

Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 06 Oct 2009 16:41

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I think I need a thread where I can post about myself and organize my thoughts. I hope that the act of revealing my feelings can help me control them. I didn't think "I'm new" was a very good title, so here is the new one.

This morning I thought about my new entry on to this forum. How would it help me? I could simply lie my way out of my guilt, couldn't I?

I concluded that if I posted honestly, and got into the habit of doing so, I wouldn't lie. My entire purpose in joining this forum was to have a place where I could be honest, and finally reveal the bits of my life that I couldn't tell anyone.

Even as I write this, even the anticipation of finally telling the truth to real people, takes weight off my shoulders.

My first thread detailed how I joined the forum, and how I felt. This is my real physical story.

I was a very curious child. I'm still curious. I can't stand not knowing. When I hit 13, I became curious about biology. I knew that there were things I shouldn't know, but the concept of "shouldn't know" is even now a difficult one for me. If something was hidden I had to find it. I looked up what I wanted to know in dictionaries, textbooks, medical websites. Then, when my curiosity was satisfied, something else took over, posing as curiosity. None of these things had photos, just descriptions. Wouldn't I understand what I was looking for better if I had photos, or videos? I knew I shouldn't, that it was wrong, but... how could it be wrong?

Well, I understood it, then, intellectually. Naturally I wanted to understand it physically. Curiosity, right? It wasn't.

There were no longer any revelations, just sin; I had lost control. I began my fight a few months later, and accumulated a legacy of failed battles for 4 years.

I am now 17. I know I have to beat it now, or it will only get worse. I know it's time to make a real commitment to winning, and I know that I can't push it off.

My y"ח tells me that I'm young, and that I can afford a few more years of foolishness. I tell him that I can't. If everyone's jumping off buildings, should I follow them? No. They can walk with broken legs their whole lives. I have to bandage what wounds I have and heal.

That's my story.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by kutan - 26 Nov 2009 19:42

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That was Rivka's question, according to the Baal Hatanya.

She could not understand how a person can at the same time be a Yaakov and then turn around and be a Eisav.

what kind of crazy person are we.

Then she was told that there are actually two opposite forces inside of us.

The physical side simply is not rational at all. Learning disabled in this area.

I guess that is why we can't expect to just be rational and explain to ourselves once and for all that this is crazy and fugetaboutit.

The physical, crazy side is the bigger one. Rav.

But the tzair can subject it. Rav yavod tzair.

Only by trickery and appeasement, though. It does not seem that Yaakov actually ever tried to take on Esav. Just avoided him.

best wishes,

kutan

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 30 Nov 2009 02:57

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Thank you for the dvar torah, kutan. It was truly inspiring...

Well, I've fallen a few times again, and have to start dragging myself out again... In this last series of falls, I noticed that I was not nearly as tempted as I was before I began my journey; the urge was perfectly controllable, but I was just too lazy to control it. It was not an overpowering addiction, but the same feeling I get before I take doubles at mealtime, knowing I shouldn't, and I can if I don't want to, but not really caring. I was overtaken by a sort of apathy to the worthiness of my cause. The falls didn't really disturb my healthy activities in life (except for a couple of wasted hours), and the garbage didn't even come close to it's former place in the constant forefront of my mind. Perhaps this is a sign that the addiction has weakened, and what needs strengthening is my resolve, or perhaps this indicates that the addiction is seated more deeply and complexly than I thought.

I'm going to operate on the assumption that I have an addiction. Self-diagnosing whether my behaviour, moods, and thoughts are due to normal teenage hormonal swings or to true addiction is insanely difficult. I surmise that by treating myself as an addict, at least to some extent, I will probably overcome any hormonal urges as well, while simply dealing with the urges as temporary may help if I am suffering a temporary suspension of sanity due to my youth, but such action definitely won't help if I am truly addicted.

