

On the way... Again

Posted by Hopefulposek - 26 Jul 2023 16:54

Hi everyone,

I made it to 90 days once before and then had a fall shortly after. I have made several attempts since then but have not been successful. I'm hoping that starting this thread where I will post updates and insights throughout this journey will help me stay motivated and grounded. Any chizuk or advice in response to the updates my journey would help me on the way. Thanks everyone for being such a supportive community.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 08 Jan 2025 14:41

I think i need to go back to my no alcohol policy, i started with one beer by dinner then had another while reading. I don't remember what I was feeling but decided to watch a movie after all, found a basically clean one and enjoyed but ended up consuming a few more beers, by the end I was not thinking clearly and watched another movie (not as clean) and drank some more. Can't remember most of the night, woke up on the couch with a bad hangover, now I missed shachris, late to seder and feeling like garbage. Only one thing to do...

Make a call. Connect. realize sometimes I make mistakes, doesn't mean i'm trash. Learn from the mistake. Make the best of the situation. take care of myself.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by chancy - 08 Jan 2025 16:07

[hopefulposek wrote on 08 Jan 2025 14:41:](#)

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end I was not thinking clearly and watched another movie (not as clean) and drank some more. Can't remember most of the night, woke up on the couch with a bad hangover, now I missed shachris, late to seder and feeling like garbage. Only one thing to do...

Make a call. Connect. realize sometimes I make mistakes, doesn't mean i'm trash. Learn from the mistake. Make the best of the situation. take care of myself.

Dear Hopeful Posek (I hope so too)

A lot of times the same people that are prone to SA are also prone to AA. Some of us are just wired to be addicted quicker than others.

And sometimes it might be an underlying trauma or current situation that we cant/dont want to face and we escape into:

Sex

Books

Alcohol

etc.

They are all escapes from our lives and give us some fleeting pleasure. But in the long (short) run they cause more issues.

I think you need to dig deep and see whats really bothering you and keeping you back from being present. What are you running from? And the answer isn't stress or anything like that, because EVERYONE has stress some more and some less, and yet not everyone gets hooked to escapism. So its much deeper.

Im sorry if i spoke out of line.

I wish you the best in your journey.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 08 Jan 2025 19:30

thats a very penetrating post and I need to think about it a bit. My intial self diagnosis was that I find movies entertaining, and though I sometimes do use it as an escape, I'm not convinced that is all it is, I enjoy entertainment to relax and I enjoy relaxing especially at the end of a long and stressful day.

I agree that the desire to watch during the day was likely fueled by escapism from the various negative thoughts I was having, such as: I'm incapable and if people realize they would think poorly of me and abandon me, which leads to loneliness, or I have no idea what to do which produces feelings of helplessness and despair.

Wow that was a lot deeper than I originally thought, thank you chancy for pushing me on this. Definitely not out of line, I gain tremendously from everyones insights and suggestions even if I end up disagreeing with them.

I wanted to add that I also had a very nice win last night, as I was reading there was one part which was slightly inappropriate. In the past I would have just read it and moved on, but recently I was talking with a chaver from here and came up with the idea of skipping these parts instead

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 12 Jan 2025 00:09

A gutten vuch everyone!

A few thoughts that have been at the forefront of my mind the last few days.

1) I'm recognizing the need for deeper inner work, regarding the basic defects: honesty, self worth, resentment, and getting out of a people pleasing mentality. But I find it hard to work on it myself and i don't have a good framework to work on it comfortably. I'm gonna bring it up at the next vaad and maybe the chevra can help me and support me as I face my ugly inner self.

2) I want to forge more and deeper connections with guys from gye, but I'm finding it very difficult. Partly is time: I'm already taking off significant amountts of seder everyday, to take off another half hour a day to make a few more calls and texts is hard for me to do (not sure whether its right or wrong, but I know it's hard). I think also I have an internal blockage which is making it hard for me, self worth and all that usual jazz. But something I just thought about on shabbos is that I don't like feeling like I'm just taking and not giving in a relationship. I view this as fundamental to the struggle is to work on being a giver (or Maitiv) instead of a taker which I feel like I was in a lot of my relationships. So when I call a guy and I feel like the call just revolves around me it makes me cringe afterwards. But I know that not all my calls are like that, and also it was explained to me that there is room for a relationship where you receive advice

from someone, and what you give in return is helping them have chiyus in their life and helping them stay clean by allowing them to help you. This is something I still have to get comfortable with, being on the receiving end.

