

Starting anew. again.

Posted by shmiraShachaim - 08 Feb 2016 19:28

Hi everyone. I have introduced myself in the past but I decided to open a new account because I haven't been on top of my GYE game and after falling a couple times after a long streak I decided to start afresh. No point explaining more so I'll get down to what I have been going through: I go by Chaim and I'm 23. I started a rollercoaster of depravity and *teshuvah* about four years ago which began with lusting and masturbating, and progressed to pornography. During this period I dealt with being diagnosed with OCD, ADD and depression, and my mother passing away. As is common with addicts, my image completely clashed with my activities and thoughts. I was viewed as a masmid, bal medos, tzadik, etc. but I had this storm going on inside me going on without anyone noticing it besides poor lonely me. True, I might of lacked self-esteem and overly cared about what people thought about me and feigned who I was somewhat, but I didn't view myself as a *complete* fake because I *did* care about growing and coming close to Hashem. Instead I saw myself as a very confused and depressed person. With a few therapists under my belt and signing up on GYE, I have been working on myself by attaining a better understating of my addiction and attempting to address my diagnoses and circumstances which are interrelated with each other and my addiction. B"H, I have gained clarity through GYE in the nature of my addiction and the means of going about it. I was able to stay clean for a month and a half and I felt it was time to start dating. I felt clear headed going out with my first date. I haven't done more than having the occasional fleeting sexual thoughts in a while and as far as I can tell I didn't view her as a sex object. I didn't fantasize about her and I'm pretty sure I was evaluating it with my usual methodical and even OCD thinking and I really truly believe it's a neis that I am engaged to her. She is sweet, pure, and has a very similar outlook and goals that I do. I was clean for a while but I was still working on a TaPHSIC shvuah. I was able to think it through and write it down, but I acted out before I actually said it. I acted out once after that by paying my "small" kinas. I am so scared. What has gotten into me? I need to prepare for marriage and not hurt this girl whom I committed to take care of in a loving and healthy way. Please Hashem help me on this never ending journey!!

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Re: Starting anew. again.

Posted by shmiraShachaim - 08 Apr 2016 19:12

[Shlomo24 wrote on 06 Apr 2016 02:06:](#)

My take is that I can't do tomorrow without doing today. I know that I can't do "quick fixes" anymore.

I don't think I meant to say I am taking care of tomorrow nor that quick fixes exist, just to take staock in my future a little. I don't think I have been too clear on the posts and maybe because

i'm not too clear myself! so I will think about it more! Thanks Shlomo

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Re: Starting anew. again.

Posted by shmiraShachaim - 08 Apr 2016 19:13

Update on myself and whats been on my mind:

I get another mazal tov! I am considered an Ahavas Hashem on GYE standards. I reached 70 days on my journey. Ahava has been on my mind lately. Not only because of all those sheva bracha speeches I just went through just a couple of weeks ago, but also because of what it has to do with pornography and the whole adult industry in general. I have been thinking about the term love ever since I had a conversation about it with someone in this industry (who still sickens me today and I won't get into details about). The term "love" has been warped in these circles to the point that it basically replaced what in the past has been considered vulgar and empty. True relationships has been replaced with the desire to fulfill our lusts and fantasies, with sex being so amplified that its connotation of genuine love has been taken over with merely lustful pleasure.

But I feel it goes deeper than that. Love- Ahavah, is the essence of giving. Real love represents the sacrifice and attention one gives to another that brings them closer together. However, the progressive "love" that replaced that love is not only a fraud but it is the complete opposite of what that real love is about. Instead of caring for another, this "love" focuses on oneself and one's selfish desires, and how much one can take advantage of another to fulfill those desires. While real love makes a lasting unity that creates a new entity, attachment, and companionship, this "love" is superficial and if anything breaks relationships apart and brings detachment and loneliness.

