

How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by KliShavur - 31 Aug 2020 16:54

Okay, here it goes...

Hello dear reader.

I am going to do my best in trying to convey my actual story rather than just writing in a stylish way. I'll try to stick to the point.

The hardest part about telling my story is that I lack the self-awareness that it takes. I can't figure myself out, I feel lost in my life. I don't know who I am or what I'm capable of - what is really me or what is the 'flip-out Israel' me.

starting as a teenager, I was the last guy to masturbate amongst my peers (guys were open about these things, don't ask...). I remember not being believed when I would tell someone that I never masturbated. My first time was when I was 15 - I don't know what got into me. But I did it. Back then, I didn't feel much guilt. The only reason that I never did it was because it sounded gross - and it is! it's repulsive.

the thing is, I was never into porn. My friend once showed me some stuff he was watching. I couldn't stand the sight of it. Way too much detail for my young and pure eyes. All I really wanted was affection. Those videos weren't affection, they were cameras capturing things that would never have entered my most vulgar thoughts.

so I went through Israel, spent a lot of time there. I was a shtarke bachur. I went years without masturbating. I was a holy kid and I was loving it. All the while, I'm learning really intensely and putting my all into it. Somehow somehow, I started to burn out. I just couldn't do it anymore. I couldn't focus, I wasn't motivated, I felt lost and alone. Everybody looked at me like I'm the shtarkest guy in yeshiva (which might have even been true), I felt shame for knowing that I'm not really shark anymore - I'm just depressed; another loser who's gonna be 37 living at home and smelling gross.

Eventually, after a year and a half of imposter syndrome and emptiness, I made my way back to USA. Home sweet home (I only you knew how bitter my home is... don't even get me started). I

went to a yeshiva, hoping that the change of scenery might help cultivate a new inspiration for learning and growing. It didn't. I felt like yuck.

I got this flip phone. For some reason, it couldn't even access the internet, so that was great, until... I realized that if you connect it to WiFi, it can browse with no problems. Okay. Anyway, it wasn't long until, after a long day in yeshiva, I would be watching who knows what on my little flip phone. HaShem Yerachem. One thing is for sure: this exacerbated my feelings of loneliness and pain like no tomorrow.

After a couple of weeks, I wasn't showing up to yeshiva anymore. I was going between playing video games, watching movies, and then the worst. I was in my room, that's where I lived. I went from feeling like the smartest guy I yeshiva, to the nastiest grime. Haven't fully recovered since. It's been over a year.

If you read this far, thank you. Have an excellent day! I wish you lots of blessing and success.

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by Rebuild613 - 31 Aug 2020 20:48

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by OivedElokim - 31 Aug 2020 21:10

@KliShavur

Thank you for your post. I hope HaShem helps heal you pain and shows you the way out of your predicament.

(feel free to completely disregard if unhelpful).

It seems to me that you have two issues that should be separated and dealt with separately:

1) depression and burnout from yeshiva life , learning etc.

2) a porn and masturbation issue.

Problems seems scary until we break them down and strategize how to overcome them, step by step. There's surely a vast gap between where you are now and where you would ideally like to be. But remember the ancient Chinese proverb "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step".

Wishing you much Hatzlacha and a kesiva vechasima tovah!

OivedElokim

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by Meyer M. - 01 Sep 2020 00:46

[KliShavur wrote on 31 Aug 2020 16:54:](#)

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If you read this far, thank you. Have an excellent day! I wish you lots of blessing and success.

This mirrors me pretty closely and has me in tears. May you see success and truck onward and

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 01 Sep 2020 06:30

[OivedElokim wrote on 31 Aug 2020 21:10:](#)

higher than before!!

It seems to me that you have two issues that should be separated and dealt with separately:

1) depression and burnout from yeshiva life , learning etc.

2) a porn and masturbation issue.

Not sure if I agree 100%, I think they are very much connected. Although it's true that p and m

issues need to be dealt with on it's own too, it's almost always caused by some underlying issue. Unless you are a full blown addict, it can be much more effective to work on underlying issues as well (in my case, low self esteem and general lack of fulfillment in life). This will help prevent a significant percentage of triggers thereby making your struggle much more focused on just the struggle.

I am no expert, just sharing my understanding, but usually we act out as a pleasure seeking activity. This is usually a result of a need to cover up some uncomfortable feeling we are experiencing. This is true regardless of if we started acting out before we had these issues because we still use them as our "feel good fix", now, just as many people start unhealthy eating habits in early childhood but only start using eating as a fix later on.

It's true that it can get overwhelming to work on too many things at the same time, so you have to take it slow. There is no quick fix, it takes time to grow, a lifetime in fact.

I was once told to think of it like a plant, there is only so much you can do, water it, prune it, etc. If you don't do these things it won't grow and will eventually die, but if you try do do more, thinking the more I do the better it will grow, then it will die for sure.

@klishavur your story sounds eerily familiar. I struggled a lot with the question of "who is the real me?"

I suffer from low self esteem and in my case, I believe, I became really "shtark" as a result. As I grew and worked on it, I kind of just lost the drive. I realized that a huge part of my drive was to prove "them" wrong. I wanted to prove my parents wrong, my Rabeim wrong my Menahel wrong, all the people who had written me off, I wanted to shove it in their face. I wanted to show them, you see, I can go to this Yeshiva (one of the top places in EY) and it's not even because of you. As I grew I kinda didn't really care about "them" anymore. The truth is the "them" didn't really exist anymore.

This made it very hard for me to find motivation and I went through a tekufa where I was really depressed (oh, and btw also one of the worst in acting out as well, coincidence?).

