

Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 01 Nov 2010 10:35

[Note: this is a copy of my post from the Introduce-Yourself forum. I am placing it here as my initial entry for my 90-log. I don't promise to post updates every day, but do hope to do so a few times a week - or at the very least when significant things happen (either good or bad). I thank everyone for their support and hope to share good news with you.]

I am fairly new to GYE and this is my first post to the Forum.

I am a frum married man and have been struggling with this addiction for approximately twenty years (shortly after my bar-mitzva). The word 'struggling' can mean many things; in my case, some of the meanings are:

- the actual sin of MZ"L, the obvious things that precede it, and the **immense** spiritual damage involved
- a constant sense of shame and guilt, sometimes conscious sometimes sub-conscious... but always always there
- brief periods of progress, success and growth surrounded by longer and longer periods of darkness, failure and despair

If I blamed my problems entirely on the Internet - I would be lying. It is true that at this point, I *think* that about 95% of my SA current issues are triggered by internet usage. However, I had this problem way way before the internet existed.

My first MZ"L was a few months after my bar-mitzva. At the time, I thought nothing of it (actually, I remember being sort of proud). After a few weeks of experimentation, I began thinking that there may be something wrong with it; I did recall that my Father had told me not to ever touch myself there (probably some number of months before) but I figured that on a relative scale it was the same level of 'bad' as staying up way-way past my bedtime. How I wish that I would have asked more about it then...

Experimentation gave way to mild habit; I was pretty sure at that point that it was something weird and that I should stop - but figured that I could do that any time I wanted, so no big deal... Then about midway through 8th grade I found out. I was looking at an english Kitzur Shulchan

Oruch, probably studying for a test, and found a strange sounding entry in the index. Looked it up - sure enough it was talking about exactly what I had been doing - and I was shocked. According to what I read, I had been engaging in one of the worst possible sins. I was embarrassed but was also familiar with the idea of being a Shogeg... so I was filled with a resolve to stop immediately. But I didn't. Days dragged on to weeks, weeks to months, months to years. Having cable-tv in the house (with premium channels) when I was in high-school surely didn't help - *although in retrospect, just as the internet - I would not necessarily blame it as the root cause.* One time, my father even found out indirectly and had a talk with me. While I was deeply ashamed, I was relieved at the same time - since there was absolutely no way that I could do that again afterwards, right? Right? But no... We did have a few more talks afterwards, and soon enough I learned to lie just the right way for them to stop..

When I was in high school, I was absolutely convinced that there was no way I would continue doing that when I went to learn in Israel. That was not the case either, although towards the second part of the year - I read quite a bit on the topic (Reishis Chochma, etc) and bought a small collection of various Chassidic/Kabbalistic sefarim filled with various Tikkunim/Segulos/etc. Though I did very few of these tikkunim, I did achieve some level of growth, cried real tears, and mostly stopped for somewhere between two to three months. That was probably the longest period that I have ever been sober since.

When I went back to the states, the old habits came back quickly (even though I was not watching any tv anymore) and then - THE INTERNET.... While the result (MZ"L) was the same as before, the material was so much more vast. Whatever 'preferences' I had before - could be found within seconds. Anything you could think of could be found.... the abyss was complete.

When I was single, I was absolutely convinced that there was NO WAY that I would keep having this problem after getting married - I mean, how could I? Took about a month for it to come back in full force. Then I remember thinking that when my wife would get pregnant, there would be absolutely no way (I am somewhat familiar with some of the kabbalistic ramifications, so I figured there's no way I could do that then...) - but I didn't stop... Then when my son was born, that was the absolute end... but NO IT WASN'T! I don't want to go into details, but one time that really stands out in my mind is looking at porn while my wife and newborn son are sleeping in the same room. I don't need to go on, I'm sure you know where this is going.

I don't think that I've hit rock bottom yet.... I don't want to hit rock bottom. Although I have some tears in my eyes while writing these words - the truth is that over the years it has begun to hurt less and less. That scares me most of all, because if it hurts then there is at least still hope.

My Yom Kippurs are filled with remorse and kavona. I find that it's one of the few days when the shell opens up and the real me comes out. Every year, on THAT day, I find myself feeling like I finally came back, for the first and last time. Never again will I go back to the filth and darkness. Sometimes I make it to Hoshanah Rabba, more often not. This year I did B"H - but after reading what you guys define as falling, I certainly fell way before then (just not the final result).

