

Still on the way

Posted by hopefulposek - 11 Jun 2025 18:13

It's hard to open up and admit that I have a problem. It's hard because I already came so far, had long streaks of being clean, and now I feel very out of control. It's hard when others ask for my advice to still be struggling myself. It's hard to realize how big this mountain really is. It's hard to put myself out there. It's all hard.

I want to forget, for the moment, all the pump up speeches and chizzuk and instead start over. back to the basics. When I first joined GYE there were some habits I created which helped forge a path to sobriety, and I let them fall away. But right now I just want to be able to stay clean for a bit so that I can get my feet under me in order to work through all the garbage in my head that drives me nuts.

I'm feeling very low right now so I don't want to write anything out. right now I want to exercise and eat lunch and still be on time to seder, but I don't think it can happen, so I'm going to go for a run and on the way back pick up some lunch.

I'm going to start slowly, treat myself with patience and compassion, and take it one day at a time.

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by hopefulposek - 12 Jun 2025 17:59

Ok, feeling better today, Shared at a meeting this morning and got a lot of love and support, felt good. I got out some cash for my incentives program (the same one i used when I first got clean and I found it very helpful). Sometimes I feel like I'm taking all the right actions and still struggling, oh well.

B"H no struggles yet today, so just taking it ODAAT. gonna be on time for 2nd seder and rock the house.

On a side note, I really enjoy running its my main hobby and also a great exercise, but recently I got hurt and should really lay off a bit, but its very hard to not go for a run and also hard when I don't go, soo....

TFLMS

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by hopefulposek - 08 Aug 2025 16:19

Hi, I haven't posted in a while, B"H most of my connection and recovery work has been coming form in person meetings and talking on the phone. but it's always nice to check back in to the GYE site where it all began.

It's funny to think about how it all started and how far I've come with tremendous help from the guys here and from my friends in Sa as well as, of course, Hashem.

I have some free time right now and thought to just post a little, a bit of chizzuk for others and also as a reflection for myself. First I want to list some of the struggles I faced and a reality check of where my struggle brought me, but then follow it with a step by step overview of my journey since then.

- I was exposed to pornography early on.
- by 14 I was viewing regularly
- by mid-highschool I was masturbating daily, regularly missing class for this purpose.
- My acting out stymied my emotional maturity and stopped me from learning how to cope with lifes challenges as well as my own personal challenges.
- in beis medrash I tried to stop, but could not.
- I broke several smartphones, and still didn't stop
- I had filters, and couldn't stop
- I would go to public computers (library, college) to watch porn, risking embarassment
- I would spend hours of studying time looking at pornography
- I would use my wifes smartphone to look at pornography
- I would look at pornography while my wife and child were in the room.
- Even while beginning recovery through GYE I still couldn't stop

But,

- I learned how to take care of myself.
- I learned that I have value even if I'm not objectively the top guy in yeshiva

- I learned that I have value even when I make mistakes
- I learned how to be a better husband, more compassionate to my wife
- I learned how to care for others and respect differences
- I learned that struggles don't make me worthless
- I learned that people can like me
- I learned that recovery is possible
- I learned to accept situations and trust in Hashem (even though I had learnt shaar bitachon many times before)
- I started to believe I am worthy of being taken care of
- I started going to therapy and working through trauma, and realize I am worth working it through
- I started valuing the little things I do
- I started being more honest with myself and others
- I started opening up to people and finding that sharing my struggles makes it easier to live through them
- I learned that I don't have to act out
- I learned that it's OK to get back up after a fall (I don't have to let yesterday's mistakes define today's ambitions)
- I learned that I can have a relationship with hashem and feel and believe in his love for me
- I learned that I when I act out it doesn't fix the problem
- I learned that when I act out is when I struggle emotionally
- I learned that I am responsible for my recovery
- I learned that recovery is not easy, but it is worth it

And I'm still learning new things and making new starts every day.

Thanks everyone KOMT and take it ODAAT!

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by ??? ????? ????? ??? - 08 Aug 2025 18:36

[hopefulposek wrote on 08 Aug 2025 16:19:](#)

- I learned that it's OK to get back up after a fall (I don't have to let yesterday's mistakes define today's ambitions)

THIS!

