

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 Dov - 23 Aug 2017 01:10

Absolutely clear, Eli, thank you!

You're obviously a very good man, sins and all, as many of us are. And Hashem will help you do whatever you need to do to be freed from lust, just as He helps so many Jews and gentiles I know personally.

If there's ever anything I can help you with, just call on me, chaver.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 27 Aug 2017 19:48

Cranky and horny. A toxic combination.

But, I know He had a plan. His plan is way better than my plan. Even though it's all seems too hard today, I know that He had a plan. I can trust Him that it is the best plan for me.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 27 Aug 2017 20:38

I just read an old chizzuk email. It quotes Dov saying how all addictions are stupid. It is something that drives me crazy. I know in my heart and head that masturbating will not fix any problem and only make me feel better for a few fleeting seconds. And whenever I stare at a girl in the street it always strikes me as so what. Yes she has nice xyz how does that help me at all. Does me no good and doesn't even make me feel good. It is all so stupid. And yet there I go going for a second look and a third, knowing the whole time what a pointless exercise it is. I just can't stop myself.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 28 Aug 2017 04:29

So?

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 28 Aug 2017 15:17

[Dov wrote on 28 Aug 2017 04:29:](#)

So?

Just venting and ticking off another crazy box in my head.

But every once in a while forcing myself to confront the absurdity of it with a simple "so what" helps me cool of the urges.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 28 Aug 2017 15:59

That's what I hoped you'd say. I relate so well, chaver.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MayanHamisgaber - 05 Sep 2017 20:02

[MBJ wrote on 10 Apr 2013 23:36:](#)

Again so true Dov.

A little patience and restraint goes a very long way.

Since I rediscovered this basic fact, I have been feeling a lot better, a lot more in control.

Next time I start to lose myself, I need someone to bludgeon me over the head with it.

Hope this is not out of place....

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

Posted by MayanHamisgaber - 05 Sep 2017 20:08

[MBJ wrote on 08 Apr 2013 11:04:](#)

Hi Dov and needtoquit, thank you for your well wishes. I just hope I take the lessons I learned from this fall and it will help me avoid future ones.

Your advise is good Dov, unfortunately there are no "real" people in my life that I can confide in at this point. Besides the forum that is a huge help, there are some from the forum that I have developed a more personal relationship with, but even that is all still virtual.

Unfortunately, when I am on the ledge only I can talk myself down, I just naturally shut out all other influences. Almost nothing anyone else says really helps for more than a short time. Change can only come from within.

One thing that is interesting to me, is how when I am in a bad place, it is not just the taiva for masturbation that hits me, it is all of them. I eat too much, I have a shorter temper, less patience, I am lazier. Naturally, all these things then tend to feed on themselves.

The funny thing, is the thing that really seemed to snap me out of it this time, (I hope it stays snapped) was when I had a fight with my wife. I was impatience, lazy and quick to temper with my son and he was crying. She said to me, "I thought that the problems we were having were my fault, but you are a part of it also, you have a giant chip on your shoulder." At which point I said something stupid and then she said something stupid yadda yadda yadda.

A minute after we cooled down, I thought about what she said, and just the fact that she acknowledged that we had a problem, something that she had not brought up in a while, and that she had some part of that problem, something that she has never done before, gave me a bit of hope.

That was in the morning, in the evening, I said to her that it doesn't have to be now, in fact it is probably better it is not now, but at some point soon, we have to sit and talk and have a conversation about our problems, she sort of agreed.

Now for me the challenge will be to temper my expectations, and be patient. There really has been a lot of progress made in the last half a year, but I am always impatient and I want it faster. That is part of the reason for my last fall. I need to let her come back to me at her own pace, I may need to give a gentle nudge now and then like last night, but I can't expect her to make a leap in one week over a chasm that has been growing for 7 years.

[Dov wrote on 08 Apr 2013 20:21:](#)

The old chasm is shrinking, as long as our egos and impatience keep shrinking. Wow, it's hard to wait. Sometimes it's even more difficult to wait once we start seeing the progress starting! That's important for me to recognize. I have cut open lots of geese to get that golden egg, killed)

Hey. One day at a time, for real.

Ciao

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 06 Sep 2017 12:50

[Dov wrote on 01 Sep 2013 17:37:](#)

Thanks for sharing all that, folks. Being clean for a while helps me see what's inside my heart a lot better. And I see that my heart holds me for ransom, holds our marriage for ransom. My own heart tells me that the only real validation - the only way for me to truly be at rest is her being sexual with me the exact way that I want her to be. Anything less means to my heart that, "Yeah, she likes me a bit, but I could have that with practically any woman I married...". So I am left - no, WE are left with a big hole through my gut.

