wrote on 28 May 2024 16:56:](#)

So I did what any ?? ???? would do, I went and asked someone who by every barometer is ??? ?????. I told him the whole story, and he told me that I have to go and tell the ?????. I then told him that I myself struggle somewhat in my ????? ??????, maybe it's not my place to tell the ?????. but he told me in no uncertain terms that I must tell the ?????. So with a heavy heart, feeling like a total hypocrite, I did. The ???? was and still is a very ???? and responsible person who I admire and respect, said he'll deal with it. That's the end of the incident.

The main idea of GYE, I think, is doing things that we know as being right, even when its hard.

Like I told you already, even when something may not have started out with the best of intentions, you did the right thing by asking ??? ????. Than you did the right thing by listening. He may even wish he could thank the person that got him to the point of getting the help he needed.

Now your job is to continue doing the right thing, Shteiging and bringing yourself to a place of true ?????.

(As a side point, the incident that brought me to GYE, was none to pleasant either. Yet I thank Hashem that it happened, because without that where would I have been)

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by chosemyshem - 28 May 2024 18:25

[amevakesh wrote on 28 May 2024 16:56:](#)

Sorry for the lengthy post, it's just something I've been carrying around with me for a while.

Don't apologize, this post is incredible. Thank you for sharing. Your talmidim are lucky to have you.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by eerie - 28 May 2024 22:28

Dear Mevakesh,

I really, sincerely think you did nothing wrong. Does it say somewhere that the eidim testifying against a ba'al aveirah have to be lamed vav tzaddikim?!

The feeling that you had was something to work on, and BH you are. Because besides for working on your kedusha in such an amazing way, you are also learning here, like I and others have, that there is so much beauty in a Yiddishe neshama, and even those that have sullied

themselves, even they have so much greatness, so many amazing facets.

So keep on trucking! No, being judgmental is not a good thing, but what you did, even if your motivation was not 100 percent pure, you asked and followed directions, so you DID the right thing. And then, BH, you joined our brotherhood! Thank you for all you add to the conversation!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by amevakesh - 03 Jun 2024 13:33

Hey, refaced, any popcorn left?
Going through some bumps in the road, which in the past has led me to feel like I have the "right" to look at things I shouldn't, so I'm posting my reflections of the past weekend, to try to feel what I accomplished in the past year. Hopefully it will pick me up and lift me out of the doldrums.

Friday night I was invited to a upper class event. It was family seating and my wife couldn't attend. I needed to be there so I had to go alone. The people in attendance were way above my social status, fancy, good looking, and decked out in their Shabbos finery. I was BH seated at a table with 4 other couples who were a lot older then me, so my own table didn't pose much of a problem for me. However the entire room was filled with people, who in the past would have led me down the path of lust. BH, I can say with confidence, that I did not stare at anyone more than I needed to, (except maybe for 2 seconds at one individual who did not tempt me at all) I looked at people that were speaking to me, but in no way did I looking at them in a sexual way. I walked out of that event feeling like a million bucks. Empowered by the knowledge that a year ago such an event would have driven me nuts, but now, there really wasn't really a struggle. Victory number one.

On Motzaei Shabbos, I had to go somewhere where there were a lot of people. As a Rebbe of Bochorim, I often meet parents who like to get a quick update on how their sons are doing. There is one set of parents, who for some reason or another values my opinion in Chinuch, and they've consulted with me a few times in the past. As I was leaving the place, I bumped in to this couple, and we started talking about there son and how well he's doing. Now these people are the nicest people you will meet, very upper class, wealthy, and very very good looking. I remember about a year and a half ago when they called me up to request a meeting about Chinuch related issues that had come up at the time, I knew him from before, but it was the first time I met her. We met, and I did my best to look away from her and focus only on him. I was so busy "not looking" at her, that the few times that I needed to were very difficult for me. I left the meeting and she was in my mind for a while after. This Motzaei Shabbos when I met them and

spoke to them, I didn't make such big deal out of "not looking", yet surprisingly I really didn't feel overwhelmed by her beauty in any way. It was a pleasant conversation, that when over, was over. I didn't carry her in my mind after. There is great beauty in the world, but it's not something that has to be worshipped and rule over me when I see it. It felt good because I was contrasting my meeting a year ago - where I looked less, but lusted far more, whereas, this time around - I looked more (not more than necessary but I didn't make as big a deal out of it), but didn't lust. I find that sometimes being overly neurotic about "not looking" can sometimes be a form of lust. When we give it too much credence and value and obsess too much, either by looking or by not looking it takes up our mind and robs me of my ability to live life. There's a fine that always has to be fine tuned, to know when I'm looking in a "Kosher" way and when it's not okay. Usually, what I feel after, is a good barometer whether the look I took, was out of necessity or not.

