

Personal recovery plan

Posted by obormottel - 12 Aug 2011 22:38

I was pressed for practical steps I'm taking on the path to recovery. So here goes:

By way of introduction:

I've been a compulsive mast*****r since age 11 or 12. Started looking at internet p**n when it became available in my house, after being married for a short time. Can't tell you when viewing this garbage became addictive, but it's been years since I realized I have a BIG problem. I would come to shul to mincha with fresh stains on my pants, and people would ask me to be shliach tzibbur! The depression and anxiety, and feelings of hypocrisy! I don't have to tell you... I couldn't stop no matter how much I agonized over this. I installed BSAFE filter, and set my own password (dumb!!!). I took on hachlotois. I gave tzdoko, and even created a knas for myself of \$180 for each occurrence (turns out it's a legit technique; I just did everything else wrong). All to no help. About a month ago I gave up on myself, and gave myself over to G-d's mercy. I wrote a tzetle to a Tzaddik and gave myself over to the Tzaddik. Within 1 week of the latter I saw a banner for this website on Arutz7. Ever since then:

1. I had my wife install K9 filter and hold the password. In addition , she restricted my internet access so that now when I finish work at 6pm, my internet shuts down, so I have no reason to aimlessly (or, rather, intentionally) browse the web after I am alone in the office. Even with filter, there is plenty room for mischief on the web for a sick mind, so I find this trick especially helpful.
2. I subscribed and now READ daily the Chizzuk emails (both lists)
3. I got myself on the 90 Day chart (day 9 as of today, YAY!)
4. I am half way through the Handbook and Attitude handbook. Found both of them extremely helpful and lucid.
5. I listened to Rav Reisman's shiur on Yirmiyohu. (Did it on 9 Av, thought it to be appropriate). BTW, R' Reisman is great; I've been listening to his MP3 shiurim for a long time now.
6. I am obsessing with this site now, reading what I can, taking part in the forum etc. I probably spend as much time doing this as I used to do the other stuff, which keeps me busy and I do it from home in the evenings, not from the privacy of my office, so it brings me back home...

On the spiritual side, I kept the fence I've already created for myself before: to go to the mikva after each occurrence, and in general to be particular ab. tvilas Ezra. I started learning a particular kuntreis on shmiras eynaim (and once I know you better, I'll tell you which one it is), and plan on doing more of such reading. I also decided to keep my mouth shut in shul, if an argument of any sort ensues (I am usually very vocal expressing my opinion), so that I learn to not have attention focused on me. Also, I promised (in that above-mentioned tzetle) to wear a hat every time I daven, bentch, say Birchas Hashachar, or Al Hamichyo. I think it should add to the additional yiras Shomaim I'm trying to instill on to myself.

What else? I apologized to my wife (for which I was ostracized by some on this forum); and I actively turn my head away if something comes into my line of sight that I know will bring me to hirhurim.

And finally, I am making this kabolo allehabo (Bli neder, it's not a vow just yet): before acting out the next time (should a time like this come, Hashem yishmerenu), I will put on my hat and jacket and say my kappitel tehilim. If I don't do it and act out, C"V, then I will pay 10 times the mikva fee the following morning (I've been pretty consistent with my mikva promise).

Your input is welcome. Please don't beat up on me too much, I'm still working out my sensitivity issues:)

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Re: Personal recovery plan

Posted by heuni memass - 24 Aug 2011 21:03

[obormottel wrote on 24 Aug 2011 20:19:](#)

The main problem I have developed in the last day or so, was based on Dov's email which says something to the effect "if you are ashamed of your lusting, you're still holding on to it".

I am ashamed as heck (I hate using this word instead of the real one, so it is brought to you courtesy of Ben Durdarya) and I can't even fathom talking to a live person about it, either face to face or on the phone. Which is why (is it alex or eliezer?) I didn't take you up on a talking on the phone offer; and you would be the guy to talk to, similar-minded etc

there is a saying " we are only as sick as our secrets" or something like that.. The idea is if you are ashamed and keep it in then its still a secret and you can continue living with it and acting on it. As soon as its not a secret and you have someone to talk to about it then its not a secret and its not holing it within..

Sure. we fill sick when we go over what we did, how we acted, how this controls and ruins our life. But, if you are holding it quite between you and yourself then you will continue living in your secret life..

We need to find a safe place to open up.. If you feel this is killing your life why cant you talk to someone safe on the phone about your issues...? Is it because you dont want to hear it and verbalize it? that is the point we need to hear it verbalize it and see how this is really destroying our life's.

