

A different approach

Posted by philpher - 22 Jun 2009 19:06

Taking a leap into the unknown - my own thread to air my ups and downs. Anything helpful posted will be cynically ignored, thoughtfully reconsidered, and then taken to heart. Currently on 6 clean days - not a record but slightly better than average. Wondering how to combat constant urges to slip and look at unsuitable things, and how to counter the looming gloom of despondency that always kicks in after a week of cleanliness. Help!

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Re: A different approach

Posted by Dov - 25 Jun 2009 23:46

[philpher wrote on 25 Jun 2009 13:41:](#)

So far activity within the context of the forum has been the only successful antidote. Everything else has been general defiance/suppression/ignoring-the-problem methods with zero long term effect.

8)Unmanageability of my life is from other things - however having a handle on the lusting is proving to release enough energy which can be more profitably used elsewhere.

Dear philpher,

Your honesty and desperation are like refreshing cold water on my face! Thanks.

Being in kollel is wonderful, as is being married, having a family, etc., etc. But. No, you are not the first person to get overwhelmed with problems associated with or unassociated with your addiction (or whatever it is). For my wife, the best day of our lives together was the day she realized that I had started to change. It was after about a year of sobriety. Soon after my

4&5th steps, which I felt I had done a lousy "job" on, incidentally. We have never watched our wedding video since I got sober and it's been a bunch of years...she has no interest in it because it pales in comparison to what is going on now. We are really a unit, though **far** from a perfect one. I tell you this because your story is painful, touching, and you seem to grasp the absolute supremacy and preciousness of your sobriety. You are oozing hope.

Therefore:

Please consider that you are really only recognizing the tip of the iceberg when you say, *"having a handle on the lusting is proving to release enough energy which can be more profitably used elsewhere"*. It is much, much more than a waste of your precious energy. It is actually deforming and poisoning every aspect of your life with self-centeredness, disproportional comparisons, and irrational thinking. Clearing away the wreckage of your past and present *will occur in tandem with your recovery*. It's not just *easier*, it is *impossible* w/o sobriety. If you take hold of the steps and actually work them the way your sponsor did, get a sober chevra to stay sober with (preferably alive and talkable, like a meeting) and make calls as needed, your chances are really good. Any problems with that (or are you doing it already)? If you feel I am "pushing too hard", please consider that I'm not **telling** you what to do **at all**, just sharing what worked for me. That is what loving someone is about, no? Hatzlocho and good Shabbos, brother!

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Re: A different approach

Posted by philpher - 27 Jun 2009 19:10

Gut Voch.

Firstly - a thank you to everyone replied. The responses are all taken to heart and absorbed with the greatest of gratitude.

Secondly - Post Shabbos, I am 3 days clean again.

Thirdly, another thought that I had about improvements in my struggle. The intermediate period between falls has improved, as previously remarked upon. What has also improved, is that each fall is shorter (and provoked by less, which is a bit of a concern) AND - here's the next chiddush - once I fall, I seem to only act out once. It used to be repetitively (since I have fallen, I might as well stay down here for a while.... ???) but now the bounce back seems to prevent that! An unintended, (although obviously crucial) improvement. A freebie perhaps? Since I haven't specifically worked on this area of my addiction that is. Any thoughts about people's own experiences with such will be gratefully received.

Finally, another chiddush perhaps even greater, but this will have to wait for later because I have run out of time.

Wishing everyone a mighty week of Y"H avoidance and purposeful reconstruction of their lives.

Philpher

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Re: A different approach

Posted by philpher - 28 Jun 2009 09:46

And now the next bit.

A brief experience yesterday enlightened me to another area of progress made, again somewhat unexpectedly. I was learning in a shul prior to mincha, when a group of improperly clad girls entered the vicinity. The urge to track their movement etc was it's usual overpowering best. (whilst I was learning, no less). Amazingly though, the yetzer hora capitulated. As far as I can reconstruct, the thoughts in my head at the time were concerned, not with the immediate problem of looking at such things, but rather, with the new realization that ones growth is so inhibited by seeing such, and on the flip side that one's growth soars if one avoids seeing such, that I didn't want to lose this opportunity. Obvious though it might be that turning aside was advantageous, it's not an argument that has previously succeeded.

