

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 bahava - 21 Dec 2009 22:47

So what's the takeaway?

How do I grow from this experience?

Well, for starters, one thing is concrete:

I am still an addict.

I was foolish to think that I was past this. I was foolish to let down my guard.

Going back to my original post here, let's see how many of my fences I've managed to hold on to for the last 74 days:

1. working through the 2 handbooks Haven't looked those over in weeks.
2. stepping out of the room and praying for 10 seconds if inappropriate content appears on my screen, no matter how it got there. This was probably the most helpful tactic starting off. I haven't kept this in weeks either.
3. daily emails Still on track. Thanks Reb Guard!
4. daily 5 minute seder in Esah Einai, a new sefer on shmiras enayim About a month since I've touched it.
5. prozac (been on for a year) Still on, but I've been considering moving off it.

6. weekly appointment with therapist, discussing this among other issues Still seeing him, but we've been focusing on other areas, as this hadn't been a problem for a while.
7. keeping the door open when web surfing in room by myself Still pretty good with this.
8. internet filter Still good with this, although my fall showed that this will NOT stop me when push comes to shove. Its a heker, at the end of the day.
9. praying for help with these issues, for myself and klal yisroel Prayer has been difficult. On and off. And never with the same vigor and simcha and reliance that I had in my first clean month.
10. helping a friend work out his issues in these areas He's clean for over 40 days, so he hasn't needed me, thank God!
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! Still reading, but its lost its novelty.
12. keeping track on the 90 day program Still on track.
13. trying to watch my eyes outside in general Better than before I started, but again, not the same level of vigor.

So where does this leave me? L'maiseh, I'm only holding on to about half of my fences. And even that half is weak, about to crumble under the weight of my own arrogance.

It's time to start over. I know this system works. My failure today was not the system! My failure was not sticking to the system.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by the.guard - 21 Dec 2009 22:52

precious, precious... as Dov said, the fall was perhaps to get your attention again. Hashem must

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by Kollel Guy - 22 Dec 2009 09:12

[b'ahava wrote on 21 Dec 2009 22:47:](#)

Well, for starters, one thing is concrete:

I am still an addict.

I was foolish to think that I was past this. I was foolish to let down my guard.

So far, nobody who ever got through this ever claimed not to be an addict anymore. I mean, I have had a goal in my mind (which might be a fantasy) that one day I want to be able to sit alone for hours in front of an unfiltered computer, and not even feel an urge. I don't know if that is even possible - not even when we're 60.

I might be wrong on this, but one thing is definite: Our true goal here is not to be successful at "not looking at ..."

Going through the proper steps
which will heal us on the inside.

When someone falls c"v, he should not be thinking of those few moments when he was making the descision. That's not what caused him to fall. It was what allowed the descision to ever exist.

Yesterday, I spent quite some time "testing out" my filter, "to see" how good it really is.

Technically, yesterday I didn't fall. Because I didn't see anything. But in reality I did.

I let down my guard (no pun intended) which is my avodah at this point.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by BecomeHoly - 22 Dec 2009 22:14

You inspire me. The way you treat a fall, the instant cheshbon hanefesh. You are an example of what we should strive for. You have proven that it can be done. God does help. Just "reinitiate" and let God do his thing :-)

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by Dov - 22 Dec 2009 22:52

Holy Jews -

Please consider getting hold of a copy of "Alcoholics Anonymous", and reading it, especially chapters 2 and 3. Just substitute the word Lust, porn, or whatever you do, in place of alcohol (I think "lust", personally). You can find it in a simple search on line for free, but I like holding a good old-fashioned *book* in my hands....what a weirdo!

If you actually go *to it* and read what it has to say and like it, then I'd suggest looking at the last two pages of "Step Two" in the other main AA text, called "12 Steps and 12 Traditions". It talks there about religious folks like us who nevertheless are in this crazy mess.

Hatzlocha Rabba!

PS. I have not knowingly lusted today and b"H have not acted out in a while, but *still* say things like "when I act out, I...blah, blah, blah...but b"H I don't need to do that today" when I share in meetings, because I believe that the day I start saying stuff like, "way back when I **used to** act out, I would...blah, blah, blah", I'll start to think I am now cured and can now control lust and "use it like a gentleman", as AA puts it quite humorously (regarding drinking). No thanks! As Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l liked to say, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on **me**!" I've had enough for a lifetime.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by Kollel Guy - 22 Dec 2009 23:06

[dov wrote on 22 Dec 2009 22:52:](#)

As Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l liked to say, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me!" I've had enough for a lifetime.

