

Road to 90 days (how I succeeded, and you can too)

Posted by Yosef Tikun HaYesod - 17 Nov 2016 07:53

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I don't understand how being here is going to help.

Perhaps posting my progress and struggles will help other people.

Perhaps I'll receive encouragement and good advice and support.

I sincerely DOUBT that I can just succeed for 90 days (13 weeks),

just because I decide I want to, SINCE I've failed so many times

in the past. But maybe this time is different, because I will post here,

and have 2 experienced guys I've been emailing regularly.

B'ezras HaShem, I will finally succeed and break free from this bad habit.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by unanumun - 18 Jan 2017 22:51

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As far as as I understand the 17 tools you brought are ways to try to stop. Sometimes people are watching porn or masturbating for simpler reasons. Maybe because it feels good or they just got into a bad habit.

By trying the different tools you can see where you are holding and what works for you.

It seems pretty clearly to me that the main focus for you has to be on tools 2 and 5. Get those down and everything will probably work out for you. Ignore those two and you won't be getting anywhere real.

It is an amazing step that you say that you finally see that the deeper problem is not being fully addressed.

Of course how to do that is very difficult for anyone but you to figure out. Based on our conversations i would suggest that strengthening yourself in emuna and bitachon might help a bit. By learning sefarim like chovos halevovos- shaar habetachon we can learn how to properly deal with what is coming our way and look at things from a more calm and accepting view point. (I am not looking to get into the big mussar helping or not helping debate in general. Here i am

offering tailor made advice to a specific person in a specific situation., Also I don't mean this in terms of learning mussar but rather as a way of changing perspective on life.)

Perhaps also reading (Lehavdil) the 7 habits of highly effective people by stephen Covey. Particularly the first habits where he discussed taking control of our reactions to the things that come at us.

i have some other ideas but those are good starters.

As far as the car moshol. I didn't remember exactly the way Watson was using it, but to me the nimshal was driving the right direction, just on the wrong side of the road. Yes, you are headed the right way but it is easier to get there if you are driving on the proper side of the road where everyone is going in that same direction as opposed to having to avoid the many cars coming at you in the opposite direction.

Yes those thirty things might be slowly moving you in the right direction but you are still destined to crash and fall because you are focusing on avoiding the cars. If you just switch lanes to the other side of the highway, the one that everyone else decided to travel on, you can just focus on driving forward. A lot easier ultimately.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 18 Jan 2017 22:54

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The daily chizuk emails are a big help. I look forward to them every day. Also Dov's daily call is educational and very inspirational. Definitely talk to the experts. They truly care. They have "been there and done that". Hatzlocha! Your success is our success! Stay with us brother.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)  
Posted by Yosef Tikun HaYesod - 18 Jan 2017 22:59

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It really happened and probably still does, but the Russians are mainly using the placebo effect.

Here is a scholarly article on it:

E. Raikhel (Department of Comparative Human Development, University of Chicago, 5730 South Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637,

USAe-mail: [eugene.raikhel@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:eugene.raikhel@mail.mcgill.ca)<sup>123</sup>Cult Med Psychiatry (2010)ORIGINAL PAPERPost-Soviet Placebos: Epistemology and Authority in Russian Treatments for AlcoholismEugene RaikhelPublished online: 5 December 2009Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2009AbstractThe dominant modalities of treatment for alcoholism in Russia are suggestion-based methods developed by narcology—the subspecialty of Russian psychiatry which deals with addiction. A particularly popular method is the use of disulfiram—an alcohol antagonist—for which narcologists commonly substitute neutral substances. Drawing on 14 months of fieldwork at narcological clinics in St. Petersburg, this article examines the epistemological and institutional conditions which facilitate this practice of “placebo therapy.” I argue that narcologists’ embrace of such treatments has been shaped by a clinical style of reasoning specific to a Soviet and post-Soviet psychiatry, itself the product of contested Soviet politics over the knowledge of the mind and brain. This style of reasoning has facilitated narcologists’ understanding of disulfiram as a behavioral, rather than a pharmacological, treatment and has disposed them to amplify patients’ responses through attention to the performative aspects of the clinical encounter and through management of the treatment’s broader reputation as an effective therapy. Moreover, such therapies have generally depended upon, and helped to reinforce, clinical encounters premised on a steeply hierarchical physician–patient relationship. IntroductionDuring Russia’s period of intense social ferment over the 1990s and early 2000s, rates of alcohol dependence and alcohol-related harm increased substantially, at the same time that mortality rose sharply and male life expectancy dropped precipitously (Leon et al.1997,2007; Nemtsov2002; Notzon et al.1998). While the precise mechanisms have been widely debated, epidemiologists and public health researchers generally agree that alcohol consumption, abuse and dependence contributed greatly to these alarming health outcomes (Demin and Demina1998;Cockerham2000; Field and Twigg2000; Dmitrieva et al.2002). What is more, while these epidemiological changes were taking place, the Russian state was withdrawing from the interventionist public health role which the Soviet Union had played in governing alcohol and its consumption.

