

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 yiraishamaim - 11 Dec 2016 04:03

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 13 Dec 2016 15:07

How can I feel like, literally, the luckiest guy in the world, who had been showered untold gifts by Hashem and also feel needy and longing at the same time? Why the disconnect of being so content and yet wanting to act out?

I have been engaging in very dangerous thoughts, potentially triggering internet searches and ill advised actions the last week. I have done this dance enough times to know where it ends if I don't change something.

The question is what? (I am not looking for answers per se, I probably won't listen to them anyway.) What do I need to do to make me feel in my kishkes what my head is telling me. Because the longing is in my kishkes and the contented feeling in my head.

I love my wife. I don't want to hurt her, but I still lust after her very strongly, but she might as well be on the other side of the world. I also don't want to go there. I don't want to be that person any more. I hate that person. I hate who he is and what he stands for. But something in me just can't let him go.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 13 Dec 2016 15:33

Well, if you are posting on GYE I'll be pleasantly surprised if you don't get a slew (yes that's apparently how it's spelled [whooduthunk?]) I just looked it up...whatever) of advice, advice and advice.

, I will just ask you to re-read what you wrote above and then please explain what it is that you *are* wanting. Very clearly and simply. I like answering that question on paper, not in typing. If you wish, reply here after you write it (just a suggestion). I think it can start a productive conversation that can 'end' this stalemate, as we have seen happen many times, bH. Instead of falling for that one and giving you advice to stop doing that

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Shlomo24 - 13 Dec 2016 16:31

I relate a lot to that post, MBJ. I would like to offer my ESH. (It's not advice, Dov!) What helped me a lot is realizing that I have an addiction. I have a chemical addiction to lust. That will not leave. Logic will not help that. Feeling good will not help that. I am chemically addicted to lust just as an alcoholic is chemically addicted to alcohol. The latest research would support what I just said. So do I want to hurt others? No I don't. Do I want to do the things that I do? No! Of course not! I'm not a bad guy. I have a disease that craves lust and it goes against all logic and morals. So yes, I did all those things and I'm responsible for doing it, because my body carried out the behavior. But my lust addiction is a force greater than myself and in that sense there's no shame or guilt about what I did, because I'm not in control. My disease doesn't reflect my "genuine self."

So what's my medicine? A 12-step program and what it entails. I listen to my sponsor. I call other members, especially when I don't want to call. I listen to others who have more wisdom than me. I don't rely on myself anymore, I rely on my Higher Power to do with me what he wants. So far he's batting 1.000 and I have no reason to believe that will change.

I wish you much Hatzlacha.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 15 Dec 2016 15:12

What do I want?

That is a great question, because the truth is I have no idea. I guess I want to feel content all the time. (I know this is not possible, but the man asked what I want, not what I can achieve.) My problem is I don't know what that means. I search for lust because I am searching for something, but I don't know what it is or where to find it. I tell myself I just want my wife to look me in the eye and tell me she loves me. But then I reason that is sounds great but would I be content after that. And the answer is well no, because then if she would just give me a hug. Etc etc.

I want to stop having this empty feeling that I try to fill with lust, food, youtube, video games, whatever. This awful listlessness that something is missing and just one hug or porn or cookie or video will fill and make me whole again. (Until next time)

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by HayomYom - 15 Dec 2016 15:57

[MBJ wrote on 15 Dec 2016 15:12:](#)

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I am not the one to offer advice. But that's what a forum is all about - where everyone sticks in their two senses. Every case is different, and every person is different, but here's what helps me conquer that empty feeling. I try to fill the void with as much spirituality as possible. There is such a rich variety of Jewish Seferim, books, audio and visual shiurim. One can set up all kinds

of learning plans, based on their level and schedule. Life becomes so much more normalized and fulfilling under such conditions. At first it may be difficult - ?? ?????? ???? - but after a while, the pleasure of such activities beats by far all the mirages offered by the imaginary temptations.

