

1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 22 Oct 2009 05:26

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 Dov - 06 Dec 2009 23:29

Wow, b'ahava! Thanks!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 09 Dec 2009 04:41

I saw this in today's email, and I'd like to keep a copy here for future reference:

More on "Being Happy that we're Sober!"

Dov's post above reminds me of a great post from "RATM" today:

In all honesty, I feel like you guys have given me a new life here...

I was once

so sick and tired of seeing myself in the mirror... "that hypocrite, loser, no-life"...

But now I can continue living without feeling like a constant

loser...

Where once I would look back on even the best of days and say: "Yeah, I was successful

at work or I did that mitzvah or accomplished these things, but I still messed up

my life today by doing ****..."

Now I look back on the

worst of days and say:"Yeah, I may have blown that deal or forgot to daven "veten

tal ummatar" at Mincha or accomplished jack-black today, but I still feel like a

winner because today I did not let my addiction beat me...."

So there may be harddays, but no more bad days, only goodones.... A complete reversal

of

fortunes...

Thank you...

thanks RATM!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by Dov - 10 Dec 2009 17:33

Wow, that was something! Thanks.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by BecomeHoly - 13 Dec 2009 09:06

I'd just like to give you some encouragement - you're at the top of the 90 day chart. I want you off it. Not because of failing, but because you should be on the wall of honor! You're doing amazing, keep us in mind as you make it over the hill :-)

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bahava - 17 Dec 2009 20:35

I feel like such garbage. My mood has been on and off for the last 3 weeks. Every few days it feels like I've finally gotten through it, and then I snap back into depression.

Maybe the worst part is that I can't pinpoint what's causing these feelings. If I knew what it was, maybe I could change something.

From an objective perspective, my life is just fine. In fact, better than ever.

I'm 70 days clean! That was unimaginable for me for the past 8 years. I feel like I've figured out how to beat my biggest test. Its a big deal. I should feel proud.

But I'm not feeling the hugs. I'm not fulfilled. I just don't get it.

Maybe its davka because I feel that this struggle is behind me. In the first 40 days, my tefilah was different. My thoughts were different. My life was dedicated to beating this yetzer harah. It was my only priority.

I guess I liked the challenge. I liked that I was finally seeing success. I liked that I could see Hashem's hand guide me through the struggle, by sending me this site, by sending me the right friends and rebbeim.

But the joy of all that is gone now.

Yes, I still have to deal with the yetzer. But its something I know I can beat. It no longer feels like an accomplishment. It feels like an expectation. Its turned into a 'been there, done that' sort of feeling.

Maybe the solution is to set up new goals?

Learning can be so good. But I haven't been to morning seder or shacharit for 3 weeks. I know it'll be great once I get there, but I'm just stuck in this rut.

Can any of you identify with my feelings? How do you deal with it?

Love always,

B'ahava

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by bardichev - 17 Dec 2009 20:38

But the joy of all that is gone now.

i can identify with that

we all can

keep on truckin!!!

or else

"jackknife tractor trailer blocking the entrance to the GWB backing up the I-95 till cherry hill!!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by the.guard - 17 Dec 2009 21:52

bahava, what you are feeling is very common. The addiction helped us "escape" from our real feelings. We stopped "feeling" life and all it's bumps and instead we just escaped to "medicate" ourselves whenever things weren't going smooth, or whenever we felt an inner discontent.

As soon as we **removed** the "drug", we start to feel again.

Now the beginning wasn't so hard, because there was a feeling of "triumph" over the addiction. But as time goes on and we get used to being clean, we start to really FEEL again. And this is not always a pleasant experience.

That is where the 12-Steps come in. They help addicts learn how to deal with real life, once they start to really "feel" once again. You may want to join Duvid Chaim's anonymous conference call.

May Hashem be with you!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by BecomeHoly - 17 Dec 2009 22:55

Just talk to God. Right now. Go spend an hour. Pour your heart out. Only connection with God will fill that void. Or go do a chesed. Go spend an hour helping in a soup kitchen.

To get out of the rut you have to DO. A friend of mine always sets it up where he's in a situation where he's forced to act in a certain way. He didn't like the atmosphere in the dorm he was living in. So he went and said he's moving out. Even though he had nowhere to go. Once you take that first step, and you're already DOING, you'll be happy you put yourself in the situation to DO.