I have seen this play out in my personal struggle with pornography. However, that instant sense of companionship I craved didn't only come from a lack of existing romance, but also from a lack of attachment with anyone in general. I felt detached from the world, and I used the ironic route of pornography to attain that so needed attachment. I used the accessible, unlimited and unconditional intimacy of pornography, where I was able to be in an enclosed world- where it was only me and my companions of complicity, to feel attachment, only to be more lonely and detached afterwards. I have been for a while attempting to focus on making real connections and strengthening the connections I already had (and also deal with why I was feeling disconnected in the first place, but that's a whole schmooze in itself). As a chasson, I am also working on internalizing what real love and real connection is all about as opposed to the fake love that I have been affected by for so long to make my marriage as beautiful as it is supposed to be.

I came to realize that this detachment wasn't only from others around me, but it was a

detachment from Hashem. I have desperately been trying to come close to Hashem for years, and it's been so difficult. I have been so distant and these activities has obviously only have brought me only further. I think we as humans naturally yearn for an association with some bigger entity, whether it be a sports team, an organization, or a celebrity. I was thinking maybe some people have even a bigger yearning, a longing perhaps so big that it's more ethereal or otherworldly. This aspiration can lean towards spirituality and ahavas Hashem, and they can even lead someone to Hashem faster because of that special inner drive. However, in the same token it can lead them to pornography and its unnatural fantasy land of those intangible sensual pleasures. I have been trying to internalize my need for higher attachment and utilizing my unique capacity for spirituality as opposed to wasting it away on stupidity.

Lastly, I feel that pornography had what to do with the lack of connecting with *myself*. I think that pornography crept in because I lost touch with myself. I was unable to accept myself of who I was by my inability to realize some of my strengths and to appreciate what I had. I couldn't come to terms with myself and I couldn't love myself. I found myself day dreaming about me as someone else, some celebrity or famous person, living a care free life. Pornography even furthered this detachment by warping my mind and sechel by digging myself further into my fantasies. Also, I feel that it didn't allow me to focus on who I was and what I had to work on in order to overcome this addiction because it inhibited my ability to think clearly about myself and my current situation, and continued to keep my focus on all the fantasy characters I made up that I can be instead. I have been attempting to appreciate what I have, and B'H my mind has been working more clearly, and not only have I been able to appreciate what I have, but I have been able to focus more on what I need to do to get better.

May Hashem help me to continue on this new road of mine that leads to genuine love and genuine connection, to my beloved wife, to others, to Hashem, and to myself.

Sorry if anything was too simple or just didn't make sense. Thanks for reading! I am looking forward to connecting with all of you on GYE!

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Re: Starting anew. again.
Posted by BenTorah.BaalHabayis - 08 Apr 2016 21:01

That was beautifully written. I especially identify with the last part, about not connecting with myself and living in a fantasy land. I can recall very clearly the feeling of wishing I could be that porn star and be able to go all out in fulfilling my taavos. I realize that in a large part it comes from a lack of appreciating who I am and the life Hashem gave me, and specifically the privilege

of being a Yid who can live a meaningful life of not giving in to all my desires!

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Re: Starting anew. again.
Posted by shmiraShachaim - 10 Apr 2016 20:59

Day 72. A couple of days ago was the first time I was able to taste 90.... but i'm still trying to take it one day at a time. Today it's been especially important that i focus on just getting through today. I'm having a hard time chevra because of the infamous T affect. I'm exhausted. As the day progressed its become more and more difficult to think. I actually started with more free time than usual, but I feel like i'm in a haze of time, spacing out, forgetting things, and just can't get anything done. My mind is starting to get those restless feelings that never bode well. No matter how much I internalize anything productive before this happens its so so hard...I was outside driving around, and eventhough I B'H haven't been nichshal in shmiraS einayim, but those familiar feelings are coming back when i am walking or driving past women. I know this is normal as a male, but i don't want this to spiral...

I am now sitting in my car.. sitting..begging Hashem to get me through TODAY. Please!!

Please Chevra, my mind is a little muddled now.. can anyone with a clearer mind help me make sure this doesn't get worse...

