

Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by Chooseurname - 11 Oct 2023 20:09

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Hello,

I was not going to try for 90 days now. Over yamim noraim I was mekabel just an hour a day to be careful - a machsom l'aynayim. I thought that was where I was holding and it was something I could build real growth on. However, when I heard over yom tov what happened in E"Y I decided I could do more klal yisroel. So here I go for 90 days whatever it takes.

I'm going to try hard to check in daily as I think it'll be really helpful.

It's a good time to start because with all the yom tov I kinda shook loose of some unhelpful habits. On the other hand, I'm glued to my computer following the news so not so great. I wish I could backdate this streak to before Rosh Hashana but alas it was interrupted...

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by BenHashemBH - 18 Jul 2024 14:40

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I wonder if there is significance to the specific things you mentioned procrastinating, specifically to the effect that they could be seen as an infinite, never-ending chain of tasks? Are you running from the fact that it feels empty, because doing it anyway seems to leave you at square one no matter what, so why invest the effort?

We daven every day, and each Shacharis is individually valuable among the lifetime of davenings.

We work each day, but do we see the value in one day vs a lifetime of workdays?

My kids will require my attention again, regardless of the attention I give them now.

Perhaps you could contemplate the value of children and parnassa to shift the mindset. Discover the value in each individual task. Even the mundane things are avodas Hashem if we can unlock and internalize the knowledge you alluded to, that this is the life Hashem gifted to me in every moment. Zeh hayom asa Hashem!

Hatzlacha

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by proudyungerman - 19 Jul 2024 04:13

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[chosemyschem wrote on 18 Jul 2024 14:04:](#)

[proudyungerman wrote on 18 Jul 2024 01:44:](#)

Why do you think you are escaping?

That's a good question. And on my favorite topic (me!). I'll explain, but t's a new idea to me so it's not going to come out clearly.

I'm not super in touch with my feelings. I think about them a lot, but I also lie to myself a lot. So this is somewhat speculative. But Dov pointed out in a recorded shuir that alot of addicts procrastinate a lot. He explained (I think) that it's a manifestation of the same drive - just get out, escape, leave this behind, numb yourself. That hit me very powerfully. I mentioned once or twice that I procrastinate a lot. In truth, I procrastinate mostly only at work and in taking care of my kids. Everything else I'm pretty on top of things. And while I'm pretty lazy, I'm not so lazy that it explains this level of procrastination.

And so when I thought about what leads to procrastination at work, it seemed liked when I'm faced with a task that I don't want to do I have an almost physical reaction to turn and do something else. Preferably porn, but I'll turn to news, gye, a novel, or anything else if porn is not available. That seems less like procrastination and more of a desperate desire to get away from the situation. (There are other indicators this is correct, like my many escapist fantasies, but this is already a lot of talking about myself. **I'm also not entirely clear on what I'm running from** but it definitely feels like running.)

And so the nafka mina of it being a feeling of trying to escape, as Dov explained, is that the third step applies here too. If I can just accept that Hashem is infinitely kind, and infinitely caring for me, and has the best plan for my life. If I can accept that where I am right here and right now is part of that plan. If I can surrender to that plan and stop wishing my egotistical plans and fantasies would be fulfilled. If I can let go and let God. Then ~~I can stop~~ He can help me stop running away from my life, and stop running to porn.

This is all true, a real elaboration!

But, to me, the question still remains...

Why are you running away from work and watching your kids?

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyshem - 19 Jul 2024 16:33

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Checking in.

Been feeling pretty sober recently. Feel like I'm less harassed by urges and have some breathing room to work on recovering. Took a break from TBOTG to read the Big Book, and have been pounding Dov's 12 Step Workshops from the GYE library. For some reason, that approach speaks to me a lot more than the TBOTG mehalach. Nu, the nice thing about not being dead is you get to try things out. And if it doesn't work, you get to try out a different thing.

Unfortunately, my number one time for reading and thinking about this was at work. But the whip has been cracked there and leaves me with much less time. Oh well.

Had a thought. There's a lot of reasons going into why we feel so low after a fall.\* I think one of the reasons is that we recognize that on some level it's so easy to not act out. Just sit and do nothing. And we feel stupid and worthless that we couldn't do this one easy thing. And that's certainly correct on one level - the yetzer is like a spiderweb and it should be easy to not act out. But on a more practical level, it's very difficult to *not* act out. Desire is powerful. And if we negate the power of desire too much than we're not prepared to fight it properly

So there's a very difficult balance that has to be found. Can't view the desire as too strong because on some level we know that it's weak, and because viewing it as unbeatable is very harmful. But if we view it as too weak than we won't prepare properly for the riptide that comes to drown us (tsunami might be a better metaphor?).