But B"h had a nice shabbos, got to learn a little and planning on having a fantastic week!

P.S. I'm going to start a new thread where people who are available to be contacted by basically anyone on gye can post their info, if it takes off and is helpful - great, if it's not - hopefully I will get hishtadlus points. Still not sure where to create it but I'll figure it out in the next few minutes and post it here.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by souloriented21 - 12 Jan 2025 00:36

Your obvious self-awareness is super inspiring. It really takes a lot strength to even start looking at ourselves somewhat objectively and starting to see the things we dont necessarily appreciate so ashrecha! Good for you! HaShem should bless you with the strength to continue on your journey of self-discovery.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 12 Jan 2025 00:52

[souloriented21 wrote on 12 Jan 2025 00:36:](#)

Your obvious self-awareness is super inspiring. It really takes a lot strength to even start looking at ourselves somewhat objectively and starting to see the things we dont necessarily appreciate so ashrecha! Good for you! HaShem should bless you with the strength to continue on your journey of self-discovery.

Thank you for your kind words, hashem should bless you as well in your journey! I found that self awareness was very powerful in helping me grow throughout my journey and I'm trying to continue it. However sometimes it can be painful and overwhelming, but nu nu thats part of self discovery. I got a lot of the chizzuk to pursue it from reading the white book and the blue book, in which I understood this to be very much a part of the 12 steps (but I am not claiming to really

understand them that well, ask Dov)

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 12 Jan 2025 00:53

So I put it under what works for me calling it "thread for reaching out" because contacting people and reaching out worked for me and I hope it can help and work for others.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 21 Jan 2025 19:49

I had a very nice call with the vaad today, felt connected to the guys and was reminded of many powerful yesodos that I hadn't focused on in a while. Thank you hashem for the Vaad!

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 03 Feb 2025 04:12

Hi,

Its been a while since I've posted, right now I'm at an airport waiting to go back home, I am tired and a bit emotionally unsettled. there are many very attractive women at the airport dressed provocatively. In order to distract myself from this situation I decided to start something I've wanted to do for w while but never had time: write out my story. everyone has a story, and I wanted to write mine up, both for myself to help heal the pain inside and for others (though not sure what its gonna do for them more than what I already wrote on my thread).

Since posts have been known to disappear, I will first type it up in a word doc and then copy and paste.

Stay tuned...

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 03 Feb 2025 04:55

First segment, Please do not feel obligated to read.

Recovery, not sobriety – My story.

Where to begin? It's so hard to know. Do I start from my childhood and work up chronologically, or would it be more honest to start from later and then go back as I became more aware of what was happening and how things affected me. Should I write things out in full, setting a stage for a long book, or structure this as a simple article. Well the best idea would be to just start and see where it takes me. I will blot out certain names but beyond that very little will be changed.

My name is __, and I am a recovering lust addict. Not "I used to be a lust addict", Because I still am an addict, and not "a recovered lust addict" because I have not finished recovering, which is something I am not sure is actually ever reached.

I grew up, just like everyone grows up, but there were things about my childhood which stood out even then and purely jump out now that I go back to examine them.

Simply, it was not a happy childhood. I survived it but I did not live it. How could it have been truly lived. There were threats and violence, pain and crying. Sure there were band-aids galore, the occasional smiling face and happy time, but overall it was secrets and fear. Now all children misbehave sometimes and all children fear getting caught. How am I supposed to know whether what I went through was so different? Well, I'm not so sure, but my childhood was still full of fear and pain. Now is not the time for examples, those will come. But needless to say, I left for yeshiva out of town a broken soul, petrified of not meeting expectations and feeling completely unlovable. But thank god most of this was below the surface, covered up to such an extent that even I was barely aware of it, or more properly blissfully unaware of it. I was a witty boy, and somewhat charismatic, but egotistical and hot headed. I had a sharp tongue, which many times was used for good to defend the abandoned ones, but it got me in lots of trouble too. I almost had the garbage beaten out of me a few too many times to be just lucky. I had friends and close ones, some very close. We would share the pain we experienced and they would support me.

