

1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 22 Oct 2009 05:26

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howdy gentlemen.

I've been lurking around this site for about a month now (thank you anonymous yid for emailing me!) and i figure its finally time i post a bit about my experiences.

i just made it to level 3 in the 90 day journey. i'm 14 days clean! a record for the past 12 months, yishtabach shemo ;D ;D ;D

my main problems seem to be the r"l standard P and M issues. i'm in my lower 20s, single, in college.

steps i've taken that are working great so far:

1. working through the 2 handbooks
2. stepping out of the room and praying for 10 seconds if inappropriate content appears on my screen, no matter how it got there.
3. daily emails
4. daily 5 minute seder in Esah Einai, a new sefer on shmiras enayim
5. prozac (been on for a year)
6. weekly appointment with therapist, discussing this among other issues
7. keeping the door open when web surfing in room by myself
8. internet filter
9. praying for help with these issues, for myself and klal yisroel
10. helping a friend work out his issues in these areas

11. reading through these forums and seeing holy jews in much worse situations break free!  
what a geshmak to see how much hope there is!

12. keeping track on the 90 day program

13. trying to watch my eyes outside in general

ok. holy cow. thats a long list. this is really my number one priority right now. and its working!!!

here's where i can use some advice:

historically, i'd fall 1-2 times a week. getting to a week clean is a challenge. when i do get there once in a while, i tend to fall on that very day. sometimes i'll tell myself "wow! you've made it a whole week! and you're feeling totally in control!" and shortly after, i'll fall.

last Tishrei, i went a whole month clean (first time in over 5 years!!!!!!!!!!) and fell like on day 31.

i've come up with 2 possible explanations for this pattern of falling after milestones:

1. i feel like i'm in control, so i let down my guard, allowing the yetzer to strike.
2. i feel like i've accomplished something, so i 'reward' myself with pleasure

so how do i combat this pattern?

i've made it 2 weeks now pretty bump-free, yishtabach shemo. probably because of the constant chizuk i'm getting throughout the day (see list above).

here's my fear:

i'll hit 30 days, and fall back. c'v. or maybe even 90, and fall back.

how do i break this pattern? anyone with similar experience?

thank you so much. i love all of you. and i pray that you'll all break free.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by imtrying25 - 18 Nov 2009 21:57

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Wow! This is my first time checking out your thread and im amazed. Im also soooooooooo happy for you that your by 40 already. Chazak Ve'ematz!! You talk so positivly im sure this s one of your secrets of success. Keep on pedaling!!!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 23 Nov 2009 21:59

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Today was rough.

I'm so tired. My sleep pattern is all out of whack.

And I've been pushing off an overdue paper for college for like a week.

And I've slipped a couple of times today. Nothing too bad. Just not activities a ben Torah should be involved in.

The good news?

I went to seder today, even if it was just for an hour. And I went to shiur for the first time in like a week. Even if I did sleep through most of it.

And I got a phone number of a girl I'm really interested in.

If only I could get past this damn paper hanging over my head.

Alright, that's enough for now. Off to take a nap.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 24 Nov 2009 07:32

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Okay, so I messed up the call with this girl.

It doesn't feel so good.

But here's the best consolation:

Knowing that 47 days ago today would have been a day where I fell multiple times.

Now, it's hardly an option.

Thank you Hashem!!!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by imtrying25 - 24 Nov 2009 12:06

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great attitude bahava. Dov always says that its very important to change our attitude. Or at least this is what i understand from him. Ok no giving up. Check out my siggy i think it may apply to your experiance yesterday. Keep up the good work. Hatzlacha. Your an inspiration for all of us.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
especially me whos trying to keep pace with you.  
Posted by the.guar - 24 Nov 2009 22:00

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In the merit of your progress, may Hashem help you find the right one!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by bahava - 24 Nov 2009 23:51

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[guardureyes wrote on 24 Nov 2009 22:00:](#)

In the merit of your progress, may Hashem help you find the right one!

