

MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 04 Nov 2012 13:48

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 mZ"l, 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 MBJ - 19 Nov 2012 09:05

I love having my own little thread here. I can put down whatever the heck I feel like. I guess this is why people blog.

I have been trying to think if I am an "addict" or just someone with a really bad habit. Obviously the ramifications are the way that I approach my recovery. I guess in some ways the proof is in the pudding, if I try "regular" methods and they don't work, I guess my problem is more severe. I definately am on level 4 "I've tried many times, but I can't generally abstain from 'acting-out' for significant periods of time (90 days or more)."

I have tried many times to stop but never with any success. But I don't know how sincere my attempts were. I do know that at 56 days is something I have not done in at least 16 years. So maybe I just needed the right motivation and the right people around me. Thank you all for that. I really feel confident now that I am on the right path for the first time in my life, regardless of what the exact nature of my problem is.

I started on this journey almost 2 months ago to try to be a better husband, but I think it is also making me into a better person. At least I hope so.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 19 Nov 2012 15:15

Thanx for 2 gevaldigeh vorts.

MT

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 22 Nov 2012 10:30

Thank You MT and Dont Give Up

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

Posted by MBJ - 22 Nov 2012 10:48

I am at 59 days clean. So WHEN I make it through today that will be 60 days, or 2 months. 2/3rds of the way to 90. Further than I have gone in my life. As time goes by, I feel myself getting into a groove. Nothing is automatic yet, but my response to a stimulus feels more natural, less forced and therefore there is less of a struggle to turn away the stimulus and not let it effect me. I think that it is a good thing. Not that I should become complacent, but that I am starting to successfully relearn how to deal with stimuli in a healthy manner, as opposed to the unhealthy way I have done for the last 20 years.

One thing that I have learned in my also lifelong struggles with an unhealthy relationship with food, is that even when you start to unlearn your bad habbits, they have a way of coming back if you are not careful. I must stay vigilant that I am not slipping back into bad habbits with my Shemirat Eynayim because I know that can lead to even worse bad habbits. (BTW, I have found in the last few weeks that my self-control with respect to food is stronger as well, without even making it a prime focus of mine.)

I also feel that I am starting to be less concerned with my total days. Yes I will keep updating my 90 day chart because that is who I am, I am a number cruncher, a stats compiler, I love numbers. But I don't feel the weight of what day am I up to anymore. I view it now as more, see you can do it, it is real, you have gone 59 days without a fall. For me this doesn't even feel real half the time, and I need that number not as a goal, because I am trying to live one day at a time, but as a reminder that I am actually doing this.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 26 Nov 2012 10:31

I am posting today mostly because I feel like it. Also because I have nothing exciting or interesting to say about my struggle. I am very pleased that I have nothing exciting or interesting to say about my struggle, it means that it is becoming more managable. I hope and I pray that my ability to post continues to remain boring and uninspired, because if I suddenly get inspired I think that would mean I have done something bad.

63 days.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 26 Nov 2012 17:29

Great point, MBJ!

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Mediocrity in some respects is actually **not** disgusting (I know, a shock to us!). Just being OK, *is* actually OK! Weird. What a liberating feeling that is to me. Cerebral-perfectionist-spiritually upwardly mobile Yeshivah guys are often *the worst* and can't take a page out of Noach's book and just *walk* with Hashem. Too often we need to be running, or on a pedestal. Be the one who the briyah is depending on.

Gevalt...it does not work for an addict.
(here goes :

No wonder the chronic feeling of 'failure' in learning and yiddishkeit is only assuaged in us by things as shockingly refreshing as porn! And in marriage, by sex positions, her eroticness for us, and overemphasizing the sex altogether. The taboo and shocking nature of it - to actually *watch* people doing such naturally *private* and personal behaviors! It creates an excitement that is one of the only things that can compete with what we expect: the music, malochim singing, and G-d speaking to us directly. It's gotta be big and beautiful, or it isn't real 'living'.

No wonder also, that in my early years of our marriage my two main complaints about my wife were that she is not *spiritual* enough and not *erotic* enough! They are two sides of the same coin for a person who can't tolerate *normal* or average. Poor girl just couldn't compete.

And no wonder my 'avodas Hashem' was a roller coaster of deveikus ecstasy - or *gey tzalmovess* far-ness from Hashem. It *had* to be that way! Swinging from "Tatty!! Take me back I am so, so sorry! I need Teshuvah!" - eventually swinging the other way and leading to tears of closeness during lecha Dodi and all kind of 'great chidushim and vorts' of chizzuk and madreigas...gevalt, gevalt. It all feels so true, so frum, so Rebbe Nachman. Only to crash even worse in another month or two! A messed-up Patrick Henry: "Give me highs - or give me lows (cuz there's nothing else worthwhile!)"