So probabilistically, that makes sense, even though the "addict" method is a lot more emotionally troubling and difficult than the "Just control yourself a bit and it'll go away" method.

By either method, I have to reach 90 clean days at least. I guess it's time to stop philosophising about how I'm going to live life cleanly and happily, and get around to doing it.

Here I go again! ;D

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by the.guard - 30 Nov 2009 11:12

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Rabbi Twerski writes in [this article](#) how we can become addicted from even ONE viewing!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by kutan - 02 Dec 2009 14:02

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Hmmm, NA, your last report rings a bell... I remember seeing someone else with the same experience. Was it TrYiNg perhaps?

Like any good general will tell you, keep the momentum going!

I have found with myself that the GYE experience has brought me to new levels, that I would have only wished for in the past, but then I need to work again, at that level.

Make a 5 minute daily seder in the attitude Handbook. You will find that the YH will do all he can to discourage such a seder. But it is only 5 minutes, and there is really no excuse... and it will make a real difference.

Post on other's threads as much as your time allows, assuming you are on the web anyway. The more you give, the more it will bounce off the reflective surface of the monitor and back onto you.

## **B'HATZLACHA!**

kutan

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 02 Dec 2009 16:14

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Keep it up - and hopefully, coming out of your shell will be part of the process of coming out of your hell, and moving to a happier life!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by kutan - 02 Dec 2009 19:34

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Silent Battle, that was clever.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 02 Dec 2009 23:25

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I tried to carefully read all the preceding posts to see if anyone had beaten me to it.

So, I finally checked out the rashi that, I presume, your username is based on. Nice. I'd be interested in hearing your thought process behind choosing that username...

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 03 Dec 2009 03:15

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Thank you for the advice, kutan and silentbattle.

Well, I try not to stick around here too much (I don't like dwelling on the problem when I should simply be living without it), so posting all over the place isn't really an option; I read maybe two or three other threads when I come here, and usually have nothing to say, but I'll see what I can do about rereading the attitude handbook.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 27 Dec 2009 00:17

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Well, I took a several week hiatus from the site after falling, until I could pull myself out again. Reading this site a day or two after a fall is often a trigger rather than a cure, because it makes me dwell on my problem, and leads to the problem.

Quitting cold-turkey has not been working for me, so I'm taking a divide-and-conquer strategy. Namely, if I fall (though I will try not to) I will try not do it with p\*\*\*. If the urge is overcoming me, I will leave the room and take care of it, rather than fall with my eyes as well.

Obviously, this is not ideal, but in my previous attempts what broke my streak was an overwhelming physical desire. I really didn't need to go back to the p\*\*\*, but I did anyway, to feed the fire. If I can hold out on the first part until Pesach, then I will start a new 90 fully clean. I don't wish to count this progress on the main chart, but I will report here instead.

Is this an acceptable strategy? It seems to be like the "gradual" method in the handbook... I can't tell if my apprehension at allowing myself to fall to m\* even in the plan of avoiding p\*\*\*, and with an intention to cut out m\* is caused by my y"t or y"h.

Any thoughts on this, R' Guard or others?

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by Elya K - 27 Dec 2009 01:44

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You're overwhelming yourself with goals until Pesach and going cold turkey.

Take it one day at a time. Before you go to bed at night say the Yehi Ratzon before Shema Al Hamita

with Kavanah. Go over your day and figure out if you were resentful, angry, lonely, tired, or if you

owe anyone an apology. Are you holding something back that you should tell or approach someone close

to you with? What could you have done better today. Figure it out, write it down, go to sleep after some

mental exercise.

Next morning, say modeh ani and the serenity prayer. Pick a part of davening that speaks to you and

say it with Kavanah, having this disease in mind. Ask Hashem to help you have the right thoughts and

actions all day - just for today. At the end of the day, thank Hashem for keeping you sober one more day.

Go to meetings, get a sponsor, post to the forum, make phone calls. Get rid of your resentments.

