

The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 19 Oct 2020 14:49

Hi this is supposed to be the first log describing what I'm going through and perhaps an outlet of my feelings and experience trying to fight the yetzer hora of hotzoas zera levatalah.

?Allow me to first introduce myself. I am a bochur of 24. Learnt in a yeshiva till the outbreak of corona. To be honest, I never fully understood what people meant when they said that masturbation is the nisoyon of the generation. Why would anyone from a logical perspective engage in such behaviour? It didn't make sense to me. That was till about two months ago.

In yeshiva I didn't have access to movies or unfiltered internet. When I came home I did. I also got my own computer for studies and although it was filtered, I was the one with the password. So I naively didn't think of it as a big threat. But one night my curiosity got the better of me and I checked out some pornography. That night I also gave in to masturbation and I realized all of a sudden that I've made a big mistake. A whole new pathway of what the brain might consider pleasure opened up before me.

Not much later I gave in a second time to masturbation (not porn which I have since tried to avoid). And as time went by the frequency of my giving in became more and more. I know I have to find a way to stop this and I am trying. It just is so hard sometimes when my whole body aches and screams and the anxiety is just not allowing me to think clearly.

Sometimes I can hold back for a day or two three even but then eventually I end up giving in. The thing by me is that I am usually okay throughout the day, but when I lie in bed and am trying to fall asleep I am having difficulties doing so without having the urge. And that is usually when I cave. So I have tried listening to a shiur to keep me distracted, which has helped maybe once or twice, but with my emotions being so powerful it is hard to concentrate. I also tried relaxing music and it has helped although I do need to experiment with that more. (I know that from a halachic perspective music is not the best thing to do before falling asleep, but I think it is permitted occasionally and it is also permitted if it is not leshem simcha. Also I am not sure if relaxing music fall under this stringency.) Another thing I do is that even when I do give in I stop in the middle and pause for a count of sixty. It gives me back a sense of control and I feel it can help overall. Another thing I do when I feel weak and I know I might likely give in is I try to postpone giving in for x amount of time. Sometimes I am so tired of the fight that just to get rid of it, I give in. I know it's wrong, but I still do it. I really need some technique here to overcome this.

I am currently going with the mindset that this is like building muscle and that slowly but surely I'll get stronger and stronger. I just doesn't always feel like this. It also pains me when I read some of the consequences this challenge has on both a ruchniyusdige and gashmiyusdige

sphere. As a bochur, I feel like I am tainted and that I might have a bad marriage or children of lesser quality because of this. I am sure that there is teshuva, but will I really be able to overcome this before getting married? I truly hope so.

My current goal is to go through a whole week without giving in.

For me this is a true lesson on another front. It's what I wrote in the beginning: I never thought that this nisoyon could be so hard and yet here I am. So perhaps when people are going through things, that to me seem trivial and perhaps I'll even judge them sometimes, I'll remind myself that it could happen to me and even if it doesn't I don't know where they are coming from so don't judge.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillenial - 23 Oct 2021 21:24

B"H clean Shabbos

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillenial - 24 Oct 2021 19:28

Checking in for Day 2 of another day being clean.

Unfortunately I'm keeping it really short as it's really hectic by us

Wishing everyone lots of Hatzlacha..

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillenial - 25 Oct 2021 20:58

Hey guys

I'm on day 3 of being clean.

Today I'm already feeling some urges.

Worse yet, I feel that feeling of 'wanting to let go'. That means the feeling of "I'll just give in and heck with the consequences." It doesn't mean I'm about to give in, but it means that that little voice has started talking. Giving any credibility to this voice can easily snowball into acting out.

I know that commitment is crucial to overcome this. But I also feel that I'm missing a key ingredient. What is the ingredient? I'm not sure.

Any wisdom from the rest of you is more than welcome.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymous.lost.everything - 25 Oct 2021 21:03

I don't have any wisdom but you can call me to tell me all about what you are thinking about doing ("the voice.") If you are interested reply and I'll give you my phone number.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 26 Oct 2021 09:54

Day 4

Not such great news unfortunately.

