

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 ZemirosShabbos - 03 Sep 2014 19:41

May I suggest another pshat?

The train in the picture is the addict. What? There's no train there?

That's because the addict/train was there to indulge and found that even after indulging he wasn't satisfied so he went off looking for more.

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by cordnoy - 03 Sep 2014 20:16

Great stuff here...if only I could understand it.

May I suggest that the object of our desire (insert your fetish here) is in the mist beyond yonder, immediately after that bend to the left, and as the train keeps barrelin' on - that object of desire is still in the distance...we can't seem to wrap our hands around it, for it is somewhat elusive....always there, always a tad away, always hazy and we're always racin' at it...why? Cuz we're addicted!

[Perhaps similar to Zemmy]

b'hatzlachah

And don't think about jumpin' off the train either [Perhaps similar to Skep]

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by Pidaini - 04 Sep 2014 10:18

OMG!!

So many good stuff today!!

I feel like I've drank the whole bottle of Woodford already!!

Skeptical's approach goes very well with dms1234's last insight, "Ah, there goes another junction, let's use the right tools now" instead of "Why the høpe (it's a four letter word, right?) is "

Thanks Y'all!!!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by skeptical - 03 Oct 2014 01:23

Today, Erev Erev Yom Kippur, is my second anniversary on GYE. Therefore, I feel the need to write something. However, what I have to say is not much different than what I wrote last year, so I think I will copy and paste that and edit as necessary.

Two years ago today, I became a registered member on a site called GYE (I don't know if any of you guys have ever heard of it).

I had been receiving the Shmiras Einayim emails for a little bit before then (thanks to my wife, see earlier in this thread for more info on that) and I finally decided to visit the site. Looking under the Tools menu, I found options for a forum and for phone conferences. I registered on the site and looked at the phone conference schedule, seeing that Duvid Chaim's group would be starting shortly, at noon.

I called into the conference a few minutes early. I had the phone on mute. I had zero intention to say a word. Duvid Chaim asked who was there and I didn't reply. Apparently, there's a check-in system with regulars saying their first name or a username. I listened in to the conference. I thought that some things I was hearing were over the top, and other things made sense. It was Erev Erev Yom Kippur, so a lot of it was focused on how we, people with lust issues, should go into Yom Tov. There was a Q&A period and it was really nice to hear from people with the same issue I was hiding for years giving each other chizzuk and wishing each other a good yom tov.

I have made some really good friends here these past two years. The bonds that were created, I feel, are very strong - even with guys I have only chatted with online. There is something really powerful about being part of a community where people really "get" you. A place where the stupid things we've done over the years isn't viewed as stupid, because the others have done similar things and can totally relate. I have also talked on the phone with several of the guys I have chatted with, and met with a couple of them. I have two chavrusas now. Both are GYE members. I learn with one in person every Shabbos and the other over the phone daily.

It took me 3 months to actively start working on myself and to actively participate on this site. But I was reading and absorbing the information that was here. You never know who is out

there benefiting and changing from your words.

It is now 1 year and 9 months from when I decided to be clean. I haven't been totally perfect during this time, but I have stayed connected throughout, and the GYE community has helped me through the tough times. I liken it to radio reception. Driving through the mountains, if I turn on the radio, I may only get static. If I turn off the radio, I give up all hope of hearing anything. Keeping the radio on enables me to get reception when the signal is there. By staying connected to GYE even when I'm not "feeling it," I ensure that I'm on the right frequency to catch the signal.

All I can say is, thank you, GYE - the staff and all the guys who are sharing themselves with others, in a struggle that is extremely tough to go alone - for helping me live life properly.

A g'mar chasima tova to all of you. I want to ask mechilla from anyone I have offended, or hurt, in the course of my writing, interacting, or moderating. May Hashem grant us and our families a great year full of health, happiness, parnassah, nachas and hatzlacha in all areas of our lives.

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by dms1234 - 03 Oct 2014 20:24

Skeptical

Two years ago today, I became a registered member on a site called GYE (I don't know if any of you guys have ever heard of it).
Is that for lashon hara? Guard your ears?

