

Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Looking_to_improve - 13 Aug 2020 22:00

New phone, new thread, new me?

I fell today.

But for the first time in a while, it hurt. I feel it has penetrated into me and made me feel regretful.

I'm not sure what hurts more, the fall itself or the fact I can't remember the last time I felt bad like this (and that's not because a lack of falling). Strangely I fell proud that I'm internally understanding the weight of my actions (and therefore falls) for the first time in a while. For far too long I felt that when I fell, it was like breaking a diet, "oops, let's try not do that again", but not much of an internal realisation of what I've been doing. No genuine sense of regret or that I had made a bad mistake. Overall I don't think I'm in an negative place, I just want to utilise my current feelings and use it to spring back up to greater heights.

Currently this is where I think I'm at:

I think I've been falling between every 2 days and every 2 weeks, probably with this frequency since Corona and even before probably up to Jan, off the top of my head. Unfortunately I don't think I've been putting in much effort, realistically I think I've just been waiting between urges and then falling, I don't think I've done much prevention on my part.

Just got a new phone and used the opportunity to fix up my filter a bit. **For anyone reading don't delay fixing your filter, I've found it has made a huge difference.** Not to be naive but pretty sure it's mostly working correctly now, no loopholes. (I did spend quite a while today trying to find one before I fell:grimacing:) Although my goal of 90 days should not be dependent on a good filter, even though I plan on having one nonetheless.

Earlier in the year I was struggling with porn but I think that was a temporary stage, long term it was less of an issue to me than masturbation, which I've struggled with for more than the past year.

I've been re-listening to a chabura by a Rebbe on the topic and I briefly bought up that I'm struggling to him, and I plan to speak to him more about it. This week I've been putting in the effort to try not fall and think about hirhurim, whereas in the past sometimes it was a matter and of just waiting until a good time to fall, not having any real method of prevention nor of fighting the yetzer hora. Already in the past few days I have had multiple times where I could have fallen but did not, and didn't follow my urges blindly. Obviously I need to be more preventative, but I still think this is a big step up from basically just hoping never to have an urge, because that's isn't the aim, rather it is our reaction to our urges. I think with this previous mindset of mine it

was going to be near on impossible to get to 90, now I'm starting to feel more confidence that it is achievable, even if I haven't been more than 2 weeks clean in a while.

I also plan to listen to the fight by the shmuz (was there website down for anyone else recently?)

I also want to be more active in the forums, both here and in other threads. I often lurk around, but I think I should really join in a bit more.

That's it from me for now, that's a bit of a megilla to read. Drop in to say hi, I wanna hear from you guys how you are all doing in your battles, it really helps knowing that we are all fighting this war together

Looking_to_improve

Warning: Spoiler!

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 25 Aug 2020 21:23

Thank you everyone for reaching out.

Baruch Hashem, today was also a clean day. I think I am being more preventative at an earlier stage, and it might be preventing stronger urges later on, although I can't tell for certain, may just be that in my current situation I'm just having less urges. I feel like I'm beginning to make progress in this area, although my count is not so high, I think my mindset is beginning to change.

The main thing I think which is working is to have the voice of reason in my head on alert at all times, so that when I start to get a nudge, and I would normally mindlessly follow, the voice is there to stop and consider, is this really what I want? It is obviously easier to sit back and just flow along with that nudge, getting lost in our own thoughts doesn't require too much effort but that stops all progress and prevents our growth

Again, I need to make sure I don't get complacent, that's when I fall. Also the way my schedule is at the moment, I'm often in my dorm alone so I think I need to try see if I can change that, and prevent easy opportunities for falls even when the desire isn't strong.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 26 Aug 2020 10:51

I fell last night.

It was quite late, after the message I send last night. A bit unexpected, but I guess it shows you that you have to be on guard at all times. I think I wasn't in the mindset at that time of night to watch out for my thoughts, and I sunk back into old habits and listened to those thoughts that try nudging you all day.