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Very powerful post, hopefulposek. Thank you for sharing.

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by davidt - 10 Aug 2025 17:31

What an inspiring and courageous post! It's clear that you've developed incredible wisdom and resilience through your recovery journey.

I wrote down some points that we can learn from you:

You demonstrate that our value isn't tied to being "the top guy" or being perfect - we have inherent worth even when we make mistakes or face struggles.

Your experience shows how sharing struggles with trusted people (whether in meetings, therapy, or forums like GYE) makes burdens lighter and recovery possible. Opening up creates

connection rather than shame.

You beautifully illustrate that recovery involves daily choices, new learnings, and fresh starts - "ODAAT" (One Day At A Time) really comes through in your message.

Your path shows how working through addiction can actually deepen one's relationship with Hashem and develop genuine emunah and bitachon in ways that purely intellectual study might not achieve.

Despite feeling that acting out stunted your emotional growth initially, you've clearly developed tremendous emotional intelligence, self-compassion, and the ability to care for others.

Your story is a powerful testament that no matter how deep the struggle, recovery and transformation are possible. Thank you for sharing your chizzuk with us!

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by hopefulposek - 19 Aug 2025 14:09

I recently started to attempt to write up many of the ideas and clarities which I learned through the past few years of working on these struggles.

The first is the idea of taking full advantage of your situation and to recognize the unique opportunities you were given despite the initial appearances of struggle. all feedback is very welcome.

Becoming a legend in my own story - It's easy to feel that you're not worth much when objectively you're not accomplishing what others (and yourself) feel is valuable. In the beginning I used a strategy, which I believe is quite common, of focusing on your own potential, recognizing that Hashem created everyone with different limitations and just because someone else is able to reach amazing heights doesn't mean you were given those abilities. The goal of this world is to become the best person you can be, and within that is the recognition that it doesn't matter objectively how you're doing, the only thing that matters is subjectively whether you are reaching your potential.

OK, great, so I don't feel bad that I'm not michael jordan or barry bonds because I was not given the ability to reach those levels. And so too in yeshiva, I wasn't created with the ability to become the gadol hador, memorizing and fully understanding all of the

torah. But I could still feel like garbage. In fact I did. Great so Hashem created me to not accomplish and to fall behind my peers and to not be able to get a good job in teaching. It doesn't feel great. I believe that fully feeling and living this perspective is important and can help me move past these struggles, but I found another angle which was very helpful to me in my situation.

The comparison to michael jordan is a good one. If my purpose in life and where I found I could be the best person was by playing basketball, then I would need to confront the idea that I wasn't created with the abilities of MJ. But what if my purpose was something else? Would it really be enough to justify my lack of skill in basketball and learn to be ok with being a benchwarmer on a minor league team?

The key is to recognize that even if you weren't given awesome strengths or opportunities in one area, it is very possible (and I would venture to say likely) that you have power and skill in another area. An area that you may not have focused on so much until recently.

There are many ways to do good in this world and to become legendary, many times we give ourselves over to what the general world values and what is toated in our communities as the ultimate good. And there is truth in what they see, but it doesn't have to be a limitation on your life. If one has a particular talent for building craftsmanship, then he can accomplish great things in this area, helping many people and affecting his community in a positive way, despite not focusing on the same things that others do. I grew up in a community where the value was placed on learning torah. Knowledge and understanding were the foremost values of life and generally decided ones social status and feelings of life fulfillment. In the beginning of my years of learning after highschool I invested myself tremendously in my studies and was actually quite successful. However as I grew older and started to face my addiction and mental health struggles I was not able to learn as well as I once was. And so, I had to start with the understanding that for me what was the best thing was to be spending time regularly journaling, exercising, going to meetings and going to therapy. But this all came at a tremendous cost to my torah studies! So I needed to accept that I had a lower potential than my peers. But the big shift came when I started not only accepting my circumstances but embracing them. Focusing not only how much I can accomplish despite the struggles, but also how much I can accomplish because of them. Some of the new opportunities hashem has granted me include: Being able to help others struggling with addiction, being able to be a more compassionate husband and father, learning to listen to others, learning to help others, finding an interest in therapy and its ability to help others going through struggle and pain.