Skeptical

(thanks to my wife, see earlier in this thread for more info on that)

Skeptical

All I can say is, thank you, GYE - the staff and all the guys who are sharing themselves with others, in a struggle that is extremely tough to go alone - for helping me live life properly. thank YOU for all your help!!!! You are an integral part of the GYE community because of your endless desire to help people out. THANK YOU!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by Pidaini - 05 Oct 2014 23:38

Ditto to DMS!!

Thank you for always being there, for being one of those people who never veiws anything somebody does as stupid, for making me feel so comfortable to speak whenever I need!!

A git Kvittel!!! A serene year!!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by skeptical - 02 Dec 2014 23:00

By Dr. Travis Bradberry

The next time you tell yourself that you'll sleep when you're dead, realize that you're making a decision that can make that day come much sooner. Pushing late into the night is a health and productivity killer.

According to the Division of Sleep Medicine at the Harvard Medical School, the short-term

productivity gains from skipping sleep to work are quickly washed away by the detrimental effects of sleep deprivation on your mood, ability to focus, and access to higher-level brain functions for days to come. The negative effects of sleep deprivation are so great that people who are drunk outperform those lacking sleep.

Why You Need Adequate Sleep to Perform

We've always known that sleep is good for your brain, but new research from the University of Rochester provides the first direct evidence for why your brain cells need you to sleep (and sleep the right way—more on that later). The study found that when you sleep your brain removes toxic proteins from its neurons that are by-products of neural activity when you're awake. Unfortunately, your brain can remove them adequately only while you're asleep. So when you don't get enough sleep, the toxic proteins remain in your brain cells, wreaking havoc by impairing your ability to think—something no amount of caffeine can fix.

Skipping sleep impairs your brain function across the board. It slows your ability to process information and problem solve, kills your creativity, and catapults your stress levels and emotional reactivity.

What Sleep Deprivation Does to Your Health

Sleep deprivation is linked to a variety of serious health problems, including heart attack, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. It stresses you out because your body overproduces the stress hormone cortisol when it's sleep deprived. While excess cortisol has a host of negative health effects that come from the havoc it wreaks on your immune system, it also makes you look older, because cortisol breaks down skin collagen, the protein that keeps skin smooth and elastic. In men specifically, not sleeping enough reduces testosterone levels and lowers sperm count.

Too many studies to list have shown that people who get enough sleep live longer, healthier lives, but I understand that sometimes this isn't motivation enough. So consider this—not sleeping enough makes you fat. Sleep deprivation compromises your body's ability to metabolize carbohydrates and control food intake. When you sleep less you eat more and have more difficulty burning the calories you consume. Sleep deprivation makes you hungrier by increasing the appetite-stimulating hormone ghrelin and makes it harder for you to get full by reducing levels of the satiety-inducing hormone leptin. People who sleep less than 6 hours a

night are 30% more likely to become obese than those who sleep 7 to 9 hours a night.

How Much Sleep Is Enough?

Most people need 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night to feel sufficiently rested. Few people are at their best with less than 7 hours, and few require more than 9 without an underlying health condition. And that's a major problem, since more than half of Americans get less than the necessary 7 hours of sleep each night, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

For go-getters, it's even worse.

A recent survey of Inc. 500 CEOs found that half of them are sleeping less than 6 hours a night. And the problem doesn't stop at the top. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a third of U.S. workers get less than 6 hours of sleep each night, and sleep deprivation costs U.S. businesses more than \$63 billion annually in lost productivity.

To be Continued...

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by skeptical - 02 Dec 2014 23:06

...Continued

Doing Something about It

Beyond the obvious sleep benefits of thinking clearly and staying healthy, the ability to manage your emotions and remain calm under pressure has a direct link to your performance.

TalentSmart has conducted research with more than a million people, and we've found that 90% of top performers are high in emotional intelligence (EQ). These individuals are skilled at understanding and using emotions to their benefit, and good sleep hygiene is one of the greatest tools at their disposal.

High-EQ individuals know it's not just how much you sleep that matters, but also how you sleep. When life gets in the way of getting the amount of sleep you need, it's absolutely essential that you increase the quality of your sleep through good sleep hygiene. There are many hidden killers of quality sleep. The 10 strategies that follow will help you identify these killers and clean up your sleep hygiene. Follow them, and you'll reap the performance and health benefits that come with getting the right quantity and quality of sleep.

