

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 yehoshua - 05 Dec 2012 11:23

it sounds so simple ;D

The things that a "normal" person does, I mean, affords to do, is for us usually a NO NO NO. Like, saying "YUPI, I DID IT". But no, we can't say that, for us it's like this Tzaddik norm that we need to keep with something like "YUPI, YOU DID IT!"

I think it sounds so simple, because it might be the only way to be sober. Why can't I only remember that every time!?

Remember, remember, remember. Even that sounds simple and I guess it sort of is. It reminds us to remember. If can't hear Him, we surely feel it....

Maybe when we say "YUPI YOU DID IT", we can add "AND THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME CLOSER TO YOU".

Finally me comes in... and I can stop that self-pity and still feel safe.

All the best to you Reb MBJ.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by nederman - 05 Dec 2012 13:25

The reason you don't remember is because you do not *mark* the instant when you make the hypothesis that you do have a choice. *Before* you think about something else you have to think "I do have a choice etc." Then later you do remember and it does become easier to try it again. You feel like telling the yetzer ha-ra "you are just a paper tiger."

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 05 Dec 2012 21:41

Dov, Broadlife, Yehoshua, thank you for your posts, but I am not sure I agree with you completely. I know that Hashem runs the world. I know that if I need something I have to ask Him for it, because nothing comes without Him. When I needed I job out of college I davened everyday for it. When it was difficult for my wife and I to conceive I davened everyday for it.

When I was ready to make Aliyah, I davened everyday for a smooth transition, etc. Ultimately I know it only comes from Him. Hashem has blessed me with never having any money in the bank, but whenever things get really tight, He manages to get me a few dollars that I need.

On the other hand there is a concept of ??? ????? ??? ?????? ???. I know you have said many times Dov, that for an addict, it is not a question of ????? it is beyond that, at a level that only G-d can control. But what if I am not an addict? I don't know if I am or not, but I don't think I am. But I will not abdicate my responsibility as a Jew on the ??? that I might be, when I am probably not. For that I need to be ????? over my Yetzer, and I can't do that if I believe that I have lost the battle before it even began. While the Hashmonaim, may not have won the battles against the superior Greeks without the help of Hashem, there would not have been any battle had Matityahu not decided, enough is enough I will take a stand here and now to defend the honor of Hashem. A born again Xstian believes that he has no power at all, no control at all, no self-control at all. Only by the grace of god can a person be saved from sinning. We believe, ????? ?????? ??? ?? ?????? ??? ????? ?? ????? ??? ??? ?????? ??????. The miracle of choice is a gift that Hashem has given us. I am not arguing with you Dov about you or any other addict, I am talking about me, someone who needs a little community a little support, and a swift kick in the pants (even self inflicted).

As for self-righteousness, it has been many years since I have had delusions of self-righteousness. I know what I am, a modernish orthodox guy, slightly right of that center. I do some good things, I do some bad, I try to limit the bad, which is part of my goals on this forum. I never got depressed after masterbating, and I never thought I was so evil that I didn't want to do any other mitzvot, I always felt, ma kesher. G-d knows I am only human born to make mistakes. That is why He made the miracle of Teshuva. Perhaps it is good that I never learned all those Midrashim of what is the fate of those who are mz"l. I remember when I was dating my wife, my father said don't do anything so bad that you are embarrassed to put on your tefilin the next day. I understood his point, but I could not agree. For that reason despite years of this self-abuse, I never went into these cycles of sinning-depression-pity-righteousness-sinning that I see people describe here. The most important thing is to look at yourself in the mirror with honesty, see the good and the bad, and know that they are both always there, one never completely removes the other. Then our jobs as Jews it to strengthen the former and limit the latter. I am not saying that I am above throwing myself a pity party, but I always realize in the end (sometimes it takes a while) that nothing good comes from self-pity.

I just had to get that off my chest. It is funny I like posting here, it helps me, but I don't feel like I am always qualified to post because I don't understand these cycles that people are going through, I just can't empathize. I can empathize with the struggle, not the mood swings. [shrugs shoulders and sighs] I don't know, it makes me sad.

A lichtegeen Channuka to all.