The difference is probably that I have never (in this area) actually experienced the effects of the growth gained by avoidance of such, until very recently that is. Now, with the experience mentally on-board, and properly internalized, it proved a remarkable weapon to attack the yetzer hora. To increase the contrast a touch more, the number of times that I have been told/learned/**taught** ??? this principle is ad ein mispor (innumerable) but it never really settled into the mind enough to make an effect.

Boruch Hashem it now has.

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Re: A different approach

Posted by philpher - 28 Jun 2009 09:56

Meanwhile, I have just scanned my second to last post. Am I allowed to comment on my own post?

once I fall, I seem to only act out once. It used to be repetitively (since I have fallen, I might as well stay down here for a while.... Huh) but now the bounce back seems to prevent that! An unintended, (although obviously crucial) improvement. A freebie perhaps? Since I haven't specifically worked on this area of my addiction that is

The obvious perspective to take on this is perhaps in line with what everyone seems to be saying about the 12 steps - you can't break the habit yourself - only Hashem can help. The fact elsewhere, indicates, nay, proves that achievements are only through Hashem's action. Obviously this is true everywhere in life, but seeing it so clearly in this field of endeavor is nonetheless a relief, even if not a surprising one

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Re: A different approach

Posted by Noorah BAmram - 28 Jun 2009 14:06

Dearest Holiest Phil,

Your vivid depiction of the inner struggle made the very heavens trembled from that battle!!

Here is a few humble shares that may help from my own personal struggle.

1. The Tanya ch 27 quotes the Zohar (was quoted here on GYE many times) that there is no greater praise to HKB"H then when a Jew overcomes the Y"H in battle.- this is an awesome statement- meaning its a greater praise the whole davenning and the whole sefer Tehilim!!

This Tanya IMHO should be required reading on the GYE network (I think its part of the GYE

attitude Handbook)

2. I can't do it alone. Lusts breeds in isolation -I'm very prone to this because of my introverted nature, I like being alone!) Ltaavoh yvakeish nifrad. For me the forum here goes a long way to combat this loneliness! (I'm amazed when I look at the forum clock and see how much actual but ironically it never seemed to bother how much time I spent on
Go figure!!

I heard once that the possuk says "kodoshim teeyu" you shall be holy - rashi comments this enjoinder was said "bhakheil" meaning on a public assembly. Holiness must go together with being part of a chaburah a group - a person can't go it alone! (You posted that you contacted SA- this half the battle making the first contact) .

time I spend on this forum

3. This to me was the biggest eye opener and the cornerstone of 12 Steps - I can't fight the menuve!!!. Period!!!End of story!! The despicable one will win every time!! Guaranteed.
the sewer forums

all I can
do is to try to avoid places where I know that there will definitely be temptation! All I can do is install a no nonsense filter on my computers (btw for me this was the most important thing, if I didn't have the filter with my wife holding the password, I would not have made it till here;))

After this I don't fight, oh yes, sure I fight, u wanna know how? With a teeny little prayer. I say under my breath (when in acute stress and other times when I'm just walking or driving) "Master of the world save me from all sin".

THERE IS SO MUCH TO SAY ON THIS LAST POINT- AND OTHERS ON THE FORUM HAVE

WITH TREMENDOUS ADMIRATION FOR YOUR COURAGE, I HUMBLY REMAIN YOUR

NOORAH B

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Re: A different approach

All I can do, is what the Almighty asks me to do, meaning not to take that second look

Posted by philpher - 28 Jun 2009 16:49

A fall is part of the journey, not the end of it. - says one of my partners.

I hope he's right! (Actually I know that he's right, but it's very helpful to hear it). Today I have spectacularly fallen - twice, so much for the claptrap that I posted on my thread. The simple explanation for the plunge is the usual - having an nonconstructive day, leading to stray thoughts, leading to less stray thoughts, etc. For what it's worth, my initial attempt to recover is by admitting this.