Still, I did do something very different this year on Yom Kippur. I was a bit more honest with myself and with Hashem than usual. I told him straight out that while I have chorota, and never ever want to do this again - I know that I say this every year. I'm not stupid and I know plenty of practical ways to improve my situation (ranging from a serious daily accounting, daily mussar reading/chizuk - to seeing a therapist privately) but why WHY am I not taking these steps!? Hashem, you have to help me help myself - I don't want to be saying the same things again next year. (This is of course a dramatisation, the above words were not exactly my thoughts/words - but it was something to that effect...)

A few days before Hoshanah Rabbah, when I was very close to final breaking point, out of desperation I started typing a plea to Hashem into a google search (I know it sounds tacky, but I do that sometimes...) I don't remember the exact text of it, so will not attempt to reproduce it - but the general gist was how I was frustrated and wasn't meeting my obligations and goals. I don't remember there being any mention of MZ"L or related keywords.. Anyways, something really weird and amazing happened. Even before I clicked on Search - all the results on the page disappeared and the browser was trying to load a page from the guardyoueyes.com forum. It never loaded, but I figured that you don't get more of a direct answer than that - so I typed out the url and after ten minutes of reading felt my first breath or relief in years. Not relief that my problems were solved, but that this was solid proof that I'm not the only one out there and that THERE IS HOPE.

(This is completely an aside, not important to what I am writing, but I wanted to write a bit more about how I found GYE. I would not call the above a 'miracle' - although it is one to me on a personal level. I am a computer programmer, and specialize in web applications. So I kind of understand what happened - to a point. Google has a new feature called "Instant" which shows you results as you type your search. Also, I have a few virus-protection plugins that slightly change the content-results coming in from google. That together explains why all the content 'disappeared' from my screen before I even hit search (i.e.the sentence had so many keywords that google somehow narrowed it down to one site, then gave up, but the plugin was already trying to analyze it & got stuck.. or something like that). It doesn't explain why content from the GYE started automatically loading in the progress bar without my hitting anything though - and though I was not able to reproduce it after trying a bunch of times that day, I'm sure it that it was due to a google/plugin/firefox glitch. Except that it wasn't a glitch to me - to me it was Hashem reaching out to me and showing the way forward. One very practical point that comes out of this, personal inspiration aside, is why didn't I find GYE in the past; I use the internet fairly frequently - read blogs, news, etc... The answer, I think is that I don't really go on Jewish sites that much (other than debka.com - to whatever degree that's jewish). Perhaps there's a way to do an advertising campaign via Google AdWords that somehow targets orthodox men... I realize that this would not be simple to do but in any case food for thought & it's something that I would be glad to contribute to financially...)

Anyways - I've been using GYE 'lightly' for the past month. The first week was full of renewed resolve. Afterwards less and less, but all I was doing was randomly reading articles and entries in the handbook - not doing anything else. However, I think that I am ready to really jump in

now. Over the past week I have:

- signed up for daily chizuk emails (which I try to read, although not every day yet)
- downloaded the guidebooks
- started attending a weekly introductory phone group (Elya's)
- created a 90-day profile (have been clean 5 days now)
- requested a Sponsor (*From my communication with the parters-admin, it doesn't look like any sponsors are currently available. I'll hopefully be set up with a parter soon, so I'm looking forward to that. Still, if any of you reading know of a good Sponsor who you think would be available, please let me know! !*)
- joined the forum (obviously)
- installed & configured K-9 on my computer. (*I have not yet given the password to anyone. This is because I have very specialized uses for my computer, and need to make sure that I can use it for several weeks without any problems from the filter. After a month (maximum) once I am satisfied with the configuration - I will give the password over to either a partner/sponsor (assuming I have one by then) or to the password gabbai*)

Things that I plan to do in the near future:

- join a responsibility-group (in about a month)
- join the noon SA group (when they start a new cycle)
- possibly install an accountability program in addition to K-9 (*tried this in the past, but didn't have a good experience... if I get a partner/sponsor who I build a good relationship with, perhaps it will be a viable option*)
- possibly use some form of the Tapsik method described on the site
- work on true Teshuva (combination of SA steps + some Tikkunim that I am familiar with & have been planning on doing)
- if all above don't work out for over ~half a year - I will contact one of the professional therapists referred to on your site

I realize that this post was LOOONG... I just felt like I had to get it all out (or most of it, anyways) after keeping it bottled in for so long. If you made it this far I really appreciate it. Any advice and/or chizzuk would be greatly appreciated.