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Re: Personal recovery plan

Posted by obormottel - 25 Aug 2011 00:21

gotta stop thinking, gotta stop thinking..... :D

Heuni, very clear point, thank you.

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Re: Personal recovery plan

Posted by obormottel - 29 Aug 2011 15:34

I found journaling my path to recovery to be helpful, so I'm going to continue doing that on this thread and everybody please comment.

Last few days were difficult. Partly because I was thinking the following: I don't have that big of a problem; I can look around on the street, there is so much to see; afterall, if I really had a problem, I would have fallen already. So it's a real struggle lately to avert my eyes. Someone here suggested that I list things that made me hate my current situation, because as time passes, I will forget and then the fall is likely. I didn't realize that I'll forget in three short weeks. So bli neder, I shall compile a list of things that have made my life unmanageable and disgusting, and come back to this list every so often to remind myself how bad of a problem I really got.

But what do you say to the fact that I found it relatively easy to stay clean for over twenty days? Maybe I'm no addict, just a guy who likes looking at p**n and touch himself. I mean, who doesn't?

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Re: Personal recovery plan

Posted by alexeliezer - 29 Aug 2011 15:50

Sounds like the Y"H is moving in for the kill.

You're an addict if you know you should stop, tried to stop, and can't (not without using recovery techniques).

Now you're wondering why you should stop?

Addict or not, as a frum yid, everything that's poison for an addict happens to be assur and torture to your beautiful, numbed neshama. Don't think so? Read through *al cheit* (coming soon to a synagogue near you).

Also, this addiction doesn't stagnate. Read the posts. It intensifies, gets uglier and demands further degeneration to get its fix. It was happening to me, at a time in my life when I had everything going for me. Baruch Hashem I escaped in time.

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Alex

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Re: Personal recovery plan

Posted by gibbor120 - 29 Aug 2011 16:58

Sorry for going a bit backwards in the posts, but you were discussing the idea of being powerless. Here is a quote from Rabbi Twerski quoting the gemara

This is essentially the Talmudic statement (Kedushin 30b) that one's yetzer hara (evil inclination) increases in strength every day, and were it not for the help of G-d, one would not be able to withstand it.

I an explanation for this in a sefer. Hashem wants us to exert our maximum effort. If we knew that we could do it on our own, we would get complacent. Knowing that we need Hashems help, and we will only get it once we exert our maximum effort, in effect gets us to exert our maximum effort.

Someone compared it to the mitzvah of *azov ta'azov imo*. I had the exact same thought. Hashem helps us once we exert effort to help ourselves. At the end of the day however, we cannot do it without his help.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by obormottel - 29 Aug 2011 20:30

[gibbor120 wrote on 29 Aug 2011 16:58:](#)

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I get the ilemolei HKB"H oizroi. I'm fine with azoiv taazoiv imoi.

So here is why I'm still confused:

when does this point come, when you say: I've done my darndest, now Hashem you take over?
maybe I can (or must) still go on my own?

In other words, I'm confused (at this stage, so many fine posts later) as to who is in control? Am I in control of my eyes? How about my thoughts? Is my being in control negates my giving the control over to Hashem? Who is putting up the fight? Is it me or Hashem? if it's Him, why do I get beat up? And my most important point: do you get a notice: "As of 10am this morning your fight has been taken over by G-d. Please sign off and turn in your keys"?

I just re-read this and it makes no sense. I'll post it anyways so hopefully Alex, Gibor, Gevura, you guys can hammer the point home.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by gibbor120 - 29 Aug 2011 21:01

The point is that you don't *know* when Hashem is taking over. You've got to fight with all your might **and** at the same time ask Hashem to help you. I don't think you can *feel* Hashem taking over. You do your best and ask Hashem to help. I'masseh, without Hashem's help you can't do it. If you did it, he helped you.

Clear enough? Just my 2 cents. I'm sure others will see it differently. What do they say about
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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by alexeliezer - 29 Aug 2011 21:05

It's simple.

You are in control of your eyes. Still, ask for help in this area.

You are not in control of your lustful thoughts. So when a lustful thought comes, that's the time to start praying for Divine Assistance. Your hishtadlus is to turn the fight over to Hashem rather than give in. Over and over. He never takes permanent ownership so you can NEVER become complacent. It's a day-by-day, sometimes minute-by-minute favor. So it helps to get busy with something else.

Your notice is when you realize the thoughts are coming much less frequently and are easier to turn over to Hashem. Lust no longer has a stranglehold on your day, your thoughts.

Before everything though, you must be willing to give up the beloved part of your self called Lust.

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Re: Personal recovery plan

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 29 Aug 2011 21:18

Gibbor and Alex, you both make good points.