Some odd things during highschool that should be noted. On our shabbosim when I would go home, I would try not to eat meals at home, rather I would eat at my friends house. I hated being home. There was nothing for me there, nothing but judgement and pain. I called my mother every erev Shabbos because it was demanded of me, but I never called my father. I had absolutely no relationship with him by the time I went to highschool. In the summers I did not go to camp to be a counselor, rather I got a job working as a law clerk in offices of family or friends. I was the only one in my class who did this, this was mostly done in order to have some spending money for the year, but maybe there was something more, I have no idea. In tenth grade I got suspended 11 times for failure to go to minyan and be in bed by curfew. I only remember getting in such trouble with my parents, phone taken away, finding my own way home from the train station, feeling abandoned and not understood. At the same time, me and

my friends were drinking heavily every Shabbos, but chasdei hashem I mostly stopped that soon after. I was basically a teenager but one coming off of years of abuse and neglect. Entering eleventh grade I started to get my act together, I also got a kesher with a rebbe which I think was one of the strongest points in my turning around, I stopped the drinking got to bed on time and showed up for shachris. I still wasn't into learning and regularly spaced out or skipped class, always making a cheshbon to end up with at least a C. Near the end of the year an older guy in beis medrash who had made a kesher with me started to learn with me and things started to look up. Then I got suspended, for minyan, again. I remember calling up my parents and my father yelling at me. I don't understand, clearly it was hard for me and I had gotten so much better. I cried bitter hot tears.

Speeding up a bit...

By the end of twelfth grade I was super shtark, waking up at 5:30 to learn before shachris and staying up past midnight to learn some more. I never missed shachris. Wow what an amazing turn around right? Well almost, see I still never talked to my father and sometimes I would shut down for a few hours not doing anything. Once I just lay down in the back of the classroom, staring up at the ceiling. Oh and I had a mental breakdown/panic attack in which I lay crying and hyperventilating with images and memories of all the abuse of my childhood playing in my mind. Yeah that freaked my friends out. Sh*t, it's hard to think about it now. There was so much pain going on, and I was masking it by consuming myself in my learning. At about this time my fathers Yiddishkeit was in freefall, no learning no davening, no nothing. It was very awkward for me to come home on out shabbosim, go to shul, come home and be told "Okay let me go wake up tatty and we'll have the seudah."

Then at the end of the year me and a couple of friends decided we wanted to stay for summer zman. We all "loved" learning, what a brilliant idea! But when I called up my parents I didn't exactly get a warm reception. I was told after I graduated I was on my own financially and would need to get a job to support myself at least for the summer (never mind what would happen the next year when I went to learn in beis medrash) That put the nail in the coffin of our relationship.

Fast forward a couple years, I was in third year, still learning shtark, and I was collapsing. I had so much anger inside it was out of control. So I went to therapy. Apparently I had a poor relationship with my parents and didn't think they loved me. It was bad, very bad. It took so much to go both physically and emotionally. And financially, at one point I was paying for the sessions and transportation and I had no money. When I told my mashgiach that I wasn't going to every session because I couldn't afford it he gave me some help to cover the rest of the sessions for the year before I left to continue learning in new York.

And with all this there was porn...

It started when I was young, very young. My older brothers had a hard life and they introduced me first to the idea and then one of them showed me porn and molested me. By eighth grade I was viewing porn on the family computer but still didn't know anything about it or masturbation. At the end of ninth grade a friend told me about how amazing masturbation was, by that point I had a smartphone and was watching (binging) porn whenever home for out shabbosim, and once I started masturbating I was hooked. It became a cycle, go home for and out Shabbos binge porn and masturbate, survive until the next out Shabbos on memories, reload on porn.

This continued for a while. At one point I went and bought an inappropriate magazine (actually I was too embarrassed to do it myself and asked a younger student to buy it for me *cringe*).