And even the final sex-act with self ('zera levatola') was not as I saw it. I saw it as the p'sak - the big failure. (Though in recovery I learned that the big failure is the first drink I take, not the last one.) Rather, masturbation is actually just the **reset** button for ending the present cycle and starting a new one! Like ending the roller coaster ride, to ride again. As the White Book puts it, "The only way we new to be free of it [the torture-cycle of obsession/fighting], was *to do it*." Reset! A new game begins...what a relief. "Maybe this one I *will* win! Hey, sheva yipol tzaddik v'kom, right? I can start over!" ...start *what* over? - another cycle of the same.

Even though growing along spritual lines is what it's **only** about in recovery - it is precious to have accepted being 'just' OK at least some of the time and in some things...walking with our G-d. An Avodas Hashem *that works* begins here.

Sorry for the long shalhevess from a spark, but it just felt like the right time. Thanks.

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

Posted by MBJ - 27 Nov 2012 11:51

[dov wrote on 26 Nov 2012 17:29:](#)

Sorry for the long shalhevess from a spark, but it just felt like the right time. Thanks.

Dov, your posts are always welcome.

It is a good thing I am so even tempered!

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

Posted by mr. emunah - 27 Nov 2012 18:26

[dov wrote on 26 Nov 2012 17:29:](#)

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v'kom, right? I can start over!" ...start *what* over? - another cycle of the same.

Hey Dov,

you spook me out - do you get printouts from my thoughts?

one recurring theme was - hey it's getting pretty boring around here, i haven't had a nisayon for
a while, i miss the thrill of beeing clean - and subconsciously i feel that i need to fall , thus egins
the slippery slope, usualy climaxing in veiwing inappropriate materials
and feeling all H*rny and depressed and thinking - well, theoreticaly i need to reset the chart
anyways, might as well finish up my "business" usualy feeiling horrible regret and drained about
1-2 hours later (and a bit suicidal) and tomorrow begis the GREAT NEW JOURNEY TO 90! Ah i
matter again (can anybody relate to this?)

Any hoo i need to avoid this

MBJ, yooze be doin' great - 1 day @ a time is the way to go!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 28 Nov 2012 21:42

That was beautiful, about resetting the chart anyhow...yes - I relate to that so well, even though
my rollercoaster ride was long before any '90-day chart' existed. I had my own "chart" in my
head. We all probably do. Gevalt...

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 02 Dec 2012 11:49

Last week was hard. My young son was sick last week. Consequently, I didn't get enough sleep.
(Being woken up 5 or so times a night is not conducive to a good nights sleep.) I never get
enough sleep since I am the night parent, but usually I cope just fine. Last week was particularly

hard. As a result, I didn't feel nearly as strong as I should in the shemirat eynayim department and for the first time in a while started to feel weak in the masterbation department as well. B"H I was not nichshol, but I had a few close calls. I started to feel that snowball build up but I stopped myself before it picked up too much momentum. In terms of Shemirat Eynayim, I just didn't feel the same strength to look away, eventually I did but not easily.

I hope that was just the tired talking and not something more. At the very least B"H I did not have the urge to surf some porn. I am grateful for that. Keep you all posted.

One day to 70 clean days.

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

Posted by Dov - 02 Dec 2012 20:25

It won't really be 70 days, though. It'll be a day just like the day before and the day after. Just -

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

Posted by MBJ - 04 Dec 2012 09:53

[dov wrote on 02 Dec 2012 20:25:](#)

It won't really be 70 days, though. It'll be a day just like the day before and the day after. Just -

To some extent I agree. When I am going through the day, I can't say I need to make it through day 70 (today it is 72), rather I need to say I am going to make it through today. I can do today. But for where I am in my development, I need to look back and see how far I have come, because I still don't believe that I can do it. Personal history has tells me that what I am doing is impossible. 20 years of experience tells me that I can't overcome my problem. So 70 days of ~~being clean is not going to~~ wipe out 20 years (Over 8,000 days) of living in filth. I need to look back and say to myself, "When you started this I bet you never thought you could do 70, and yet here you are. Now let's go and tack on some more. Let's go even further up the mountain."

I hope that at some point, I will be able to not need to look back, because I will have the self confidence to believe in myself and my recovery. But for now, it is still not quite real and I need to look down the mountain and see how far I have lifted myself out of the muck.