But love is really doing stuff for each other. In sobriety I see that what will actually make me feel at rest, is loving her. That is an impossible place to stay if I am lusting or playing with lust. Every peek with my eyes - or inside my heart - at 'what I could have/should have', drags me right back to the crazy-thinking that is sooo natural for me.

The thinking that tells me I have the ability to define love - and it is '*her* wanting sex with me the way I want her to want sex with me *when* I want her to want, blah, blah, blah, etc.'...you get the idea.

So the program talks of G-d and a relationship with Him. He can't give me sex, but He can give me the validation that my wife cannot. And that to me is one of the big differences between all this Pamensky stuff, therapy, etc - and recovery in the 12 steps.

Yes, we in 12 steps are spiritual fanatics. We believe in a real G-d, whose love for me is as real as anyone else's - even my wife's. We can retreat to Him, and He is OK with us forgetting all about Him (we all do frequently). He loves us like crazy anyhow. Even when we are masturbating to porn, even when we are raging inside waiting for whoever to give us whatever. He's cool like that. Much of the RaMa"K's **Tomer Devorah** is about this exact point. I love Him and He loves me - and it is real love and provides a basic spiritual rest that opens me up to living sanely. To living without so many needs. RMB"M's son's sefer **Hamaspik** talks about this idea, too, when he addresses love for G-d near the beginning

And it takes the work of real actions (like opening up to real safe people, writing, making real amends, taking actions of love, etc.), faith, time, but *first* and foremost it takes **surrender** of my lust - not just 'shmiras einayim' or 'yir'as Shomayim'. They are as effective as spitballs are against a tank.

Addendum:

By no means am I saying above that I actually *live* in this reality all the time. All I am saying is that I am growing along these very lines and often do live this way. But I certainly have ups and downs.

I recognize that when I am desiring more touch, affection, or sex than my wife is naturally giving me, it is either pain in me groping for lust-morphine or just my sweet tooth for sex talking again. I am not dead yet, you know. I see it, admit what's wrong with me to my recovery friends and to G-d, sometimes to my wife, and **chill about it**. That's letting go. If I cannot chill about it, I know that I will eventually need a period of sexual abstinence to re-surrender sex and re-reconnect with my wife w/o intercourse...boy do I hate *having* to do those - even though life and our marriage are fantastic during them.

The solution always brings me back into what I wrote above - dependence on G-d instead of on my wife or on sex. And it works.

This post and the questions and clarifications followin' it are extremely pleasant to read. Very insightful.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 06 Sep 2017 12:56

[MBJ wrote on 03 Apr 2014 11:21:](#)

There is something that I have been mulling over in my head, and I guess I wanted to get it out and see where it takes me.

I started this journey with the lesson that sex is optional. Lust is not like breathing, I don't need it to survive. I won't die without ejaculation. Now I am thinking that this has to go even further.

I know there have been discussions here of "el isheich teshukateich" and that it is not a sexual thing at all, though that is how I always read it. As someone who has not had sex with his wife in almost 3 years, it still rankled me though, despite the fact that it is a general yearning for closeness, and not sex.

Then I listened to Rav Lazer Brody's talk on Dovid Chaim's phone conference. He said a few wonderful things there, but one that really really stuck with me was that when a man yearns for his wife, he reverses the order, he becomes the woman in the relationship. My wife does not want to be married to a woman, she wants to be married to a man. My walking around her like a dog waiting for a pat on the head is a major turn off. So I tried to incorporate this into my life, but I failed. Like I wrote earlier, my wife has become more open to me, but I recently took it further than she wanted and it made her upset, justifiably. I let my penis do the thinking and I got in trouble. I am still craving and yearning for her, her approval, her physical touch yada yada yada.

A few days ago I was surfing YouTube and I came across a speech by R' Manis Friedman. He also was discussing the punishments of Adam and Chava. In talking about Adam he said how his curse was to provide for his family and do it with difficulty. The point he took out of it was that man, or more correctly a husband, is a giver, a provider. It is the very nature of man that he gives and THAT is how he finds his fulfillment. A woman on the other hand is a receiver. (He deliberately differentiated receiver from taker. A receiver has to open themselves up and make themselves vulnerable to accept what the giver is giving.)

Lusting is neither giving nor receiving, it is taking. It is pure selfishness. No one benefits but the luster, and since it goes against what my real nature is as a giver, I find no satisfaction in it, only an emptiness that I think can be filled by even more taking, which really just makes the hole bigger and bigger.

I can get into now what I learned from the Tanya column in the weekly newsletter, that perhaps the *tayva* and lust is my *nefesh habehemis*, and the giver is my *nefesh eloki*. And feeding the *behemis* is emptiness for my *eloki*. Maybe I am wrong in that, but it sounds good to me. Chassidus and Tanya is completely foreign to me.

