

newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by mike dupont - 20 Aug 2015 14:23

After years of having been an internet addict I got caught by my wife recently which I believe was Hachem's gift to me so I can finally start to better myself. In the mean time I met with a therapist which is going to coach me (and my wife) on how to cope/get things under control.

I'm happy my wife wants to give us a second chance and she's been looking online for help, this is how she got to GYE and convinced me to subscribe.

Just one concern: I looked at the 90-day chart and was actually disappointed by seeing the longest current streak is 89 days although some people have been clean for hundreds of days. Does this mean almost everybody will fail again? Is there no chance to become clean for the rest of our lives?

Mike

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by cordnoy - 20 Aug 2015 14:58

Welcome,

You sound like you are on the right path.

Once one reaches 90 days, he 'graduates' to the 'Wall of Honor.'

When you reach 90, soon enough, you too will be able to open that thread and more.

If you ask nicely, someone will show you around and introduce you to other secret forums.

Unanumun knows some of them as well, but he is not so accessible.

[Sounds like the back of a cereal box.]

b'hatzlachah to you

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 20 Aug 2015 14:59

Welcome Mike!

When you have a current streak of more than 90 days you get listed on the "Wall Of Honor" which you can see by clicking the button at the top of the list.

It's great to hear that you wife is being supportive and working with you to set things right. Change doesn't happen overnight, it's a lifelong process, but the rewards are tremendous (in both worlds). With Hashem's help you will get there, one day at a time.

KOMT!

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by waydown - 20 Aug 2015 15:05

Firstly,

Welcome I am new as well. And I want you to know I feel for you. Its going to be a tough battle. I truly believe this is the hardest battle you will face throughout your life. Whats more as opposed to other addictions, wherever you go lust will be dangling in your face. (The mall, work, internet etc..) An alcoholic generally does not have to go about his daily life bumping into expensive tasty shnaps. But wherever we go there are pretty girls jumping al over us. BH you have a wonderful caring wife. I feel for your pain though. And don't balme yourself this is an almost powerless out of our control adiction. Just as a diabetic has nebach a disease out of his reach so to is this disease for some of us.

Re the 89 day clean streak issue and will you ever be clean for life?

Here is my take. And I should make a disclaimer the pros in this site may kill me for what I am about to say and may not agree.

One thing is for sure I don't think one can ever get rid of his tavaia till the day he dies. We know that the yetzer hara doesn't sleep till the day we die. Al taman batzmacha ad yom mosecha. This is our dor's nisyan. I don't think I will ever win the war. But I think our job is to win battles not wars. Once we realize that we will never win the war we must realize that almost nobody wins every single battle. To be honest there are tzadkim such as Dov who are clean for 18 years straight and that gives us chizuk. We must strive to be like him. I think many if not most of us will have slips every now & then. As I said this is our yetzer and it won't go away. Circling back to my diabetic mashal. Generally diabetics live functional lives but on occasions they have outbursts. Our goal is to keep on fighting and not let those slips discourage us and even more important we must make sure that slip doesn't send us into a downward spiral. Let it be a slip brush it off and move on. And as long as its only occasional slips we still have control over our lives.

As far as the 89 days thing, well again I'll get killed for this. I have never gone more than 4 days willingly without sinning (I have had fever for 4 days so that doesn't count). In my mind 89 days is a great accomplishment too. Provided that 89th day fall ias a slip not a downward spiral.

I should point out that since its an addiction even a slip is dangerous. We can't approach this by saying whats the big deal I'll let myself slip here & there. Because you will fall back into the addiction. So allowing ourselves to slip is a slippery slope But at the same time we have to realize that we are human and suceptible to it. And we won't get down when it happens. Rather to the contrary we will work on ourselves to ensure that we know how to bursh it off and move on.

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by mike dupont - 20 Aug 2015 15:27

waydown and the others,

thanks for your prompt reply, great to see other people care and react that fast.

Personally I might accept your theory about being unable to win the war (although the thought

of it is somehow depressing) but I'm also concerned for my wife and our married life.

How will/should she cope? Can she accept today that for the rest of her life she will be married with an addict who will stumble from time or time or is she better off leaving me and maybe try with someone else?