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Re: Starting anew. again.
Posted by realsimcha - 11 Apr 2016 06:10

What can you do to get some rest?

Do you have any healthy way to chill out when you are tired and alone?

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Re: Starting anew. again.
Posted by shmiraShachaim - 11 Apr 2016 16:46

B'H I got past yesterday with nothing crazy happening. But it was a good reminder that I need to keep my A-game on for being aware that i am still vulnerable. Small reminders have been sent

my way sporadically that I need to stay aware and connected (past few times because i was tired), and B'H i have been able to do so.

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Re: Starting anew. again.
Posted by shmirashachaim - 11 Apr 2016 16:56

[realsimcha wrote on 11 Apr 2016 06:10:](#)

What can you do to get some rest?

Do you have any healthy way to chill out when you are tired and alone?

It's hard to get rest.. I'm not on my own schedule as i am married now. But maybe i should be more firm on going to sleep at a timely hour every month.,,

I guess i could think of them, it's just hard when i have responsibilities to take care of. Happens to be yesterday, when i was tired and frustrated that i couldn't get anything done, i just sat in my car, and logged onto GYE, posted hung out here a little bit, and did one thing that i was supposed to do. I was supposed to do four, but i think i succeeded on something more important than those four things, and thats staying clean and therefor in the long run I'yH i will be more productive. Its just that yesterday was more simple and other days when i have a chavrusa its much less flexible.

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Re: Starting anew. again.
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 11 Apr 2016 17:40

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Re: Starting anew. again.

Posted by shmirashachaim - 12 Apr 2016 16:36

haha.. very good!

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Re: Starting anew. again.

Posted by shmirashachaim - 17 Apr 2016 02:44

I'm on my 79th day. I feel as if its the last stretch but its getting hard. First of all, i've been getting these thoughts throughout the day that i would've liked to delete infinitely. memories in the past of places and things i have done. Places near me that i can go. Why now? Why? One of my problems was my need for excitement. If you would meet me you would laugh because i am not an exciting hyper guy at all. But that doesn't take away the fact that i get this restless feeling that i want to do something new and exciting, which in the past have led me to the easy "exciting" path of pornography. Maybe this is what im feeling now? maybe the excitement of pornography can be abated by the excitement of beating pornography, only to come to returning once i don't feel that excitement any more? Furthermore, day 90 is in sight. But what is after that? feels like a long stretch of the same thing, cant be that exciting for much longer.

Please Hashem, i don't want this to be like last time. Please give me the insight in what to do now.

Please, and advice would be nice. thanks

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Re: Starting anew. again.

Posted by realsimcha - 17 Apr 2016 03:35

Hey Shmira, No way. Not doing something can never be called exciting. I wonder if its really the need for excitement that eating at you, or if the feeling of needing excitement itself is part of something deeper. An anxiety or lack of satisfaction with yourself . Who knows? Not sure if you should just see a professional about that. I did that when things got confusing for me.

But in the meanwhile -- do real exciting things! And take your wife with you! Travel -- do you have a car? Can you take a few hours to go out of town? Learn how to rollerblade [if you dont know]. Give a speech [terrifying!] . Start doing something out of your comfort zone. Learn how to

dance. Learn how to build and build something. Find new exciting stuff to do besides for not watching p. Not doing is not so exciting...

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Re: Starting anew. again.

Posted by inastruggle - 17 Apr 2016 06:49

Hi shmiras hachaim,

I've been a way for a while so I don't know you're story until now. I read some of your posts to try to get some idea but I might be way off target here. If that's the case then just ignore me.

I saw that you fell at 101 days. This is extremely typical. I've seen this too many times and had it happen to me as well.

There are a bunch of reasons that people fall right after 90, I definitely don't know them all. I'm going to write the reasons I fell and the reasons other people told me they fell.

1) They weren't really clean the whole time. I don't mean they were falling I mean they were hoding their breath. I'm sure you've heard the term here before and I don't need to explain it. I hope that that's not the case.