Why is this so hard?

Or am I making this hard for myself.

At least last night and this morning, I was able to persevere.

Somehow when I closed my eyes last night, all types of images started creeping in. Not necessarily real ones. It went downhill from there.

IY"H I'll once again have to pick myself up and brush off the dust.

It's just so frustrating. I don't feel like my tries are getting me anywhere and I don't feel like any real lasting growth is coming out of this.

It's true that when I practice shmiras eynayim, it's less intense. Nonetheless I don't feel it dissipates.

Maybe I'm doing something wrong.

[I know that not all I wrote is fact, I'm just venting my feelings.]

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymous.lost.everything - 26 Oct 2021 10:08

I sent you my phone number. You can talk or listen, or both. When you call you're helping two people. Calling is a form of therapy.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by EvedHashem1836 - 26 Oct 2021 12:20

[anonymousmillenial wrote on 26 Oct 2021 09:54:](#)

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Don't know the longest you went clean and im sure its different for different people but at least for me at this point its not so much of an active struggle just some mild thoughts in bed here and there

Was hard to get here but couldnt have been happier I fought tooth and nail to get to this point

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by DavidT - 26 Oct 2021 13:56

First of all If you feel challenged by nisyonos in the area of kedusha, you are actually in good company. Chazal describe the temptation, ?????? ??? ??????? – man desires and craves these things. (????? ??? ?' ????? ???) There is a natural craving for immorality implanted in all of us.

Don't let the yeitzer hora succeed. Even if you have lost many battles, you

will win the war. The Siyata Dishmaya you were witness to in the time that you did manage to stay strong assures you that you can and will succeed.

The Tzadik falls seven times and yet he rises (Mishlei 24:16): This is the lifeline of a person who stays focused, even in the face of adversity. Regardless of any past mistakes, he persistently carries on. This puts him in a superior category, even when his present madraiga is perhaps unsatisfactory.

Fighting the present ugly yeitzer hora is our chance to show beloved devotion to Hashem. When Moshiach comes, there will be plenty of avodah for us to do. Nevertheless, this glorious opportunity which is being offered to us now, will be over

Rabbi Twerski once wrote as follows about someone who was convinced he could never give up these behaviors:

His conviction that he cannot overcome the addiction is the addiction talking to him, saying, "Give up the fight, it's useless. You'll never succeed, so why put yourself through the misery." Other than just try to stop, what has this young man done to make essential changes in his character? That's where one should begin.

I attended an AA meeting where the speaker was celebrating his 20th year of sobriety. He began by saying, "The man I once was, drank. And the man I once was, will drink again" (but the man I am today, will not). Alcoholics who have not had a drink for many years but have not overhauled their character are "dry drunks" and will often drink again. The same is true for this addiction.

How does one become a different person? By working diligently on improving one's character traits. Learning how to manage anger, to rid oneself of resentments, to overcome hate, to be humble, to be considerate of others, to be absolutely honest in all one's affairs, to admit being wrong, to overcome envy, to be diligent and overcome procrastination. In short, one should take the Orchos Tzaddikim (I'm sure it's available in English), and go down the list of character

traits, strengthening the good one's and trying to eliminate the bad ones. This does not happen quickly. When one has transformed one's character and has become a different person, one will find that this "new person" can accomplish things that the old person could not.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 26 Oct 2021 16:09

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Any personal tips and suggestions on how you got there?

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Re: The struggles of a human

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Thank you very much DavidT for your warm words of chizuk.

It's very true what you write. In order to overcome these challenges, we need to become a new person. Perhaps that's the reason we have those challenges to start with. We go in as person A and we come out the other end as person B. Person B might have battle scars that will last him a lifetime. But in the end, person B will be a stronger, healthier and more tolerant person. And, as you wrote, we have to be patient with ourselves and can't expect instant result.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Avrohom - 27 Oct 2021 03:56

[anonymousmillenial wrote on 26 Oct 2021 16:10:](#)

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Hi AM, I'm relatively new to the forum - so I took some time to read through your thread. You're an incredible fighter and have some of the clearest, articulate arguments understanding what the fight is about and how to combat it. We can all learn a great deal from many of your posts.