I cannot express how much appreciation I have for the people who made this site and community and continue to make it thrive. While we all have our missions in life, and don't necessarily always know what they are - I am SURE that you are making major roadwork in Shamayim. I hope to some day not only be thanking you but contributing as well - although there is so much work to be done beforehand...

Thank you again & chotzlocha to everyone here

- Naftali Z

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 17 Nov 2010 21:22

Ok, it's one week since my last post... I finally had a "full" Fall today.

Although I'm obviously disappointed in myself, it is not much of a surprise to me. The past week (giver or take) has been a downward spiral of "slips". Not every day, but each time a bit more than the time before. I had managed, without too much difficulty to keep my hands to myself - but today a certain threshold was breached... and at least it was over quickly.

As a post-mortem of sorts, a few observations

(sorry if the below sounds a bit overly self-absorbed. In fact it probably is, but it helps me tremendously to write it down here - so I appreciate you reading regardless)

- After I had my first "slip" (approx 10 days ago) and dutifully posted about it - I found the responses very helpful and uplifting. However, about two days afterwards - I started slipping again (and this time much worse) and felt embarrassed to keep posting about it. In a silly way, I wanted to "get over it" and then make a post about the temporary struggle and what I did about it. Big Mistake. Before my slip, I had been posting on the forum and having contact (even with

virtual names) made me much stronger and disassociated from the temptation. Once I stopped posting, I was "on my own" again - which doesn't lead to anywhere good

- I am absolutely convinced now that my addiction/desire is NOT for actual masturbation. I thought that was probably the case in past, but am certain now. Rather it's a case of "curiosity killed the cat" - meaning: I have a tremendous desire for either seeing or reading about things that "break" some sort of norm - i.e. Poretz Geder. Although I did have a full fall today, over the past ten days I did not touch myself at all even though I had many slips - and it was not very hard to keep my hands to myself, as the desire wasn't really for that. If I'm reading a news article, then I see a link for some other article that looks interesting; If I want to watch a perfectly clean movie - then I feel an extreme compulsion to see what other things might be there; Etcetera. The point is - my addiction is that I am drawn towards "peeking" at limits/barriers being broken (in the sexual realm) rather than specifically looking at immodest pictures. While obviously this isn't "normal" (I hope not anyways) - is this common for people dealing with lust-addiction?

- On the practical side, although I have K-9 installed & relatively fully configured - I have not given the password away to someone else. I have practical reasons why - but ultimately it's because I was procrastinating (in other words, being a coward). I will try very hard to overcome this week - will probably give it to my wife and the filter-gabbai, although I have to think through the details (when I do need an override, it's critical for work)

- When I posted my fall on the 90 day log - I found the automatically generated email very uplifting and helpful. I really appreciate the thought & effort that went into designing/implementing this

- I am not really in any way depressed. I was a bit down right afterwards, but at this point am in a much better mood than I've been for many days. I know that it sort of fits with the "keep on trucking" message - but maybe I should be in a worse mood? Kind of confused and a bit worried...

Ok.. I guess that's all for now.

[Moderator's note: One word was changed to minimize triggers].

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Re: Naftali's log
Posted by Kedusha - 17 Nov 2010 22:01

Hello Naftali,

In a way it's kind of freeing when we realize that we can't handle letting our eyes wander at all.

Could you please send by PM the e-mail you received? Thanks!