Try it - you may like it.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 15 Dec 2016 18:53

[MBJ wrote on 15 Dec 2016 15:12:](#)

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What you describe here is precisely what alcoholics write about in their stories recorded in the Big Book of AA many times. It is also what Roy wrote in 'The Problem' in the SA White Book. No difference between either of those, same problem...and for the addicted men and women I know in 12 step fellowships including myself, same solution. The true secret founder of the 12 Step Program, Carl Jung, discovered that what the drunks he was working (and failing) with were really seeking the very thing you say at the end of your response: wholeness. He called it 'Unity', I am told. And wrote that in a letter to Bill W., who wanted to know where it all started.

You describe it so well that it's refreshing. And that honesty is another example of what is sometimes shunned, or at of what is at least suggested not to look at much. Admitting a deep and real - albeit stupid - desire for what cannot be achieved by any human being: true, ultimate, happiness. Messilas Yeshorim spends most of his hakdomah clarifying just that point! And his purpose is certainly *not* to suggest that 'all is futile'. Just that the pursuit of ultimate happiness in this life, is.

From what i understand so far, 12 steps helps people (who actually *work* them to) do what seems anathema at our core: give up and surrender to a Higher Power. It's core is humility. And, as frum as we may be, the shocking reality still is that deep inside where no one sees, we truly believe that it's stupid to put G-d in charge of our lives; to actually trust Him. After all, we can't see Him; it appears that He is at least partially responsible for things like threatening to kill the children of guys who masturbate, etc; the Holocaust, the fact that our lives have some crappy circumstances, etc. What sense is there in simply and truly surrendering our will and care into His hands? Not much, it seems.

Now, I am **not** referring to agreeing to **do** His Will (Torah and Mitzvos), mind you. I am talking about letting go and letting Him run the world and our lives and care for us as he wants to and not kvetching about it but *accepting* it fully. And that's not a issue of frumkeit.

In other words, the surrender that all the AAs and SAs and NAs the world over are working.

And all the gasps of good, frum people saying, "How can you say such things, *of course* we trust Hashem! Who *else* do we trust?! Ein lanu al mi l'hisho'ein ella Avinu sh'baShomayim!", etc, etc..." All beautiful words describing how it is indeed *supposed* to be. What every Rov must say - **and should** say - from the pulpit. All true - but not describing where we really are, nor where we will likely be for the foreseeable future in this short life. And, hard as we may try with mesiras nefesh to mitzvos and Torah, we just cannot get 'frum' enough to *make* ourselves to be there. To truly surrender to Him and his Will. To be OK with Him guiding our lives and using us for whatever His good purpose happens to be. Being at peace with life on Life's terms.

Virtually every time I bring that idea up to frum masturbaters net yet in recovery, their response is the same. They confuse step 3 with accepting the ol mitzvos (Yoke of Divine Service). But that has nothing to do with the core of the Program. [Now, please remember that the 12 step program is not Torah but rather Derech Eretz, which Chaza"l tell us is the priority [i]ahead [i]of Torah.] Step 3 - the core of the 12 step program - is not about **doing** His Will, but rather about **accepting** His Will and care.

The path to that seems to be agreed upon by 12 step folks as being open only to people not using their drug-of-choice. And after we are sober, we discover that the path is still too narrow to get through easily till we quit using our side-drug, the ego. Steps 4-7 to the rescue! We learn to start getting out of Hashem's way...or we go back to our drug in the end.

When I read your list of requirements for True Peace, I am reminded of myself exactly. And I remember the place everything good starts, for me: surrender. Not surrender in thought, but in action...and the thought and heart follows, as a gift.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 15 Dec 2016 19:47

Dov,

May I make a suggestion please?

Rewrite the above post without mentioning what frum people do or don't do or what they think or whatever.

Simply explaining what the addict is looking or searching for, and how the 12 steps help him.

Thanks

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 15 Dec 2016 23:25

[cordnoy wrote on 15 Dec 2016 19:47:](#)

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[sorry MBJ - I feel like explaining myself here. But if you want me to take this out of your thread just tell me so and it's gone, no questions asked.]

Yes, I can easily do that, cordnoy. And I *would* do that if I were writing in some other venues than GYE. But I believe that it would not be helpful to do that here on GYE, of all places. I see the greatest obstacle for many good people (myself included) being the confusion of truth with fiction...especially when the fiction is *holy* fiction.

