

Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by skeptical - 12 Jun 2013 23:45

After 183 days and 3 hours (6 months, 1 day and 3 hours) of working really hard on myself and staying clean, I had a fall this afternoon.

I am posting this here because I had made up that in the event of such a situation, I would be open and honest with my wife (unthinkable a short 6 months ago!) and everyone here. I will post more of my thoughts here after I tell my wife.

As I have encouraged others and will continue to do so, I am picking myself up, not getting down about it and continuing on with my life.

More Soon.

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by cordnoy - 27 Jun 2013 23:35

skeptical:

when I say feeling low, I meant it

this is different than greed, ego, lashon hara

yes, it is our challenge, but it is one that at least to me makes me lower than others

it is an aveirah that is frowned up[on bigtime

as far as the connection between our sins and our success rate....yes of course there is, but ultimately, there is a whole slew of cheshbonos

your last point regarding fireworks, I disagree with

forget the porn

I have experienced it

I know what intimacy and relations with wife could be

in our 20 plus years of marriage, there has been at times fireworks

what the porn industry teaches is that is always the case

and yes, they take everything to the extremes, but it could be there

what I am learning here and other places is the expectations is about me

the heck with the "me"

it is time to focus on her

what does she want?

what does she need?

if that will lead to fireworks, kol hakavod!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 28 Jun 2013 00:54

In this week's Parsha (28:3) we read:

Zeh ha'isheh asher takrivu laHashem - Give up the fireworks for Hashem's sake.

One cannot really enjoy life when he is sidetracked with fake illusions.

Hatzlacha

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by cordnoy - 28 Jun 2013 01:39

Actually I learned the passuk differently:

This is the fireworks that should be offered to HASHEM.

If she is in mood and does want, offer this to Him.

Make her feel good.

Be makayem your mitzvah.

Providing "zeh HA'ISHAH" the woman ...have only her in mind!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by skeptical - 28 Jun 2013 02:43

cordnoy

when I say feeling low, I meant it

this is different than greed, ego, lashon hara

yes, it is our challenge, but it is one that at least to me makes me lower than others

it is an aveirah that is frowned upon bigtime

It's very easy to be hard on oneself. No matter what the challenge is and which aveirah we commit, the YH encourages us and gives us many reasons to beat ourselves up. The reason is simple: The longer we're down about it, the longer we'll be down.

However, we know that **every** Jew is full of good deeds like the seeds in a pomegranate, how much more so is a Jew who is working on his character!

By the way, regarding anger, it says that one who allows himself to get angry, it's as if he served idols. That sounds pretty severe to me! Why is it that anger is tolerated more than this sort of thing? Because it is way more common for people to wear anger on their sleeves and most of us have had some degree anger, so we let it go and say it's not so bad. Our challenge is way more intimate, so people keep it to themselves and we have no clue how many are affected.

cordnoy

as far as the connection between our sins and our success rate....yes of course there is, but ultimately, there is a whole slew of cheshbonos

I agree. There are many cheshbonos that go into it, however, taking on a positive action in order to put you in better stead to receive bracha is a widely accepted practice in Judaism. This is called making a keili.

cordnoy

have experienced it

I know what intimacy and relations with wife could be

in our 20 plus years of marriage, there has been at times fireworks

I chatted with you just before and you clarified what you meant by fireworks.

I think AlexEliezer has already addressed that appropriately. When you have a good connection with your wife, it is possible to have intense and more enjoyable experiences. That comes from focusing on her and giving.

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by cordnoy - 28 Jun 2013 02:58

Skeptical

Ultimately every person has to decide what will cause him to improve

It seems you are saying that this sin is compared to anger, greed, ego etc and you need to work on that challenge

That is fine

I view it differently

I viewed it similar to arayos, especially owing to the manners in which I acted out

Since I joined gye, I now view it as a lust which distances ourselves from god, for we need to focus our lust after Him.

Thank you

Once I joined gye

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by skeptical - 28 Jun 2013 08:49

I agree with you 100%.

Whichever approach works for you to get closer to Hashem is definitely the approach you should use.

The Baal HaTanya talks about depression (atzvus) and bitterness (merirus).

Depression paralyzes a person. All they feel like doing is lay in bed with their covers over their heads, sulking and pitying their existence.

Bitterness, on the other hand, spurs him to change. He's upset with his current situation and he's determined to put up a fight to fix it.