Which brings me to my third incident, which is the reason I decided to post. I have a certain challenge in my otherwise beautiful life. I have tried to overcome it many times, but for now, I've come to a place of acceptance that it's pretty much beyond my control to fix. There are so many blessing I have and I don't take them for granted. Most times I'm a very happy, lively, and outgoing person and I'd like to think that I have a decent amount of ????? ??????. However when the challenge gets too much for me, I can sometimes be filled with a sense of sadness, coupled with feelings of wistfulness and longing, wishing that things would be different. This specific challenge directly impacts my ????? ??????, it takes an ordinary struggle and makes it more difficult. In the past, during moments of difficulty, I almost felt entitled to indulge in lust to "make up" for the ????? that I deal with. This morning I woke up at 5 A.M. (after going to bed at 1) engulfed by feelings of longing and sadness. I tried to fall back asleep, but the feelings were strong. In the past I probably would have allowed myself to watch something I shouldn't to make up for my challenge. This time there was no question that I was going to do that. Why should I exacerbate the situation by indulging, when it will only increase an appetite that I can't fill. So as I was laying in bed stewing in self pity, I said enough is enough. Stop, get out of bed, reflect on what you do have and be grateful. There is so much good in my life, to be happy with. Even my challenged was designed specifically for me by a loving father that knows what's best for me. So, I decided to post it, to air out my feelings, it's kind of therapeutic for me and helps me deal with life. Onward.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by iwannalivereale - 03 Jun 2024 13:53

Wow what a post chaver!

Powerful dose of chizzuk!

Thanks!

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by chosemyschem - 03 Jun 2024 13:55

[amevakesh wrote on 03 Jun 2024 13:33:](#)

There is great beauty in the world, but it's not something that has to be worshipped and rule over me when I see it. It felt good because I was contrasting my meeting a year ago - where I looked less, but lusted far more, whereas, this time around - I looked more (not more than necessary but I didn't make as big a deal out of it), but didn't lust. I find that sometimes being overly neurotic about "not looking" can sometimes be a form of lust. When we give it too much credence and value and obsess too much, either by looking or by not looking it takes up our mind and robs me of my ability to live life.

Thank you for sharing!

Quoted part above is a particularly great point.

I don't know if the "not looking" you're describing is a form of lust, but it's definitely not healthy avodas hashem and comes from lust and feeds greater lust. The only counterpoint I'd make is that it's very hard to learn how to not "not look" but also not "look" and it probably depends on what level of the struggle a person is.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by amevakesh - 09 Jun 2024 13:13

What does an airport in the summer have to do with a very fancy wedding. Both are virtually a delightful feast for the eyes. There's lots to see, plenty of real excuses to look, and many

people decked out (or not) in their finery. In the past, these were my worst triggers. Traveling in general naturally lowers my guard. When I'm out of my routine, I'm less vigilant and more susceptible to lust.

This week I had to travel through an airport to a fancy wedding. At the risk of sounding conceited, I was honestly not even interested in my surroundings. The turmoil of emotions, the heightened awareness usually present in such settings, were largely absent. Instead, feelings of pride mixed with serenity and calm were my companions (most of the time). Did I see things? Sure, but they didn't stick on me, don't think I took any real second looks, and was able to just move on from whatever I did see. I'll admit that one of the things that kept me on the straight and narrow was the thought that if I make it through intact, I'm gonna post about it, but hey,
???? ??? ????? ?? ?????. It's a tool at my disposal and I'm gonna make the most of it. Onward.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by amevakesh - 10 Jun 2024 12:58

I guess too much pride isn't a good thing. Flying high doesn't last. Some of life's stresses are getting me down. Getting hit by the fantasy bug. This time last year would've probably looked at things I shouldn't. Onward.

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Re: Navigating the ocean of my life
Posted by chaimoigen - 10 Jun 2024 15:08

[amevakesh wrote on 10 Jun 2024 12:58:](#)

I guess too much pride isn't a good thing. Flying high doesn't last. Some of life's stresses are getting me down. Getting hit by the fantasy bug. This time last year would've probably looked at things I shouldn't. Onward.

Flying high is part of the up-and-down zigzag of the graph of life (and your heartbeat). The flying high parts help raise the baseline. If the overall trajectory is up, you're growing. And that's significant!

Eyes to the mountain - as dawn breaks and the Light floods you - it will be different this year!

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