I don't have a practical way to find that balance. But certainly it's worth trying to drum into our brains that when we lose, we lost a hard fight.

\*I recall a post on a certain forum I read once while acting out. The person was writing about a certain once-in-a-lifetime lust indulgence they engaged in. They prepared for months and months, setting it up in the perfect way. Every aspect was planned out perfectly, and no expense was spared. All to ensure that this once in a lifetime event was going to be the perfect lustful encounter.

And what is so fascinating is that the person wrote that part of their preparation was insuring they had a coping mechanism set up in advance for the inevitable low feeling the next day. This person was an experienced luster who was happy with their lifestyle and had no problem with the actions they were engaging in and yet they still *knew* they would feel low the next day. Of course, they blamed it on "dopamine letdown" or something like that. And their reaction wasn't to question their lifestyle or anything productive. Instead, they viewed it as just something to be dealt with and overcome in setting up a perfect lust activity. Mind-blowing.

(Agav, and this is a discussion for a different time, if I recall correctly the way they coped with the letdown was by spending time with their spouse. Love as an antidote to lust. But that's a different schmooze, and I'd like to stop thinking about this incident now.)

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by BenHashemBH - 19 Jul 2024 17:11

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Thank you for the insight Shem.

Between hopelessness and over-confidence, there is regular, practical, and healthy confidence in yourself. Knowing your abilities and current limits, then working and pushing to increase those limits over time. The difficulty is the honest cheshbon hanefesh, realizing where we're really at and also recognizing what we are capable of.

Kol tov

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by horizon - 21 Jul 2024 15:48

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Balance my friend. Balance is what its all about.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chancy - 22 Jul 2024 19:55

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Dear Rabbi Shem,

I admire your energy to write such deep and insightful posts over and over. Its amazing! Please stick around and keep trucking.

I want to talk about your question regarding procrastination.

I cant talk for everyone, I can only share my experience which is pretty extensive.....

Everyone has uncomfortable things in his life, some stuff that we dont want to deal with, its too hard, too boring, too painful, etc.

However, most healthy adults will deal with it anyways because thats life, you deal with crap.

Some people however, find it EXTREMELY hard to do that, either because of past trauma, or because of there brain chemistry, ADHD and so on.

Those people will seek to escape those problematic things in life by whatever means necessary. Drinking, gambling, binge watching, porn, sex, everything that will numb that uncomfortable feeling for a bit, its easier to numb the pain then having to go thru surgery.

Others, especially people with ADHD have a chronic lack of dopamine and norepinephrine neurotransmitters. That makes the body crave it more then the regular person. And once they try out one of the drugs mentioned above, the body gets used to it and now wants it even more. Thats why ADHD people are more prone to be addicts.

Anyhow, i cant tell you whats going on in your brain, But one thing you must make clear to your self, When you say your ideal day would include porn and arousal, thats just your body craving its dopamine and norepinephrine! If you can get it from a healthy source, you wouldn't NEED the bad stuff!

Regular exercise is just as good a source of dopamine and norepinephrine as sex! Try it! So keep that in mind.

Love

Chancy

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyschem - 24 Jul 2024 19:08

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Chancy deep and meaningful as always. Thank you for the insight. I thought about this for awhile.

Where I think I disagree with you slightly is that you're saying there's a physical feeling that can help fill whatever void porn is trying to fill. Which may very well be true.

But without getting into whatever deep internal mechanisms are activating in my brain, I really like the sound of the solution offered in step 3. Instead of filling that void with substitutes, why not try to stop trying to fill it and turn the whole mess over to Hashem's care. Idk if I can pull it off, but there's thousands of people in 12 steps groups who've gotten somewhere powerful with it.

I'm not saying don't do things (like exercise) to help make the fight easier. You don't get points for taking the hard road. But trying to fill the void seems endless.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by BenHashemBH - 24 Jul 2024 21:13

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Trying to work this through.

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You can't control X (and presumably don't want X to control you) – step 1

Hashem has the ability to help you with everything (which includes controlling X) – step 2

You relinquish everything to Hashem (including transferring that control of X to Him) – step 3

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If you replace X (porn) with Y (exercise), not that that can't work, but it doesn't fit with the declaration that you can't control X.

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Seems it's not just about giving Hashem your X addiction. The only time that X is explicitly mentioned is in the first step. You give Him everything, your whole life. That's why its not filling a void, because space for my will no longer exists. All that you are is now bound to Him, and there is no room left for X.