Thinking about yourself as the lowest of the low is poison if it's going to make you depressed. If however, it is an impetus for growth, it's a great thing. The only thing I suggest is that you be aware of the motive.

Hatzlacha!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by cordnoy - 28 Jun 2013 08:54

and in the litvishe world it is said, "torah will not flourish when there is atzvus."

yep, im not depressed

kinda numb

knowing that I was so low, and I need to reach so high

it wont happen in one day, or even two

but like it has been said here over and over, focus on the NOW; make the right decision for the moment. don't look back; don't look ahead!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by Dov - 28 Jun 2013 15:40

It's always a lot *easier* than we think it will be. And it is always a lot *harder* than we think it will be.

U write about "how high I am going to need to reach" - but it's not so. There is **no** need for me to reach any higher than *just* above the excrement I am stuck in with my lust, self-obsession, religious nuttiness, resentment, or self-centered fear. Just above it is Reality - and reality is so, so sweet when it is really *accepted*. The idea that my choice is between disgusting evil - and holiness or hisbatlus to G-d...well, that's just big drama. It's not so. I just have to crawl humbly out of the mud. G-d is right there waiting for me with love. Hashem either loves us to bits **while** we are on our knees masturbating desperately to the porn fantasy in our heads - or He does not love us at all. Of course He loves us then, otherwise how would the first person have ever gotten clean? Hashem works for us to create recovery solutions (the refuah) **while** we are busy, oh so busy, living in the problem (the makkoh). As far as I can tell, any other attitude toward Hashem's loving concern and efforts for me, is just plain stupid.

And yet it is so much **harder** than I realize it is, to just do that little tiny thing. Once I realize how small a move is needed and admit that, oh how painful it is just to let go of my assumptions that "but it's *impossible* to do **that!**," or the fact that in my heart I *truly* feel that if I do not have x, y, or z, I'll die, or the fact that what's actually operating in me is insanity, not 'desire' or 'yetzer hora'.

Ohh, that acceptance is so hard to have for some of us. We become such drama queens. Too bad. It makes taking the little (but real) steps like calling a recovery person, like stopping the use of silly 'usernames' in any discussion with real recovery people (it's nuts!), like letting go of our silly shame and finally admitting what we are *actually doing* in our lusting, and like allowing ourselves to smile even though we are imperfect (as though we will have to wait for *this* kedusha, or for *that* accomplishment, to 'deserve' the privilege of feeling some joy). We are tied to these feelings like dogs, to use the gemorah's expression. It's sad.

And just changing in those tiny ways is like "a mountain" to our battered and disfigured hearts - but it is really just "a thin thread", as Chaza"l call it.

It's so sad when I read guys describing recovery from their insanity and stupidity as though it were some high madreigo or sublime state of being.

But R' Pinchos Koritzer (I think) said that every lo sa'aseh begs us: "Just don't be an idiot!" The Chofetz Chayim also said that after the Ten Commandments, there is a simple commandment

of G-d that we not be idiots with out lives.

Addiction is the one place of all that no high madreigos or sublime states are needed. Just don;t be an idiot. I am sober for over 16 years of todays - and all that means to me and to my wife is that for about 16 years *I have not had to be too much of an idiot with my life*. Sobriety no madreigo, really. It's like breathing - it is life itself. Living is not a 'madreigo' and I do not deserve any real schar just because I took fairly good care of myself today so that I would not get run over by a truck, die of fat consumption, or fall off a building. I breathed today instead of my old,

That's sobriety. Life itself - Derech Eretz.

Once there is sobriety, then an addict has a basis of sanity he did not have before. He can then be in Recovery, which is a whole new world. The Good Life. And recovery leads a Yid into being a better Jew, of course. That's Torah. It only comes after Derech Eretz. The 'Torah' we have before our sobriety is pretty, but that's all. Like candy instead of real food. It makes us energized - but only sicker, not better. Like watering weeds. Nu. Boruch Hashem there is recovery even for low, low people like me!

stupid habit of holding my breath (white-knuckle/religious sobriety)...congratulations.

G-d is Good. Really. That's why He likes us so much. He knows we are good, too.

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by cordnoy - 28 Jun 2013 15:52

I wasn't guilty of all those things you wrote aboutn but certainly some of 'em.