MBJ

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by jjblue13 - 06 Dec 2012 04:25

Thank you MBJ.

A lot of what you wrote I identify completely.

[MBJ wrote on 05 Dec 2012 21:41:](#)

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In Tomer Devorah (perek 6) the Ramak speaks about Middas HaGevurah and he writes (a rough translation) A person is created with two yeitzers a yeitzer hatov for himself and a yeitzer hara for his wife [Zohar bereishis]. Ramak explains this that when a person arouses his yeitzer hara for himself (his lust) he damages ... because this brings destruction to this world (by arousing a negative Middas HaGevurah from above) ... rather he should arouse [the yeitzer hara in] himself for her benefit, not for his own enjoyment ... and buy her nice clothes ... and a nice dwelling ... and this is the secret of [Shir Hashirim 2:6] "Semolo tachas lerosh vyemino techabikeini" ...

Although these levels are far beyond our own (at least mine), the idea that we cannot ever lust ever, now or ever in the future, because we are addicts, seems to me a bit far out. That we must abstain from it for a period of time is certain. The only way to return to normalcy, is to pull all the way to the opposite extreme, and then slowly find our way to the proper position. There is a time and place for lust, to our wives, for her sake, and her sake alone, and we (on the ultimate madreiga) won't have anything in it for ourselves.

This is my take on this issue.

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

Posted by MBJ - 06 Dec 2012 07:32

[jjblue13 wrote on 06 Dec 2012 04:25:](#)

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This is my take on this issue.

I like what you say here, but I am still not sure how the lust comes in. I agree wholeheartedly that a break from the lust is good for us, and I have found that it has helped me tremendously. On the other hand I am not sure that I can lust just for my wife's sake. It seems a dangerous place to go. I would think that the lust should be replaced over time by things like love and intimacy. I think part of my problem is that while my wife was making that transition, I was not, and so we were left with me lusting and her nothing.

The truth is though, that so far I have identified a problem, I have not yet seen the solution. I am waiting to be clean for a little longer and make sure my head is on straight, then I will broach the issue with her and see if we can't come to a solution together. Maybe in the end we have to find the balance, the ????? ???? to make it work. I pray to Hashem that we can find that balance and live the life we are supposed to live.

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

Posted by yehoshua - 06 Dec 2012 10:42

You are right. Indeed we act out for different issues and will react differently. And yet the end result is similar, I too just want to live the life. Tnx for being real!

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

Posted by jjblue13 - 06 Dec 2012 14:12

[MBJ wrote on 06 Dec 2012 07:32:](#)

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Agreed.

The Ramak refers to this as arousing our yeitzer hara, so that appears to me to be lust. You seem to understand that lust is a selfish feeling, and in that case it is dangerous to lust, even for our wives. So from this prospective, I should have used a different, more exact, term. (maybe
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Thank you

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by jjblue13 - 06 Dec 2012 14:44

[MBJ wrote on 05 Dec 2012 21:41:](#)

On the other hand there is a concept of ??? ???? ???? ??? ?????? ?????. I know you have said many times Dov, that for an addict, it is not a question of ????? ???? it is beyond that, at a level that only G-d can control. But what if I am not an addict? I don't know if I am or not, but I don't think I am. But I will not abdicate my responsibility as a Jew on the ??? that I might be, when I am probably not.

Maybe check out the 20 questions from the SA book Eye.nonymous has posted them here
www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=4870.msg128413#msg128413Reply_20

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 06 Dec 2012 21:26

[jjblue13 wrote on 06 Dec 2012 14:44:](#)

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Maybe check out the 20 questions from the SA book Eye.nonymous has posted them here
www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=4870.msg128413#msg128413Reply_20

Thanks for the link, I scored between a 3 and a 5, some questions were neither a definite yes or no. So I guess I have an answer to the am I an addict question, maybe?