Then you'll begin to come out of your shell for real.

Elya

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 27 Dec 2009 04:07

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I appreciate the concern, R' Elya, but I am certainly not overwhelming myself. My current plan is actually rather lax considering my previous successes. I know that I am capable of fulfilling it based on my prior performance. What happens after Pesach, we shall see.

Regarding taking each day on its own: Of course a spiritual enlightenment is part of the daily healing process, but I know that if I have to re-make the decision to be clean each day, there will be days that I make the wrong decision. Without a structured plan, I can't guarantee (or even wager) that I'll stay clean for any given period. There WILL be days that I feel depressed, tired, or disheartened, and will be willing to throw my work to the winds. Such is the nature of living. However, when I have a medium-term plan, I tend to follow it simply because I am compelled to complete my work, and the level of disenchantment that it takes for me to throw it off is much higher.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by Kollel Guy - 27 Dec 2009 06:26

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First of all WOW. You are the wisest 17 yr old I have ever heard of. When I was 17 I didn't even understand enough to really care.

Secondly, these dialogues you seem to be having with the y"h are no-good. Don't talk to him. If he want's to talk to you while your clean - he can only discuss the topic of it's severity. After a fall - that's when he can discuss how it's not so bad.

It sounds like you have very typical feelings and inclinations. These can be extremely difficult to control at your age, and therefore I think it is irresponsible for you to rely on just will alone, and 'play it by ear', meaning have the battle when he approaches you. That's like spending money on your credit card and saying "When the bill will be due at the end of the month, then I'll work and make some money". Your main work is prevention, not actual fighting. The fighting will be there regardless - believe me, there's no way to avoid it completely. What you CAN do is fight from afar. And this is how people succeed in winning this fight. This is how you can derive the strength to overcome the urges when they do attack.

The kotzker said "If you wait for your y'h to approach you - you don't stand a chance. If you



initiate the battle, then you might win".

Hang in there man, you are very fortunate to have found this site at such an early time in your life. Most people have to wait till well in their 20s to find out that there is such a thing as an addiction. Take advantage of the gift H-shem gave you and use it for all it's worth. On this site there are the tools which will get you out of your situation... If your willing to use them.

Oh, and if you think the after-feeling is bad NOW, just wait till after your married.

Hatzlachah rabs!!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 27 Dec 2009 06:30

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Reb Lo Levado (a.k.a. - Not Alone) - First of all, it's great to hear from you again!

Second of all, I'm glad to hear that you're still working on growing, and still planning victory!

However, I don't think the idea of "one day at a time" is about deciding each day to make a new commitment to being clean. I think it means that when you're faced with a nisayon, instead of thinking, "I can't do this, I have to be clean for the next 3 months," you say, "just for today." Or if that's too much, even "just for one hour." And then, an hour later, hopefully oyu've already moved on, or you can try to push it off again.

There are three major advantages to this strategy, that I can see (more experienced people can probably mention more). 1) it breaks time down into manageable chunks. Otherwise, we can think, "whoa, I can't hold off for 2 months!" But "just till tomorrow" works a lot better. 2) even if, after that day, you fall, you pushed it off for one day. That's one day without this huge aveirah, and the amount of kedusha that you bring into this world is beyond imagining. And 3) Even if, Ch"v, we fall, we know that we didn't just blow everything - we blew this one minute. But now, it's another minute, and we have another minute to be strong in, with hashem's help.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 27 Dec 2009 06:35

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Just to clarify - making a long-term plan is good, because it's a long-term battle. But on the day-to-day level, we can say, "one day at a time."

KG - I think he already has a plan of what he's going to do when faced with a nisayon.

I should mention, though, that you might want to try also having a plan that will lead to you being clean, and then have the "plan B" of going into a different room.

As with any plan, try to visualize yourself succeeding, getting up and leaving the room, and hopefully doing something else. the more you picture that success in your mind, the more likely it is to happen.

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