

My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 06 Mar 2016 18:47

Hi all

I'm revamping my efforts all around. Got an accountability partner, a sponsor, a 12 step group, a coach, and some new tools. Of course if I started to list what I don't yet have this post would never end. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I recognize that my "plans" are only as good as what I will make of them.

I thought it might be helpful to have a place to write about my experiences at times. Fell free to share any thoughts/suggestions/comments you may have along the way.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 25 Apr 2016 22:11

I really enjoyed Y"T. It seemed that it was the first time in a while that I could feel good about celebrating yontif and feeling the message of Hashem's kindness without also feeling like a complete fraud and phonie.

I definitely felt grateful for the relative sobriety I have had over the past several months, even with a couple of falls. Also, my schedule of work and learning has been improving + learned some hagaddah stuff.. it all made a big difference.

I have not been tempted to act out with lust all that much, B"H. Though there have been triggers for it... frustration with family and stuff, especially when I feel like I have no say in things and get dragged along with the everyone else, boredom, hanging out with female cousins, stuff like that.. and going on trips where we see women dressed for the warm weather. I'm just trying not to focus too much on it and to get it "out of my system" as painlessly as possible.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 28 Apr 2016 22:41

I used to journal sometimes. Often to write out how miserable I felt, agonize over a difficult decision, and spell out for myself my sins and struggles with lust, and my "kaballos" for the future (which rarely lasted more than a few days. But I have kept many of these papers around, as if I may need them someday...

I am throwing them out now, or trying to. But I read them first to decide if I am ready to part ways with it. Today I read 2 pages I wrote after Yom kippur maybe 3 years ago. My "Vidduy" was so depressing, but also heartfelt and clear. My "Kabbalos" were even more depressing, with some good ideas and others that seem almost childish in how I attempted to break free back then. Like:

No reading after midnight - Go to Sleep! - not so different than what I am doing now, except with internet use

Don't enter the TV room - or at least make sure to intentionally avoid it at least once a day as a reminder - didn't work for me

Don't use unfiltered computers unless someone else has a direct line of sight to the screen - very hard to keep to practically,

Give away unnecessary wireless devices, like my kindle - wish I followed through, but fat chance I guess

Install monitoring software on my filtered pc, and appoint a friend as my monitor - I did this, and it helped for a bit, but I never explained my problem to the friend, and he never confronted me about anything lust related (I assume he never caught me). Eventually, I guess the program expired or something

Reflect on my kabbalos each day during shemone esrei to keep myself on track - got tedious, and when I "discovered" I had broken a geder my \$20 knas kabballa was too hard for me to keep to

Sleep in a sitting position - I can't believe I actually did this, but I did for a few days at least. This one more than any of the others brings home the point to me of how desperately I felt that I needed to change, but how hopelessly powerless I was to do it

I know it's the 12th hour before Y"T, and I shouldn't be on the computer now, but I am. Had a bit of a struggle today, so maybe it's a good thing. Talk to Y'all after

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 01 May 2016 17:01

A few years back I opened up to a Rabbi about my problem. It took me till now to relate to some of the things he told me. It is shocking really. I have been struggling with this problem in one way or another (sometimes with 99% effort, sometimes with .05%) for so long, yet I was so blind for so long (and maybe still am in many ways). One thing he stressed was that the urge and compulsion to keep acting out is going to be very powerful (I think he was loathe to say that I would be powerless against it). He advised me to get a support community - like GYE :-)
and a mentor/rebbi/guide that would be accessible and available for me. But he also stressed that I would only be successful if my own commitment was rock-iron stronger than the urge to act out will be. I know that many people, myself included, have found that willpower alone is not enough. But I understand commitment today a bit differently, and I see it as maybe the single most important thing in recovery.

Commitment means **real** desperation for change. For some, this might be Step 1 of the 12. I have also found that what today I may feel as a desperate need for change, I can easily "forget" about tomorrow. Knowing this helps, but I'm still working out how to overcome it.

I like what Dov said in a recent chizik e-mail. Commitment "to do anything", "whatever it takes", "worth dying for", is not what I need. Rather I need commitment to do specific things. Concrete undertaking and steps (with either an uppercase or lowercase "S"). Another part of this to me is being honest and not agreeing to or committing to things that I have no intention or faith in myself of actually being able to do. Facing my unwillingness to change (or inability/powerlessness) sometimes allows me to make commitments that are real and that I never imagined I could make. Another way this was expressed to me was by something that Dov mentions in his 12 step recordings: When a commitment leads to a feeling of dread - "I can **never** _____ again?" - it's because it's a real commitment.

Along these lines, commitment to me means accepting to take actions that will really make a difference. Whether this means going to therapy, joining a support group, installing filters, doing daily posts, connecting by phone to others and really seeking help, not using a computer if I am in a room alone. And maybe joining SA for real could fit on this list. Talking to Rabbi's or mentors who have the ability to guide me through issues that are serious concerns for me personally. I have not tried all these things, but they are all things that to me show real commitment. I also take a realistic and practical perspective to them, as much as possible. I may not have money for the therapy/support groups at the moment, or may not be prepared to approach the right Rabbi, mentor, therapist. But if that's what is necessary, then I will work

towards it by saving up the money, slowly developing a list of serious questions that I need answered, putting in the work on whatever assignments I think are necessary before I can be open to receiving help from certain mentors, therapists, SA gurus or whatever. Maybe this reflects a misguided need for control, but it is just my way...

