

MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 04 Nov 2012 13:48

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My heart is pounding out of my chest right now as I put these thoughts on "paper". This is the first time I am being completely honest about my problem, and it is very scary.

I am writing this mostly because I think getting these feelings and thoughts out of my head will be cathartic and if by chance I can help someone else, that would be wonderful.

I have been struggling with this problem for better than 20 years. I started with these thoughts and actions at a very young age. While I can't remember exactly how old I was I am sure I was not yet 10 years old, I think that 8 is a closer approximation. When I got my first computer at age 16 with an internet connection, it got a lot worse.

I went through up and down periods sometimes falling "only" once a week, sometimes everyday. I am still not sure if I would consider myself addicted to p\*\*\*, but I sure as heck am addicted to m\*\*\*\*\*. For me the p\*\*\* was always a means to an end and not an end itself. As soon as I finished being mzf, I would turn off the p\*\*\* because I found it disgusting. I only wished I had found it so disgusting 5 minutes earlier.

I tried to stop many times only to fail after a week, two weeks even three weeks. Maybe when I first got married I was able to hold off a little longer, but even that did not stop me forever. It is funny I never davened to Hashem to take away my urge for lust. For some reason I felt that if I didn't stop on my own my Teshuva would be imperfect and I would not be completely forgiven. This past Rosh Hashana I realized that this line of thinking was getting me absolutely nowhere. They say by Neilah, you should take on one Asei and one Lo Ta'asei to work on the coming year. Like a broken record year after year, my Lo Ta'asei was always the same. Clearly my thinking was flawed. This year I davened to Hashem to help me kick this horrible habit. So baruch Hashem, since Erev Yom Kippur I have kept myself pure. I have had 41 clean days now, and I can't believe how easy it has been. Not to say I haven't had temptations, but nothing a small slap in the face and telling myself, "I am not doing anything stupid today" hasn't stymied. In the past my hands would literally start shaking two weeks into my trying to stop with the need for physical relief.

I think I wrote enough for today, hopefully I can update more tomorrow with my 42nd clean day (6 weeks).

Kol Tuv,  
MBJ

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey  
Posted by cordnoy - 12 Sep 2013 17:27

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Great stuff!

Keep on truckin'!

I was actually thinkin' of writin' a post on what I have learned from GYE.

You have stolen some of my thunder, but I have no complaints.

Onward!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 12 Sep 2013 21:32

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Thank you guys, all of you.

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

Great stuff!

Keep on truckin'!

I was actually thinkin' of writin' a post on what I have learned from GYE.

You have stolen some of my thunder, but I have no complaints.

Onward!

I am sure I missed some stuff that you could fill in. It is always good to post a good summary

once in a while so we don't forget.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 27 Sep 2013 01:02

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Chag sameach to all you in chul, and good erev Shabbos to those in Eretz Yisroel.

I am addicted to lust.

I recently have come to accept this about myself. Whenever I pictured what an addict was I never pictured myself. I never neglected work or kids because of it. I never did anything with another person. I never paid for anything. Discretion and caution always came before getting my fix. There were certainly red lines I never crossed.

On the other hand, I have been doing this for over 20 years. I have tried to stop countless times pre-GYE. I have more times than I care to think about. I turn to my drug of lust whenever I am anxious, depressed, stressed. I can't indulge even a little without feeling the compulsion to continue. I am lacking in control.

When I first came to this realization I was very confused. I became despondent that I will never be cured. I became nervous that I am only doomed to fail in the end. All my progress will be nothing if I didn't get myself to an SA meeting right away.

Then I calmed down. I realized that addict or not I am making great progress. It also made me feel better about guarding my eyes(GME). I have not been making great progress in that regard and I started feeling dejected because of it. Now I realize that I am sick. Years of abusing lust as caused my brain to be screwed up. So now I feel less bad about a failure and more proud of my success. Even more important I have come to understand, not having that first sip. If I start it really will only lead me to want more. Taking that first look is dangerous. A danger I don't need.

I am falling asleep I will continue this later.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey  
Posted by MBJ - 29 Sep 2013 00:49

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Now a real Shavua Tov,

I recently viewed a credit card bill and it had me a little worried. I was then cleaning the bathrooms before chag, and the combination of being in the bathroom with the pressure of the bill caused me to want to masturbate. WTF???? I pushed the feeling aside but man that is really screwed up. It just showed me even further how much I have become dependent on this drug called lust as an escape.

I have come to learn the dangers of using lust and fantasy to escape from my problems. Games of what if are so dangerous for me. I have started to crack down on fantasies of all kinds. If I find myself starting one I quickly take a second, calm down and start thinking of something else.

Accepting that I have a problem more serious than a bad habit, has encouraged me to take my recovery more seriously. Knowing that I can so easily fall back into all my bad patterns has given me greater resolve to stay away from them.

I just have to figure out how to keep my new found confidence fresh. Recovery is important to me, but it is crazy how much time and mental energy I put into this. I can imagine that it will not take long before I tire of the strain and start to allow myself to slip back into bad habits. Perhaps I have to just keep reminding myself the consequences of slipping and taking the first sip.