I half feel that the ga'aveh that is somewhat apparent in the recent posts (or fishing for chizuk with heartrending tear pullers) is the cause - and as such, future growth should be more genuinely attributed to a higher power.

Please let me know your thoughts on the matter, especially after a rant, constructed so recently after a big fall.

Yours, in a blur of confusing feelings

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Re: A different approach

Posted by Chaim - 28 Jun 2009 17:05

Your ability to speak the truth is one of your strengths.

You said you fell twice-

I find this happened to me, when I had the accompanying feeling of

"Well I am giving this up, right, so as long as I fell, I might as well..."

"I might not ever get to do this again, so - at least enjoy..."

This makes sense to my addicted mind, which really doesn't believe that I will Never do it again, but just uses this latest urge of mine to purify myself - against me. Halevai! I will never do it again?! Great!

But the YH - like a martial arts master - flips me over, using my own energy!

I encourage you - not to despair of controlling your urges.

Battala mevia lidei ZIMAH

Keep productive, give to others and POST

If you have a day like you mentioned - read posts and reply

I got chizzuk out of your determination - in the face of falling - to keep trying.

Thank you

I am going to Doven Maariv, and will add a prayer for you

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Re: A different approach

Posted by philpher - 28 Jun 2009 17:27

Thank you for the previous post.

It is amazing and shocking that I can go from the sublime highs of defeating the YH to instant, utter lows. And feel so confused that I don't even know what I want next.

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Re: A different approach

Posted by the.guard - 28 Jun 2009 19:35

Please read the Attitude handbook #23-30 dear Tzadik... Hashem loves you so much, don't let the Yetzer hara tell you lies. Pick yourself up... You haven't lost anything gained before. The test for now is to get back up in spite of it all. A fall while on the journey is worth MORE than a clean day when not trying.... We will pull together with you.

Everybody, grab hold of pilpher... now, 1,2,3, and UP!

There you go! :D

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Re: A different approach

Posted by Noorah BAMram - 28 Jun 2009 20:01

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Re: A different approach

Posted by Dov - 28 Jun 2009 21:12

Dear pilpher, BH you are posting! For most people doing that *at all* is quite a change so *almost **by definition***, that means it's a good idea!

Chaim wrote: "Keep productive, give to others..." and, "batala mayvee liday shiamum/zima"

You wrote: "the usual, having a non-constructive day..."

What you are hitting on is for me, a big yesod and I think it's a bit more/different than either of you may be speaking out.

Once we stop acting out, we embark on a journey of recovery - "*recovery*"? *what are we recovering?* A: We are getting our Sanity back! (we probably *did* have it when we were five or six...) It is **insane**(see Websters, really) to be doing all kinds of things that we really know are destroying us, our families, etc. I assume, like me, you have not come this far (posting and I noorah am also puuuling

asking for help on a forum for men with por-n problems!) because you are just "sick and tired" of dissatisfaction with yourself, or even because it's so upsetting to be doing aveiros. Don't get me wrong, I am not a fan of aveiros! **But**, as I have posted about before, trying to *finally stop doing these terrible aveiros* never got me into recovery. Well, let's say it never **kept** me there. Trying to **stop dying**, on the other hand, did wonders. I presume you feel clear that in some respect, this lust problem is killing you and that is why you are going this far to get help. If so, Sanity is definitely for you and you have come to the right place to start getting it back! :D

So, here it is. After we stop acting out with Hashem's help, **the program is here to help us change into the kind of people who do not need to go back to acting out**. Basically, that means "getting a life" and learning what to do so that you can *stay* in it, for a change. Lust "opportunities" (includes sights, sounds, ideas, memories, people, whatever triggers us) can distract us from our lives. It's not really about acting out any more, it's about reality. It's about staying alive. That's it in a nutshell: we can't afford to get distracted from our real lives, at all. This BTW is the deeper meaning of what you and reb Chaim quoted above. It's not only good advice, it is the goal of the program. (The "9th step promises" in ch. 6 of AA spell out the "spiritual awakening" of the program.) That is also how the program, even though the steps talk a lot about G-d, is **not religious**: it **ends** with you getting your freedom back. You are now awake! :o Now it is up to the individual to determine how he knows what G-d wants him to do, and that is where religion (may) start. B"H we have a Torah that is true, that we love, and we believe Hashem helps us live it.