1 One effect of this withdrawal was to render alcoholism, previously treated as a social disease, increasingly individualized and medicalized by default. Thus even while biomedical explanations of heavy alcohol consumption remain unpopular among many laypeople in Russia, medical (and quasi-medical) treatments have gained significance as the primary means by which alcoholism is governed.

2 A particularly popular and prevalent mode of treatment is the use of injected or implanted depot disulfiram—an alcohol antagonist—which narcologists (as specialists in addiction medicine are known in Russia) commonly substitute with chemically neutral substances. While narcologists represent this therapy to patients as khimzashchita (which literally translates as “chemical protection”)—a potent pharmacological treatment which renders their bodies unable to process alcohol—privately they often describe the method as “placebo therapy” and emphasize its reliance on mechanisms of suggestion (vnushenie ). Such clinical techniques have been used in Russia since the 1950s, and according to some sources, khimzashchita and closely related methods currently make up the majority of long-term interventions for alcoholism offered by narcologists (Ivanets2001; Sofronov2003; Mendelevich2005).

3 Such therapies are also highly contested in Russia: condemned on a variety of clinical, ethical, and political grounds. They are criticized by proponents of TwelveStep therapies for ignoring the underlying emotional and spiritual roots of alcoholism and by advocates of harm reduction for being falsely represented as “cures” for a chronic disease (Mendelevich2005). Even many clinicians who administer khimzashchita point out that, while it is often successful in facilitating short-term remissions, patients rarely see the need to supplement it with longer-term psychosocial interventions—leading to a cycle of decreasingly successful and increasingly short remissions (Valentik 2001, p. 244; Sofronov2003). Not surprisingly critiques made by visiting Western European and North American physicians have often focused on the disregard which such treatments seem to show for a normative model of patient autonomy; instead of treating patients as autonomous, rational and (potentially) self-knowing individuals, these methods are said to rely on “people’s ignorance” and their “belief” to frighten them into sobriety (Fleming et al.1994; Finn2005; Par?tt2006). According to such accounts, the mechanism underlying khimzashchitais very simple; it consists of the physician convincingly telling his patient, “If you drink—you die” (Chepurnaya and Etkind2006, par. 2).In this article, I draw on historical and ethnographic research to examine why, despite such critiques,khimzashchita remains a popular form of treatment among physicians and patients in contemporary Russia. In particular, I trace how disul?ramtreatment in Russia has been shaped by a clinical style of reasoning speci?c to a Soviet and post-Soviet professional ethnopsychiatry, itself the product of contested Soviet intellectual and institutional politics over the knowledge of the mind and brain.

4. I argue that this style of reasoning has facilitated narcologists’ understanding of disul?ram as a behavioral, rather than a pharmacological, treatment and has disposed them to amplify patients’ responses through attention to the performative aspects of the clinical encounter as well as through management of khimzashchita’s broader reputation as an effective therapy. Moreover, I suggest that, with a few exceptions, such therapies have depended on, and helped to reinforce, clinical encounters premised on a steeply hierarchical physician–patient relationship.Over the past two decades medical anthropologists have increasingly drawn attention to the circulation and meaning of medicines, and their articulation with various lay and professional models of causation, idioms of distress, healing systems and local understandings of ef?cacy, as well as their place in global political economies of health (van der Geest and Whyte1988; Etkin1992; Whyteet al.2002; Petryna et al.2006). This focus on medicines has been particularlysigni?cant for scholars who have traced how the biologization of psychiatry has—along with the neoliberal transformation of health care in many countries—facilitated a growing emphasis on pharmaceutical interventions for mental illnesses(Healy1997; Shorter1998; Luhrmann2000; Biehl2004; Lakoff 2006;Rose2007).While alcoholism and addiction have resisted subsumption under the aegis of biomedicine or psychiatry for much longer—at least in the English-speaking world(Valverde1998)—over recent years there has been great excitement in some quarters of the medical community about pharmacological treatments for addiction,including drugs which dampen the neurochemical effects of opiates or alcohol and those which reduce sensations of craving (Valverde2003; O’Brien2005; Lovell2006; Vrecko2006b)