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by hopefulposek - 19 Aug 2025 23:39

just saw captains thread for advice for new members and thought of another one after posting.

Take responsibility for your own recovery! everyone wants to help you, but the bottom line is its up to you

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by hopefulposek - 11 Sep 2025 11:25

90 Days Sober! Very grateful for hashem getting me here and the miracles I experienced during this most recent segment of my journey. I want to share something I was writing up yesterday, just a look at some thoughts I'm struggling with. As I mentioned before I am struggling with some depression and the past few days have been pretty rough. As always I'd love to hear feedback and chizzuk from the chevra, and I hope that this can be a source of support and help for others who are facing similar challenges.

Through my journey I started to become more depressed. This is interesting because therapy is supposed to make you feel better, but it takes a while. First you become aware of your feelings, then you learn to accept them and live with them. But there's a space of time in between, where you're aware of your feelings but haven't yet accepted all of them. That's where I ended up.

Right now I just want to write about the past few days and the feelings and thoughts that have come with it. Sometimes a depression spell has a clear trigger and sometimes it seems to have come out of nowhere, suddenly in the throes of spiraling thoughts. This time it was the second type. I don't remember when it started.

I am losing my feeling of connection and passion with yeshiva, and along with that is a loss of passion for teaching. I've mentioned to people that I might become a therapist, as I have been helped by the field and have gained a lot of knowledge during this period, and some said they thought I would be a good therapist and that I should go for it. But there's a voice in the back of my head saying "Do you really think that's a good idea? What if you get depressed again and need time off? How can you abandon your clients like that? You're not safe to be around people in a meaningful way. Better to just hide behind a desk job so that you can't hurt anyone."

The theme is to not take any responsibility because I can't commit and am not reliable.

Now, once I'm not able to take any responsibility I get the feeling of inferiority and disfunctionality. Coupled with the focus on how I hurt people when I don't fulfill my

commitments, and it feels kind of terrible. I don't want to be this person, the unreliable person who hurts people, and so I start looking for escapes.

But now I'm also a person who can't handle life, which makes me more unreliable and also unable to relate to others. And I'm also questioning whether I have a "real" problem or it's all in my head and I should just snap out of it which feels like a lack of identity that I don't know what's real about me.

At about this time I usually realize that this feeling is familiar and keeps coming back. But this feeling is super uncomfortable, not wanting to be what I am since what I am is so pathetic and weak and worthless, so I start wishing that I could just not wake up in the morning.

Now that's a really uncomfortable thought to have. Not only do I look for escapes in movies, alcohol and lust, but I wish for the ultimate escape: death. I really don't want to be that person, the suicidal crazy guy, and so I double down on my escape methods. I'll stay up late so that I don't have to lay down with my thoughts. I'll drink until I can't think straight. I dread the next day not knowing how I'll feel. And the spiral continues, each feeling triggering the next in a full blown storm of emotion.

Ok at this point things are pretty bad. But the problem is that it's getting worse, I started to make a plan of how to end my life, and though I didn't put it into action I did prepare everything. When my therapist asked me why I don't get rid of the means to kill myself, I responded that I didn't want to. I wasn't ready to let go of that security blanket, knowing that I had the choice to escape the pain I'm in. It's scary to let go and trust in G-D. How can I trust him when I'm in so much pain?

OK so now I'm here, I did get rid of the means to end my life, but I still have some work to do, and that's what I'm going to be focusing on today. I'm not sure how this will work, but I plan to take the time to keep writing about this and find some calm amidst the storm.

(I'm not sure why it bolds the font when I copy and paste but I can't seem to undo it, sorry if it hurts your eyes)

I wrote up another part also which IY" H I'll post in a few minutes, this post is long enough that it

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by hopefulposek - 11 Sep 2025 11:35

Here's part 2, this is something I'm still working on and really acts as a lynchpin for success when I'm able to get into the right mindset.