Yeah, I am sad that some are offended by this. And that's because I really want to be liked by everyone - my own sad problem. But I bet they are among the people who are most deeply *plagued* by this very obstacle, and that this is *why* they feel offended...and yeah, some of them are not. Safe Spaces can be found on almost any college campus and they are welcome to go . Or ignore my posts the way others do. No big loss there.

I have also noticed that some of the people who mistakenly accuse me of believing that 12 steps is the only way, or of belittling Torah avodah or Teshuvah, or of other things I'd never even consider, do so because they themselves are generalists. "To the man with only a hammer in his toolchest, all problems must be a nail"...and that man likes to assume that anyone else who espouses a tool must also have *only that* tool in their toolchest. 'Gandalf' put it so well when he said that Saruman just couldn't help but judge him as a power-hungry megalomaniac...because *Saruman* was one himself. It seems to me that we are most comfortable assess others using our own tendencies. And that works for good or ill.

So even though it might p.o. some truly good folks and even tho some of them will surely pin the tail on this donkey (me) instead of on themselves, I will write what I think is good to say, in the way I think it is good to be written.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 16 Dec 2016 00:39

[Dov wrote on 15 Dec 2016 23:25:](#)

[cordnoy wrote on 15 Dec 2016 19:47:](#)

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Of course!

You are entitled to write what you please and how you please and where you please.

But, as a matter of fact (opinion), it is precisely your reasoningI that caused me to make that suggestion.....allow me to explain with two points (and obviously, I'll be brief).

1. In general, when one states his opinion, and at the same time, mixed in throughout his opinion, he inserts what the others maintain and why they are wrong, it confuses the others (the readers) as to what he truly wants to say. (Personally, I have a learning disability when it comes to double negatives.)

2. B'davka on GYE, where there are many or some who think different, by inserting why you disagree and what is wrong with their approach, you can or may minimize the effectiveness of your important words.

(Especially because your stress to MBJ was simply to address what it is he might be searching for.)

However, in the end, I defer.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 16 Dec 2016 00:45

And one other note, lest anyone think different, it is only on account of the high regard I have for your words - that is why I make these suggestions. I want them to be heard and understood.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Shlomo24 - 16 Dec 2016 01:35

Cords: I have never observed you being so polite! (I also only read Dov's post fully once you posted about it, lol).

Dov: I very much relate to what you wrote. Of course I "trusted" in Hashem before program! How could I say that I don't, as a frum Jew! That would be anti my whole existence. But in reality I really didn't. It wasn't because Hashem isn't a loving Higher Power, of course He is, it had nothing to do with Him. It was because of my self-reliance and my disease.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 16 Dec 2016 02:51

Dear Cordnoy and Shlomo24 (Wait! Look how far I have come, I am actually using the fake names!!),

Thanks for the feedback and friendship. Understood your suggestion and reasons cordnoy, and I must admit that keeping the points you made in mind will make things more difficult for me. But I agree it might prove worthwhile. Will at least try it once in a while. Thanks for your feedback

Shlomo24; real life experience is so precious. It usually beats wise words hands down even though it obviously isn't applicable to everyone.

Thanks MBJ for your patience with this digression, and G-d bless you and your honesty. I say stick with it and you will get real places eventually. I don't need to take significant and real actions of honesty - I need to **keep** taking significant and real actions of honesty each day, right now, and live right, right now. Not for this week or the rest of my life, but right now. We who do that now, are getting places v'lo ira. Adon Olam is full of awesome remainders and mantras for this line of work.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 17 Dec 2016 19:28

Looks like I missed a party. Thank you guys for taking the time to post.

Yes, trusting Hashem to actually run the world is so hard. After all I would also do a great job, no? Maybe even better. Truth be told that is the area of my life that I have put the most work in over the last few years and it is hard it I have made much progress.

The real key though Dov is the last part, surrendering in practice, not just in thought. That is the part that I only succeed on doing occasionally. I just naturally want to hold onto the illusion of control, even though it is only an illusion.

Either way it feels nice to know I am not the only insane one here.

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