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Yosef Tikun HaYesod - 18 Jan 2017 23:10

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I totally agree with you that I need to focus and work on #2 and #5.

I will read up on #2; can you help me with #5?

As I mentioned, I need help finding a good alternative.

The moshel is now clear. The nimshal, not yet.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Watson - 18 Jan 2017 23:34

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What I meant with the moshul was that the guy would do well to listen to the other drivers, and not try to figure out which side to drive on all by himself.

On this journey trying to understand is a liability. Not helpful at all.

Just find someone you trust and do whatever he tells you to do, without needing to fully understand it first. Doing it all your own way, on your own terms, is causing you problems.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Workingguy - 18 Jan 2017 23:42

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[Watson wrote on 18 Jan 2017 21:42:](#)

[Workingguy wrote on 18 Jan 2017 21:27:](#)

He said they found 100% success rate.

I wonder if they were happy joyous and free, but I take your general point.

On one hand, I strongly doubt it. But on the other hand, you never know because maybe once they knew they would never do it again, they just let it go

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Singularity - 19 Jan 2017 09:51

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[Yosef Tikun HaYesod wrote on 18 Jan 2017 20:31:](#)

Nice post. I do need to introspect and figure myself out and what makes me tick.

I doubt I can do that alone, though. Maybe over a coffee with you or Mark.

For me to truly understand what I'm "doing wrong", however, please tell me which things

that I've tried are "going the wrong direction headed for a crash" (not including #13, which the Rov said was worth a try):

1. posting daily updates on my experiences and feelings, as I keep trucking along
2. updating the 90-day chart daily
3. reading the 20 steps gye book, which I got printed out
4. reading the 30 attitudes book, which I got printed out

5. emailing several people from the forums
6. emailing a support buddy/coach/sponsor ( even trying a few different ones, to find the right one)
7. talking at length on the phone 3 times to Dov (well over 4 hours total)
8. talking with Cord, and deciding to meet someone who he thought to set me up with.
9. meeting him, a "success story" from gye...and talking at length with him in person (for several hours)
10. removing all streaming capability from my computer "Cold Turkey"
11. putting on time limits when I can access my computer
12. talking and opening up to a Rov about my problem and the possibility of giving my son 1/2 a password
13. giving my son the second 1/2 of my password, so that I cannot change the time or content settings
14. listening to the 12-part series of shiurim by Rav Ben Zion Shafier on tyvah called The Fight
15. emailing him and receiving his notes on the lectures, and then transcribing the shiurim
16. listening to the 17-part series of shiurim by Rav Simcha Feuerman on The Chasan Shmooze
17. taking notes on them, so it sinks in better and in order to eventually email him some questions
18. emailing Yaakov for help, and deciding to try his suggestion of the taphsicshevua
19. figuring out all the components of the shevua, to give it the best chance of working
20. davening daily to HaShem for help to succeed and break free (this should have been 1st) **[My notes: Daven to Surrender.]**
21. listening to Rav Fishel Shechter shiurim on Yosef HaTzadik and Chanuka and the parsha
22. transcribing some of the main points/insights and stories
23. exercise-walking regularly (&maybe running) to relieve stress and tension and get in shape
24. strengthening my night seder of learning with my son