Amen Ken yehi ratzon.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by bahava - 25 Nov 2009 07:38

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I found Doves words in today's email really powerful and relevant to some of my particular struggles.

I'm posting a copy here for future reference.

Quote: "I feel drained right now. I feel like I've been fighting the whole entire day."

Ok, Airbag and seatbelt time.... uh-oh.

Either the outer environment needs to change, or the inner environment does. One of them has to go. If you believe it's from inside you, I do not understand how anyone expects to "beat" a mental illness. Just go and ask any crazy person, maybe he'll tell you.... Now, if it's really just "a ta'ava", then I understand - fight, fight, fight. But if:

Quote: "I feel that if I can get past the hard times it will only get easier. But I never can get past them."

... as you put it, then perhaps, maybe, it's time to give the entire fight up to

Hashem. To me, that means (step 1  
[<http://www.guardureyes.com/GUE/12Steps/12StepsStan.asp>])

admitting to Him exactly what you want to do [i.e. pursue the lust], (step 2  
[<http://www.guardureyes.com/GUE/12Steps/12StepsStan.asp>])

asking Him to help you just let go of the entire idea, to give it up completely

and trust in Him fully. And then (step 3  
[<http://www.guardureyes.com/GUE/12Steps/12StepsStan.asp>])

to take the actions of letting it go, like getting busy with something else; preferably finding some way to give or love someone: people, or lehavdil, Hashem, (or even ourselves... if we really know how to).

And also, to me, it means agreeing to never take the credit for "winning" again.

As long as you admit you are nuts, and you admit you have no other hope but His

help, and you do what you can to make going about His business your priority right now, then it's His business if you succeed or fail, not yours.

Sound crazy? Well, I think busting one's head against the wall for the 15,000th time with the same losing derech - (only harder this time) - yet expecting things to be entirely different this time - is pretty crazy, too :-)

Quote: "But it aint over till its over."

And when is that? Won't there be a next time? Yes, for those who let go of it each time, it does get easier over time. But for those who just distract themselves from it to get over it, I believe there is a residue from each struggle, that may not go away. A feeling of, "well, I gave up that nice one, I deserve a consolation prize" or, "poor me, I lost out on so much fun," or, "woohoo, I can control this stuff, after all! So maybe I can use and enjoy it - and just stop it as soon as it starts to get out of hand, no?". Those natural thought patterns would build up in me over time until... you guessed it. And no wonder it's a tidal wave then!

(And then we act as though it's such a surprise!???)

I have no other explanation than the above for the very common phenomena of the guy (like me) who could "go for a month, or so, until the pressure builds up", or whatever. Or so many of the well-meaning folks here with 23 days, or 33 days, over and over again for five years... you know what I mean. How else can anyone explain that? Please let me know, will ya?

What people like me need is a psychic change. Not improvement, but a new derech.

Let Hashem figure out if it's called teshuvah or not. It's gotta be a different fight, or else.

On a good day, I let the fight be His business, and my job is to do His work...

and when lust ideas occur to me, I admit to myself that I am not just another yid

with "a ta'yva", but rather, that I am "cracked" in the head. I have an allergy.

I am not able to lust like others can, and control it. They can perhaps, but not

I. So no wonder I need a Higher Power. I avoid it like fire by closing my eyes or

my brain and doing something else. I make a call to a friend and admit exactly how

sick I am. Then I go happily from there, completely free.

I don't need Hashem's power to help me "beat" this Yetzer Hara. I need him to remove

the lust from me. I need His help to get myself out of His way. I need to go about

His work, period. Not fight any battles.

A huge problem here is that if you just extract the surrender and trust in Hashem,

the whole thing still looks like some kind of winning. Some folks will totally mistake

the "closing of the eyes" or the "making a call to another addict" as the way we

fight it. It's not. It's just the actions we take to give it up. As many addicts

who actually use the steps

[<http://www.guardureyes.com/GUE/PDFs/The%2012-Steps%20and%2012%20traditions.pdf>]

will attest, the total freedom from the nutty lust comes during the dialing of the

friends phone number, or during the prayer itself. Like when I say, "G-d, whatever

I am looking for in the image of that woman walking by, let me find it in You, instead."

