

Almost 1 year sober

Posted by djl605 - 12 Jul 2018 03:13

BH I'm getting close to hitting the one-year mark of sobriety! I don't remember the exact date of the last time I acted out, but I know it was some time in early Elul last year. Immediately afterward I thought to myself, "We just had Tisha B'Av a few weeks ago. It's Elul; I'm supposed to be getting myself ready for the most intense period of Teshuva of the entire year and THIS is what I'm doing?!"

Since then I've just been taking it one step at a time. First I said I'd get through Elul. Once I did that I told myself to hold out through the Aseres Yemei Teshuva. Then sukkos. Then I told myself it's just a few more days to finish off tishrei. Once I got through tishrei I asked myself if after nearly two months of sobriety I was just going to give up as soon as there wasn't a big milestone coming up; that got me through Marcheshvan. Next I targeted Channukah. Tevet and Shevat were very difficult for me. That point, about 5-6 months in, was undoubtedly the time I struggled the most. That was when I made this forum post: guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum/324223-Resenting-my-own-success . But once Adar rolled around I had Purim to target and then Pesach. And then, I'm not sure exactly when it happened, but I'm pretty sure it was some time during sefiras haomer, things suddenly got so much easier. I suddenly didn't have constant urges to act out. I can go weeks at a time without even thinking about it. And now here we are, less than 24 hours away from Rosh Chodesh Av.

I'm not sure exactly why I decided to make this forum post. Maybe I just wanted to tell someone about my success since this is still a secret part of my life in the real world. There are certain people who I honestly would love to tell this to since I think they'd be sincerely proud of me, but for now I'm too embarrassed. But anyway, maybe this can somehow be mechazek the olam.

I'm certainly not completely over this problem. I still get urges, sometimes very strong, to act out. Now that I think about it, I've had urges a few times in the past couple of weeks. Probably because of some extra stress at work right now. I literally just put that together as I was typing out this post, so maybe the element of self-therapy is part of why I decided to post this message.

Anyway, I've rambled long enough. May our sincere efforts to improve ourselves and overcome our yetzer hara's be counted as merits for klal Yisrael and may they help tip the scales so this coming Tisha B'Av will be the very last one we mourn in our galus.

I guess I can answer questions people have for me.

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Re: Almost 1 year sober

Posted by bentorah34 - 12 Jul 2018 18:51

Amazing! Thank you for sharing! Huge chizuk for us.

Was the forum post deleted? For some reason I cannot access it and I would love the insight into the 5-6 month mark and its increased struggle as I keep slipping around that time as well...

Wishing you continued Hatzlacha and keep coming back to let us know how it's going.

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Re: Almost 1 year sober

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 12 Jul 2018 18:56

The link to the older post doesn't work because there's a period at the end of it.

Hatzlacha and KUTGW!!

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Re: Almost 1 year sober

Posted by djl605 - 12 Jul 2018 18:59

Thanks bentorah! The post wasn't deleted, but it's in the "Baalei Batim" forum, so it's probably only accessible to married men. I've reproduced my original post here:

B"H I'm now over 100 days clean. I haven't looked at internet pornography or masturbated even once in 5778. As the streak gets longer, it gets easier for me to keep going, not least because I don't want to break the streak. I fear that if it ever gets broken, it will take me a long time to get another streak going again (it's happened to me before).

The big problem I have going for me now is that I've started to resent my own success. I sometimes lie in bed and wish that I hadn't succeeded for so long so it would be easier for me to fall again. Has anybody ever dealt with anything like that before? How do you handle it?

Unfortunately, I didn't really get any magic new advice to handle that particular situation. But now that you know that others (i.e. me) also consider that time to be particularly difficult and have succeeded in getting through it, hopefully it can be a chizuk for you!

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Re: Almost 1 year sober
Posted by djl605 - 12 Jul 2018 19:01

The link to the older post doesn't work because there's a period at the end of it.

Indeed, that was it! I edited the OP so now the link should work (at least for those with access to that forum).

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Re: Almost 1 year sober
Posted by bentorah34 - 13 Jul 2018 02:30

Got it now. Thanks. Someone else posted about reaching out to speak daily with a sponsor or partner. Did you try that route or winged it on your own?

I don't think my problem is resenting the success, rather perhaps getting complacent and letting my guard down.

How long did you struggle prior to this year? What was your level of addiction?

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Re: Almost 1 year sober

Posted by djl605 - 13 Jul 2018 12:19

I didn't try that route. I certainly wouldn't tell others not to do it, but for me that was too hard.

My personal details are that I've been involved with this since my teens, probably 14 or 15. I'm now in my late 20s. So on one hand, that's half my life, but on the other hand it's not the 50 years that some people have struggled. At points I was acting out on the internet daily (and occasionally even more than once per day) for extended streaks of time.

I wasn't religious when I started, and I actually didn't really think there was anything wrong with it. I just figured that it was healthy teenage sexuality, and masturbating privately was a safe outlet for that sexuality. By the time I became aware of the religious and psychological damage I was doing to myself, it had already become enough of a habit that it was difficult to break.

To be clear, I didn't exactly just quit cold turkey one year ago. I got married in my early-to-mid twenties and I knew that if my wife knew what I was doing, it would really hurt her feelings. That was enough to slow me down substantially, but not completely. It wasn't the "when I'm married my sexual needs will be taken care of, so I won't need to do it anymore" lie that so many people tell themselves. Obviously (at least for those of us who are married), marital intimacy is an *entirely* different thing from masturbation. But the guilt of hurting someone I care so much about did cause me to try much harder than I had in the past to push off my desires for as long as I could. I slowly weaned myself and then one year ago I told myself enough was enough.

It's just one year down and God-willing 90+ years to go, but at least it's a start!

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