25. posting on several new guy's forum threads, trying to welcome them and help them
  26. making a few "date nights" with my wife, giving her more positive attention
  27. going to a big Rav and having the chutzpah to ask how to succeed long-term and become a tzadik **[I think superfluous based on stuff above]**
  28. instituting or reinstituting quality "family time" when I come home for dinner
  29. opening up to a friend in real life, in person on a long walk **[Run, my friend!!!]**
  30. taking the SA are you addicted test / and a more involved 50 question test too **[Don't know. It's about knowing yourself. Perhaps [bgcolor=#00FF00]positive[/bgcolor]]**
  31. taking the actual shevua (hasn't happened yet, because I'm still deciding on the nusach)
  32. going to the mikveh (hasn't happened yet, because I really dislike going, but I will once)
  33. listening to music and trying to relax and "breathe" and calm down
  34. reading a long article and watching a couple of videos on breaking bad habits,
- and probably a few more things that I left out and can't think of now. **{If you consider this a "bad habit" ...}**

Green are positive steps

Red are white-knuckling

*I'aniyus da'asi*

Doesn't mean that red stuff don't have a place. I redded out all TaPHSiC shvua stuff, yet I do it myself.

I think the more one grows positively, the less white-knuckling the preventative steps become. If I'm throttling down to a crash, then even the strongest nets may not be able to help me. If I'm climbing higher, then lighter and lighter nets will be strong enough, were I to slip and fall. Sure you can be *machmir* and have your bulletproof shields, but I feel you'll get to a point where you won't have to harp on it as much.

I love you, o brother. Please don't take offence to my suggestions.



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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Yosef Tikun HaYesod - 19 Jan 2017 11:56

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This week starts Shovavim, which is special for doing teshuva and being mitakane the pagam habris.

I'm taking it seriously this year with real actions (bli neder):

learn more Torah, say the long Arizal version of krias Shema al hamita, and fast at least once.

Now's the time. I'm ready to change and grow and fix up this mess I've gotten into.

I appreciate those who are really trying to help me. I definitely need all the help I can get.

Just like I've written concrete things I've tried, if you can give me concrete, well-defined things I can actually do that will help me, then I will do them (again, bli neder).

Read Chovos HaLevavos Shar Bitachon I can do.

It's heavy and slow reading, especially if I read it with an eye

to incorporate and apply the lessons, but I can do it.

Read the attitudes and perspectives 21 or 30 principles,

and really think about it and try to incorporate the lessons, I can do.

Get daily chizuk emails and read them the same way, I can do.

But, introspect and figure out underlying reasons why I feel the need to escape and self-soothe,

and then figure out how to meet those needs with some other fulfilling (but not destructive) activities,

sounds nice, but I don't know how to do it...so it gets filed away under "nice idea in theory" but I can't act on it.

Will you help me?

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)  
Posted by GrowStrong - 19 Jan 2017 12:16

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The problem is you don't yet have reasons.

You say yourself this is less of an addiction problem.

The truth is that thanks to UNA and a couple of other guys in this thread, the solution has been so eloquently laid down for all of us here, that it's actually a little mind-blowing.

Maybe you just need some substantiation and to intellectualize and internalize the **reasons**.

But if you don't have any reasons then what can you do.

I see you seem to have reasons to take shovavim seriously.

Those are most likely from lessons you learnt all your life from the Torah.

But this is an emotional thing.

I see you are good at lists.

Why don't you try this for an exercise.

Sit and make a comprehensive list of all the reasons why you shouldnt stream and masturbate.

I know you are good at comprehensive.

Your intellectual prowess will also serve to give everyone in this forum a really good long list of reasons to add to their own if you decide to share it, but this is ultimately for you....

Throw them all in, the emotional, the religious, the personal, the familial.

Then we can see what we can do to internalize all those reasons, and how to keep that list close to your chest when the streaming monster comes knocking.

Nobody stopped acting out until they had enough reasons to do it.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Singularity - 19 Jan 2017 12:16

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[Yosef Tikun HaYesod wrote on 19 Jan 2017 11:56:](#)

This week starts Shovavim, which is special for doing teshuva and being mitakane the pagam habris.

I'm taking it seriously this year with real actions (bli neder):

learn more Torah, say the long Arizal version of krias Shema al hamita, and fast at least once.

**Now's the time [fierce determination. Bold, romantic outset].** I'm ready to change and grow and fix up this mess I've gotten into **[pinky promise?]**.

I appreciate those who are really trying to help me. I definitely need all the help I can get.

Just like I've written concrete things I've tried, if you can give me concrete, well-defined things I can actually do that will help me, then I will do them (again, bli neder).