1. Stay Away from Sleeping Pills

When I say sleeping pills, I mean anything you take that sedates you so that you can sleep. Whether it's alcohol, Nyquil, Benadryl, Valium, Ambien, or what have you, these substances greatly disrupt your brain's natural sleep process. Have you ever noticed that sedatives can give you some really strange dreams? As you sleep and your brain removes harmful toxins, it cycles through an elaborate series of stages, at times shuffling through the day's memories and storing or discarding them (which causes dreams). Sedation interferes with these cycles, altering the brain's natural process.

Anything that interferes with the brain's natural sleep process has dire consequences for the quality of your sleep. Many of the strategies that follow eliminate factors that disrupt this recovery process. If getting off sleeping pills proves difficult, make certain you try some of the other strategies (such as cutting down on caffeine) that will make it easier for you to fall asleep naturally and reduce your dependence upon sedatives.

2. Stop Drinking Caffeine (at Least after Lunch)

You can sleep more and vastly improve the quality of the sleep you get by reducing your caffeine intake. Caffeine is a powerful stimulant that interferes with sleep by increasing

adrenaline production and blocking sleep-inducing chemicals in the brain. Caffeine has a 6-hour half-life, which means it takes a full 24 hours to work its way out of your system. Have a cup of joe at 8 a.m., and you'll still have 25% of the caffeine in your body at 8 p.m. Anything you drink after noon will still be near 50% strength at bedtime. Any caffeine in your bloodstream—the negative effects increasing with the dose—makes it harder to fall and stay asleep.

When you do finally fall asleep, the worst is yet to come. Caffeine disrupts the quality of your sleep by reducing rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, the deep sleep when your body recuperates most. When caffeine disrupts your sleep, you wake up the next day with a cognitive and emotional handicap. You'll be naturally inclined to grab a cup of coffee or an energy drink to try to make yourself feel more alert, which very quickly creates a vicious cycle.

3. Avoid Blue Light at Night

This is a big one—most people don't even realize it impacts their sleep. Short-wavelength blue light plays an important role in your mood, energy level, and sleep quality. In the morning, sunlight contains high concentrations of this "blue" light. When your eyes are exposed to it directly (not through a window or while wearing sunglasses), the blue light halts production of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin and makes you feel more alert. This is great, and exposure to a.m. sunlight can improve your mood and energy levels. If the sun isn't an option for you, try a blue light device.

In the afternoon, the sun's rays lose their blue light, which allows your body to produce melatonin and start making you sleepy. By the evening, your brain does not expect any blue light exposure and is very sensitive to it. The problem this creates for sleep is that most of our favorite evening devices—laptops, tablets, televisions, and mobile phones—emit short-wavelength blue light. And in the case of your laptop, tablet, and phone, they do so brightly and right in your face. This exposure impairs melatonin production and interferes with your ability to fall asleep as well as with the quality of your sleep once you do nod off. Remember, the sleep cycle is a daylong process for your brain. When you confuse your brain by exposing it in the evening to what it thinks is a.m. sunlight, this derails the entire process with effects that linger long after you power down. The best thing you can do is avoid these devices after dinner (television is okay for most people as long as they sit far enough away from the set). If you must use one of these devices in the evening, you can limit your exposure with a filter or protective eye wear.

4. Wake Up at the Same Time Every Day

Consistency is key to a good night's sleep, especially when it comes to waking up. Waking up at the same time every day improves your mood and sleep quality by regulating your circadian rhythm. When you have a consistent wake-up time, your brain acclimates to this and moves through the sleep cycle in preparation for you to feel rested and alert at your wake-up time. Roughly an hour before you wake, hormone levels increase gradually (along with your body temperature and blood pressure), causing you to become more alert. This is why you'll often find yourself waking up right before your alarm goes off.

When you don't wake up at the same time every day, your brain doesn't know when to complete the sleep process and when it should prepare you to be awake. Long ago, sunlight ensured a consistent wake-up time. These days, an alarm is the only way most people can pull this off, and doing this successfully requires resisting the temptation to sleep in when you're feeling tired because you know you'll actually feel better by keeping your wake-up time in tact.