BTW I agree that 89 days clean is a great achievement but I was expecting higher figures than this

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by waydown - 20 Aug 2015 15:48

Mike Who am I to talk? I was never in your shoes. My wife only almost caught me once but never really caught me. I really can't talk for your wife.

As a husband I would beg my wife if she eever read this to look at me as the same man she always loved just with the knowledge that I have an illness. If chas vsholom one husband is disgnosed with diabilities ones life will never be the same. Its an added burden on that guys wife. She now has a sick husband. But almost always she loves her husband enough to stand by and live the tough life with him. I say the same is true for this illness. I want my wife to know I love her and never intended to trade her for some pretty selfish stupid shiktza slut (or jewish if CV thats the case). I am simply sick. And please treat me the same way you would deal with an ill husband.

Again i am talking like a man. (cordnoy would say a selfish man). You do pose a tough question.

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by Hatzileini Na - 20 Aug 2015 22:25

[mike dupont wrote:](#)

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Personally I might accept your theory about being unable to win the war (although the thought of it is somehow depressing) but I'm also concerned for my wife and our married life.

How will/should she cope? Can she accept today that for the rest of her life she will be married with an addict who will stumble from time or time or is she better off leaving me and maybe try with someone else?

BTW I agree that 89 days clean is a great achievement but I was expecting higher figures than this

Mike,

Welcome aboard.

Based on your last line here I'm not sure you understood one of the earlier posters. People with streaks longer than 90 days are moved to another list; "the wall of honor." There are many people who have had streaks for years and years. Sure the Yetzer Hora does not go away, but we can reach a state where we are not falling in this fashion and many here do.

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by serenity - 21 Aug 2015 05:12

The care you show for your fellow and the support you are willing to give him is truly amazing. Yasher Koach.

You mention the terms taiva, addiction yetzer hara, fight and winning battles and may not win the war. These terms need to be separated a bit.

Addict = Disease & sickness & mental disorder & allergy of the body & obsession of the mind & withdrawal symptoms
I would like to help you clarify a few things, if you'll permit me to do that

Solution for addict = Surrender & acceptance & honesty & defeat & Miracle needed & medical treatment & recovery program

Non-addict = Yetzer hara & taiva

Solution for non-addict = fight & battle & resist & learn mussar/chassidus & do teshuvah

A normal person has a taiva and the yetzer hara says go for it. Hashem will forgive you, you can't fight it anyway etc etc and he either gives in or he doesn't. If he goes for it, he doesn't lose control and take it to the point of risk, compulsion and obsession.

The unrecovered addict also has a taiva and the yetzer hara says go for it. When he goes for it, he then loses his freedom of choice and never knows how far he will go. He reacts with a phenomenon of craving. He craves more and more, and although each time he gets worse and worse and suffers more and more consequences, he is convinced that the next time he will be able to control it.

The normal person can stop when he wants to and can set limits. He gives into his yetzer but it's more calculated after. He doesn't have an obsession with a false belief that next time he won't go to far.

In other words:

Addiction is a disease, that is analogous to an allergy, that manifests itself in a phenomenon of craving combined with the obsession of the mind that we can safely engage in lust. So it's 1. An allergy of the body and 2. an obsession of the mind. The yetzer hara does not give us an allergy or a disease or act through either of those. So if your acting on a response to an allergy, and you have the obsession of the mind, it has nothing to do with the yetzer hara. If you just have the allergy and not the obsession, that means that you know you have a severe reaction to lust, so you don't engage in it. The unrecovered addict engages in it anyway. It's like someone who has a severe allergic reaction and could die if he eats peanut butter. If that guy eats peanut butter, he's got to be insane. The addict is taking an insane action, because he is obsessed with the idea that it will be okay this time. The person who is not an addict and has no disease of the body or obsession of the mind. He knows he can't eat that peanut butter. He may try to find a safe way to eat it, otherwise he doesn't.

Just to provide an example:

If I click on an inappropriate site with the intention of taking a quick look or lets say I even want to act out quickly, and I end up acting out for 3 hours. And lets say this happens over and over again. It doesn't yet mean that I'm an addict. If I do that and each time I think this time will be different then maybe I'm an addict.