I made it back to do some more writing. I really hope the therapeutic effect is worth it and doesn't cause me to just hate myself more for taking so much time off from yeshiva.

I want to focus on a thought I had on Sunday and try to crystallize it.

One thing that makes me feel dysfunctional and incapable of accomplishing anything in this world is the time swallowed up by my mental health recovery. Even when I was just starting on GYE I was spending a couple hours a day working on it. From watching the videos to posting on the forums GYE essentially became a part time job for me. But now that I've shifted my focus in life to becoming more mentally stable and working through some trauma which is stopping me from living fully, all while maintaining sobriety, it feels more like a full time job plus overtime.

I attend 3 in person meetings a week as well as the vaad phone call. I go to therapy once a week and am now starting twice a week sessions as well as meeting with a psychiatrist to get some meds. I have to exercise regularly, and I have to be working towards goals that excite me and keep me motivated. This translates to around 7-10 hours a week of working out (depending on what training program I'm currently working on). I need to journal regularly. I need to get 7-8 hours of sleep on a regular basis. I need to occasionally take personal time to relax and treat myself for how I'm doing. I need to occasionally take time to be with my feelings when my emotions get really raw.

This is all just to take care of my mental health. Beyond this I have a wife and kids, I have basic responsibilities in life and I'm supposedly in yeshiva full time. But I struggle to really fulfill those responsibilities and to be present in yeshiva because of the time constraints from keeping myself healthy and functioning. I feel like a cripple, seeing and desiring the simple life of others but unable to be a part of it. I'm stuck with my nose to the glass, and I continue to tell myself to just push through and I'll be able to join them, but alas I've found that even when it bends I bounce back and if I push too hard the window shatters cutting me up with shards of reality, landing me flat on my back where I started, still looking but separated.

I've written before about the difference between acceptance of limited potential and the appreciation for unique opportunities hidden within a struggle. I think I need to go back to those concepts and focus on them again and again. But one mashul helps me to be able to work on the acceptance aspect.

If I ChV'Sh had a diseased kidney and needed dialysis every day for four hours just to live, I think I would have an easier time reframing my mindset and changing my goals and lifestyle to fit what Hashem has given me. It is clear, if your kidneys aren't working you need treatment, end of story. Now it's just a matter of taking the situation and working to see the diamond in the rough.

The problem is that in the world of mental health nothing is clear. There are many different approaches and different things work for different people. So there's a lot of trial and error, there's a lot of guesswork trying to figure out what I need for my recovery. How often do I need to journal? When I'm feeling down and alone should I push past it or take time to feel it? How many meetings should I go to? Do I need to be training for a marathon or will I still be excited about a shorter race (with shorter work outs)? How often should I treat myself? Should I learn Friday night or take the time to read a novel and enjoy myself? Should I commit to part of seder or leave it open ended? Should I have a chavrusah and deal with the pressure and flaking on a commitment or learn myself and feel more loneliness and less successful learning? And there are a myriad of ways to mediate all these points, details filling pages and pages in my mind of "what if's".

I don't want to overthink everything, but it feels like there's so much at stake and I'm constantly recognizing mistakes that I've made and want to change, so how can I just continue on wasting away in one direction or the other.

So now back to the clarity: it doesn't matter. I must do what I think and feel is the best for my recovery (sobriety and mental health) based on my personal experience and the guidance from professionals and others who have had similar struggles who Hashem surrounded me with.

It's hard to not show up to seder. It's hard to go to sleep early. It's hard to miss minyan in order to exercise. It's hard to tell my wife I can't go out because I need a meeting. It's hard to spend money treating myself when I'm on a kollel salary and am getting support from family. It's hard to not learn outside of seder. It's hard to take a vacation in the middle of the zman because I just need to get away from the pressures of life. It's hard to come home late because I was making a phone call. It's hard to go out to eat because I missed lunch in yeshiva because I was on the vaad call.

It's all the same thing: It's hard to be different.