As someone who always had an unhealthy relationship with food, this kind of struggle is not new. The food problem is more obvious as your pants start to get smaller and smaller and your weight starts to climb the scale. I always felt that dealing with my food issues was extra hard, after all you can't quit food cold turkey. I need to eat to live and so it is easy once you are already indulging to just go a little too far. This lust addiction is also just as hard. It requires no serious action to have a slip, all I have to do is look the wrong way, or shut my eyes and think the wrong thoughts and I will start to feel the pull of lust saying do it just one more time.

My food issues go back and forth and so I lose weight than put some back that lose it again in a big circle. I don't want to go through the same kind of thing with my lust. Indulge, dry out, indulge in a big circle. I need something better. I think I mentioned that I started reading the white book to try to get some ideas.

To be continued...

Eli

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey  
Posted by Pidaini - 29 Sep 2013 16:21

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[MBJ wrote:](#)

I was then cleaning the bathrooms before chag, and the combination of being in the bathroom with the pressure of the bill caused me to want to masturbate.

on a more serious note, very insightful notes.

Take it one day at a time, make the right decision for now, worry about later when it comes.

KUTGW!! KOT!!!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 07 Oct 2013 15:11

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I wasn't sure I was going to post this, but I obviously decided to.

Those who know me or have read this thread, know my issues.

So, my wife said something that I interpreted as she was willing be more intimate with me, i.e. she wanted to me to kiss her, or at least she wasn't against the idea. So after going crazy in my head for a week, of not wanting to jump her and also not allowing myself to get too carried away with ~~hope~~.

Finally, I ask her if I can kiss her good night, so I gave her a simple kiss and B"H she did not pull away. Feeling very pleased with myself, I tried to kiss her the next night, and she pulled away and said something to the effect of sure I let you kiss me once, now you want to do it again before you know it you will be asking for sex. Now that is not exactly what she said, she was gentler, but that is what she meant.

For sure old me would have taken that rejection stormed out of the room and straight to the computer for some good old P&M. By not letting myself get too excited and carried away by false hope and fantasy I was able to keep my response mostly neutral and make it out mostly unscathed. Now naturally I am disappointed but not devastated. I understand that Hashem has decided that I need more time and am not yet ready to move forward.

I did try to explain to her that she is in the driver's seat all the way. If I do something that she doesn't want that she should absolutely feel free to tell me to stop. I tried to say that if you don't want me to kiss you because you don't want to that is fine, but don't stop me just because it might lead to more. You can just stop the more. I hope she understood, I am not sure that it will make a difference.

What I found even more disheartening, was I asked her if she noticed any kind of change in me or our relationship, and she basically said no. That was hard to swallow. I feel like I have been working very hard on myself and I feel like things have improved tremendously. The fact that she doesn't see it means that it is either all in my head, or she is oblivious to me, or at least any good that I do. Either way that situation is not good. But, I am trying to remain positive and work

on the only person that I can work on. ME!!!

Oh one other thing, 365 cumulative clean days!!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey  
Posted by Pidaini - 07 Oct 2013 15:28

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KUTGW!!

I understand you, I am in a different situation but my wife doesn't know at all about my whole GYE life (talk about double life). Many a time I wish I would be able to ask her "do you notice the change in me?" hoping that she would answer "Of course!!!". I can't, and she never offered her own "you know, I've noticed something lately".

KOT!! You're doing great, and it is very possible that since you are actively working on it therefore you notice the smaller changes much more than she.

KOMT!!!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey  
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 07 Oct 2013 16:39

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Hi MBJ, good post, thank you.

I wonder if your wife thinks you didn't change in the area of needing her. Meaning, you believe that you need her to love you in order for you to be happy. Maybe it turns her off because of the emotional blackmail "since he needs it, I am bad if I don't give to him." I think you might see different results if you give up on her. Look how much work you have to go through to change.

Can she change like you if she doesn't even believe there is anything wrong with her? If you can hypothetically answer that with a "no", can you get some validation in other areas of your life? Eat better, find a better shiur, start a company, spend more time with your kids? The advantage of this realistic approach (give up) is that you won't be getting stabbed in the heart like this. I feel your pain unfortunately.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey  
Posted by MBJ - 07 Oct 2013 17:11

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Thanks Pidaini.

MikeWisowski,

I do want her to love me. I have thought of giving up on her, but I refuse. Giving up on her is giving up on my marriage and I won't do that. I have thought many times that I should just totally disengage. That though is part of what got me in this mess in the first place. Besides, she may not even notice.

I have plenty of validation in my life. My kids, my work, myself. But it all pales in comparison to her.