Because of the above distinctions, we are sometimes better of just sharing our experience and what works for us and not giving advice. The advice we give is only our understanding and may not be applicable to the other person at all. But if he relates to our experience, then perhaps he can also gain from doing what we did to get better.

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by cordnoy - 21 Aug 2015 10:32

[serenity wrote:](#)

Addiction is a disease, that is analogous to an allergy, that manifests itself in a phenomenon of craving combined with the obsession of the mind that we can safely engage in lust. So it's 1. An allergy of the body and 2. an obsession of the mind. The yetzer hara does not give us an allergy or a disease or act through either of those. So if your acting on a response to an allergy, and you have the obsession of the mind, it has nothing to do with the yetzer hara.

Serenity, the entire post is well-said and explained and extremely helpful.

I'd like to point out one thin' though, and I don't know if I'm right at all, but it is the way I view it. Firstly, you write: The yetzer hara does not give us an allergy or a disease or act through either of those. Do you know that to be a fact? I mean, maybe; but maybe not? Do we really know what the y"h does do and what he doesn't do? [deleted for possible kefirah issues.] But more importantly is the next line of yours: it has nothing to do with the yetzer hara. While it's true that the books label it as such, but I don't believe it has "nothin'" to do with the y"h. Now, if your belief is that we were born with this addiction (and somehow it manifests itself later on in life), then maybe you are accurate, for then I doubt that addiction is the y"h's doin', but as I do not think that to be the case, the addiction was caused by our actions, surroundin's, behavior and such, thru the plot of the y"h. Now, once it reaches the addiction stage, does he simply vanish from the premises, for he now has hooked? He probably stays around to ensure that we remain in this addictive state, or maybe not. But either way, your main point I agree with wholeheartedly: The addict is not fightin' the yetzer and therefore the regular weapons of war to engage in battle with him might not be productive, so we need to do somethin' different, and that is where surrenderin' to God and wavin' the white flag to Him comes in.

imho.

b'hatzlachah and thanks again

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by waydown - 21 Aug 2015 14:13

Re Yetzer Hara Vs addiction.

R Akiva Tatz has a whole shuir (maybe even a few) about nekuads Habichira. Basiclly, I think his point is we all have a point thats a test and a point thats beyond our control. The newly observant yid who never kept shabbos, his test is not to turn on the lights. Is that even a test for an FFB yid like me? But perhaps my test is I tend to bit my nails. Well thats assur. So a whole shabbos I must ensure I don't bit my nails. Will a non observant jew be held acounatble for biting his nails shabbos? How about when he takes the bad from good while eating a McDondalds chesseburger on shabbos. (Burier) I don't know but its kind of way beyond his control & grasp. But once he becomes observant and learns the mitzvas now biting his nails and burrier is part of his bechira.

My main point yes the yetzer turned it into an allergy or sickness. While we have that allergy we are powerless and have no control. But our yetzer doesn't want us to seek medical help either. He likes when we are in the allergy state. Will Hashem hold us accountable? Who knows for the actual sin while in that state? Who knows? But he proably will hold us accountable for not seeking treatment or enacting measures to treat the allergy or sickness. Oh and even if it is treated he wants u to fall back into it again. So for the rest of our lives he wants to get us. He will never give up and he knows it worked once already.

Leaving the yetzer aside though, I think even the addictive part never totally goes away. Once we tasted our doses our body is just hooked on it. Thats why its so dangerous for a recovered achohlic to even take one drink. So I think once its in our DNA its here to stay. Thats why I say you can't really win the war and eradicate the lust within us. But we may be able to contain it. And as I poined out earlier, wherever we go its dangling in our face. I ca go a whole week without seeing one bottle of alchohl. Try going one day without seeing one pretty woman.

