

Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by E-Tek - 17 May 2012 23:00

Editing this post with info from my original thread by way of introduction.

Hello all.

I've been lurking for some time now, I figured I'll give a shout out. The name of my game is shpiegel- I'll just tell you all what I've been telling myself, to better affect myself. Introductions later, I really have to run to seder soon.

R' Leib Kelemen says over (B'Sheim Omro, don't forget!) that R' Chaim Vital writes: He was have a conversation with his Rebbe, the Arizal, and he asked him why the Arizal keeps saying that he (R' Chaim Vital) has a special neshoma. "We, who do not reach the toenails of the previous generation, can't possibly be considered special compared to those that have come before us."

The Arizal answered, because in every generation it is far more difficult to do the right thing, because of the forces arrayed against us, we cannot judge ourselves by our accomplishments. Rather, if we are anywhere near the previous generations in our activities, it means far more than it appears to mean, because the fight is tougher. On that scale, concluded the Arizal, you have a special neshoma.

Concludes R' Leib- in our generation the fight has become nigh on impossible. But if we realize how much we accomplish by simply considering ourselves part of the fight, and a kal v'chomer if we are succeeding to any extent at all- well then, Moshiach should be here any day!!

We are the generation to bring Moshiach, there's no doubt about it. And the proof is what we are up against.

Okay, and now to introduce myself.

I'm twenty(mumble) years old, and I've had this addiction since I was 14. When I was 16 or so, I learned it was bad (although if I had been honest, I knew from the start it wasn't quite right). I made several conscious efforts throughout my teens to stop, without very much success. Emotionally, I went from determined to depressed to ambivalent. About two years ago I started making more efforts on a very basic level- More of the "what" in Yiddishkeit than the "why". This path seemed to work for me- I took my intellectual knowledge I had gained and used it to make a long-term decision to physically remove myself from, well, everything. And all of a sudden, I found I was able to think straight. (I know, this phenomenon is common here.) I made an absolute ton of small steps to keep myself headed in the right direction, and the sum-total of all those has made me a different person. The most fundamental of those changes is a day-to-day, personal, emotional relationship with the Rebono Shel Olam.

I found out about the website a little less than three years ago, and kept it in my inbox until I was ready to work on myself. (It takes a certain emotional maturity to make a commitment, no? I was still a kid.) Started working with some success before I got a chance to start lurking here, but this site seems to be turbocharging my efforts.

I have not finished the handbook- I'm reading it slowly and deliberately. During the zman I spend less time working on this and more time keeping too busy with good things. Use the

Yetzer Hora's ANTI-THINK device against him, and all that.

Hatzlocha to all! Thanks for listening.

I'm posting to get some hugs, basically.

I'm lucky in that I'm sending my computer in for repairs, so I'll have some breathing room. I'm also going to focus on the handbook material, and think about a nusach for Taphsic. There is my parent's K-9 and password computer, so I'll be on, but not more often than daily.

Sigh... Sheva Yipol Tzadik Vokom, eh? The difference between a Tzadik and a Rosha is how many times they get up after falling... So here's for a new count. The old one netted me 4 days. That's about average for a serious try, but not for one I make in the States. So there is that. So, I fell big time today...

Thanks for listening.

Meir

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by E-Tek - 11 Sep 2012 19:19

So... Reb Dov said this.

[Reb wrote on 11 Sep 2012 04:25:](#)

Last night I fell after 2+ weeks clean. I feel really bad, but in the long run I didn't lose more than one day, all the times I gave up my lust are still extant. One day at a time.

Perhaps I'm getting to involved in my recovery, true it's the most important thing in my life, but I don't know if it should be on my mind all day. The Kuzari writed that the times of davening are the most important times of the day and from them we derive spiritual nourishment for the entire day, much as we get our physical food from eating. But hey, we don't daven all day, gotta learn and do mitzvos too. Maybe I should try to think about my powerlessness 3 times a day not more or less (optimally during davening). Unless an urgent need arises I should occupy myself with learning Torah.

I'm not so clear on this. Does anyone have any suggestions or experience with this???

When you say

Perhaps I'm getting to involved in my recovery, true it's the most important thing in my life, but I don't know if it should be on my mind all day
by the words 'my recovery', do you mean 'overcoming lust temptations'?

If that's what you mean then wow, are you *onto* something! When I look at the people I know with long term sobriety (and remember when they were 'young' in the program, too), I see a common thread. They focus on *recovery*, not on *staying sober*. In fact, the SA meetings I go to have plenty laughing in them, and the atmosphere of a good meeting is actually sometimes funny. We can laugh about how big a deal we make of some things - and have some real gratitude for the little things we overlook. You can't get heavy in this program. That's actually what it's all about. Rare are the meetings I attend that have not looking at porn or masturbating as their main discussion.