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Re: Naftali's log
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 17 Nov 2010 22:08

reb naftali,

first of all welcome to this holy place. you did a great thing jumping on the bandwagon of GYE, it is the greatest show on Earth, as someone said. it 'shows' you the way to live a real life.

writing a post-mortem is a great way to help organize your thoughts and gain perspective. but remember that the most important thing is to do something. see where you can safeguard yourself for the future. i know for myself that i tend to think things through a lot, over and under and around. action is way more precious and more effective. as Dov says, our thinking got us into this situation and thinking will not take us out, only doing.

right now, after a fall, there is some pain and motivation. use it to implement something. give away the password. you will feel prouder and happier. i also need computers for work and when i needed a modification done to the filter the gabai was very helpful and efficient.

keep posting keep on doing the great work you are doing, step by step. as long as you stay in the fight you will see results bezras Hashem.

all the best

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by ur-a-jew - 17 Nov 2010 22:13

[Naftali Z wrote on 17 Nov 2010 21:22:](#)

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Naftoli, if you take this lesson with you to never feel too embarrassed to post, you may be able to say that the fall was even a little worth it. Which is what the possuk Sheva Yipol Tzaddik is all about. The Yetzer Hara loves isolation and so long as you maintain that isolation you are toast. Once you have come out of isolation you have won a major part of the battle.

Re your addiction and desires, I can very much relate to what you've written and I have seen others here write the same. So take comfort you're a "normal" addict.

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Re: Naftali's log
Posted by Dov - 19 Nov 2010 05:16

[Naftali Z wrote on 17 Nov 2010 21:22:](#)

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This is, in fact, the SA definition of the Problem (it seems to me). Read the White book from the beginning.

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 19 Nov 2010 07:34

[Naftali Z wrote on 03 Nov 2010 08:46:](#)

On the negative side, I am beginning to feel tension - both in general, and not so in general (assume you know what I mean).

THIS IS A GOOD THING!

Before we managed to stay clean, we would COVER UP our tension, BURY IT, even before we were consciously aware of it. How? With the escape and pain relief of acting out!

The tension is not because you are trying to change. THE TENSION IS THE REASON YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ACTING OUT! AND, ESPECIALLY those tensions that DON'T SEEM RELATED to acting out!

As you are starting to recover, YOU ARE STARTING TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FEELINGS.

Start to pay attention to them.

Do something practical that you enjoy to relieve them. Listen to some music. Take a walk. Talk to a friend or relative. And especially, HELP SOMEONE SOMEHOW.

Try to be aware-WHERE IS THIS TENSION COMING FROM. Is there anything you can do to

improve the situation? Sometimes, we just need to reassure ourselves that HASHEM IS ON THE CASE, He's taking care of things, even if it doesn't seem like it sometimes to us (I'm sure you've heard that cliché story about the pair of footsteps in the sand? It IS cliché, but it IS true).

Good luck,

--Eye.

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 29 Nov 2010 11:46

One week went by - things were getting better, more stable than last time. Mid week I spoke to my wife about the filter/password, though I procrastinated in actually giving it to her.. then I fell last night (after 8 days clean). Felt bad about it - but decided to turn a negative into a positive: I made some additional changes to K9 and **finally** gave my wife the password (emailed it to her then fully deleted the email on my side).

I was going to PM my sponsor about the fall - but frankly I was still too embarrassed (yes I realize it's the wrong attitude..). I decided to do it the following evening (as well as post here on my forum log) - but to first spend the afternoon in planning concrete next steps (my plan was to write a mission-statement of sorts, and to make a plan for short term rewards that I would give myself when I make progress). That way I would at least be coming with something new and positive to report...

So I wake up today - not feeling too great about the fall - but really happy that I finally gave over the password. I think to myself - ok so I need to spend about half an hour thinking/writing things today. . Then tonight I'd post my progress & let my sponsor know how things are going - a plan.

Well - the writing session did not wind up happening as scheduled. I got sick, had a headache all day & slept a lot. Then some procrastination. Then had dinner and watched a relaxing movie with my wife. (Movies & associated pros/CONS obviously a separate topic for a different time...) Then a bit of procrastination... and a bit more... well so at least I finally gave over that K9 password this weekend, right? At least that was a big step. (I tell myself as I head off to sleep

land) Then....

