

Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by Chooseurname - 11 Oct 2023 20:09

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 chosemyshem - 23 Sep 2024 15:52

[thompson wrote on 23 Sep 2024 15:44:](#)

[chosemyshem wrote on 23 Sep 2024 15:10:](#)

I'll take any form of sobriety, and am very grateful for the clean week. Hoping for a new week that has more sanity though.

Would you mind sharing your definition of the word sobriety with us? Some of my favorite

When I find myself white-knuckling for a few days, I begin feeling like a phony.

On the one hand, I'm technically clean, but on the other hand, my mind is so full of sexual thoughts - so much more than when I do act on it. How full? If it's all your thinking of, then technically sober or not you have a problem. But that doesn't mean freak out over every thought.

But on the third hand (or one foot), there's the truth of ?? ????? ????? ??? ??????. Ultimately, what matters is how I act, not how I feel and think.

Then, on to the second foot, our actions are typically influenced by our thoughts and feelings. The Chinuch famously says the exact opposite. "After the actions go the the heart" or something like that.

This line of reasoning is one of the catalysts behind rationalizing my way out of "technical sobriety" into full-blown indulgence. And then the cycle repeats.

I'll leave the mic open for whoever wants to jump in here with a post about how not acting out for 90 days rewires your brain and how you think and feel.

Your totally right that there's a lot of room for vague fuzziness in "sobriety". That's why SA uses a simple definition of sex with anyone you shouldn't be having sex with (including yourself a.k.a masturbating, but generally not including your spouse.)

I like that simplicity, but include consuming any form of pornography/erotica.

Lusting in my heart, looking at woman at the street, fantasizing etc. etc. etc. are all things I want to stop too, but are not practical to include in the definition of losing sobriety. First, because they're fuzzy. But more importantly, if I counted every dumb thought or look as a fall I'd have like two clean days ever. Those things will come, but I'm not holding my self to an impossible standard. As you pointed out, holding oneself to an overly high standard just allows them to rationalize their way into acting out.

That's my definition, feel free to pick your own.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by chosemyshem - 27 Sep 2024 15:03

A year is a big thing to review.

But I can reflect.

I re-started the 90 day count after Succos this year. Going into this past Rosh Hashana I had very few hopes left. I'd been struggling for so long and nothing helped. And I'd been on GYE for over a year and it still didn't help. I felt so hopeless that I didn't even make a kabbolah that *this* year I'll stop watching porn (like I'd unsuccessfully said for so many years).

And then I had a moving Yamim Noraim and thought maybe I could change.

And then, as usual, I fell some point over chol hamoed Succos. And I was ready for the cycle to restart. I was ready for the whirlpool of lust to slowly drag me deeper and deeper.

And then Shemini Atzeres happened. I tried this year to be besimcha that whole day and it was a powerful day. Till simchas torah night when I started hearing the rumors about something happening. October 7th was a powerful kick in the pants (as it was for many people, although interestingly enough it seems to have affected the less yeshivish crowds more profoundly.)

So I put on my big boy pants and started the 90 day chart again. And somehow, through some unbelievable miracle, went 30 days clean for the first time in probably 5 years. And then I fell again. And again. And again.

The ups and downs are thoroughly documented here on this thread. I did things I thought I would never do for recovery. I spoke to my boss about installing a filter (which I thought was risking my job but shockingly was no big deal). I contemplated joining SA. And, I picked up the

phone and spoke to people. With my name. With sharing all the gory details of my shame. I thought I would rather die in my lonely shame than do something like that, but I did it.

That more than anything else this year has fundamentally changed the nature of the struggle for me. I took an axe to the walls of guilt that surrounded me, and wow did it feel freeing.

Idk much about the power of friendship, but the positive peer pressure around here takes full credit for pushing me to do it.

I learnt a lot this year. I learnt about the struggle and I learnt stuff about myself. While I strongly believe that getting clean is just about getting clean, not about self-discovery or personal growth, it turns out it's hard to avoid some of that along the way. It's been one hell of a ride.

I'm nowhere close to being out of the woods yet. The lows of this year hit some very low points. And I think I'm only clean right now because of Elul and some weird semi-bet with Undermajordomo Thompson. But last Elul couldn't keep me clean. And I didn't have ~~internet acquaintances~~ friends who I could talk to and make weird bets about this.

Progress is a tricky thing. And I have a tendency to forget how bad the lows can get when I'm at high and a tendency to negate any imperfect high. But looking back at this year, the lows came a lot less often than they ever have. And the highs keep on getting higher.

Slow and steady never wins the race. But life's not a race. Or if it is a race, it's not one I know how to win anyway. But one slow, fractured, painful, meaningless, bloody, chaotic, hopeless day at a time, G-d's been carrying me down the racetrack in a way I had given up on hoping for.

Thanks boys. If I don't see you next year in Jerusalem, I'll see out here. Crawling down the racetrack one slow, painful, *beautiful* step at a time.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip
Posted by chaimoigen - 27 Sep 2024 19:06

Every word in your post is as profoundly beautiful as life is, difficult as it is.

I appreciate you, and our friendship, and I get a lot from it.

You're the Turkey Slug **King**, brother.

I wish you a year of Bracha, growth, living, menuchas hanefesh, and may all your Tefillos (that you talked about in earlier posts), be answered with Rachamim.

Here's a warm hand, and a warm hug,

Chaim

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by chosemyshem - 02 Oct 2024 16:17

On the topic of breaking down the walls of shame. A small but potent incident from today.