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 06 Dec 2012 23:08

[MBJ wrote on 05 Dec 2012 21:41:](#)

As for self-righteousness, it has been many years since I have had delusions of self-righteousness. I know what I am, a modernish orthodox guy, slightly right of that center. I do some good things, I do some bad, I try to limit the bad, which is part of my goals on this forum. I

never got depressed after masterbating, and I never thought I was so evil that I didn't want to do any other mitzvot, I always felt, ma kesher. G-d knows I am only human born to make mistakes. **That is why He made the miracle of Teshuva. Perhaps it is good that I never learned all those Midrashim of what is the fate of those who are mz"l.** I remember when I was dating my wife, my father said don't do anything so bad that you are embarrassed to put on your tefilin the next day. I understood his point, but I could not agree. For that reason despite years of this self-abuse, I never went into these cycles of sinning-depression-pity-righteousness-sinning that I see people describe here. **The most important thing is to look at yourself in the mirror with honesty, see the good and the bad, and know that they are both always there, one never completely removes the other.** Then our jobs as Jews it to strengthen the former and limit the latter. I am not saying that I am above throwing myself a pity party, but I always realize in the end (sometimes it takes a while) that nothing good comes from self-pity.

Self-pity is surely not an option for addicts. We can't afford it. So I like your point about how there ought to be no such things as "being too ashamed to approach G-d" - no matter what we did wrong. We - even addicts - are certainly people born to screw up occasionally. And as I have shared many times and posted repeatedly (and as the RMB"M has clarified in hilchos Teshuvah), normal Jews and lh' normal gentiles are people who **can** afford to make the mistake of enjoying porn, masturbating, and even doing worse things - for that is what Teshuvah is *for*. Humans!

But *addicts* - whether Jew or gentile - cannot afford these things, because we can't control and enjoy them the way others can. Even if masturbating were a *mitzvah*, we could not afford it, because of what happens to us when we use a drug. That is an addict. And as an addict progresses in recovery using the 12 steps, he becomes unable to afford resentments and pride. And as he progresses further in recovery, he becomes unable to afford even more *subtle* forms of resentments and pride...and on and on it goes. That is the life of any addict in 12 step recovery. We are doomed to spiritual progress, never reaching perfection - or to ruin our lives by resorting to our drug.

And all the while, *non-addicts* can use porn, masturbate, resent the heck out of people, or get lost in their fear and pride once in a while...*and get away with it (in this world)!* And theirs can **still** be a great life of progressive aliyah in avodas Hashem. Bumps along the way - even terrible spiritual bumps - are what helps people grow, you know. There is surely never a reason not to be able to face Hashem again...as you put it so well, and as sforim tell us.

And I agree 100% that Rabbi Twerski is apparently misleading when he implies that any man can become an addict in seconds by looking at porn, and the like. An *addict*? A ba'al tayvoh, yes, a struggler with the yetzer hora, yes...but an addict? I doubt that.

Most guys here have the obligation to fight, and fight hard! Use chochmos from the goyim like psychology, cognitive therapy, hypnosis, self-help books, medication and psychiatric help - do whatever it takes to quit and learn how to live clean! It is your bechirah and your obligation as a Jew.

But it's your **life**, too! There is no mitzvah to valiantly stand there and watch it go down the toilet. So if your repeated sincere efforts do *not* work, or if you see that the cost of your playing

around with these things has been far too great to self and family already, then I am here on GYE to hold 12-step out recovery to you if you want it. G-d can do anything for us when we get out of His way and let Him. If you see that you **have** in fact have been *beaten* by this lust problem as alcoholics describe themselves as having been beaten by their liquor habit...then you are not alone, friend.

MBJ, I apologize for the well-intentioned but overzealous GYE guys who have posted *to non-addicts* silly things like, "all *you* need to do is admit *you* are powerless - and never forget it!" I have posted about that many times after a spate of well-meaning guys trying to brand *everyone* as addicts.

And I cannot blame nederman for posting things about AA/SA and the 12 steps that imply that they are basically pathetic abdications of real Jewish bechirah and of basic human freedom of choice. SA recovery is **all** about finally taking full responsibility for *yourself* by accepting uncomfortable reality and taking real unnatural action rather than just relying on holy feelings or on G-d to "save me from this already!" But when misapplied to be used by non-addicts, 12-steps can be twisted into a sorry excuse for not taking responsibility for oneself. Though, of course, those people (even addicts) who do not take full responsibility for themselves *never get sober, anyhow*. But time bears out the truth in these matters as it does in practically everything. 30 days of success or even 90 days I doubt means that much in terms of the person himself. My experience tells me that a few years are needed for the truth to come out - for the inside issues to be forced to the surface and for the new tools to be tested.