- note: the rest of the post is very introspective (and in looking it over before posting - frankly a bit on the weird side. I'm posting it partially because it helps me with clarity, and partly because perhaps some of what's here may help someone else more than it helped me). If you don't feel like reading a bunch of inner dialogue / mosholim / self-loathing - then the short version is that I couldn't fall asleep, tried various "attitude" methods, was winning - and then got up and masturbated anyways. Now I'm kind of miserable. Read on if you want to-

I can't fall asleep. Not uncommon. Fine whatever, I'll just lay there for a while - have to get up early tomorrow though... A familiar voice: "hey hey hey. I/you know - I/you haven't reported anything to your sponsor and now WE'RE back to day ZERO on the chart. Why not get our kicks in a bit? Yesterday's was a bit too quick & wasn't really satisfying, let's do a clean job of it, kay? Plus you can't fall asleep - and you KNOW how much easier it is to fall asleep once the deed is done right?" And I KNOW that this thinking is complete bull\$%^&. I know that each struggle & battle is precious in its own right. I know that I should be thankful for having these desires - Hashem hasn't given up on me. I think of a recent chizuk email (from Dov's posts) about how at the time when the desire is there - it seems to make a sort of perverse logical sense (along the lines of a ruach shtus) and how we need to remember how horrible it is afterwards and how stupid it feels - and just suspend our internal logic, believe in ourselves & just do what's right. This is working - it's going away.

But then not really.

Ok different strategy: MEDITATION! *I think about how I am on a boat in the middle of an ocean surrounded by calm blue water. I am thirsty with lust, and really want to take that drink... but this is the ocean and the water is bitter/salty. I will only be satisfied for a brief moment - and the thirst will return much stronger. If I keep drinking I will eventually die of thirst.*

That thought helps me for a while....

..... Why can't I fall asleep? I try some long multiplication, rearrange pillows, etc. ... Still awake, and the desire keeps gnawing away.... Ok - I just need to survive for 30 minutes. If I'm still awake by 3:30 - I'll get up and see if I can find something interesting despite the now password-

protected K9, but let me just stay here for half an hour. (*thinking - I'll hopefully fall asleep by then*). Arrggh it's not working! Ok - let's break out the big guns. I've thought of rather potent meditation recently - this one should definitely do the trick.

MEDITATION ROUND2: *I imagine a soul up in shamayim that's looking down in horror because if I go and do this - it will be swallowed up by a bunch of shadows and made into a sheid. I imagine the soul having the face of a child, and then I imagine myself as that soul. How would I feel if I were up there - no freedom of choice - just looking down on someone down below who's thinking of doing the unthinkable and dragging me down into the darkness? And for what - some stupid pleasure. What would I (myself I mean) do to some pervert who's about to harm a precious human child that I care for? Is this soul not a child? Is Hashem not its FATHER? Are we all not connected? The angels there know that it's hard for me, they are all rooting for me - but there is also fear. If I fall, I may eventually do Teshuva - but what about now? Will this precious, trembling soul need to suffer unspeakable horrors because of my lust? No - I will **not** harm that soul. I **will** protect it.*

Ok - good - that really REALLY worked. No more desire - zilch. Great, finally I can go to sleep.

But I can't. Argg - and where did my Kippa go? Look - *of course I won't do it - but if I were to sin, I could later on do Teshuva (&Tikkunim) and redeem that soul right?* SHUT UP! Ok ok - to sleep.... ... darn where did my kippa go? Ok that's it - I'm turning on the light and finding it. Darn it - now that I'm standing up I'm not even tired. Ok I am going on the computer and testing the filter. If I find something bad - will try and resist - but at least that way I'll know that the K9 settings need to be stronger. NO WAY, I CAN'T DO THAT!!! Ok ok - so I'll just play some games or something until I get myself tired and then fall asleep, ok?

Well - no need to describe the rest. **After twenty minutes - a COMPLETE fall.**

I am deeply ashamed. Part of my shame is in having fallen a second day in a row - even though I KNOW for sure that I had the strength to persevere & the knowledge that I need to discuss it with my sponsor on the phone tomorrow. But the REAL real shame is that the above meditation (about the soul/child in Shamayim) isn't really just a meditation - it's the truth of what happens when I do MZ"L and I KNOW it. *No I'm NOT a mekubal, nor do I know close to as much as I should... and YES I understand that I can't really even imagine a Malach/Nefesh/Ruach/Neshama/Nitzuz/Klipa/Sheid etc... Yes I understand that the above metaphor is a silly simplification that I concocted & and Yes I understand that much of the pgamim described in Sefarim like Reishis Chochma are alegorical in nature since we as humans can't really grasp what happens up there. Yes I understand that it's possible for an*

ultimate victory to outweigh all the damage. But DAM* IT - I KNOW THAT I HURT SOMEONE INNOCENT UP THERE - BADLY. Whatever that SOMEONE is (maybe a Malach, maybe a Nitzuz, maybe a soul, certainly my own soul) - I stared it in the face, swore to protect it - and then callously turned around and betrayed it - knowing the implication full well.