5. No Binge Sleeping (In) on the Weekend

Sleeping in on the weekend is a counterproductive way to catch up on your sleep. It messes with your circadian rhythm by giving you an inconsistent wake-up time. When you wake up at the same time during the work week but sleep past this time on the weekend, you end up feeling groggy and tired because your brain hasn't prepared your body to be awake. This isn't a big deal on your day off, but it makes you less productive on Monday because it throws your cycle off and makes it hard to get going again on your regular schedule.

To be continued...

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by skeptical - 02 Dec 2014 23:12

...Continued

6. Learn How Much Sleep You Really Need

The amount of sleep you need is something that you can't control, and scientists are beginning to discover the genes that dictate it. The problem is, most people sleep much less than they really need and are under-performing because they think they're getting enough. Some discover this the hard way. Ariana Huffington was one of those frantic types who underslept and overworked, until she collapsed unexpectedly from exhaustion one afternoon. She credits her success and well-being since then to the changes she's made to her sleep habits. "I began getting 30 minutes more sleep a night, until gradually I got to 7 to 8 hours. The result has been transformational," Huffington says, adding that, "all the science now demonstrates unequivocally that when we get enough sleep, everything is better: our health; our mental capacity and clarity; our joy at life; and our ability to live life without reacting to every bad thing that happens."

Huffington isn't the only one. Jeff Bezos, Warren Buffet, and Sheryl Sandberg have all touted the virtues of getting enough sleep. Even Bill Gates, an infamous night owl, has affirmed the benefits of figuring out how much sleep you really need: "I like to get 7 hours of sleep a night because that's what I need to stay sharp and creative and upbeat." It's time to bite the bullet and start going to bed earlier until you find the magic number that enables you to perform at your best.

7. Stop Working

When you work in the evening, it puts you into a stimulated, alert state when you should be winding down and relaxing in preparation for sleep. Recent surveys show that roughly 60% of people monitor their smartphones for work emails until they go to sleep. Staying off blue light-emitting devices (discussed above) after a certain time each evening is also a great way to avoid working so you can relax and prepare for sleep, but any type of work before bed should be avoided if you want quality sleep.

8. Eliminate Interruptions

Unfortunately for those with small children, the quality of your sleep does suffer when it is interrupted. The key here is to eliminate all the interruptions that are under your control. If you have loud neighbors, wear earplugs to bed. If your mother likes to call at all hours of the night, make certain you silence your ringer before you go to bed. If you had to wake up extra early in the morning, make sure your alarm clock is back on its regular time when you go to bed. Don't drink too much water in the evening to avoid a bathroom trip in the middle of the night. If your partner snores . . . well, you get the idea. If you think hard enough, there are lots of little things

you can do to eliminate unnecessary interruptions to your sleep.

9. Learn to Meditate

Many people who learn to meditate report that it improves the quality of their sleep and that they can get the rest they need even if they aren't able to significantly increase the number of hours they sleep. At the Stanford Medical Center, insomniacs participated in a 6-week mindfulness meditation and cognitive-behavioral therapy course. At the end of the study, participants' average time to fall asleep was cut in half (from 40 to 20 minutes), and 60% of subjects no longer qualified as insomniacs. The subjects retained these gains upon follow-up a full year later. A similar study at the University of Massachusetts Medical School found that 91% of participants either reduced the amount of medication they needed to sleep or stopped taking medication entirely after a mindfulness and sleep therapy course. Give mindfulness a try. At minimum, you'll fall asleep faster, as it will teach you how to relax and quiet your mind once you hit the pillow.

10. When All Else Fails: Take Naps

One of the biggest peaks in melatonin production happens during the 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. time frame, which explains why most people feel sleepy in the afternoon. Companies like Google and Zappos are capitalizing on this need by giving employees the opportunity to take short afternoon naps. If you aren't getting enough sleep at night, you're likely going to feel an overwhelming desire to sleep in the afternoon. When this happens, you're better off taking a short nap (even as short as 15 minutes) than resorting to caffeine to keep you awake. A short nap will give you the rest you need to get through the rest of the afternoon, and you'll sleep much better in the evening than if you drink caffeine or take a long afternoon nap.