Ahhhh. By the time I get up to the second half of the word G-d, we feel the whole

thing evaporating.

It may not work perfectly all the time, but we stay sober from the bottom line behavior

this way, no matter what. And over time, our heads change. The struggles are surrendered.

There is no more pressure build up. If there is, then we take an honest look at

our first step [<http://www.guardureyes.com/GUE/12Steps/12StepsStan.asp>], perhaps



with a friend, and go on from there.

Quote: "I can use chizuk right now."

Well, I don't know if that constituted chizuk, but sometimes we don't need encouragement,

rather we need someone to remind us that "I have no one to rely on but myself"(as

in the story in the Gemara [<http://rehab-my-site.com/guardureyes/forum/index.php?topic=944.msg18019#msg18019>]

of the sex-addict, Rav Elazar Ben Drudya), by holding up a mirror. I hope you see

that Hashem is in there right next to you, no matter what.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 30 Nov 2009 02:08

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Alright people.

I haven't finished my overdue papers yet. And the anxiety has led me to almost slip up.

This used to be a very common pattern for me. For a number of years, the night before something big was due, I was almost guaranteed to fall at least once.

It was part of my procrastination routine.

And it helped me feel in control.

But not anymore.

I've taken some real steps towards getting these essays done with.

And if I feel like procrastinating, I'll post here, thank you very much.

As far as the feeling of control goes, I suppose the answer is trust.

Trust that even if I fail this class, I'll still be okay.

Trust that even if this is the worst essay I've ever written, I'll still be okay.

Trust that if I just sit down for a couple of more hours, I'll have a finished product to hand in.

My life is too valuable to waste worrying about essays. To act out against the will of my Creator.

Okay, I think its out of my system. Back to these papers.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by habib613 - 30 Nov 2009 02:44

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b'ahava

last night, i was where you are right now.

you can do it.

it is possible.

and when you're done, and you realize that you just pulled an all-nighter without slipping, you

Hatzlocho!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

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Posted by the.guard - 30 Nov 2009 11:10

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What beautiful Yidden!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 04 Dec 2009 08:57

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Here's a great vart I heard from a Rosh Yeshiva of mine on this week's parsha, VaYishlach. I think it can help us all in our attitude towards this challenge.

When Yaakov demands a beracha from the angel of Esav, the angel names him Yisrael "ki sarita im elokim v'im anashim vatukhal" - "because you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."

Why wasn't his name changed to tukhal? Wasn't that the victory of Yaakov, that he succeeded?

So the parsha is teaching us that the focus is not the result, not the fact that Yaakov succeeded in his struggle. Rather, the focus must be the struggle itself.

Yaakov's bracha was based on the fact that he struggled, that he cared, that he wanted to do something. The results were out his hands. The results were given to him mimeila from him Creator.

Now we can understand why this was manifest in a change in his name. His identity, and the identity of his children forever, is based on the fact that he struggles to improve, and not the results.

And this is the true bracha of klal yisrael.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by the.guard - 05 Dec 2009 18:21

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I ACED that vort!

(ACE stands for Another Chizuk E-mail) :D

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by 7yipol - 05 Dec 2009 19:41

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b'ahava,

That was really gevaldik!

Thanks so much for sharing it.

Hope the yh isnt listening;

he doesnt deserve any warnings!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back  
Posted by imtrying25 - 05 Dec 2009 21:49

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[b'ahava wrote on 04 Dec 2009 08:57:](#)

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Now we can understand why this was manifest in a change in his name. His identity, and the identity of his children forever, is based on the fact that he struggles to improve, and not the results.

And this is the true bracha of klal yisrael.

Hey baahava you stole that post right out of my hand. I was planning on posting it till i saw it here.

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