2) Because there's nothing special about 90 days. I know there's a whole fancy explanation on the site about 90 days breaking the habit, neurotransmitters, blah blah, Dopamine, blah blah. It doesn't work that way. I'm living proof of that. I've been clean plenty of times for 90 days, yet here I am with 4 clean days. When people get there, especially for the first time it's very disappointing to find out that day 90 is as hard as day 89.

3) Because it's a goal. Whenever we reach a goal we feel like we can relax. Some of the most dangerous times are the special times. 90 days, 180, a year. We get overconfident in ourselves and one slip later we're back to day one again.

4) I don't know how common this is but I know I fell because of it. When I get to a certain point I start realizing that this may be it. That video may of been the last bit of porn I see in my life. This streak is looking pretty serious. Am I sure I saw all I wanted to? No porn for the rest of my life? And the next thing I know, back to day one.

5) I saved this one for last because it's the most important. I disagree with realsimcha, recovery-getting to 90 is very exciting. The reason people fall after 90 days is because there's nothing left to do. We made it. This is where we were aiming for. Ok, let's go for 100. Now what? I guess in another three months I can celebrate 180 days. OK, that should be nice. Now what?

Day 67 is a lot more exciting than day 124. And it only gets worse, the special days are further and further away. My point is, it's really boring. You made this point, but it's important.

Ok, so what do we do? I'm going to address each reason in order.

1) Holding your breath. First you have to recognize if this is the case. If it's a constant active battle and not getting easier with time then it's likely the issue. Obviously it varies in strength depending on the circumstances but overall it should get easier with time. If that's the problem then search the forum for holding your breath. There's been plenty written about it by better people than me. I also don't think that that's your issue.

2) There's nothing special about 90. It's very very important to realize that. Then celebrate it when you reach 90. Because you do deserve a pat on the back and it is a milestone. If you don't

3) It's a goal. Some people don't count days because they feel it gets in the way of the one day at a time attitude. You may want to consider that. I personally find it to be helpful to count.

With the overconfident part you can just put it into perspective. I've probably been struggling

with this for a shorter amount of time than most people here. And its been over 10 years. Let's do the math, AHEM, $3,650 \div 90 = 40.5$ For every one day clean that's forty days of falling. Also know as I've been clean for 2.47% of the past ten years. Nothing like reality for a bit of humility. 90 days is a really short time. So is 180 days.

4) Realizing porn might be gone for good. First of course is keeping the one day at a time attitude. It doesn't mean to use it as a trick to keep slogging through. It means to live it like today as all that counts and realize that the present really is all that matters right now and all you can change. Dov has a great post about this buried somewhere among his other megillos.

The second thing for this is always having your reasons for stopping on hand. It's a really good idea to take 10 minutes to write out why you want to stop on a paper. I did this before and came up with way more reasons than I thought. Keep the paper handy or memorize it. You want to have the answer ready.

5) It gets boring. It really really does. And once you get to 90 a few times, then 90 is boring too. The important thing to remember is that recovery isn't the goal. It's the means to the goal. The goal is living life, serving Hashem, making real relationships, that's the goal.

Recovery shouldn't be exciting. Satisfying, yes, hard, for sure, but exciting not. The problem is that it can be. It isn't a good thing and it also doesn't last. Realize that it will be boring and it should be.

Whether it stays a part of your life or you're able to forget about it after a while it isn't anything other than something you use to be able to live life the way you want to. Don't confuse a goal in recovery with a goal in life.

This post went on for a long time, I apologize for that. I feel like I missed a few things I wanted to say, especially about the last point but I'm very tired now so maybe I'll post later.

Anyway hatzlocha, I hope at least something in that post is useful.

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Re: Starting anew. again.
Posted by cordnoy - 17 Apr 2016 07:09

So what do you think of 90 days? Can you say it in three sentences perhaps?

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Re: Starting anew. again.
Posted by inastruggle - 17 Apr 2016 16:19

What do I think of 90 days in 3 sentences. I tried, the best I could come up with was this:

Too complicated

To say in three sentences

That is for haiku

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