

what is working for me

Posted by YosefAvinu - 14 Oct 2010 21:44

Hi All,

Here is a little tip that has been working for me, for almost 6 months now. Well, it starts with having someone like a Rav who you'll really feel ashamed revealing this behaviour to. Second, to make a list of things to do if you feel the urge before acting out. the goal is not to act out, of course. then take a vow that if you act out without first doing these things, you'll report your actions to the Rav, each and every time. However, if you do these things from your list first, and bar minan, act out, you don't report yourself. the vow should be time limited, say renewed every day before davening or every yom rishon for a week. The "things to do" must be things you can do and that you normally love to do but they should include some things of kedusha, like reading the weekly parasha, a few chapters of tehilim, studying halachot or reading midrashim. In total the list should be designed to keep you busy for at least an hour.

While the above method, does seem to leave an option for acting out, after completing the list, my experience has been that I have not acted out in close to 6 months with this method. In fact, the urge seems to dissipate while thinking of doing something from the list. So I haven't yet had to even do anything from the list.

Now, I know that Hashem is the one who is really helping, but He does expect us to do our hishtadelut, and the above method is a hishtadelut. One should be honest with Hashem that he does desire these unholy things, and he knows it's wrong, and that he needs Hashem's help. And to tell Hashem what he is doing for his hishtadelut, no matter how small. This concept is expressed in a prayer brought down by the chemdat yamim and appears in some yom kippur machzorim (in small print).

Vows are serious business so if, heaven forbid, one falls without doing the things on the list first, he must report himself to the Rav.

I have found that it is also helpful for shmirat eynayim when I'm in the city. What I tell myself is that there is no difference between looking at the attractive partially dressed woman on the street, and the even more revealing images on the internet. In fact, the former will lead to the latter. However, as I know that I've vowed to do some stuff from my list first, I might as well not start looking. Cos, I know that I would either have to go through the process of doing the really easy to do stuff on my list first, which isn't what someone who is gagging for lust really wants to

be doing, or face the disgrace before my Rav.

There is no arrogant confrontation with the yetzer hara here. People much greater than me have faced the yetzer hara and not done so well. Only Hashem saves us. the essence of this approach is admitting that while I may not be able to win against the yetzer without Hashem's help, at the very least I should be able to use some of the energy the yetzer gives to do some good, i.e. to do the things on my list. However, the yetzer hara seems reluctant to give a person energy to do good, so this seems to weaken the urge for lust. Secondly, my pride, also from the yetzer, wants to keep this thing a secret and I want to appear pious to my Rav. Thirdly, the vow obligates me between these two choices - using the yetzer hara's energy for good first or face disgrace before my Rav. Together this seems to provide a spiritual window or tunnel to flee from the yetzer in that moment.

b'hatzlacha.

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