

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: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 15 Jun 2012 19:57

Oy...

This hurts...

I went to a bookstore to buy a copy of the white book. Guy didn't have it, but I had no restraint and caught glimpses of some covers...

Next stop, amazon.....

I've blocked it on K9.

It's funny, it was book covers that got me this time, and then I started reading one...

And they didn't even have it at a normal price! I ended up getting it at Barnes & Noble.

What's more, I want these shiktzas so bad that I'm certain I didn't get release. But it's a fall by the rules, so it's a restart.

Because I wanted it so bad, I'm getting off the computer until Motzei Shabbos. (Oh, and boy will this cost me, taphsic wise.)

Have a great Shabbos, and Hashem, please give me the rest of the day CLEAN!

B'Ahava,

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by obormottel - 15 Jun 2012 21:48

Welcome to day one. What are you going to do differently this time?

Talking to a real person is great, but beware of making a fellow struggler into dumping grounds for your temptations.

But if you're ready to do some work, and follow directions, there are a lot of people who'd be thrilled at the opportunity to help themselves by helping you.

Does that make sense?

Gut Shabbos,

Mottel

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 17 Jun 2012 02:29

[obormottel wrote on 15 Jun 2012 21:48:](#)

Welcome to day one. What are you going to do differently this time?

This will take some thought. I don't know, yet.

[obormottel wrote on 15 Jun 2012 21:48:](#)

Talking to a real person is great, but beware of making a fellow struggler into dumping grounds for your temptations.

I know this, and that was my problem: I don't have anyone who qualifies for the Big Book's specs of whom to talk to.

[obormottel wrote on 15 Jun 2012 21:48:](#)

But if you're ready to do some work, and follow directions, there are a lot of people who'd be thrilled at the opportunity to help themselves by helping you.

Does that make sense?

Gut Shabbos,

Mottel

And, I guess that is one of the things I'm doing differently this time. I can't do this solo, the extent of my addiction has made this quite clear.

The Big Book says, when you find your motivations for putting yourself in the path of temptation are ridiculous, you know you're in trouble. Okay, now I'm starting to believe it.

Hatzlacha, all!

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 18 Jun 2012 22:13

Hello everybody!

Here's what's happening:

My summer plans seem to change by the half-day here, with people saying they'll learn and people saying they can't. I hope, IY"H, to keep myself as busy as possible between my summer job in a day camp and chavrusas.

I took a test today, and it was humbling... In middle, I pulled a real blank. This is a rare experience for me... I don't mind. I do know it, just having a bit of trouble with the memorization. Ok.

On the addiction front, I finally spoke to someone from the forum on the phone today. If anyone else is available to speak to, please PM me. I need to get serious about this. I am poised to join a phone group once a week, though I'm a but stymied about what to do during my summer job- I probably won't be able to. Maybe this will only work during the zman, or perhaps I'll join a different group just for the summer. (This won't help the material, but it will help the principle.)

Wishing you all a clean, cheerful day,

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 19 Jun 2012 20:18

This quote about Dr. Bob resonates with me:

?My whole life seemed to be centered around doing what

I wanted to do, without regard for the rights, wishes, or

privileges of anyone else; a state of mind which became

more and more predominant as the years passed.

It was very true about me, during all my growing up years. It still is, the primary difference being that I want to fix it. I do things that I feel are emotionally out of touch with myself (myself being the addict) because I WANT to be different.

I've found, for example, that after lecturing about something to 15 people, I've internalized a madreiga of it. This only worked, however, once I resolved to stop lying to myself.

Although I have not cleared one week since joining GYE, I HAVE noticed a change in my day-to-day habits. This alone is enough of a reason to be happy with my progress.

When I got back my computer, without any sort of filter and webchaver, my first reaction was to install webchaver. That was when it really started to sink in... I'm not going to change this! I will lust forever! The only way to go is to change my habits, to stop looking... I'm not going to browse in libraries, and I probably won't even read secular books. I'll never find out what happened to Eragon, or how Bean will solve his genetic problem... I won't read another book written by my favorite author, because he has a sick mind (brilliance notwithstanding). I won't be watching movies, ever again. And, even if it happens that I break down and read or watch something like that, I will see it for what it is, and I will be be disgusted with myself for doing something that I KNOW is wrong- maybe just for me, but that doesn't change the WRONGNESS. And why? Because I'm committed... finally.

Hatzlacha, all!

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by obormottel - 19 Jun 2012 23:35

LIKE

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Re: New New count

Posted by Dov - 20 Jun 2012 00:10

Wow, that was pretty shtark. Maybe a *bit* overcooked. Take it easy, Etek man. Youch! The solution may not be "never doing this or never doing that", but more like "I will do this today, not that today". *Forever* is not ours, I think.

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 20 Jun 2012 22:02

@ Dov:

On second thought, I'll PM this.

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 26 Jun 2012 01:06

So, um, I fell Sunday morning. Spoke to many peoples, including my Rebbe, and I'm not letting it get me down at all.