So yes of course its not enough to just battle this as we would battle the yetzer hara. It requires a much stronger innovative, well thought out, surrender plan. Its very differnet than being makbal to come to shachris on time. But its still a war. Maybe a differnet type of war. It still requires, changing mindsets, life patterns and style and tremendous courage. I think that just makes it a tougher war not an easier one. It wll be harder than anything anyone was ever challenged to his entire life. And so we stil must apporach this via declaring war and building up courage

Disclaimer, this is all my view of my struggle. but I ain't no pro. I am very weak myself. I am a beginer and still learning.

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help

Posted by serenity - 21 Aug 2015 15:04

Yes, I agree, although I think some people are born with it or at least the potential is innate. Personally my experience is that I was born with it. I was compulsive and obsessive from the start at a very young age.

I don't have a source to say the yetzer hara doesn't cause the allergy. If it did cause the allergy are we saying it's like a test from Hashem? Like Hashem tested Doniel or Avraham with extra tests? And if so, would that be the yetzer hara, the Sutton or Hashem Himself or what?

I think in the Shais Taub take he says the yetzer hara may be a part of the obsession that we convince ourselves we can do it safely, but not a part of the allergy of craving.

Also when I say it's not the yetzer hara, I mean the part where we become powerless. Addicts and normal people both have the yetzer hara. Normal people don't go to the lengths that addicts go to.

I have friends that have a yetzer hara for gambling. They go to a casino and may even get carried away for the night. They don't spend the next three months going four nights a week, destroying their business, their marriage, their kids and themselves. That's what I mean the yetzer hara has nothing to do with it. I'm pretty sure my yetzera hara went on vacation a long time ago. He (which really is me, right?) proved his point long ago and accomplished his mission. When I was 10 and he (or the sutton) showed me my first "picture" his job was done. I think that's the only reason I was finally able to get recovery with Hashem's miracle. The yetzer hara either fell asleep or maybe even he felt bad for me.

Maybe you can bring some sources for some of this. I unfortunately gave up on learning years ago.

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help

Posted by serenity - 21 Aug 2015 15:14

"yes the yetzer turned it into an allergy or sickness." Waydown

Let's keep discussing that part. As I'm saying to Cords, I'm not sure that's true. I personally believe I had the allergy from day one. I guess at the end of the day it doesn't matter when the allergy comes. What does matter is that once you have the allergy or have identified it for sure, you have to consider that the normal methods of fighting the yetzer hara may not work. So if you're trying to get sober for a year and can't maybe you have to try other methods. What has helped me is AA, SA, Therapy and medication. The second I slack off on any of those things, I lose the grace of God that allows me to keep sober. I no longer care if I (the big I) win this battle. I'm not trying to prove anything to myself. I know I can't win it, therefore I utilize any outside help that is available.

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by waydown - 21 Aug 2015 16:10

So basically you are suggesting that in order to succeed (I stress succeed not win) you must turn to therapy and medication? There is no path to success any other way? Yes I totally understand we can't just view it as a fight against the yetzer. But I would venture to say most yetzer hara's are more spure of the moment changing little stuff kind of things. (just as a silly example) Yoy are in the mood of shmuzing and instead push yourself to learn torah, True its ain't easy to always learn but that yetzer hara to batul is not a vicious cycle nor do I need major tact to succeed. (Its funny because he gets me here too!) In contrast this lust, addiction, (lets not call it yetzer hara) requires tact and a well thought out strategy (including help from other wonderful people such as GYE!). It requires na latitude and life style change.

In a nutshell, no its not your typical melchomas hetzer. There is alot more invloved. But is it really mutually exclusive? And is the only answer therapy and medication? And at the end of the day won't you admit that it also requires get resolve and a declaration of war against lust?

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by serenity - 21 Aug 2015 16:26

I'm just saying what I need and what is working for me. I know very little and in no way claim to have a solution that fits everyone. Maybe if I did some things differently, I wouldn't need the medication anymore for example. I definitely agree that a big part that has helped me and many others is doing the little things that I don't want to do. The the main thing is to keep taking action!

I feel bad for Mike Dupont, he is a newbie who has a simple question and he's getting a

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Re: newbie - first time I try to get clean with help
Posted by waydown - 21 Aug 2015 16:55

LOL yes sorry Mike. I hope we are not overbearing especially I can get longwinded!

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chabura!