Now to sum up. I am a husband. My wife's desire is for me. If I desire her I am reversing the natural order of things. The constant search for her affection is nothing for me. It will not fulfill me at all. It goes against my very nature. The only thing that can really fulfill me is my giving to her. Lusting is antithetical to who I am as a person. Lusting is not me. Desiring is not me. I am the husband the person who gives. I provide for my wife, I provide for my family. I keep them safe, I provide order in the house. On some level it means I have to maintain an objectivity, an aloofness, because I have to see what people need on their terms, not on my terms. After all the best way to give is to give as they need it, not how I think they need it.

Really, I see this as true, because when my wife and I used to be intimate, all I really wanted was for her to enjoy it. I just wanted her to enjoy it like I thought she should, i.e. what I learned from porn. But I was trying to give and lust at the same time. That doesn't work.

What I am trying to learn now, is that lust is anathema to me. Any form of lust and desire is not just dangerous, not just an allergy, but actually undermining me as a person. The lesson now is not just that I can live without lust, but rather I can't live with it. It is not an option at all. There is no such thing as lusting like a gentleman, since lusting is the polar opposite of what a gentleman is.

So what I am trying to do is give my wife what she desires, what she is open to receive, not like before with the hope that she in turn will give back, but because that is who I am, a giver. It has given me a new attitude, even better than before, when in the back of my mind, was always when will it be my turn. Before GYE my attitude was, it has to be my turn, then it was I can wait for now, but eventually it will be my turn, now I am trying to learn that I don't get a turn, but that is OK, because I don't need one. In essence, when she has her turn I get mine too, since we are like two pieces of a puzzle. I give she receives. A symbiotic relationship, where we both get what we need all the time.

Similarly, all lust from the outside, all foreign women, have to be completely shut off not because it may lead to bigger stuff, it is more basic than that. My chasing after foreign women is directly undermining myself, something I never appreciated before.

This has been pretty long winded, I don't know if people agree with me or not, but I am curious to see where this takes me.

Gold!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 06 Sep 2017 13:16

[MBJ wrote on 01 Nov 2016 13:01:](#)

I was hyst noticing that I started this thread Nov 4th 2012, almost 4 years ago. That is kind of depressing. Sad that 4 years later I am still struggling.

True I am a few days shy of hitting 90 for the 4th time. I had a sobriety streak of almost 2 years somewhere in the middle. My marriage went from the brink of disaster to a pleasant and very functional one, and sometimes, when I let it, even a happy one.

But still I feel kind of like a failure that 4 years later I am still lusting. 4 years later I still have falls. Granted 4 years ago I didn't even know lusting was my problem and I still believed that with enough will power I could overcome it this time. Or better yet 4 years ago I finally got the inkling that maybe my will power wasn't the problem.

I remember asking many years ago if a cure is possible. So far I don't see it.

On the other hand I really have so much to be grateful for. This forum and the wonderful people on it have really helped me be more conscious of my lusting and therefore in a better position to do something about it. As well as given me tools through which I can be better.

True, I can also say I am not porning and masturbating 5 times a week anymore. But if that was all, if I was the same person who just masturbates a lot less that would be sad.

Ultimately I want to answer am I a better human being, eved Hashem, father, husband than I was 4 years ago. Sadly I can't definitively say yes, but that may be just a memory bias of mine.

Sure there I things I can point to that I have greatly improved on. Mostly my patience and acceptance of whatever happens as the will of Hashem. That in turn has made me a better husband and father I hope. Maybe that has to be enough for now. Progress not perfection. Maybe that is my solace. If nothing else I can better say Gam zu letova and that is enough for now.

Sorry I can't quote each and every pearl, but there was no way I could miss this one. [Can someone with protectzia please contact the techies and request that threads can be viewed on one or two pages; it is pretty annoyin'. The savin' grace here is that there are jewels on every page and all you need to do is click and view (hmmm....I used to do plenty of that).]

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by GrowStrong - 06 Sep 2017 14:32

guardyoureyes.com/forum/4-On-the-Way-to-90-Days/147170-MBJs-90-day-%28and-more%29-Journey?limit=600

That will show the full thread in one page

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 06 Sep 2017 18:28

Cords, thanks for reposting those incredible articles. Boy do they hit home. Somehow every chosson has to be trained in the proper approach..... Wish i would have been. Even if i was in sick mode then, i woud have at least heard these concepts exist.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 06 Sep 2017 20:01

Thank you guys so much for digging that stuff out. I should read my own posts sometimes. I forget the lessons I learned in the past because I stopped living them.

Cordnoy, that was an amazing post by Dov that you posted. Thanks for bringing it here

I am glad to be back on this forum.

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