To be continued... Maybe if I have time. Please don't feel the need to read all this.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by lamaazavtuni - 03 Feb 2025 05:17

Tatteh in himmel look at your tayeraeh kinderlach. Ver raised who knew what hopeful posek was going through. But my friend my dear brother that has me crying as I read your heartrending life story in shamayim veismin ya. They know what your going through. I don't know how to end this is so emotional. But my dear dear brother in shamayim I wanna sit near you. The aibeshter is close to the broken hearts more then tefila lemoishe more then tefila ledovod. Hashem likes the tefila leahny much love your friend. Who rooting for you from the sidelines.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 03 Feb 2025 12:46

Part 2 from the plane:

As I started to shtark out, I also started to want to stop. It wasn't all at once but gradually becoming embarrassed of myself. I would try different things, but nothing worked. Putting my old smartphone away, and then taking it right back out when I got back for Shabbos. Oy, it was impossible. I couldn't stop! At one point I broke my smartphone, but even that didn't help. I don't remember all the details but I always would get caught up in the lust and pursue porn until I either accessed or masturbated to fantasies amongst frustration. Even in yeshiva on my dumbphone I would get porn, the yeshiva was slowly catching on to the issues but my lust was always one step ahead.

Even when I would manage to go clean for a bit, and couldn't access porn, I would go crazy, I would lose my mind. I planned many times to go off the derech just so I could have my access to porn. Damn it I needed my drug so badly. But I could never confide in anyone. Oh sure, I mentioned it to a rebbe or two, but never the extent of the issue. I told one rebbe that I didn't want to go home for Shabbos because there was unfiltered wifi there (which was partially true, but honestly I just didn't want to go home. I also needed my constant escape into learning.)

It felt so bad, and wrong being in a dorm with such amazing and shtark guys, and yet I was

watching porn in the nights sneaking out to the bathrooms to masturbate. It killed me on the inside.

[p]And once I started college the end was near. B"H somehow I got a filter on my computer. But, and I don't remember all the details, I could sometimes still get around it. Take it off put it back on. I remember once wanting to give up, so I emailed the filter company to take off the filter, they emailed me back a while later after the urge had passed to confirm. I told them that I was in a moment of weakness but now wanted to keep it on. Oh what a sweet little tzaddik I was

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 03 Feb 2025 14:22

Not sure why this got cut off, but part 3:

But I could access and it continued.

So I started dating, because marriage fixes everything, right?

Nope. Dated for a couple years, during that time nothing much happened. Kept learning shtark, rocked my way through college. Nothing much stands out in my mind of those years so lets skip ahead.

Mazel tov! I'm engaged!

Oh Sh*t! My kallah has her own issues, but honestly that's her story to tell not mine.

[p]Yay the wedding night! Now honestly I'm slightly level headed (I know it's hard to believe but just trust me) and I wasn't expecting sex on the first night from this sweet innocent beis yaakov girl, and I got what I expected

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 03 Feb 2025 14:24

Anyways, we clearly had different ideas of what intimacy was supposed to be and had some struggle figuring that out (we never really figured it out, I just felt not loved and rejected). So

we're married and it's very nice. I'm not watching porn or masturbating anymore! Omg marriage actually worked! Uh oh, apparently sometimes sex can cause pregnancy. And pregnancy is one of the leading causes of children. And childbirth causes apparently unending niddahness (new word, websters). So I had a hard time, during the pregnancy and started filter poking, and after the pregnancy I found that my filter wasn't so good. I could once again get porn. And I fell, and again, and again, and we were back. Ah my old friend how did I ever live without you, and yet how can I live with you. Oh the shame of watching porn with the baby in the room, it is actually really awkward.

I don't think during my clean time I was ever really better, I still was thirsting for connection but I was maybe getting some from my wife, I don't really know. The point is I was back in a rut. And there was no way out.

Just one week, just stay clean one week. Argh! Okay just 3 days? No? Damn you!

Again, try again. Argh!!!! Why oh why can't I be free?!?

Maybe a better filter?

Nope went crazy and broke it down. I need my drug to live and yet I cannot live like this.