If it were someone else who did it to a child on earth - I wouldn't hesitate to rip them apart if I could, and here I am the same...

I know that this kind of thinking isn't productive - but I just don't understand myself sometimes.

... ok so that's the end of the narrative....

on a completely practical note, I plan on joining the daily phone group when it starts on Dec 13th. Will try and read some reasonable portion of the white-book beforehand. Still not sure if SA is for fully me - but I definitely feel defeated (though still feel that I have control) - in any case its as good a place to start as any, right? (If any of you guys have recommendations for specific book portions/ exercises that should be done prior to starting DovidChaim's group - please let me know) As far as the mission-statement/short-term incentives - still have to work on that, but will post when I put these together (I" H this week)

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by kosher - 29 Nov 2010 15:06

R' Naftali,

Exceptionally well written post. The openness and honesty here is incredible. I won't try to downplay the seriousness of the fall, but as you know, it takes time to break free from an ingrained habit and if you are at least taking honest concrete action to improve you are certainly going in the right direction.

I have one small quibble with your post. You are focusing on the spiritual effects of your actions.

Those are certainly real and valid points. Yet, I have a beard and my job title is "Rabbi" (you see) and that wouldn't do it for me, its still not real enough. What keeps me on the "straight and narrow path" is the realization that if I don't keep my lust under control, my marraige will end or become living hell, the relationships I have with my children are at stake, I could loose my job, friendships or worse (maybe speak to the people who have been at risk of going to jail as a result of the preverse judgements they made since they wer caught up in lust).

what that is worth

Anyway, keep up your work here. I am confident in your ability. Its never easy at first, but we can break free.

KOT!

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Re: Naftali's log
Posted by Dov - 29 Nov 2010 17:57

Hi Naftali Z,

Have you read the White Book yet? I am *not* saying that I think you need to, just asking if you have.

I am not criticising you, only observing, and admit I may very well be completely wrong, so:

If you are an addict like I am, then you may need to accept some alterations to your way of thinking. It sounds to me that you are not considering that. Yes, it is a "new life", a "new day", and "new efforts" for you, etc....but the exact same way of thinking.

I do not ascribe to that.

I relate to much of what you wrote before. If you would consider it, I'd ask you to read the 1st step of SA and share what you think about it, OK?

Hatzlocha,

Dov

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by returner613 - 29 Nov 2010 18:36

[kosher wrote on 29 Nov 2010 15:06:](#)

What keeps me on the "straight and narrow path" is the realization that if I don't keep my lust under control, my marriage will end or become living hell, the relationships I have with my children are at stake, I could lose my job, friendships or worse (maybe speak to the people who have been at risk of going to jail as a result of the perverse judgements they made since they were caught up in lust).

I definitely hear what you're saying and it does make sense. It's a healthy attitude and I definitely agree with it.

To be absolutely honest though - the part about marriage/children/work falling apart is also still partly theoretical to me at this point. I know that it's CERTAINLY possible - and I wholeheartedly agree with the "Hitting Bottom while Still on Top" idea (though I am certainly not anywhere on top..) - but...

Let me explain my situation briefly:

I'm in my early thirties, have a wife and child (I'm expecting another soon B" T). My relationship with my three year old son is good; with my wife - I would say pretty descent (*i.e. we definitely have fights once in a while, and there are definitely some control/responsibility issues that we ought to see a counselor for in the next 3 years - but it has gotten much MUCH better over the years and on the whole things seem stable/loving to me. In terms of intimacy - we have it, although unfortunately my wife doesn't feel much due to some hormonal issues - something that we think we should see a specialist for in the long run*) Both my wife and myself have VERY erratic schedules & go to sleep quite late. My work is in computers, and I often work from home and late at night. I also have a pretty bad procrastination habit & tend to play computer games far more than I should - so when my wife sees me up late on the computer she thinks (I hope anyways) that I'm either working or (very possibly) wasting time. While my wife knows I have a bit of a wandering eye and am desensitized towards many things, she is rather pure in relation to this area (B" H) and I don't think that she realizes the extent of my problem to any close degree. Needless to say - I have not told her, and don't want to any time soon. (Do I think she can handle it and help me - very possible, but I'm not certain and I don't think that I need to make this HER problem. If I told her - I would imagine that she would tell me that if I want to stay married - I immediately need to see a therapist, etc..) In terms of stuff that I've looked at over the 20 years of having this problem - while I'm definitely drawn to taboo topics - there is a certain point past which I never went - and I haven't done (or wanted to do) anything illegal that I can think of (nor have any strong taiva for anything illegal or anything involving other people) [note: if anyone reading this does/did have a problem with any of the above & reading this makes you feel bad - I ask you a thousand apologies. My point is not in any way to put any one else down - I'm just explaining the extent of my personal situation. If I had any of the above problems - with my lack of self control - I would almost for sure be completely 'gone' by now...]

Why the above personal background? To make a point - currently, in my family life - this problem is having a negative effect - but (at least in my mind) it has reached a sort of equilibrium. Therefore, while I understand that eventually it will tear me apart - right now it feels close to as theoretical as the spiritual ramifications.

On the other hand - where the problem is ripping me completely apart NOW is in the area of personal growth (spiritual, work, life goals). My davening and learning are in a rut. I'm not working on any of my personal goals, not doing cheshbon hanefesh. My procrastination is getting worse and worse, and little things take more and more enegery to do. I know some of this is due to diet and (lack of) sleeping habits; another part is related to remaining emotional issues from childhood. But the lion's share is due to the constant stress and emotional toll of this problem - the weekly ups and downs. Concentrating on how much better my life would be without this constant gnawing dagger in my side - would definitely help and be something tangible and concrete. But the problem is that I have to want a better life badly enough - and right now I'm not sure if that's really true. I really want it to be true though...

Hope this doesn't sound like I rejected what you said, or am resigned to the problem. Just laying

out where I am holding right now...

[kosher wrote on 29 Nov 2010 15:06:](#)

Anyway, keep up your work here. I am confident in your ability. It's never easy at first, but we can break free.

Thank you - I really appreciate that. Knowing that others have broken free gives me a lot of confidence and hope for the future..

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Re: Naftali's log
Posted by ur-a-jew - 29 Nov 2010 20:01

Naftali, I want to thank you for the long post including the detailed history. Because I admit until reading and thinking about your post I never truly got the "poshut pshat" of what it meant to "hit rock-bottom while on top." But then I read your post and I could relate to a lot of the situation you described. Although in my life I was probably where you were at in terms of kids and stuff about ten years earlier than you were. I've never acted out live. And I don't envision how I ever would. But when I thought about what you wrote I realized that it is doubtful whether most of the people on this site who have acted out live would have envisioned doing so when they first started out with the addiction. Chazal tell us in no uncertain terms, however, that this is the way of the Yetzer Hara, today a little, tomorrow a little and eventually the guy is doing things he never fathomed.

As the Gemara in niddah says (13b):

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In other words, the same torah shbaal peh that tells you how to make the tefillin that you put on this morning tells you this is the way the Yetzer Hara works.

Let's envision someone like you, call him Naftali A. He has the same background as you and like you he is pretty complacent now. Naftali A. also has a good relationship with his three year old. But 3 year olds are not 3 forever and now he's ten and learning gemara. He doesn't have a learning disability but he just needs a little extra attention. Unfortunately, he can't get that extra attention from his father, since his father even when you get him away from his computer gets easily distracted and irritable. Moreover, because Naftali A. never learned how to properly structure his day (because he is so busy with porn) also saw his income being effected and is now having trouble with the mortgage and the ever-rising tuition bill. The inability to deal with the rising expenses has also increased the tension in the marriage as well. And because of the tension the connection between Naftali A and his wife is not as strong as it used to be. So what does Naftali A. do he turns to the one place that temporarily calms him, more porn. And because he is a little bored of the old porn he starts getting slowly, slowly just a little more creative in the way he is acting out. Comes another Yom Kippur in 2019 and like the Yom Kippur of past years Naftali A. says this year is going to be different. And for a couple of weeks it is different. But old habits are hard to change, the stress level is mounting. Naftali A. acts out yet again. It is not even too out of the ordinary just some dirty movie that he downloaded off the internet. Naftali A's wife finds out about it and she realizes that all of these years she's been suffering because Naftali A refused to acknowledge and deal with his problem. It is not a pretty sight. It will probably be solved after a lot of intervention and with a lot of embarrassment. We hope. Naftali A. now realizes that he's hit rock-bottom. But Naftali A. kicks himself, because he really could have done this years ago when he was relatively on top his game. Things really were pretty good then. What a fool he was.