At some point when masturbation was still new and disgusting to me, I swore that I would never masturbate again. If I recall correctly, I even used the shem Hashem (I was very young and very dumb). Every erev Rosh Hashana by hatares nedarim, this shvua would pop into my head. And it killed me. Every year it would remind me how hopeless I was, how terrible I was. I would beat myself up for being too weak to stop masturbating and too embarrassed to be properly matir neder.

If hataras nedarim is meant to be a cleansing experience, for me it only served to remind that there was yet another reason I was going to Hell for masturbating and there was nothing I could do about it.

I'm pretty good about ignoring painful things, and would generally mostly manage to forget about it. But it weighed heavily on me, year in and year out. I remember one erev Rosh Hashana I spent a while learning hilchos nedarim and frantically looking for some heter.

This year was different. In shul, I calmly announced the story and asked the three random guys to be matir my neder.

I'm kidding. That would be nuts. Instead, when I remembered during hateres nedarim I beat myself up for only a few seconds. Then, after davening, I emailed my Rav (whom I had previously opened up to about this struggle) and explained my shaila and asked what to do. Maybe he'll know a loophole, and if not, I'll follow the psak and be matir neder. Since only one judge needs to know the neder, and he now knows the story, it won't be difficult to take care of this.

It felt so good to finally be able to take care of this. It's perhaps a small thing, but I've been shlepping it around for so long and it felt so unsolvable. I felt like a rasha davka every erev Rosh Hashana, and now I feel so liberated.

Would never have happened without being able to open up and connect here. Thank you guys, and may you all be zocheh to a ksiva v'chasim tova and year full of light, one day at a time.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by chaimoigen - 06 Oct 2024 00:41

A gut gebentche yohr full of Bracha.

I can't quite put my finger on it, but I have a strong sense that every breach in that full, heavy wall of shame also opens up a new window to air and light and hope and a view of the heartbreaking blue sky.

Here's to a beautiful year, chaver

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip

Posted by chosemyshem - 08 Oct 2024 21:24

Loved the video GYE has for their [campaign](#). Give back to the community and d\$nate! If you can't donate - give back to the community and join a vaad!

Anyway. All's good here. Neder I previously referenced has been matir'ed. So that's a weight off my shoulders.

Work without little GYE breaks is super boring. On the other hand, work without little GYE breaks results in a lot more work getting done apparently.

Skipping over Yom Kippur, because that's kinda heavy. I have a question about Simchas Torah.

Anyone else have an absurd amount of trouble on Simchas Torah when they pull down the mechitzah so the women can watch the men dance for some reason?

Watching men walk around in a circle cannot be exciting. I just don't believe it. I don't understand why it's a good idea for anyone.

There's a great story with the Mir post-Holocaust. The women were standing in shul simchas torah and a certain Rav complained to R' Chatzkel that it wasn't tznuis. He got very upset at the Rav and told him not to interfere. He explained the bochurim need to get married.

Which explains why single women should watch hakafos in yeshiva but not why married women need to be sitting there all dolled up right next to the hakafos.

Regardless, I hate hakafof for many reasons. So it is convenient that there ain't no women making it to the 35 second vasikin minyan hakafof. But this is a longstanding grouch I've had.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip
Posted by Bennyh - 08 Oct 2024 23:28

There's a minyan in my area that does hakafof on simchas torah mournfully, like by a levaya, with lamentations instead of songs — aching over the ?????? ?? ????? on this special day. The women are clad in black headscarves and sackcloths and they keep the mechitza tightly shut. PM me for details.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip
Posted by chaimoigen - 08 Oct 2024 23:31

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Nice grouch.

There's actually a reason Al Pi Sod that there's no Mechitza by a Chuppa and by Hakafof on Simchas Torah. Doesn't mean that wandering eyes aren't a problem....

A shul with a balcony is a better solution, methinks than 35 second Vasikin **Grinchy** Hakafof.... Or a Yeshiva...

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip
Posted by redfaced - 09 Oct 2024 02:36

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip
Posted by chosemyshem - 09 Oct 2024 20:57

[Bennyh wrote on 08 Oct 2024 23:28:](#)

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I feel like you're just teasing but I want that in my life.

Anyway, it sounds like most shul's simchas torah last year.

#ThatGotRealTooFast

@chaimOigen this is "al pi sod" like a Frankist type of sod? Or a real sod?

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip
Posted by chosemyshem - 09 Oct 2024 21:16

Anyway. An update unrelated to my simchas torah grinchiness.

Had some urges today. Nothing major but I caught myself searching for some content. Stopped before it got anywhere.

That's nothing really new (though it's been a quiet couple weeks).

What surprised me was that with being almost halfway to 90 and all this vaad organizing (obligatory reminder that you can still join!) I apparently started thinking of myself as someone who knows what he's doing. Twas a helpful reminder that I'm the same me who made these dumb decisions for all these years, and I need to keep on doing what works if I want to stay clean.

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Posted by chaimoigen - 09 Oct 2024 23:14

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I love this post.

But only because along with the slice of reality sandwich came the last sentence.

Life is beautiful. And so are you.

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Re: Chooseurnames 90 day trip
Posted by BenHashemBH - 09 Oct 2024 23:36

[chaimoigen wrote on 09 Oct 2024 23:14:](#)

[chosemyschem wrote on 09 Oct 2024 20:57:](#)

@chaimOigen this is "al pi sod" like a Frankist type of sod? Or a real sod?

Aren't you supposed to follow statements like that with "vhameivin yavin"

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I wouldn't know though