

A 90-Day Walk

Posted by KoachCheshvan - 11 Jul 2020 23:19

Today marks the 9th day of *shemiras habris*.

A few months ago, I had read an interesting book called, *Addiction, Procrastination and Laziness: A Proactive Guide to the Psychology of Motivation* by Roman Gelperin. In the book, he mentions that our brains are hardwired to seek pleasure and avoid displeasure. There is, what he calls, the "pleasure unconscious". When the brain is not satisfied with the level of pleasure, it will bring something into your mind designed to increase pleasure. It could be a pleasurable memory or a song, (which often elicits a memory), it could also be a suggestion to do something more pleasurable like eating or the suggestion to "act out".

I am working to be more aware of what my brain is doing to try to get pleasure. Today when I was at work, my brain brought to mind an old familiar song that is heavily associated with the "gay lifestyle", as I was thoroughly committed to it for 14 years of my life, and lived in it for an additional 5 years. I have many pleasurable memories associated with it. I acknowledge that fact, and when my brain brings up an old pleasurable memory, I am working on being able to recognize my brain at work, and allow the memory to move on as best as I can, rather than get caught up in memory which can bring about a sense of sentimentality and nostalgia.

Today there were a few moments of a "twinge": I saw men that I was attracted to, but instead of assenting to it, I recognized that my behavior and my considerations were learned behavior as my brain sought out pleasure. Over time those learned behaviors became more detailed as I learned more about the gay life and I indulged in certain behaviors.

The other thing I am trying to do when I see a temptation of that sort is to analyze why I am attracted to that person. Am I comparing myself to him? Do I think he is more masculine? Am I feeling inadequate? Then I try to picture myself as I am, but whining about these feelings to the other person. "I need you to protect me!" "You're more masculine than I am!", etc...It seems to help.

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Re: A 90-Day Walk

Posted by ColinColin - 13 Jul 2020 00:38

Many of us on here have brains which react to displeasure by seeking out intense highs.

Our task is to recognise when we are not happy, and to remedy it with wholesome Kosher methods, and to keep things in proportion.

An intense low feeling can be just that - a feeling - but actually we are in place in life where we have opportunities to be happy and productive.

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Re: A 90-Day Walk

Posted by KoachCheshvan - 13 Jul 2020 02:38

[ColinColin wrote on 13 Jul 2020 00:38:](#)

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Yes, I believe that is true. I imagine that getting into the habit of bringing into our conscious mind our feelings will help to analyze and dissipate those negative feelings.

It's even amazing, and sometimes telling what will generate a *positive feeling*. It can indicate a relative general low consideration or self-esteem. For example, even something simple like replacing windshield wiper fluid in my car can make me feel more "manly", and the first time I did it, the thought of it gave me a real high, as if I were suddenly a great auto mechanic.

If I may ask ColinColin, what does "clean" look like for you, and how have you managed to have a clean streak for so long?

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Re: A 90-Day Walk

Posted by KoachCheshvan - 15 Jul 2020 02:35

Tonight marks the 13th day of *shemiras habris*:

I had an interesting experience and insight into my own journey for gender wholeness. I was thinking about the whole notion of gender wholeness, my lack of it, and never really being affirmed as a boy or as a man. I have in my music collection the Superman theme song, which I usually play when I want to move a little faster. Today was one of those days when I needed to move a little quicker and so I was playing it.

As I was playing it, my mind was "in the zone", it was like *I was Superman*. And when I was a child, that is exactly what I would imagine and pretend, just as I was doing today. It hit me that this childhood pretending and my current pretending were the boy wanting to mimic *the man*. Superman more than any other character that I connected with is maleness in its most unadulterated, noble form. Someone who is super-strong, has super powers and yet uses those powers for the benefit of mankind. That's the man *I want to be*! There are many visceral reactions that I have to stimuli that are negative but hearing the Superman theme song is one of the childhood visceral reactions that have a positive effect. I am going to explore this further and see if maybe Superman can help me overcome my addictions.

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Re: A 90-Day Walk

Posted by Grant400 - 15 Jul 2020 04:15

I know you probably heard what I'm about to say and it may sound idealistic but it's the truth and if you think about it you will see the facts speak for themselves.

You seem to want to be looked at and to view yourself as the quintessential "Man". Rippling muscles, chest hair, baritone voice and a commanding presence. John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, Dwayne Johnson.

My dear friend: Chazal say "Ayzehu gibbir hacovesh es yitzro" meaning "Who is deemed a warrior-one who prevails over his inclination (evil inclination)". There are many people who seem muscular and tough but when it comes to mental strength and discipline they melt like a block of ice on a hot summer's day. It's all a facade. How many famous people- actors, politicians, powerful businessmen, newscasters- the epitome of success, in control of themselves and reigning over industries and veritable empires who completely destroyed themselves and their reputations and families because they had zero self control because it was with another

woman or any other moral issue? They completely crumble in the face of temptation. Where was their discipline? Where was the seemingly powerful fearless man all of a sudden? The answer is simple- all these outer trappings these artificial indicators of "manliness" dont have anything to do with reality. This concept of manliness being compromised of the physical aspect is wrong! Oh so wrong!

Who is more of a man R' Elyashiv and R Akiva Eiger or Mike Tyson? Who is more a man a frail old man who throughout his entire life was a true soldier of Hashem, who completely beat down his own desires in the face of an intellectual understanding and disassociated himself from the simplest of pleasure instead pushing himself to grow spiritually in ways we cant fathom or a person who has discipline only in regard to one area, to build enough muscle to smash someone else in the face so he can be famous and make enough money to indulge in every pleasure available?

A true man can be physically weak but if he is mentally in control he is a MAN! An elite warrior! So my friend it's not superman with his supernatural powers you need , it's you with your regular powers to rise up to the occasion and be your very own superman!

Grant

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