You're so close to getting over that hill (more like an everest). Keep putting in your effort, so GOD can do the rest! :-)

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by Dov - 17 Dec 2009 23:41

Dear b'ahava,

It's nice to be a baby again, isn't it? I mean, we are all babies here, just beginning on the path of sanity. And to finally be more sane means that in some respect I am finally beginning *real* avodas Hashem, as a shoteh is patur because his avoda is meaningless. A fruitcake can *not* do a miztva.

"**Pischu li** sha'arei tzedek - Hashem! Please! Open the gates for me! Even if I'm a big tzaddik already (Guard *told* us we are), *and* a ba'al teshuva already (he told us that, too) - I am still ~~like~~ a baby just starting out and standing *just outside* your door, Tatty! I'm not even inside the front gate yet!

Let me in to get started at being your real servant today!"

...and Dovid Hamelech said that many times in many different ways over his relatively short and relatively bitter life, even knowing that he had ruach hakodesh, etc., etc. He was always starting. Don't just *think* it - that doesn't work. Feel it for a minute.

Pour it on when you say hallel tomorrow. Repeat the passuk a few times before or after hallel, too, if you think it'd help (I do). Look for the same idea in other parts of davening, like M"S chanukas habayis l'dovid, etc.

Why? Dovid hamelech answers: **Zeh** hasha'ar laShem! This is the attitude for success -
) use it over and over!! Humility is *very* useful.

So, to paraphrase Golda Meir (oy vei): we have little to be "humble" about, because we have even *less* to be proud about.

Tzadikim yavo'u vo - even great tzadikim (like us

Don't be fooled. I cannot accept that Hashem brought you through this problem just to get you out of it so you could just move on from here as though nothing happened. He could have protected you from getting into the problem in the first place, then, no?

Herr tzuch einn, zisseh yid: To quote Rav Noach Weinberg, **He found a way to get your attention**, probably because he was missing you a whole lot. Look at what the last three posts suggested. This **IS** your trip, not just an accident He "saved" you from.

Hatzlocha!!

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by imtrying25 - 18 Dec 2009 00:07

After a Dov post theres not much more to say. What i could say is that i have had these feelings too. We get so used o the struggle that we actually come to enjoy it. Ive had times that i wanted to be depressed. It just felt so good. same with this. when we start pulling away from the yh we are starting a new way of living. We are so used to the up and down up and down that we actually come to expect it and enjoy it. When we dont have it we feel that something is missing. But we have to tell ourselves that this is the type of life we wanna live. Without the win fail win fail and so on and so forth. Its a more even keel life. Its something new. Give it some time. Youll start enjoying this new way of life. Youll start even getting addicted to just having an even keel life. Its weird but its so true. Sometimes in the past i would wanna fall just so i could have that fighting feeling back. Weird but true. So i think this is what youre experiencing right now. Just convince yourself that this is a better way to live and eventually IYH youll come to enjoy it. Hatzlacha and Keep on truckin.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by 7yipol - 20 Dec 2009 20:12

B'ahava,

Im sorry to hear that you are still in the rut and feeling down.

"Tzur me'ra v'asei tov"

The tzur me'rah youre doing. And doing really well. For 40 days you 'fought' (sorry, wrong word Dov) the yh, doing your utmost to leave the garbage dump.

But once you clambered out, what then?

Did you start to clean your smelly clothes?

To polish your muddy shoes?

To remove that ridiculous looking banana peel from your left pocket?

Did you start moving away from the stench, or simply stand beside it?

Waiting.

For what?

"Asei tov"!!

Start cleaning up your act, both inside and out!

Figure out whats dirty, and clean it.

Then start cleaning the area around you - after all no one can come out of a cess-pool and not carry the muck around with him till he cleans up.

Figure out who youve adversely affected - and help them.

And finally, work on covering up that garbage dump.

Build fences around it, hammer in sign posts warning others to stay away.

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Theres too much good to be done to have time for depression

Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by imtrying25 - 20 Dec 2009 20:15

Bubbys know how to put it so well, dont you think baahva??

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by bahava - 20 Dec 2009 20:20

Okay, you guys are right.

I need to move on to the next project.

I think this is a good time in my life to work on bitachon. I had never given it much thought until recently. And it'll help me get over a difficult break-up that's been lingering in the back of my mind for a few weeks.

Can any of you recommend any learning to help in this area?

(No offense, but chasidishe stuff doesn't do it for me, but that's another discussion.)

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by the.guard - 20 Dec 2009 20:21

to sum up what 7up said, the saying goes: "The monkey's off my back, but the circus is still in

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my head"