Besides, I love the spinning gold bar thingy next to my name, :D

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

Posted by Dov - 04 Dec 2012 23:38

Well, I **know** that *it is impossible* for me to be sober.

I am not joking, not spewing a party line, or anything like that. A clear review of my own history (which I do every time I meet a new sexaholic in recovery and share it with him) proves to me that I cannot stay sober on my own power - and by all rights should not be sober today! This is a miracle. The same miracle Hashem does for the sober heroin addicts and the drunks.

And the fact that I am sober itself does not prove that "it is possible", at all. That is a very important thing.

For I believe that knowing that is *precisely* why I am sober today! Cuz I know that and I can't do it, so I stay out of G-d's way. Specifically, I do that today by not playing G-d and pretending that *I am needed* in order to 'save' *anyone's* soul. For the truth is that I am just His tool - you will do what you feel you must do, and outcomes are *always* in His hands. I also stay out of His way by actually using my steps when people (life) bothers me enough - instead of denying it, getting self-righteous on them, getting self-pitying on me, or trying to learn how to manipulate them better using 'techniques'. In other words, I give the outcomes of my life to Him and trust that He knows **exactly** what He is doing. The serenity prayer...or Adon Olam - faith, trust in my real G-d and Eternal Best Friend.

Frum as I was before, I never really did any of that - instead I had to also manipulate my life by self-pleasuring, by making people follow the script, and by being oh, so self-important. And I was convinced that this was what Hashem wanted from me - nay, demanded. Based on Mesillas Yeshorim, chassidus, and everything else I learned...twisted by my addiction's subtle insanity.

The Torah cannot teach anyone sanity and how to surrender to the truth. It is not meant to teach that. For that is the province of the heart of man. It is the ikkar of bechirah, as far as I am concerned. Even if *G-d Himself* said all that to me I doubt I'd have **known** it yet. I **had** to learn it the hard way, by addiction and recovery. Typical for addicts. This is what I have always meant in posts about how you or I or even G-d do not convince an addict that he or she is really an addict - only the person himself can ever do that. Some of us are addicts, and it will take this to get us to the recovery we need, whatever it turns out to be. It's choosing life, for us.

Hey, chanukah is upon us. He gave temeyim b'yad tehorim, rabim b'yad m'atim. He did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

If the chasmona'im would have walked away from the battle saying: *"You see? This victory shows us we were wrong to have low self-confidence! We **did** beat the great army with our soda bottles and herring plates, after all! We've got more power than we ever imagined!! Self esteem is so healthy and so nice, isn't it?"* ...we would never ever have had this holiday of Chanukah.

They would have ***missed the entire point***, l'gamrei.

G-d save us from that.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by broadlife - 05 Dec 2012 00:32

[dov wrote on 04 Dec 2012 23:38:](#)

I stay out of His way by using my steps when people (life) bothers me enough - instead of denying it, getting self-righteous on them, getting self-pitying, or trying to learn how to manipulate them better. In other words, I give the outcomes of my life to Him and trust he knows exactly what He is doing. Frum as I was before, I never did that - so I had to also manipulate my life by self-pleasuring, by making people follow the script, and by being oh, so self-important. The Torah cannot teach anyone that. If G-d Himself said all that to me I doubt I'd have known it yet. I had to learn it the hard way, by addiction and recovery.

Dov you summed it up perfectly (as usual...)

Here's what I took away from what you said:

Living in the extreme involves jumping from one area of extreme reaction to another: from being self righteous, to self-pitying, to manipulative, etc.

I think those who seek sobriety/recovery and are honest about it, inevitably confront this idea that they've got to stop jumping back and forth between these extreme reactions to life. Trying to be better than other people, or when we don't get the attention that we want, living in self pity and hoping that someone will notice...but even if they do notice and do take pity on us or give us the attention we seek...it doesn't really satisfy us...c'mon who are you kidding! Even if you got that pity from others, it wouldn't be enough and you know it. You'd keep coming back for more self pity or gratitude...

This self centered spiral of self righteousness to self pity and back is a fundamental problem that I definitely am afflicted by and am starting to pay attention to a heck of a lot more than I was doing for the past 9 years.

Struggling with lust and being addicted is tough, but not even realizing that your entire life is out of control because you are not being honest with yourself and letting a force called **EGO** run your life and you don't even realize it...that's so so so scary...and completely debilitating. Blinding!

Today is today. I dont know what will be tomorrow. But today I definitely don't want my life to be dictated by the ego that festers inside of me. So i'll pray to hashem to let me be real with myself just for today, and not let that silly ego take control of my life without me even realizing it.

MBJ Hatzlacha!

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Too shay. Chanukah Sameach