Bringing It All Together

I know many of you reading this piece are thinking something along the lines of "but I know a guy (or gal) who is always up at all hours of the night working or socializing, and he's the number one performer at our branch." My answer for you is simple: this guy is underperforming. We all have innate abilities that we must maximize to reach our full potential. My job is to help people do that—to help the good become great by removing unseen performance barriers. Being number one in your branch is an accomplishment, but I guarantee that this guy has his sights set on bigger things that he isn't achieving because sleep deprivation has him performing at a

fraction of his full potential. You should send him this article. It just might shake something loose.

After all, the only thing worth catching up on at night is your sleep.

End.

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by ineedchizuk - 03 Dec 2014 05:12

That wuz a shtikle long.

(Almost) put me to sleep! :-)

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by cordnoy - 03 Dec 2014 06:28

ouch!

thanks for that.

Especially to a guy who can avg. between 3 and 4 hours of sleep a night.

sheez! that sure does explain a lot!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by Dov - 12 Dec 2014 06:29

Wow, Skep, man...that was a tremendous cutandpaste contribution. I have funny things to share abt sleep issues in my life.

I whined to my sponsor abt the problem for the first 5 years of sobriety...till it drove him nuts. He said to me, "Look Dov, just get up every day at 5am and you will go to bed earlier every day and end up getting more sleep."

That week, two different guys came over to me from the neighborhood and asked if I'd join them)

no?

I took one of them up on the offer and did that for 4 years. It helped tremendously and still does, a few years after having to quit that for another a.m. arrangement.

Still, I do struggle with getting to bed at a good time - actually with everything that has *anything* to do with time! That's life, and it's OK.

But I am grateful to you for this article because clarity is what I can use for the next push in a better direction for me. So thanks, chaver!
in early morning learning. (my sponsor then was Catholic - he never knew those guys!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself
Posted by skeptical - 18 Dec 2014 22:24

Weird,

Today is a special day for me.

Two years ago, at this time, I had just finished indulging in a nice, big, juicy fall. And I had decided for the first time since I joined GYE, 3 months earlier, that I was going to start working on being clean.

I was a guy who would indulge in inappropriate lust throughout the day. I'd wake up really early to do it, I'd do it throughout the day, and would stay up really late to do it. If I couldn't indulge at a particular time, I'd be thinking about it.

I wish I could say that I've now been clean for 24 months, but that's not the case. I've fallen a few times since then, but throughout it all, I've kept in contact with my newfound GYE friends. Each time I fell, I've learned new things about myself and am constantly working on improving. I'm happy to be able to say that boruch Hashem, I've been "up" a little over 19 months out of these 24.

I've mentioned in the past that I have two chavrusas that I've met on GYE. One I learn with over the phone daily, the other I learn with in person several times a week. Just last week, I was sitting in shul, learning with my chavrusa, and I shared that I had undertaken to do something every day, and that that day was a full week. I mentioned that it's a very juvenile accomplishment, something that people would expect of me already. He responded that every little bit is something major. The fact that today, the two of us are sitting in a shul learning on a regular basis, when in the past we'd be doing all kinds of other things, is a major thing.

May we all continue to go from strength to strength and delight in our accomplishments, bringing more and more light into this world. A freilichin Chanukah!

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Re: Still Gotta Work on Myself

Posted by skeptical - 22 Feb 2015 01:25

A couple of nights ago, I was at a wedding where all the women seemed to have gotten their gowns half off. There were times I needed to be "on the floor" to perform hashgacha duties. At one point, the Mother-of-the-Bride came to ask a question in the same state of dress. I was aware that these people were within my Daled Amos, but I also knew that I didn't need to look at them (In the case of the M-O-B, I didn't need to look below her face). After the reception, the wedding was moved into a ballroom right outside the kitchen. Going out of the kitchen into the hallway, I had many opportunities to look into the open doorway of the ballroom where there

were disco lights and mixed dancing, but I knew I didn't need to.

One can be aware of his surroundings and still not look at what they don't need to look at.

And don't think I'm on some high level. Women aren't just "boards" to me (as recently related in a story of a big rabbi). I could have really enjoyed myself that night, and nobody would have suspected I was doing anything wrong. Boruch Hashem, I'm in a good state of mind and I just don't need to look at things that I don't need to look at. May that frame of mind stay with me.

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