One small thing that also helped me a few times was to connect my commitment to something that was *real* to me. Once, I made a quasi-neder that if a certain situation would be resolved happily, then I would abstain from a specific activity. Another time it had to do with someone's health, etc. but they helped make the commitment feel real and binding on me. For the most part, these worked only temporarily. Eventually they were not real enough to string me along forever. But I think they were crucial steps in helping me gain the "sobriety" to take the next step forward. They helped me make sober decisions in the future. Technically, I think I have been fully faithful to my first "neder". But definitely not in spirit.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 02 May 2016 17:17

I don't want to tell, but I fell. How?

I felt discontented yesterday. I wasn't living the day I had hoped and planned for. I spent way too much time on GYE. Also, it was the first time after yomtov that I wasn't busy and with family. I was tired and feeling down. I laid down to watch a movie and relax, which is something I had been avoiding. It was a "kosher" movie I told myself, though my view of kosher is quite twisted by this point (there was even some nudity, but "not the bad kind" ;-/). The movie finished after midnight, but I wasn't feeling any more contented (surprise!). So I kept watching TV, then I went for a walk, and got into bed with a GYE recording playing so I wouldn't act out. I thought I had made it. But I was restless and woke up to act out a fantasy and masturbate. I broke a few personal boundaries in what I did too, which makes it seem worse. I told myself I would get up in the morning and move on. But instead I slept in, acted out again in the morning, mumbled davening in my living room, and made my way to the computer to find some erotica. I didn't get that far, as someone reached out to me, and I closed all the tabs I was planning to check out... But I still feel like acting out, honestly.

What's so frustrating is that I didn't feel the urge to act out building the whole Yomtov. Maybe as I got back to "real life" my usual problems became relevant again

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Re: My Journey

Posted by inastruggle - 04 May 2016 15:42

I usually don't feel the urge building up. What helps me is that over time I realized the patterns of when the urge is there. This way I know in advance when the urge will be worse.

For me motzei shabbos is a hard time, I know to watch out for it.

Just learn from your falls and get back into the game.

Maybe motzei yomtov is harder for you (it is for me), there are a lot of reasons why that can be. Don't expect to be perfect.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 06 May 2016 21:37

On my recent fall, I used a mainstream site to access all kinds of problematic material/erotica. I have k9 on the computer on the strictest setting, but this site is not blocked. I try not to rely on the filter anyway, but...

Any advice, thoughts?

I can give more specifics, but would rather not on the forum

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Re: My Journey

Posted by markz - 06 May 2016 23:28

I haven't put enough thought into this, I may come back and edit something as I don't want this to be off my cuff

I will get slammed for this, but in my opinion if you feel the filter gives you a safety bracket to think that you're safe, despite the fact that you constantly play TAG with it, remove all your filters (if there's no kids around) for 6 months, and you may discover sobriety much sooner

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Re: My Journey

Posted by inastruggle - 08 May 2016 02:01

I'm not really writing this to thanks613 since we chatted already but I feel like someone should protest.

A filter obviously won't make you safe. If you have a filter, keep falling, and still think the filter makes you safe, then you have bigger issues than gye can handle.

We have filters first and foremost because the gedolim say to have them.

It gives you a bit of breathing space from a fall. If it takes you 20-30 clicks to fall instead of 2 then you have a lot more time to snap out of it and the additional hassle makes the urge slightly less powerful (especially since the holes are usually less quality than the original).

That said I do hear your reasoning. Maybe a rov should be asked.

When do I start slamming you?

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Re: My Journey

Posted by Yesod - 08 May 2016 02:48

"inastruggle" post=287055 date=1462672898

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Once i committed to fall, i was never, ever, stopped by any filter or anything.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by Aryeh821 - 08 May 2016 02:54

[Yesod wrote:](#)

"inastruggle" post=287055 date=[1462672898](#)

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I think the idea is to stop you from coming and also for people on the fence

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Re: My Journey

Posted by inastruggle - 08 May 2016 03:16

[Yesod wrote on 08 May 2016 02:48:](#)

Once i committed to fall, i was never, ever, stopped by any filter or anything.

That statment brings so many frustrating episodes to mind. How circumstances interfered with my plans. I don't remember ever not falling either but I uh, had to compromise a lot of times. I do think I didn't fall but that would be only a handful of times.

Like aryeh said, that's not when the filter does much for you. Though you do get a mitzvah for having it. Mitzvah lishmoa l'divrei chachomim, it may be a d'oraysah of lo sasur. Ask someone who actually knows what they're talking about if you're curious.

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Re: My Journey

Posted by Shlomo24 - 08 May 2016 03:53

[Yesod wrote on 08 May 2016 02:48:](#)

"inastruggle" post=287055 date=1462672898

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When do I start slamming you?

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When did you commit?

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Re: My Journey

Posted by Yesod - 08 May 2016 04:26

Before i fell

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Re: My Journey

Posted by thanks613 - 08 May 2016 05:47

Thanks for the chit chat. Ina, what's vd"l?

For the record, I was without a filter for a coupla months before now, partly because I thought that "relying" on the filter was counterproductive. I'm glad I had those few months to improve my perspective, but I'm better off now that the filter is back on. Of course, I still have easy access to unfiltered internet if I want it. But hopefully, I can make good decisions for myself.

I ~~was talked into~~ made a decision to block the site. It's not a strategy I love, because in the past it has been like a cat-and-mouse game of blocking out sites and finding new ones.. but I think it's a good decision for me right now.

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