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So for this to work, you CAN'T just give over X and keep the rest. Hashem isn't the closet where you toss in your mess and then proclaim your room clean. He's your entirely new room that doesn't require a closed closet because everything is as it should be. Lev tahor bara li Elokim.

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This is intense. You are ceasing to be all of who you were until this day, and allowing yourself to be recreated anew by the only One who has that power. You give Him your absolute surrender, because you believe that He will not destroy your true and meaningful self, as He purifies your very being.

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You let Him choose your Shem.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyshem - 24 Jul 2024 21:31

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[BenHashemBH wrote on 24 Jul 2024 21:13:](#)

Trying to work this through.

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You can't control ~~X~~**your life** as evidenced by rampant and destructive X no matter how hard you tried to stop (and presumably don't want X to control you) – step 1

Hashem has the ability to help you with everything (which includes controlling X) – step 2

You relinquish everything to Hashem (including transferring that control of X to Him true but a small and unmentioned part of the process) – step 3

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If you replace X (porn) with Y (exercise), not that that can't work, but it doesn't fit with the declaration that you can't control X. True mostly, but also doubt exercise would be a sufficient solution (even combined with other "tools").



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You let Him choose your Shem.

One thousand percent. Much more articulate than my post. Made a minor revision for clarity.

As Dov says, it's not that my *lust* is unmanageable, my *life* is unmanageable. Turn my *life* over to his care and start living my life the way he wants it to be.

As far as I can tell (from Dov's workshops and reading the big book but not actually doing the 12 step program) this is the whole kuntz of the 12 steps. This, together with honesty and connection (via meetings), and eventually service is the entire program. Honestly the nekudas hamachlokes between this and the BOTG is incredibly small (but very important). And that is just whether turning my life over to hashem is done through surrendering to him or through fighting to get to him.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyshem - 25 Jul 2024 21:04

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And then today was back to four hours of work out of the workday. No surrendering my life to Hashem. Poor davening. Feeling lust and enjoying it.

Guess I can't expect things to go so fast, but this sure is tough.

Spent awhile doing some online shopping and definitely was slipping. But having the Techlog notifications go to a chaver really helped b"h.

Oh well. So it goes. Still sober. Win some battles lose the war or vice versa. ~~Life sucks but at least at the end you get to die.~~ Thank you Hashem for putting me in this situation and please give me the strength to carry out your will.\*

\*Nothing weirder than people who pray/daven/talk to Hashem out loud in public. It reeks of ga'aveh, it feels performative and insincere, and worst of all if it is sincere you're engaging in a profoundly intimate relationship in public (mi yitencha k'ach li).

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by yiftach - 25 Jul 2024 22:43

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No one ever promised me that this process is easy, what they did say was, that it's worth it!

Follow the leader: Fight! Fight! Fight!

Thinkin' of you from afar!

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chosemyshem - 26 Jul 2024 17:13

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Ending another sober(ish) week. Feeling pretty good.

Sunday my wife is heading out of town for the day. She doesn't do that often. Historically, every single time she's done that I've binged my brains out till she got back home. Something about knowing she's out of the city gives me a feeling that I've got the freedom to act out and I have to grab every second (a source for a din of ishto ba'ir?). The couple of times she was out of town overnight I literally binged till close to sunrise. Even during cleaner times, this specific matziv is a massive, unstoppable, overwhelming trigger (if that's the right word).

I'm hoping I'm in a better place now. I have a schedule loosely planned in my head to stay busy (preferably out of the house and away from my computer). Imma try to reach out proactively. But I'm nervous. I've prepared properly for other similar times and folded like a cheap chair sat on by a fat man.

Posting for accountability, chizuk, and so y'all can please blow up my phone Sunday afternoon.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by chaimoigen - 26 Jul 2024 17:36

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Spent well over an hour catching up on this Hall of Fame thread.

Lots of thoughts and feelings, will try to catch you before Shabbos.

The fact the you're still in the game, with cogent, contemplative and honest striving is a genuine inspiration for me. And there's a lot of genuine food for thought, not just thread-candy.

Here's a hand, that will be warmed (much-neededly) if you grab on. "Oooh, we're halfway there.... Take my hand, we'll make it, I ~~swear~~ hope..."

Gut Shabbos, Shem.

Livin On A Prayer,

Chaimoigen

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip  
Posted by Muttel - 26 Jul 2024 21:08

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[chosemyschem wrote on 26 Jul 2024 17:13:](#)

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Posting for accountability, chizuk, and so y'all can please blow up my phone Sunday afternoon.

Oy, tears come to my eyes as I remember the last time I binged when my wife went away with the kids for the afternoon and I still had access to one unfiltered device..... I

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