It didn't even feel good, so that's a memory I want to keep with me, that the desire that bothers you so much is really nothing, and really isn't that pleasurable or enjoyable, aside from all the negative effects it has on me.

So back to day 0, it's important to dust myself off and get back into it. I think I'm starting to progress and develop, so now's time to maintain that level of growth

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 26 Aug 2020 20:59

Clean Day today, please God this will be the time I get to 90 and beyond.

Something I heard in a shiur today that resonated with me...

Warning: Spoiler!

God doesn't expect us to plant the flag at the peak of Everest

God expects us to climb?

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 27 Aug 2020 13:01

Feeling quite a strong desire today, I don't want to fall, but I think I'm going to struggle to not...

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Grant400 - 27 Aug 2020 13:46

[Looking to improve wrote on 26 Aug 2020 10:51:](#)

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It didn't even feel good, **so that's a memory I want to keep with me**, that the desire that bothers you so much is really nothing, and really isn't that pleasurable or enjoyable, aside from all the negative effects it has on me.

So back to day 0, it's important to dust myself off and get back into it. I think I'm starting to progress and develop, so now's time to maintain that level of growth

Hey! Just an idea. I know you won't approve but I gotta try. (People are scared of pens and paper almost as much as washing on a piece of bread.)

Take a small piece of paper and write on it the exact feelings you felt after the fall. Describe the clarity with which you saw how it was dimyon and not reality. Stick it in your wallet. Take it out when necessary, or the mere fact knowing that it's there can already be a boost and a push in the right direction.

We know the truth. But when it comes down to it we have to start reconvincing ourselves why it's not worth it, and in the face of strong desire, the tiny guy inside who actually uses his brain becomes inept and overrun by much stronger logic called "Arrrrhhhhhhh". So, having it all written out can prevent you having to start a long negotiation process which ends with a hostage getting hurt.

Remember, we don't negotiate with terrorists.

Grant

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 27 Aug 2020 17:48

Still clean, I think I'm passed the worst of it, but worried a bit for later tonight.

Thank you Grant, I really needed that chizuk, I just had a chavrusa, and sometimes I find the urge gets worse as I learn, and I'm just waiting to finish and then fall. Your message made sure the urge progressed the other way and became weaker. Thank you, I really enjoy reading all your posts, they are always so well thought out. I haven't yet tried this method, but I might try it tomorrow. I don't often gave my wallet on me, maybe I'll put it in my phone case instead

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 27 Aug 2020 23:23

Thank you Hashem for a clean day. I'm really glad to not have fallen. I'm happy Hashem's given me the strength to stay clean, I really appreciate even more a clean day now, when I don't lead myself down the wrong path and have to try get off it.

I'll elaborate more tomorrow, it's very late.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 28 Aug 2020 14:26

Yesterday I had a strong desire, probably from following my thoughts too much during the day. I managed to keep myself busy, I had a chavrusa, made some phone calls, listened to the fight, played some football and tired myself out. I went to bed quite glad that I managed to control myself. Although it was a successful day, it makes me appreciate more the days where I avoid the fight at an earlier stage by controlling my thoughts, rather than fighting it head on once I'm in the battle, which I've led myself into. It's much easier to see the latter as a victory, but in my opinion the former is much more successful and really what I should be aiming for. I want to try figure out how I can make those days feel like much more of a successful day, rather than a non event or just a neutral day. Would appreciate any ideas you guys have.

Today I had a nap and either before or just when I woke up, I started to follow my desires and thoughts.

I came very close to acting out, much more than yesterday. But when I was about to act out, the voice in my head was like "I don't really want this", and I didn't go any further, although it didn't feel like a different voice to the one telling me to act out. Maybe I'm misinterpreting it, but it didn't feel like so much of a fight to stop. Not sure if I should consider it a slip or a fall, not really sure if the specifics matter so much, I succeeded in not fully acting out, but controlled my thoughts very poorly.