If recovery (and life) were all about *staying sober*, then all the steps would be about sobriety. But the addiction is only mentioned *once* in the steps. None of the other steps are about overcoming lust or staying sober, at all.

From the second step and on, the only goals are:
restoration to sanity in living (2 and on);
acceptance of a life that is focused on spiritual progress and not based on my instincts and defects (3-7);
and restoration of sound relationships that actually work with others including G-d (8-11).

Nothing there about overcoming lust. We come to the program knowing that we can't afford to act out our lust any more, simply because we have done it enough to know that we have lost that ability - it always ruins things for us, eventually. That's *our* contribution: bitter experience, hitting bottom. We come humbly after spending years trying to negotiate with our wives, trying to negotiate with lust, trying our guts out to negotiate with hashem to make us able control (and still enjoy it 'when we really *really* need to')...never letting it go. We really believed we *should* be able to partake just as the rest of the non-addicted world can. Nu. So we addicts were wrong, and that is our 1st step admission. We use Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk's eitzah in his Tzet'l Kotton (written for normals, of course), to open up to a trusted friend without shame and without holding anything back. The reward is freedom from the temptation, for we let go of ego that way
And we

keep doing that to keep surrendering the ego. Beautiful. (And it's even free!)

So steps 2, 3 and all the rest are only and all about how to **remain** in a life that is free enough of the kind of pain that will likely make us resort to to using our drug. It's a nechomah. Dependence on G-d by gradually reducing the defects of character we have that are not allowing us to effectively put ourselves into G-d's hands and accept ourselves, our life, and people (and Him) as they really are (steps 4-7). So none of the steps are about how to stop the pesky porn and masturbation habit. For that's what we bring into recovery ourselves! Like Hashem says he sent 48 neviim and 7 neviot - but we only quit and gave up and started to depend on Him when
. Hitting bottom is Haman
getting that ring - it's all over. We give in.

So either we cannot afford to act out our lust anymore and are willing to make the calls on the phone to admit it and let it go when we feel tempted, to pray for the people we lust after and let them go that way, and to call out to Him humbly to take away the pain and help us walk on without it - or we still think we *can* afford to 'partake' as anyone else can. Then we lose our sobriety and cannot work the steps effectively. Nu.

So no, ChaimCharlie, you *are* right, but can reword it: keep your *recovery* on your mind all day - not your *sobriety*. Recovery is positive, growth, and done with G-d and people....sobriety is just *not* acting out - that's negative. Sobriety is just *breathing*. Recovery is ***living***. No one enjoys life thinking all day about not suffocating, right? That can make a person kind of nutty, nervous, no? Yechh.

Lust is nothing but a distraction from the life G-d is giving me - real life. It really does not deserve my time of day. That's the goal for any sexaholic/alcoholic in recovery - being too engrossed in their real life of meaning to get involved with shtuyot. That's the whole fruit of recovery, I think. It's growing up. Sadly, we don't really like growing up.

And somehow it hit me.

Reb Eliezer has been telling me that I'm missing commitment or motivation. I myself noticed that I slipped somewhere from positive to negative sobriety. And Dov said why.

So I'm back. This is living. I want to live a normal life. I don't want to walk around depressed because I acted out AGAIN last night, because I missed Shacharis with a minyan or skipped seder or whatever. Rather, I'm going to forget about masturbating for a bit and start focusing on being a good person. Because I now that when I'm a good person, I feel good. I'm mostly happy, I feel motivated to do the right thing. And on that footing, I can ask Hashem to help, I can feel like posting, I can speak to people... And on the footing I have now, I feel like sleeping the day away, hiding and or not talking to/with Hashem... And the cycle of mast/cry/pray starts like that.

I want to be a better person. That's it. Not a clean person- although that's nice too- but a better person. I'm gonna focus on that.

Thanks, everyone.

Oh, and I have to get on a phone conference, but I can't. I'm gonna speak with Dov about this, see what he says.
And try to enjoy it on the way every now and then! You deserve recovery, not just sobriety.

Hatzlacha!!

Meir

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by E-Tek - 11 Sep 2012 19:22

Just a quick thought.

The count was great- but I'm going to do without it for the time being. It keeps me focused on the wrong thing. Besides, it's all one day at a time anyway. (Did you see where Dov posted his days?)

However, I'm keeping the taphsic. There isn't really a reason to do without it.

One of these days I'll post the text for it, but I know what it is.

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by E-Tek - 14 Sep 2012 19:38

Four falls in rapid succession this morning, after I didn't wake up in time for slichos.

Money in the pushka.

Shmooze from Mori V'Rabbi on inyonei Rosh Hashonah, about us coming to Hashem with no progress report- ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????. I feel better about it. I have no progress to show Hashem? Hashem wants me to keep in touch. Hashem will forgive me if I want to be close to him.

If I reaffirm my Ol Malchus Shomayim.

Have a great clean Shabbos, and a Ksivah VaChasimah Tovah!!!!!!