That being said, I am now very aware that I have no control. (How many times can I hit bottom? As many times as I forget what hitting bottom was like!) The money didn't stop me. The list of reasons not to act out that I carry around in my pocket didn't stop me. WebChaver didn't stop me (and yes, I just got my copy, and it was BAD. I'm waiting for my chaver to speak to me...). The fact that a penalty was that I had to speak to my Rebbe didn't stop me.

Why is that? Why don't consequences mean anything to me?

Because I'm an addict. Duh.

What does that mean, anyway? Addict? Define it.

It means there is a disconnect between the way my head works and reality. Reality is living with knowledge of consequences. And an addict doesn't have that.

Okay, so how do I fix this?

I start living with consequences. It's a work in progress- You had better believe I've made progress, I am a different person entirely than who I was before. But I can slip back into the

addict mentality at any time, probably forever. If I catch myself, we call that a slip. If I don't, we call that a fall. But that doesn't negate the work I've done to ground me in reality. I do feel different.

Thanks for listening. Hatzacha to all!

Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by E-Tek - 26 Jun 2012 01:27

Just a thought, which I think is relevant:

Rav Berkowitz says, every person has their nisayon. For the one without the BIG nisayon this guy has, they will be tempted sometimes anyway- that's life.

But regarding the person with the big nisayon: The Eibishter arranges his life so that if he does not work on it, he will MESS UP HIS LIFE. He'll be tempted 30 times a day, he's going to have tremendous physical consequences. This is the meaning of the posuk: Hinei nosati lifneichem hayom ES HACHAYIM V'ES HAMOVES. Life or death- you choose right, your life will be fine. You choose wrong, you'll be messed over. And yeah, you'll kill yourself. Eventually.

An addict like me who works on his addiction will automatically be able to function, live a normal life, etc. An addict like me who does not will make a mess of his social life, learning, marriage and family life, job... Death, first miniature death, then for real.

And this, friends, is reality.

Hatzlacha! Meir

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Re: New New count

Posted by Dov - 26 Jun 2012 03:29

You seem to say that recovery is mainly 'working on your (or my) addiction'. As in: [E-Tek wrote on 26 Jun 2012 01:27](#):

An addict like me who works on his addiction will automatically be able to function, live a normal

life, etc. An addict like me who does not will make a mess

I daresay that after it is just referred to once in the 1st step, there is **nothing** about alcohol or the compulsion to drink alcohol mentioned **anywhere else** in any of the 12 steps of AA. (Does AAA have *more* steps? If so, how many? I have always wondered that...)

So, the entire focus of the 12 steps is on attaining - what? Sobriety? Nope. Sure, we addicts cannot live without sobriety. It's the same as breathing. But we do not say that the tachlis of taking good care of my lungs is so that we will be able to *breath* - we all know that it is *so that we will be able to live!*

The 2nd step spills the beans: "a Power greater than ourselves *that can restore us to **sanity***"
Sanity is the goal, of all the ensuing steps. *Basic* sanity is surrender of our character defects that make us think in such counterproductive (often quite crazy) ways (steps 4-7).
Advanced sanity comes from setting our relationships with people right in making amends (steps 8-10). The *truest* sanity is our making peace with the recognition that we are each actually totally alone with G-d (step 11). We need nothing else than Him for there *is* nothing else. And it is His Will for us to be mixed with and useful to His people, creatures, and world (even tzomeyach and domeim, k"v non-Jewish humans).

To me, the beauty of AA's steps is that they recognized that religion starts **AFTER** these steps...the steps are secular - not associated with any *religious* practice, but rather with self-honesty and maturity. From twisted human to healthier human. That is, they are Derech Eretz. Being an Odom. *Torah is **past** that.*

So the addicts with Torah and who think they must have a real relationship with Hashem because they feel so much sometimes...yet they still progressively masturbate and porn compulsively...they (we) understand well the meaning of Chaza"l's expresion: "...they are like one who has the *inner* keys but not the *outer* keys, to get in at all!"

Hey. You probably know all this and didn;t mean that you look forward to focusing on fighting the addiction all the time. But hey, I felt like writing about it anyhow. It's a free country...Obama
: :-X :'(

So all I am saying is that I hope that (as long as you are *sober*) 'working on your addiction' is your minor - and your major is *working on honestly "growing (imperfectly) along spiritual lines,"* as AA puts it, using the 12 steps or *whatever* tool you choose. That's what many call 'positive sobriety' vs 'negative sobriety'.

It's much more fun, too.

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Re: New New count

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 26 Jun 2012 14:11

[dov wrote on 26 Jun 2012 03:29:](#)

(Does AAA have *more* steps? If so, how many? I have always wondered that...)

Reminds me of a joke (if anyone is in the mood). A friend in Yeshive once approached me and said, "Would you like to see me do the Elevator Dance"? "Sure", I said. And he just stands there motionless. "Nu?" I said. And he replies, "It's the Elevator Dance - It has no steps."

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Re: New New count

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 26 Jun 2012 14:26

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Re: New New count

Posted by obormottel - 26 Jun 2012 14:38

Don't let the fall bug you down, brother Meir!

May I suggest you keep up a good work, and make daily phonecalls to real people to keep your disease on notice?

Mottel

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