So you can hit "rock bottom" now meaning you can recognize that this one image or movie or instance of masturbation is the first of a slippery slope that if I do it today can lead to disaster and cause a major catastrophe while still "on top" when things are relatively okay and matters are not totally out of hand. Hatzlacha

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Re: Naftali's log
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 29 Nov 2010 20:12

UAJ, that was an excellent post, you illustrated the point very aptly

Naftoli, stay here on GYE and listen to the special people here who care and help. keep posting and keep davening. and most of all, keep opening up to new ideas and find new courage to take steps that will help you. as long as you are willing to keep trying and keep learning b'ezras Hashem you will reach your goal.

hatzlocha

zs

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Re: Naftali's log
Posted by returner613 - 29 Nov 2010 20:20

ur-a-jew

Thank you so much for your beautiful response. The story of "Naftali A", while not necessarily applicable to my specific situation (I"H) certainly does help me view it in a more real way. I made a few personal changes to your narrative - and it does help me see much more clearly where things will be if I don't work on it now. It will take much more thought - but I will work on it, as this is definitely something important. I really appreciate it.

One point (and I hope it doesn't sound defensive! Certainly not the intent) - if I gave off the impression of being complacent, or thinking I'm still on "top of my game", or that this is somehow manageable - I definitely renounce that. I am definitely an addict - and my inner life is a complete mess. All I was saying is that after 20 years of having this problem - the addiction "pattern" itself (i.e. what I want to look at and how often) has, in my mind, relatively stabilized and is slowly gnawing away at my soul, destroying me from the inside, and making me less and less productive on the outside. That is certainly not me being "on top" or in control. If in addition to that, the "pattern" itself may get worse with time (i.e. I may bored of the current stuff I look at, and want something more extreme) - who am I to say no - perhaps that could happen.... In any case, I definitely DO want to work on this NOW and not have it get worse.

Thank you for your words, advice and chizuk

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Re: Naftali's log

Posted by ur-a-jew - 29 Nov 2010 20:46

[Naftali Z wrote on 29 Nov 2010 20:20:](#)

One point (and I hope it doesn't sound defensive! Certainly not the intent) - if I gave off the impression of being complacent, or thinking I'm still on "top of my game", or that this is somehow manageable - I definitely renounce that. I am definitely an addict - and my inner life is a complete mess. All I was saying is that after 20 years of having this problem - the addiction "pattern" itself (i.e. what I want to look at and how often) has, in my mind, relatively stabilized and is slowly gnawing away at my soul, destroying me from the inside, and making me less and less productive on the outside. That is certainly not me being "on top" or in control. If in addition to that, the "pattern" itself may get worse with time (i.e. I may bored of the current stuff I look at, and want something more extreme) - who am I to say no - perhaps that could happen.... In any case, I definitely DO want to work on this NOW and not have it get worse.

Thank you for your words, advice and chizuk

Naftali and ZS thanks for the positive feedback, writing certainly helped me but I am glad that it could help someone else as well. Naftali Z, don't worry about being defensive. Your clarification only demonstrates why you have all the more reason to start working now. Someone who is complacent can possibly delude himself into thinking it can't get worse. But from the sound of it, you're way past that since as you describe your "inner life is a complete mess." The first step to your "outer life" becoming C'V that same complete mess is in the next dirty image or whatever your preferred method of acting out is. Which hopefully won't ever be. But you are certainly capable of not doing that today. And right now that's all you have to worry about. Continued Hatzlacha.

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