Here are my thoughts on what you might be struggling with - forgive me if I'm off the mark.

- ?When You started about a year ago, you were loaded with motivation and the belief that this can be conquered. That belief helped you climb very high. Since then it's been a lot of up and down and you're feeling like you're not getting anywhere ("It's just so frustrating. I don't feel like my tries are getting me anywhere and I don't feel like any real lasting growth is coming out of this.") Perhaps you can use R' Yisroel Salanter's advice for Yiush - to focus on the value of each clean day, or each Nisayon passed, ODAAT, and ignore the immense mountain - knowing that *that is the trick to get to the top*. Also, look back at the strength and conviction you had earlier and look at what helped you then
- What happens when you get a strong urge? Does it overtake you, flooding your head with thoughts, followed by an anxiousness of "can I fight this, I can't, etc." with a battle of trying to get rid of it?" A tightrope walker who is thinking "I'm going to fall!" will likely do so. What has worked for me (I believe you wrote about this earlier) is watching the urge, externalizing it, and letting it go. Having your mind loosen up, and relax, allows the lust and accompanying anxiety to exit. Easier said than done, perhaps, but I do think from my own experience, that there's a strong correlation between when lust overtakes us and the anxiety that goes along with it and grows and grows until we give in.

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I do try to keep to the ODAAT principle and I try not to let the anxiety take over (although as you mentioned this is easier said than done as it's very easy to constantly check yourself to see if the urge is gone thereby exacerbating the anxiety).

But as you mentioned, the constant ups and downs without the feeling of actually getting anywhere doesn't give much satisfaction and can lead to yiush. And in fact has led to the occasional frustration and feeling that it's not worth fighting this as there is no end to this (of course this is not true).

Also worth pointing out is that knowing 'the rules of the game' doesn't always mean we have cheishik to play and abide by them and that can lead to reckless behavior, unfortunately with not such great results. Doing is always harder than actually knowing. I can have the know-how of playing baseball in 2 seconds (swing the bat when the ball comes your way), but it can take months and years for me to perfect my skills and truly become an expert in it.

This is not to say I haven't had any growth lately. Baruch Hashem, I'm not at the point of Yiush. In truth I know that there has been a lot of growth over the past year. Unfortunately, if growth is only measured by a number on a dashboard, then the situation would indeed be a bit more bleak.

This growth came partly from trying to ask myself, "what's the next step in overcoming this?". So even though I'm not at the point of entirely overcoming the full challenge, I'll try to see what action I can take to at least move in a forward trajectory. Slowly I've been peeling back layer by layer.

This is an example of the steps I have taken over the past year:

- 1.) Get a better filter
- 2.) Whenever I fall due to something the filter does allow, I try to block it.
- 3.) Make sure I don't have access to other unfiltered devices in the house.
- 4.) Work on letting go of movies because they are triggering. This includes:
 - a.) Making the decision of actually letting go
 - b.) Getting rid of physical access
 - c.) Making the decision again of letting go (as unfortunately backtracking by me is a reality sometimes.)
 - d.) Strengthening myself in this area whenever I backtrack once again.
- 5.) Work on MZ"L. This includes
 - a.) First and foremost shmiras eynayim

b.) Keeping busy

c.) Davening

d.) Keeping in touch with the forum and the like

e.) Try to shift my perspective (i.e. telling myself that this is not something I need)

So, yes, I do have to focus on conquering each day separately, like you mentioned. And even when we do fall, we should at least make sure that we fall forward and not backwards. That happens by seeing where we fall and setting the proper fences up. And perhaps even better, set up the fences even before we fall. In the process of doing so, we'll learn a lot about ourselves, which in turn will further inspire growth even in other areas.

Again, thank you very much for your response

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Warning: Spoiler!

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