

Meaningful Growth - Second Time Around

Posted by yiraishamaim - 07 Mar 2016 03:54

I am referred to on the forum as Yiraishamaim. I am 91 days clean, the second time around. Originally I joined this forum only after battling this compulsion for years unsuccessfully. It had become abundantly clear that I needed some kind of intervention. So I joined this forum and from that time onward the journey has been a meaningful and productive one.

My experience prior to GYE was like a little boy lost at Times Square during rush hour. Waves of people are moving quickly and assertively, as I raise my head frantically in search of my father. I am thoroughly convinced I will never see my father again. Just then, our family friend Joe sees me. With one motion he scoops me up and puts me on his shoulders. Joe tells me: "I can help you but only if you are really serious about finding your dad. You look for him and I in turn will guide you towards him. Don't worry, just like you are looking for him, you can be sure your father is looking for you."

Joe – our beloved forum, gave me the tools to begin recovery. Without the forum I was really lost. At first I didn't realize how much of an am ha'aretz I was. I started giving suggestions that were not in line for a successful recovery program. They were intelligent ideas mind you. Some of which were strongly rooted in classic Torah concepts. As true as they were, my points were not relevant for our type compulsive behavior. As we have all learned, addiction is a beast of another persuasion. Some of my colleagues gently corrected me. Others were not as kind and articulated their opposition much more aggressively. However, I can say with certainty that I am much the better man by listening to their sound advice and better judgement.

Day after day I was sober. I was euphoric. It was such an emotional high that I expressed my inner elation in a testimonial at 180 days. I went on to add many more days to these 180. I received a number of PMs. I was delighted to listen, support and advise anyone that sought me out. The fact that I could help another person, in the very area of life that not that long ago I myself was a dismal failure- gave me indescribable joy. I guess this is how *Gan Eden* feels.

There is a saying "the bigger you are the harder you fall" I wish that such an expression would not apply to me. Unfortunately, after attaining sobriety for almost 400 days I began to slip. The slips became more common and then one day I fell in the sense that I could not just brush it away and call it a slip. I also knew that if I wanted true sobriety I needed to face it and pay the price. I immediately went on the wall of honor and clicked I had a fall. I was devastated. By my fall I had hit so many emotional and psychological buttons that it was difficult to handle. I went onto to the forum and made my admission. The guys were predictably supportive and helpful. One fellow tried to humor me. I generally love his jokes. However I was not yet ready for humor. Like visiting a person during *shiva* who lost a loved one. Only after having the loss validated and releasing the pent up emotions can a person be ready for humor.

I went back onto the forum to begin again. But how could I? I had had close to 400 days and now I am down to single digits? I began to learn the important lesson that just like our goal is to strive to be sober one day at a time so the appreciation of sobriety, should be one day at a time. One need not add to an enormous number of days of sobriety to feel accomplished. Every day and even every moment of clean wholesome living is invaluable.

I have learned much in terms of forming a program for long term sobriety. This is too long a subject to be discussed on one foot. Our understanding of Hashem, and our powerlessness without him is surely the essence of keeping sober. Although that is a long subject, the following are a couple of ideas that I have found to be helpful in terms of *Hishtadlus*. There is a famous *Or Hachaim* on prevention of lusting and *Arayus*. In short he talks about keeping our thoughts and eyes in check. Think of it in this way. Before 90 days of sobriety we are like hungry animals chasing our tails. After 90 days the hunger has subsided to a degree. We then feel there is a true chance for long term sobriety. We are sincerely adamant that we must and will be sober. What have we really done? Well, we all know that we teach the children of our community that every mitzvah that they fulfill puts another brick on the Beis Hamikdash. While it's not factually correct it is conceptually true. Kids need a concrete visual model to properly comprehend things. When we decide that we will be sober no matter what, we have built in our minds a strong brick wall around the possibility of acting out. Every time an inappropriate thought or pic comes into view – even in our peripheral vision- and we put it out of mind or view, another brick and more mortar is added to this wall. However, if we let what is inappropriate linger in our minds and thoughts, then this protective wall gets weaker. The possibility of a slip or even a fall *r"l* becomes more likely. This attitude together with limiting to the greatest degree our possible exposure to lustful sights or thoughts(by having a proper filter) is a compelling deterrent to acting out.

I have a friend who lost 65 pounds over 20 years ago. He accomplished this without diet pills or surgery. He says he has never put on more than 5 lbs since then.

How did this compulsive eater do it? Among the different techniques and attitudes he never allows thoughts of delicious food to linger in his mind and no compromises with the inclination to eat. I once saw someone offer him a piece of cake. I asked him would he take a piece. Is it worth it? He just smiled and said "It's **never** worth it" *Morai V'Rabosai* we must form a proper tailor made individual program for ourselves for long term recovery. For engaging in self-defeating behavior by acting out, we know only too well

IS NEVER WORTH IT!

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Re: Meaningful Growth - Second Time Around
Posted by cordnoy - 26 Feb 2017 23:24

Il like this post and there are many good sentences in here.

Hopefully, the mechaber is doin' swell.

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Re: Meaningful Growth - Second Time Around
Posted by Singularity - 27 Feb 2017 09:22

Great share. Keep up the sobriety!

I think your point about the brick wall is basically saying, do we wish to let go of lust, or does that thought scare us?

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