Meir

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by E-Tek - 24 Sep 2012 02:25

Hi, everybody. I'm back on the chart, and I'm remembering how good it feels to be clean. I forgot.

I just had read those posts from the early days of my 60 day streak, and I can relate to them now. Shmiras Eynayim was TOUGH today, and B"H for the first time in a bit I didn't give in, and it hurt me to look away... But I reminded myself that it's the pain of growth (read: the Y"H) and it passed. And now? I feel awesome!!

I'm going to sleep now, I am busier these days than I have ever been in my life.

Hatzlacha!

Meir

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by Shteeble - 24 Sep 2012 16:28

kutgw

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by E-Tek - 25 Sep 2012 13:14

Gmar Chasima Tovah, everybody.

Have a meaningful and clean fast, and no, it aint guaranteed- at least not for me- that it will be clean.

The time when I will be unable to visit GYE on a regular basis is approaching. Real progress has been made. Real work still remains. I am in a bit of a panic about it. I will be in Eretz HaKodesh, and I will need to substitute GYE for real people. I've asked this before, and so far two people have responded with contact info. I would appreciate as many numbers as possible. Please PM me.

Meir

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by mifatfait - 26 Sep 2012 19:40

[E-Tek wrote on 25 Sep 2012 13:14:](#)

Have a meaningful and clean fast, and no, it aint guaranteed- at least not for me- that it will be clean.

Me too. That's what I learned from my explosive Rosh Hashonoh. Perhaps because I knew that I had such a good Y"K with Hashem's help. Powerless never fails, just sometimes I fail to be powerless.

I hope it worked (or is working, rather) for you too.

Gut Yar!!!!

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by nederman - 27 Sep 2012 03:23

You are trying to meet people in person or call them on the phone?

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by Dov - 28 Sep 2012 18:41

Two GYE guys are coming to visit the place I live over Succos and we are getting together!

Yipee!! Precious!

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...
Posted by E-Tek - 03 Oct 2012 01:24

Gut yar and gut moed, everyone.

Had a wonderful Yom Kippur, was away in between, and am having a very frustrating Sukkos so far (family). Fell this afternoon. Think I'm coming down with the flu. Timing is spectacular, vehameyvin yovin.

@Nederman- both.

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...
Posted by tehylimzugger - 03 Oct 2012 22:24

[E-Tek wrote on 03 Oct 2012 01:24:](#)

am having a very frustrating Sukkos so far (family). Fell this afternoon.

oh mazel tov etek! i didn't know. so, are we on for some cholint tomorrow morning? [is 5 am good?]

M.U.F.F.I.N.

K.O.T.

G.U.I.T.A.R.

R.A.T.

and any other acronym you happen to have handy.

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...
Posted by E-Tek - 04 Oct 2012 15:43

By family, I refer to the ones I knew for over 20 years...

I don't know all of those acronyms. I must not be as veteran as I thought.

Still falling. My motivation is shot.

But I haven't given up, and that's why I'm posting.

That sounds bad, I'm not really fighting, just trying to live life, and as I said before, I seem to get strong lust attacks when I am shirking some sort of responsibility. So the solution remains the same- to live better, and al that is stopping me is when I klutz.

Gut Moed.

Meir

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...
Posted by E-Tek - 10 Oct 2012 00:59

Yom Tov was tough, there were all those frum girls... I am very twisted inside. It definitely isn't them...

I had my glasses off for most of the hakafo, because I knew I wouldn't be able to stop myself from looking and in my self-interest, I knew it would be embarrassing to be caught at that. But in all other circumstances, I took drinks, and I fell in the afternoon today.

I feel like I can't do anything about this now, because my life is in flux and I won't be able to get to anything. I know if this was a disease I would do anything to deal with it, but there are certain people with whom I can't discuss this so that they'll understand the time. IY"H in Eretz Yisrael, I plan to consult with my Rebbeim and my GYE friends (in person), and I think I'll put two phone conferences in, and maybe a 12-step meeting.

Just reporting. I have nothing to add at the moment... It will shortly be impossible to be online for a long period, so I'm taking advantage.

Meir

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Re: Not Counting... But Anyway...

Posted by nederman - 10 Oct 2012 04:00

Yes, I hate when all the girls and women come out all dressed up.

I just keep reminding myself that i am not powerless and that if I focus on what I am doing the arousal dies down by itself and for a while now I have found that it's true.

Sometimes I really get hung up on some lady and I am just jealous and I want that one for myself, then I remind myself that in practice it will never happen, and that if I try to make the best of what I have I could still be extremely happy.

I think the thing that does the most for me is to accept that I am a mediocre person who loves women, loves sex etc. When it's someone I really think I shouldn't be attracted to (men, etc.) I can't let go until I remind myself that the attraction is not my fault, and is fundamentally okay, but choosing to lust after that is not okay. Then I don't.

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