I would add that there are times when I HAVE seen it. There were a couple of times when I was in a situation where there was a trigger right in front of me, and I couldn't get away for whatever reason. I tried my best not to look, took off my glasses, tried delaying tactics ("I'll look in 5 minutes") but I felt that I was stuck, the pull was becoming inexorable, and I would eventually have to give in. So I said a quick tefilla to Hashem to take it away. And for seeming no apparent reason, the person left!

I can't say that I do it every time, or that it works every time I do it. But when it happens, I acknowledge it, and I feel like Hashem is giving me a hug and telling me " I see what you are going through and I am helping you".

Gevura!

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by alexeliezer - 30 Aug 2011 15:13

Beautiful work Gevurah!

Also a great example of the nuts and bolts of dealing with a close encounter.

We can post here all we like, but these real life battles are where the rubber hits the road. Caught a glimpse of a powerful trigger posing in front of me this morning at work (one of my absolute favorites in the bad old days). I turned around and left the room and was near tears in the stairwell begging for help. I'm ok now.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by JackAbbey - 30 Aug 2011 15:48

there is a difference between seeing something and then avoiding the trigger, and between having a trigger right in front of your eyes for the next 6 hours, for example in a train or airplane, or in a family get together where your sister-in-law dresses like in the time of the maabil, then you are in deep trouble and you are forced to ask for hashem for help, and he will help you if you mean it

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by alexeliezer - 31 Aug 2011 17:59

Jack thanks for the laugh ;D

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by obormottel - 31 Aug 2011 21:24

[alexeliezer wrote on 30 Aug 2011 15:13:](#)

Caught a glimpse of a powerful trigger posing in front of me this morning at work (one of my absolute favorites in the bad old days). I turned around and left the room and was near tears in the stairwell begging for help. I'm ok now.

I was in tears the other day after a powerful trigger, too, only mine were tears of frustration. I really really wanted to look, but I forced myself not to; but I was tantruming like a baby.

"But I wannnaaaaaaa loooooook, why can't I, why why WHY?"

In retrospect, how pathetic that a pair of whatever can trigger such an emotional response. Crying for not being allowed to look? Complaining and whining about it?

[alexeliezer wrote on 31 Aug 2011 17:44:](#)

Triggered? Feeling a lust attack coming on? Call out to Hashem right away for help. Tell him you are powerless over lust and only He can restore you to sanity. Tell Him "take my lust, I DON'T WANT TO LUST." Give up your lust to Hashem.

Alex

So after a while I remembered that and prayed for that and it helped.

But I am still haunted by the power of that emotion of feeling forced against my will to lower my gaze and not being able to even sneak a peek. It felt so unnatural not to look....

This is the first time since I've begun to look away, that the pull was so strong and the reaction so emotionally charged. It always felt like violation of my independence but I was always so proud

to subjugate myself to Hashem's will and do what He wants, not what I want. I had to search for that pride and until I davened I couldn't find it.

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Re: Personal recovery plan

Posted by obormottel - 31 Aug 2011 22:00

Someone today told me a story of a Wish Master who granted people's wishes, which was awesome. You could ask him anything. However, the salt of the story is that the Wish Master fulfilled your wishes in his own way. For example, someone who asked for eternal life was turned into stone statue. Someone else, who asked for riches, was transplanted into a downtrodden place on Earth, where his meager possessions made him the richest man in a 100 mile radius; etc.

It ocured to me that this a nimshal for my confusion lately:

You see, the Wish Master changed the circumstances of the petitioner, not his self. So if everything around you decays and you don't, you think you live forever. If everyone is even poorer... v'dal.

So I am confused: are we asking Hashem to change our circumstances by taking away triggers? Or should we be asking him to change our being, that lust should not be part of our human experience?

L'mai nafka mina? If "al tvieni lidei nosoyon", then I'm not working on myself, just pray I don't get provoked.

If "take away my lust", then once that's taken away, it's no longer me; and Hashem sent me to this world to fight my Yetzer, which in my case happens to be lust.

Well, in the case of "al tvieni" you can say that my praying IS working on myself, since other guys (myself included) are happy to be tested and even happier to fail the test.

But if you're praying for lust to be taken away, then you truly give the fight over to Hashem.

And He does take it away, only with a time limit, similar to my internet access: three hour block during business hours (actually, in my case of surgical lust removal, it's about 15 minutes or till the next trigger, whichever comes first).

The latter seems to be reb Alex's sheetah, or am I wrong?

On the other hand, the al tvieni is a coin minted by the Chachomim, so it seems OK (or better than OK) to simply ask not to be tested.

Confusion reigns!

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