As for the stabbing in the heart, my point is that it doesn't hurt like it used to. I decided a while back to give up hope and expectations. To stop fantasizing about coulda and shoulda. Stop putting these scenarios in my head that just build me up to inevitable fall. Giving up those fantasies where hard. In a sense it was me giving up on her. It hurt, but it was the right thing to do. It felt like something being cut out of my chest and I felt empty. But giving up on fantasies has allowed me to accept her as she is, and not as I wish her to be. It means that even though I will keep trying to push our marriage in a healthy direction, I will accept if she pulls back as her prerogative. So I will try to be increase her tolerance to my physical touch, until she is no longer suspicious of it and she learns once again to trust me. It will take time, and I will be patient, but I refuse to just give up.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

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Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 07 Oct 2013 18:09

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I don't think you'd be giving up on your marriage. It's just not the marriage that you think Hashem should have given you.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 07 Oct 2013 23:37

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You'll have to explain that one a bit better. If I had to do it over again, I would still marry her, I would just do some things different. But I can't.

Hashem gave me this marriage and I am grateful for it. I wouldn't replace it for any other. Sure there is room for improvement (an understatement) but what doesn't have room for improvement?

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by Dov - 08 Oct 2013 02:01

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Dear Ploni,

Have you read a few pages of MBJ's thread yet? He has come a long way and been through a lot of the considerations you address already.

A friend of mine told me that after his mother died (he was about 18yo), the shiva was very hard. But by the 5th or 6th day, they were all cried out. Then on the last day a visitor came. She was a very emotional person, well-meaning, etc. She came to them, sat there a while, and then began bawling sincerely expressing how sorry she is for them, how immeasurable their pain must be and how they must be thinking things like, "How will we go on without mother?", and really empathized and empathized....

My friend told me that while this was going on, he, his father, sisters and brothers turned to each other and just shared the realization that they were all way past where this well-meaning, sweet person was. She was in **her** place in the grief and imagined where they must be based on her stae when she walked into their shiva.

For me, that was a big life lesson, so I am overdoing it and writing it all out. But all I mean to say is:

MBJ may need to hear exactly what you wrote! Or he may not - you may be saying what seems natural and right based on his last post. But if you did not read the past bunch of pages, you may wrote something different. I don't really know. Just suggesting.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 08 Oct 2013 02:18

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To answer the question: yes, I thought I read his thread. However as you hinted my understanding may be off. I was going to leave it alone before you chimed in, because from his response it didn't seem as if we were talking about the same thing. I wasn't going to say any more about it.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 08 Oct 2013 15:45

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I hate the backspace button!

Anyway, so I recently made a big deal about how I am giving up on all hope and that it has made a big difference in my recovery. I was chatting with Pidaini and he asked me what that meant to me to give up on hope. Here is what I explained to him, maybe it can help others.

In the world that is my lust addiction, far and away the biggest trigger for me is my marriage. I have certain expectations of what my marriage should be and not getting them has caused many a masturbation fit over the years, including this year. It has ended clean streaks of 189 and 99 days. I want my wife to go to mikvah, to be affectionate with me, to let me be affectionate with me, to have sex with me once every few years. I tell myself that these are perfectly reasonable expectations of her and I have every right to expect that she should comply. So the when the times gets close for her to go the mikvah, I all but convince myself that she is going. I picture how I will kiss her and she will kiss me back. I will hug her and she will reciprocate. (Then other things that are not for your eyes.) I go over these scenarios over and over again in my mind.

Then the time comes and she doesn't go, or if she goes that is all that happens. Now I have just spent a week building myself up with anticipation and excitement and then nothing. I am climbing a staircase that is about to be demolished. So I climb up and up and then BOOM! I fall and I get depressed and I start to give up. I start to act out. Maybe I stop myself, but after a few times, I give up and fall, going back to those old comforts of masturbation. I could feel myself losing it, getting depressed, spiraling out of control. I knew it was happening and why it was happening, but I had no power to stop it. (I was powerless.)

With the help of cordnoy, I learned about the evil of hope. What I do when I hope is I expect a certain reality. I say, I deserve that reality and that is exactly what is going to happen. I play that reality over and over, but that reality is just a fantasy, and after building myself up so high I have no choice but to crash. So instead of trying to picture the reality that I want, I live in the reality that Hashem has given me. When it came time for her to go to the mikvah I asked her nicely to go. I knew in my mind that she may not go, and that was fine, that is between her and Hashem if she goes. I did my part. (Incidentally, she went that time, and has been going since.) The same thing about my recent post about the kiss, I knew she might say no, there was no guarantee that she would agree. Once she said yes and once she said no, and that was OK because that is what Hashem wants for me.

I have a quote below in my signature from AlexEliezer

Only when we make our real lives sweeter than our fantasies will we reap the emotional rewards, the happiness of recovery.

If I am living in the fantasy of the life that I wish I had, then there is no way that I can appreciate all that I do have. Once I was able to let go of that fantasy I was able to appreciate the love that my wife does have for me. Because of that I can take the little disappointments as they are and

move on, not to let it control me. I know that I deserve what I get, not what I think I should get. Hashem is not trying to screw with my head. I just have to learn to listen to what He is saying and understand that whatever He decides is what is best for me.

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Hope I was clear.