Read Chovos HaLevavos Shar Bitachon I can do.

It's heavy and slow reading, especially if I read it with an eye

to incorporate and apply the lessons, but I can do it.

Read the attitudes and perspectives 21 or 30 principles,

and really think about it and try to incorporate the lessons, I can do.

Get daily chizuk emails and read them the same way, I can do.

But, introspect and figure out underlying reasons why I feel the need to escape and self-soothe,

and then figure out how to meet those needs with some other fulfilling (but not destructive) activities, **[hello!! This is the real recovery tool!!! Don't get bogged down by the sidelines!!!!]**

sounds nice, but I don't know how to do it...so it gets filed away under "nice idea in **theory**" but I can't act on it.

## Will you help me?

Yes.

Go to 12 step meetings.

all those suggestions you just said, they're all theory. that's the problem!

Things that are real, are *also* only theory until you actually **do** them.

And I don't think a longer *Kriyas Shema* will actually help.

Personally, it just sounds like that romantic determination one gets, whether in Elul, or during the Omer, or during *Shovavim*, it's a strong inspiration but it will fizzle out. And you'll be left in the ashes of all your good-willed plans.

The Torah won't help insanity. Please listen to the Dov Call recordings link in my signature.

And fasting? Here's what I read from Rav Twerski in *Smiling Each Day* (ad libbing):

Fasting for *Teshuvah* is a classical case of taxing the poor for the benefit of the rich. How so? Your eyes sin by looking at inappropriate pictures. Your ears sin by hearing lashon hara and the like. Your heart sins by lusting, propelling the eyes and desiring the forbidden. And who pays for it all? The stomach? Shame! It did nothing wrong? What beef you got with it? So the rich (eyes, heart) can do what they want and the poor get the brunt of it!

Now I'm not knocking the Rabbinically- and Torah-ordained fasts. Those were *metukan* from a much greater *Chochmah* than what I have, or will ever have. Talking about personal fasts. Which I did, once, in a flaming *Ba'al Teshuvah* state, while spending the rest of that day playing *Crash Bandicoot* (ztz"l)

I was mean in the post. I'm sorry. But maybe that's why the good medicine is usually bitter. That's why I organised the removal of negative karma. Muahaha. I am undefeatable.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Yosef Tikun HaYesod - 19 Jan 2017 12:49

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Grow, that's a nice idea. It will take some time.

Sing, you're nuts.

Live 12-step meetings are said (on this very website) to be detrimental for a non-addict.

Rav Twerski's book may put a smile on your face, but the idea to fast in order to repair the damage caused by this aveira as part of one's doing real teshuva, is talked about by the Baal HaTanya and the Arizal.

It isn't something little ole' me is making up.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Markz - 19 Jan 2017 13:00

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Dear Yosef

*Many many of us lust because of emotional issues caused by our childhood*

*(Which is why + karma helps us)*

*Many of us can't hear advice the way it's presented due to experiences of our childhood*

If you want to get sober for real you're gonna have to break out of the gridlock

Until then, youre gonna repeatedly ask for input, and remain on your exercise bike, pedaling in futility

I'm strangely sober BH for reasons explained on my thread.

However if those things weren't sufficient to get my tricycle moving, I'd seriously consider SA meetings despite the fact that socializing isn't for me

Id ask my **sensible** Rav and follow his advice to the tee

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by GrowStrong - 19 Jan 2017 13:05

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[Markz wrote on 19 Jan 2017 13:00:](#)

Dear Yosef

*Many many of us lust because of emotional issues caused by our childhood*

*(Which is why + karma helps us)*

Dear Markz,

Thank you for bringing this up. Maybe you can tell me what I'm doing wrong. Due to the issues in my childhood, the prolonged absence of karma is starting to give me a complex.

I was considering opening a barter thread offering 2c for each karma point but I'm not sure if incentivizing is allowed on the forum.

Any and all advice will be immensely appreciated.

Yours always,

GrowStrong.

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Re: going for 90 days (Feb. 20)

Posted by Singularity - 19 Jan 2017 13:07

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[Markz wrote on 19 Jan 2017 13:00:](#)

Dear Yosef

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**Id ask my sensible Rav and follow his advice to the tee**

And disclose **everything**. Output is only as valuable as its input.

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