I think today and yesterday are indicative of my progress, that although I'm only 2 days into the count and not controlling my thoughts well, I still managed to stop myself.

One weird thing I've tried to do when I get a desire is to visualise myself driving to school. It's quite a vivid visualisation because I've driven it so many times, so I find it occupies my mind quite well. I think about the gear changes, the accelerator, break and clutch, and everything else on the way, as if I'm doing the real thing. I need to find something to do when I'm learning and get an urge, because if the learning didn't stop it coming into my head, then I think I'll need something else to occupy my mind. Maybe I'll tell my chavrusa I need a 2 mins break?

One last point to conclude for now, something I read on a bisli packet.

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Picture for illustration only

It's nothing more than that, there's nothing too it. It's an image on a screen, and no more. There's no relationship, no deeper meaning, no closeness nothing. I'm not married but it's for sure nothing close in any semblance to a substitute. It's just images and we can't let it get the better of us.

?Hope you all have a great shabbos, looked forward to growing more with you all, you are all amazing.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 28 Aug 2020 18:13

Extremely well written post. Hatzlocha.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 29 Aug 2020 22:15

Shavua tov

Motsei shabbos was ok, but wanted to fall, only really stopped because I couldn't be bothered. Really not sure what's holding me back, I guess Hashem's looking out for me, because I haven't been doing a good job the last few days.

That being said, I think I need to change my mindset a bit. I think I just read it on Hashem help me's forum and I'm sure it's been said many times, but I need to approach it one day at a time. Having a count to track my long term progress is good, but regardless I need to worry more about today, right now. The fact yesterday was perfect or terrible shouldn't change my effort and enthusiasm to stop today. No count will be perfect, but getting too caught up in a small issue and making it as a justification to fall because my current count isn't perfect, is much worse than accepting yesterday was clean, albeit not how I wanted it.

Last 3 days have been a bit of a rough patch, but ultimately when I wake up tomorrow, I should try to have the same courage as if I was waking up any other day. Nor should I ignore slips, or falls, I need to know how to progress from my failures, but this is a different aspect to keeping clean from today's fight.

One of the most important things right now is keeping up this forum, even if I sometimes treat it as a diary, because it means I'm holding myself accountable and it's sign that my true inner desire is to be clean.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Grant400 - 30 Aug 2020 01:31

Love the attitude. You are awesome. We can all learn from you.

Just a small point. You wrote in regard to not having a clean streak, "Getting caught up in a small issue...". Wrong. It's a NON issue in regard to the battle now. Yes it may be harder emotionally when you recently fell, but every second and every battle is exclusive. The whole concept of a streak is to help psychologically, not to discourage. Hashem doesn't ask for streaks, he asks you not to do it. Yes you fell, but now is a new and fresh test. Will you pass?!?

Life isn't built with records and streaks,

It's seconds and minutes, hours and weeks.

Grant

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 30 Aug 2020 04:03

[Looking to improve wrote on 29 Aug 2020 22:15:](#)

I guess Hashem's looking out for me, because I haven't been doing a good job the last few days.

You must be doing something right because Hashem only protects *tzadikim* from *chet!*
Sometimes when you try really hard even if you become lax a bit, Hashem steps in just to give you that extra push.

We have to realize this before it's over because it won't last forever.

Keep fighting!

Wlinevergiveup

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 30 Aug 2020 11:38

Maybe I should rather write a rating here of each day, in addition to keeping count?

Please lmk if you've found a similar method you found worked for you that might be worthwhile to try

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 31 Aug 2020 21:36

Been trading blows with the yetzer hora for the past few days, I'm worried I'm getting stuck in a bit of a rut. Haven't been knocked out yet, but the best way to avoid that is to stay out of the boxing ring, not go in and fight.

Every day is a gift from Hashem, a chance to start anew, and not hold myself to who I was today. Hopefully I can put this into practice, not just know it

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