I didn't feel insane, per se, when I *came* to SA, though I *was* very frustrated with my weakness and apparent stupidity. But over the first year and a half I recognized it: "Uh, oh, Sanity! I guess I really *was* nuts before, cuz I didn't have *this*! Oh, well. At least it's OK now, so who cares - call me what you want!". And it will be OK for you, too, even though:

It is amazing and shocking that I can go from the sublime highs of defeating the YH to instant, utter lows. And feel so confused that *I don't even know what I want next*.

Hope this was helpful.

Dov

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Re: A different approach

Posted by philpher - 29 Jun 2009 10:52

Phew, a slightly more sane reply after yesterday's rollercoaster.

Firstly a public thanks to Noorah, who sent me a timely email which finally halted the horrid descent. A groysah yasher koach.

Secondly, I have re registered 16 hours of cleanliness since last falling.

Thirdly, I read the attitude sections as suggested by guard - they were very helpful. Most apt is the necessity to realise that when you feel no hisorerus to pull out of a decline/depression is when Hashem is presenting the most difficult test. Having got beyond this stage (although without succeeding much, at least this time) I hope to be able to perceive it with greater clarity on the next time round.

The best reaction that I have seen in myself is not feeling guilty (in the negative "so don't bother to continue" manner) for as long. This is partially due to my wife picking up on my distress, although being unaware of the cause and doing a good job in the "ezer" area rather than the usual.

Everyone should feel free to comment on my thoughts, all responses are analysed and gratefully received.

Philpher

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Re: A different approach

Posted by philpher - 29 Jun 2009 10:58

Another response

Dear philpher, BH you are posting! For most people doing that at all is quite a change so almost by definition, that means it's a good idea!

Why exactly does this help? I have an idea, but I want to see people's responses first if possible. Is there anywhere on the forum where this is discussed precisely? Btw, I was acting out whilst posting? (Blasphemy!) Please explain! Posting wasn't helping in the slightest. Albeit receiving a positive response from Noorah was rather handy, but that is already an after effect. Whilst acting out, I felt no greater clarity, nor the slightest reduced inclination to sin.

Once we stop acting out, we embark on a journey of recovery - "recovery"? what are we recovering? A: We are getting our Sanity back! (we probably did have it when we were five or six...)

"vehamyma bikushoo chishevonos rabim" - koheles - and they thought lots of things (after being created straight by Hashem.)

quote]Trying to stop dying, on the other hand, did wonders. I presume you feel clear that in some respect, this lust problem is killing you and that is why you are going this far to get help. If so, Sanity is definitely for you and you have come to the right place to start getting it back![/quote]

Thank you for putting things so clearly.

Hope this was helpful.

It was. Thank you.

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Re: A different approach

Posted by philpher - 29 Jun 2009 11:08

Finally, whilst I still have a few minutes, I want to post a reply I received from a helpful individual who is considered on this forum as a maven in these areas. I want to submit some of the queries to the public. Most of the content (which was very helpful) has been removed, but that which remains should make sense on it's own:

the reason you are having major difficulties is because it IS majorly difficult. this is normal.

Rather fortunate, under the circumstances. What is more difficult is suffering in silence, which is something that I intend to (verbally) break out of today. BTW, does everyone have similar difficult tasks - which are imperceptible to everyone else, or is this really an area of difficulty that is genuinely more difficult than the "average" spiritual hurdle?

you can not even have one slip in 90 days.it is like antibiotics - if you miss a day, your bloodstream will not have enough medicine to heal the disease.it has to be kept up. the same here.the struggle, depending on your situation and the length of time you had the addiction, will be extremely difficult, as you know.remember, one slip and it wont work.

How does this tie in with being constantly told to take one day at a time? A bit of a palginon somehow or another. Please explain.

The yetzer hora is also our best friend.without the yetzer hora, without the challenge, we cant

grow.

Realizing this is strange. Is there anywhere on the forum that discusses this more?

Thanking in advance any repliers.

Philpher

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