I need to recognize that the noise from outside, and what other people who don't share my struggles do and think, doesn't matter. I need to trust myself and what hashem has given me, even if trusting myself means not trusting myself but trusting others who should be trusted in these areas. I can't afford to live my life based on how others live theirs. I need to get this clear. I don't know in the total view of pure emes what exact actions would be the best for me in my recovery. But I do know, based on the understanding and knowledge that Hashem has given me, what appears to be the right general course of action. And that's what I need to do. I don't have to get the perfect formula, and in fact I won't. To get the exact perfect formula of how much to do of everything would be nothing short of godly. I don't have to demand that of myself and surely hashem doesn't demand it of me.

Once I am comfortable that I am doing my best within hashems expectations I can face myself and say "Others may not understand what you're doing and they may think you're going about it wrong. But it doesn't matter. The craziest thing is that they might be right that objectively you should be doing something else, but since that wasn't the

perspective Hashem gave you, then it's not true, you shouldn't be doing something else. Keep doing what you should be doing through the eyes and mind that Hashem has given you. Your job is to do Hashem's will, not ploni's will."

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Re: Still on the way

Posted by BenHashemBH - 11 Sep 2025 14:01

[hopefulposek wrote on 11 Sep 2025 11:25:](#)

I am losing my feeling of connection and passion with yeshiva, and along with that is a loss of passion for teaching. I've mentioned to people that I might become a therapist, as I have been helped by the field and have gained a lot of knowledge during this period, and some said they thought I would be a good therapist and that I should go for it. But there's a voice in the back of my head saying "Do you really think that's a good idea? What if you get depressed again and need time off? How can you abandon your clients like that? You're not safe to be around people in a meaningful way. Better to just hide behind a desk job so that you can't hurt anyone."

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Now, once I'm not able to take any responsibility I get the feeling of inferiority and disfunctionality. Coupled with the focus on how I hurt people when I don't fulfill my commitments, and it feels kind of terrible. I don't want to be this person, the unreliable person who hurts people, and so I start looking for escapes.

But now I'm also a person who can't handle life, which makes me more unreliable and also unable to relate to others. And I'm also questioning whether I have a "real" problem or it's all in my head and I should just snap out of it which feels like a lack of identity that I don't know what's real about me.

At about this time I usually realize that this feeling is familiar and keeps coming back. But this feeling is super uncomfortable, not wanting to be what I am since what I am is so pathetic and weak and worthless, so I start wishing that I could just not wake up in the morning.

Shalom Brother HopefulPosek,

You are a deeply emotional soul. In this ocean of feelings you have, it's perhaps not surprising that you experience a sense of being lost, unsure of who you are or where you belong.

Please forgive me for sharing an observation. It may not be correct, and I certainly don't mean to appear like I'm attempting to simplify what is a complex situation.

Essentially saying things like: I'm not reliable so I can't take responsibility. I can't handle life, so I can't live. I might hurt people by not helping enough, so I can't help them. Are perhaps a bit circular in the dilemma being part of both the premise and conclusion.

What if you took that responsibility and owned it - would that create a reliability?

What if you accepted a way to live - would you then be able to handle that life?

What if you helped people to the best of your abilities - is that overall hurting them or helping them?

We all have challenges and limits. I won't pretend I know anything about how your depression affects your thoughts and actions. Wondering who I really am is a potential way to try and find myself. Identifying with the diffusion is a potential way to ensure I never do.

Looking for escapes doesn't negate your inherent value. Don't confuse what you do with who you are.

You have tremendous potentials. Great depth is scary and confusing, but also powerful and enlightening. You have access to feelings that others don't. You can thus relate better to others who are drowning in emotions where you have experience how to help them swim.

We don't know the outcome of our efforts. I wonder if we could relate to Yonah, who didn't connect with his mission, and so he ran away. That got him stuck. He went back and did what he was supposed to do, but still didn't feel good about himself. So he became depressed and in his grief he asked for death over his distress.

Hashem then taught him a lesson in compassion.

I think we are sometimes like Nineveh, confused and unable to even tell our right hand from our left, but we are not bad. We deserve our own compassion, to forgive ourselves and give ourselves a chance. Surely you are worth it.

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