Y'know it's very interesting that you say that, because I just never would have guessed that about you. You don't sound emotionaly involved at ALL.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by Dov - 22 Dec 2009 23:08

[Kollel Guy wrote on 22 Dec 2009 23:06:](#)

[dov wrote on 22 Dec 2009 22:52:](#)

As Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l liked to say, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me!" I've had enough for a lifetime.

Y'know it's very interesting that you say that, because I just never would have guessed that about you. You don't sound emotionaly involved at ALL.

Unemotionally involved in what?

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by the.guard - 22 Dec 2009 23:10

[Kollel Guy wrote on 22 Dec 2009 23:06:](#)

[dov wrote on 22 Dec 2009 22:52:](#)

As Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l liked to say, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me!" I've had enough for a lifetime.

Y'know it's very interesting that you say that, because I just never would have guessed that about you. You don't sound emotionaly involved at ALL.

Kollel guy, is this a joke?

If not, what do you mean?

Dov is **more** emotionally involved in living lust-free - and sharing with others about it - than anyone I know ;D

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by Kollel Guy - 23 Dec 2009 05:51

[guardureyes wrote on 22 Dec 2009 23:10:](#)

[Kollel Guy wrote on 22 Dec 2009 23:06:](#)

[dov wrote on 22 Dec 2009 22:52:](#)

As Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l liked to say, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me!" I've had enough for a lifetime.

Y'know it's very interesting that you say that, because I just never would have guessed that about you. You don't sound emotionally involved at ALL.

Kollel guy, is this a joke?

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Dov is **more** emotionally involved in living lust-free - and sharing with others about it - than anyone I know ;D

This is my super sarcastic way of trying to be funny.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by bahava - 23 Dec 2009 07:41

Well gentlemen, I'm back.

Today was the first day in a while where I stopped feeling bad for myself, and started to take action with my life.

L'maiseh, yesterday is what I needed to snap me out of it.

I'd really like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Really.

Without your support, yesterday could have been much, much worse. Instead, its energized me to push my life forward.

I'm a different person now than I was 2.5 months ago, and its because of all of you.

Thank you.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by Kollel Guy - 23 Dec 2009 10:56

That's what GUE is all about.

I came in here looking for help, half expecting either yeshivishe raid which won't have the slightest effect on my life, or mystical hallucinations about how you need to balance all the energetic forces within you - using love for nature.

And what I found was a whole community of frum jews JUST LIKE ME, who share the same difficulties and frustrations as I do, and who also seek to free themselves of the self-destructive habit they find themselves caught in, and who all help and support each other in truth, and with wisdom - usually from experience.

It's an amazing thing, and your just beginning to realize how true this is.

It's changing my life, in more than just one way.

Your very welcome. More than you appreciate the help, the rest of us appreciate the opportunity to help you succeed!

And as Bards would say, KOT,NMW!!

In simple language, that's:

Keep

On

Truck'n

No

Matter

What

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by Dov - 23 Dec 2009 13:58

Now **that** was geshmak!!

(oops! yesivisheh reid!)

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Hang in there B'ahava, you got a whole bunch of fans rooting for you here!

Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back
Posted by Kollel Guy - 23 Dec 2009 14:40

Lo! R' Dov,

but that's not the type of yeshivishe raid that doesn't work.

I meant Iggeres Hamussar or something. Extremely awesome for evryday taavos, but doesn't hold a match to addictions.

Don't get me wrong, I love yeshivishe raid, I just think it has a time and place.

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Re: 1 step forward, 1 step back

Posted by 7yipol - 23 Dec 2009 18:29

Kollel Guy has got it.

I think its as if we are struggling to stay afloat in a very turbulent ocean

with waves crashing over our heads and no one else in sight.

We are fighting the mighty powers all alone. All alone

And we realize that all we can do is cry for help.

Suddenly a lifeboat pulls up next to us.

Arms reach down into the raging waters and pull us up, into the safety of a boat.

Sure, the storm is still tossing us about.

Sure the boat may still tip ch'v.

But we are no longer alone

There is comfort in company.

The danger still looms, but automatically,

our bodies relax when we feel

the hard bottom of the boat,

the warm blanket around our shoulders,

the water bottle gently lifted to our parched lips.

Someone cared enough to brave the elements

Just for me!

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