Thanks

I've got work to do

Like one simple step

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by Pidaini - 28 Jun 2013 17:47

[Dov wrote:](#)

But R' Pinchos Koritzer (I think) said that every lo sa'aseh begs us: "Just don't be an idiot!"

The RopBAD WORD REMOVEDzer Rav said "the entire Torah is one Assay and one Lo-Saseh, the Assay is be smart, the Lo-Saseh don't be stupid"

Have a great Shabbos

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by Dov - 30 Jun 2013 08:01

"Ropshytzer!"

Boo-wah!!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by skeptical - 07 Jul 2013 21:26

So, yesterday I was in bed and I was thinking, and as my thoughts often do, they went on a tangent. One thought went to a slightly related thought, which went to another slightly related thought, which went to... and ultimately I was thinking back to some of the things I used to waste my days doing.

Suddenly, I caught myself. I realized what I was thinking about and told myself that just because the thoughts trespassed my mind, it doesn't mean I need to keep entertaining them. So I booted them, looked around the room and thought about other things.

Many times we think that once the thoughts are in our minds we're stuck with them, we have no choice but to continue the fantasy. But that's not the case. If we are aware of our thoughts, and we really **want** to free ourselves, we **always have the power** to change the station.

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by Pidaini - 07 Jul 2013 22:32

Absolutely!!!!

There is a new "movement" called "three principles" or "innate health" that is focused on the fact that humans constantly have thoughts going through their minds, in and out, and that we have the choice whether or not we want to entertain them. (it's much more than that, you can look [here](#) for a Jewish based program)

Thanks for all the chizuk, skept, keep on writing (about NOT fantasizing;))!!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by Dov - 12 Jul 2013 20:17

Hatzlocha with whatever you choose to do chaver!

But I don't know if any 'new' or 'special jewish-based program' is needed here. In my experience there are simply two aspects to this job of 'controlling' my thoughts:

1- either I keep doing things basically the same way as I am used to (not making any real changes to move out of my comfort zone) and superimpose "Recovery" on top of that.

or

2- Surrender to the truth of my anias hada'as, to my real history and the facts about my personal inability to 'beat this' or to 'change myself', and to the fact that *ein hachavush matir atzmo m'beis ha'asurim*...and start living Recovery **in place of** my old way. That is quite a sacrifice, especially for us professional frum liars and hidens. The frumer we habitual porners are, the bigger liars and hidens we are, of course. That's not a value judgement at all, just the plain math. It ain't easy for us.

#1 takes a *tremendous* effort, dedication, vigilance, and frumkeit...but yields little to nothing in the end. The true addict will fail at it! And on the way, he will become progressively entangled in, isolation, sincere hand-wringing, and religious fantasy (our 'tiffeh cheshboinos' and 'tikkunim')...and **still** be lusting and masturbating like a secret pig when he really, really *needs* to. And he knows it.

#2 takes a painful surrender of self-will. The comfort-zone of doing things the way we always have - in other words, "how we all got in this mess". We often feel it is turning our backs on yiddishkeit, but it isn't. It's just a giving up of the ego-based model of self-perfection and kedusha that he has been carrying on his back all these years. It's a giving up of the twisted yiddishkeit he has developed all these years to try and control' himself.

It takes a difficult acceptance that Hashem is not and has never been ignorant and that Hashem accepted the realities about our limitations and our brokenness a long, long time ago...and that **He is willing to work with us anyway!**

Practically speaking:

Little things like learning how to keep the brain on a much shorter leash. Surrendering the thoughts sooner. That little thing, over and over, is where the big change comes. It is one of the ways we really accept a new way to *feerzach*, instead of struggling to superimpose 'Recovery gimmicks' on top of our 'real' (sick, old) way of living.

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by Pidaini - 14 Jul 2013 00:01

Sheesh!!! Should've known that Dov would get on the case, but it's not that different than 12

I am totally with you Dov, don't get me wrong, and i'm happy to have gotten such a nice **short** peice out of you, but I just wanna say that I was responding to Skep's post, which didn't mention a word of "surrender" just the fact that we can control our thoughts, very simple. The point of "innate health" is just to allow people to gain the most from the life that was given to them, and be happy, no matter what the situation, by realizing that all feelings come from thoughts which don't necessarily have to be part of reality. (so no RID, very helpful in recovery, no?)

Thanks again for the insight!!

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steps, it has numbers too, "**3** Principles"