But I am still happy for those who 'mistakenly' use SA and *really stay sober* for those few years...for at least they may have had a view of what life free of lusting is really like - **and maybe they hated it!** At least they can now make a more informed decision. It happens, I am sure.

Hatzlocha, MBJ and everyone!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by nederman - 07 Dec 2012 09:59

[dov wrote on 06 Dec 2012 23:08:](#)

And I cannot blame nederman for posting things about AA/SA and the 12 steps that imply that they are basically pathetic abdications of real Jewish bechirah and of basic human freedom of choice.

You definitely cannot blame me for implying a choice of vocabulary. You chose the word "pathetic" in your own head. You are doing the labeling, not me.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 07 Dec 2012 17:45

I do not blame you in the least, chaver, as it is the idea that *I* get from your posts and did not quote *you* as having actually used the label. I just do not think that you could honestly believe that 12 steps promulgates dependence and perpetuates addiction itself - and not view it as a pathetic response to bechirah and real life. Did I take you the wrong way?

It seemed to me that you were saying that SA and the 12 step path *is* a poor choice - unless a person **wants** to remain addicted to the fellowship and *chooses* to abdicate learning what it means to live with the bechirah and intelligence that G-d created us to use. Did I read you right, or not?

Please, if you disagree with my assessment of your opinion and you truly feel that for many good people SA (the entire powerless thing and the meetings, the sharing, etc) **is** an unpathetic, honorable, and healthy choice for some yidden, then just tell me here so that I quickly remove the mistaken label from my post. I do not want to misrepresent your opinion any more than I'd want someone to do that to mine. No debates are needed - just a yes or no answer is good enough for me.

Thanks,

Dov

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

Posted by nederman - 09 Dec 2012 11:20

[dov wrote:](#)

I do not blame you in the least, chaver, as it is the idea that I get from your posts and did not quote *you* as having actually used the label.

You basically said "I cannot blamed nederman for implying it." I can cut and paste from your original message again if you want.

I just do not think that you could honestly believe that 12 steps promulgates dependence and perpetuates addiction itself - and not view it as a pathetic response to bechirah and real life. Did I take you the wrong way?

In other words you mean that I dishonestly believe it. You believe that I am dishonest.

Please, if you disagree with my assessment of your opinion and you truly feel that for many good people SA (the entire powerless thing and the meetings, the sharing, etc) **is** an unpathetic, honorable, and healthy choice for some yidden, then just tell me here so that I quickly remove the mistaken label from my post.

I have my own thread to write about the method that I have used so that you won't get angry every time I talk about these things.

I am not qualified to describe a program of recovery as pathetic or unpathetic.

Honorable is a moral qualification, and I rely on the Torah for my morals, and I don't know where "honorable" is found in the Torah.

I think SA is definitely a healthy choice for sure for someone who is acting out, but not the best possible choice.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 09 Dec 2012 12:39

Dov,

I am not saying that SA is a bad thing, nor am I saying that it is not appropriate for some who have tried other paths and found that they are unable to succeed. I am merely saying for myself, the SA method, at this point, may not be right for me. As I said perviously, I don't know 100% if I am addict, after all I have been doing this for a long time and have never been able to stop. BUT, despite that I don't think I am an addict, and that with the right mindset I can be successful. If I find over time that I am wrong, I will have to reevaluate myself. Just like you could have someone who drinks more than they should but is not an alchoholic, I think that I lust more than I should but am not an addict. I hope I am correct in this assesment.

Like I also said earlier, I can see by some people's posts that their situations are much more extreme than mine, and they do need more help and a better structured support system.

Nederman, I respect what you are trying to do, and I have found that some of your methods have helped me with my recovery, but on the other hand, your methods are something that one does on ones own. That are many people who need others to push them foward in order to

make progress. For some that would be SA and going to meetings, phone calls etc. I know even for myself, this forum has been a huge help for the community it provides, even if I feel on the outside looking in half the time.

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