One time I had skipped seder to watch porn, and then it happened. I saw an ad for GYE.

Now I had seen ads for it before and signed up once but quit because at that point I was not ready to give it up, but now I opened it up and watched the promo video for GYE 2.0 (good timing). And I cried. It was telling my story, my pain, and what I hoped could one day be me getting free.

So I decided this is it, I'm going to break free. I started with the F2F program, and went clean for a long time (I don't remember how long it was for but I could check later, I think it was 90 days). During this time I started taking my glasses off in the street when I would go walking. Once my wife asked me about it and being young naïve and uneducated, I told her I was working on shmiras einayim and there is a big push being made for everyone to try and be more careful in all areas, hence the glasses, and her being a sweet beis yaakov just thought "Oh wow my husband is so special."

But then I fell back. And I was back in the cycle. Now this time things were much better, I got techloq and it was a much better filter actually blocked pretty much everything bad, and I did have a bunch of tools from the F2F but it was still tough. Then I reached out to my mashgiach. I told him the basic story (the porn part, the childhood stuff is special for you guys, and my therapist) he was very helpful and comforting and agreed to be my co-pilot. I started texting him everyday and we would meet once a week to shmuz. This was super helpful and I started getting a nice streak. But inevitably there were issues, bumps in the road. Though at the time they seemed like unpassable mountains, looking back now from where I am, I see they were no more than speed bumps on the road which led to the real freaking mountain. And the cycle continued for a while. Get a nice streak, break it, binge and get back in the old habit, break into another long streak, but invariably face a challenge and fall back.

Some of the challenges: My wife's unfiltered smartphone, the public computers at college or the library. To deal with each challenge as it came up took a lot of strength and was not easy, many times it was only after several consecutive falls with the same problem that I would address it.

I don't know where the turning point was but I had one point where I had a few very long streaks only briefly broken (albeit with intense bingeing). Throughout this all, I was still posting on the forums regularly and using other tricks to stay involved and motivated. But I had never conquered my inner demons, the anger and frustration were real. My shalom bais was at stake. We never fought but there was very little connection. I was already sick and tired of intimacy and we spent very little time together. I remember starting to cut suppers short to go back to learn because they were just unbearable, so uncomfortable. I was working on being sober but I was not at all really trying to recover. By this point I had made a major shift in my lifestyle, I was sleeping better and exercising more. But my emotions remained out of wack.

On purim I came home very drunk and fell breaking a nice streak. That was the last time I fell (as of this writing).

I got back on the train and was sobering up. But the pain was still there, and to make it worse my wife was expecting again. I was in a very bad place emotionally. I was feeling constantly rejected by my wife, and all alone in the struggle. The pain was so terrible. Walking around, not as a man, but as a wound, a gaping wound of hurt. I did not want to live, I wanted to die. I wasn't actually suicidal but I did not want this life anymore. I remember telling an older Kollel yungerman (the same beis medrash guy who started learning with me all those years back, and whom with I now had a strong keshet/relationship) that I wanted to die and that I wished my wife would never go to the mikvah again so that we could stop having sex and I wouldn't have to feel that pain anymore. He told me afterwards that it made him cry, as I write this it's making me cry, and I'm on a crowded flight!

I was getting anxiety attacks and would not be able to be in the yeshiva, a couple times I came home on Shabbos in the middle of shachris because I just couldn't be there anymore, bearing this great pain while surrounded by so many who knew nothing of what I was going through. The feeling of loneliness it produced was so powerful that I had to leave.

After discussing these episodes with my mashgiach he suggested I go to therapy, I agreed.

And that is when a lot of things started to happen all at once.

I started therapy and worked on recognizing where all my negative beliefs about myself came from (surprise: childhood!), and also on feeling my emotions instead of pushing them aside.

I also started reading/consuming information on sex addiction and addiction in general, along with other books on mental health struggles.

I took tremendous amounts of time off of seder to invest in my mental health. I started journaling and taking long walks.

It's hard to say exactly where things went from there. It took some time, but things started to get better. There were still struggles but overall things were getting better.

[p]And I was still clean

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