It took me a while to get back to somewhere stable and in the meantime I played the part of what I thought I was expected to be.

One takeaway is that no matter what drove me, no one can take away what I did accomplish, even if it wasn't with good intentions. I still grew by leaps and bounds, during my "flipout" stage.

Now I am just a regular guy in kollel with nothing to prove just doing what I realized I really want to spend my day doing.

It took a few years to inspire myself again to continue to learn full time because I had to build scratch. I learned all the classic sefarim a few times, got a better picture of what life is about, thought about it a lot, and in the end I now am in a much healthier place then I was back then, even if I am not as *shtark*.

Then I was selfish, now I try to do things for others and my creator.

This is my story and I think it relates in some way to yours.

Once again, it takes time.

Feel free to reach out if you need, or disregard if I am totally off.

All the best,

Wilnevergiveup

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by Dave M - 01 Sep 2020 13:33

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 01 Sep 2020 06:30:](#)

[OivedElokim wrote on 31 Aug 2020 21:10:](#)

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All the best,

Wilnevergiveup

Beautifully written. I think many of us here relates to what you wrote. Btw, I typed up a fairly long response to your post deviating to a slightly different topic, but then deleted it when I realized I probably should not go there.....

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by easy - 01 Sep 2020 13:42

to answer your question of who you are
you are a holy yid one of hashems people
your goal in life is to do your best in serving hashem
it seems like being shtark isnt your avoda
i hope you get clarity to what your specific goals are

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by OivedElokim - 01 Sep 2020 14:20

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 01 Sep 2020 06:30:](#)

[OivedElokim wrote on 31 Aug 2020 21:10:](#)

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All the best,

Wilnevergiveup

Obviously I didn't mean that they aren't very much connected. I just meant that if you begin to deal with your depression it will make your struggle with p&m easier because you will be working from a healthier, more grounded place.

It has been my experience that when I was suffering from depression and self esteem issues I had no strength to fight to stay clean, but now BH I am a lot more strong and resilient in this fight because I have a healthy sense of self.

Obviously any success you have in life can help you come out of a rut. It's just that pinning your mental and emotional health on your success in this area seems a bit risky.

That being said, every person is different and I guess do what works best for you. The main thing is to deal with the issues head on and to keep trucking...

OivedElokim

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by Grant400 - 01 Sep 2020 14:26

Hey KliShavur! Welcome to GYE! Or should I say welcome home?!?

Thank you for sharing your story. It takes true courage to open up like that even on an anonymous forum.

Firstly, I'm leaning towards a cocktail of the two approaches. Oived Elokim and willnevergiveup. The way I see it is that yes, you may have started down this route only because of pain and disillusionment with yeshiva life, so they are indeed intertwined. Nevertheless even if you start properly working on the burnout aspect your newfound "sense of happiness" will have to be dealt with exclusively too.

So basically what I'm saying is that there's absolutely no point in trying to figure out what when and where. Today, both need to be dealt with properly. Each one must be worked on at the same time because if not you will be running in circles and only end up feeling worse.

To address the burn out problem: Do you have a trusted rebbi or confidant you can confide in? You need to figure out and decide what you really want and what is your true goals in life. Are you capable of learning like you were? Or was it all for different reasons, and those either don't exist anymore or you don't value them quite the same? (Someone mentioned this point). Do you even want to go back to that place and are struggling or did you lose the desire even to want that? These are serious questions that need addressing.

Now about the kedusha problems, if you are really holding by working on it then you must get rid of your unfiltered internet. Just making decisions and resolving to do better doesn't work. Chaz"al made gezeros for a reason. It doesn't mean someone is hopeless, this is the way Hashem expects us to fight the yetzer hara. We must use his very own tactics against him and outmaneuver him. Figure out where the main urges come from and work on removing them. Be it a device, a particular relationship, or even being in a certain place at a certain time. Whatever it is brains must be used and not just emotion.

About your saying that you don't know who the real you is. Every individual is comprised of two factions. The part that appreciates good and abhors evil, and the part that loves pleasure and instant gratification. It's called the yetzer hara and the yetzer tov. They are both part of you and both the "real" you. But every person has the ability and free will to choose which he's going to follow. So the fact that you are where you are today doesn't mean that the best version of you isn't real. They are both authentic as can be. But which one you will follow and serve is only up to you. So yes the "shtarke bachur" is still in you and you only have to entice him to reemerge

as the victor to herald his greatness once again.

After answering all these burning questions, I believe you will have much more clarity and have an easier time making hard but important decisions.

Remember, the real you is however you choose to live today.

Grant

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 02 Sep 2020 02:06

Amazing reading my story, written by someone else. Buddy, BH i got back oto my feet. You will too b'ezras Hashem.

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by Snowflake - 03 Sep 2020 14:07

A lot of what has been said hits home for me and I'm sure it does too for a lot of people. Particularly the "who am I?" question which I think everyone faces at one point in his life. It can be a very daunting moment. One where you question why do I do x or y? Is it because I want to or because others expect it from me? It can be scary not knowing where you'll land after all that introspection. It can lead to some sort of "yiddishkeit depression" where the person gets stuck and particularly with shmutz. But all I can say is once you go through this self questioning period, you come out a lot stronger and focused. And I just want you to know that there's a light at the end of the tunnel. Everybody here has felt lost like you and many have progressed and come out a lot stronger. All I can say is, yiddishkeit can be fun and self-fulfilling! If it isn't, you're not doing it right! Don't be afraid to find out your true yiddish identity. It will unleash your full potential.

Anyway we're here for you, do read the GYE Handbook, try to come here everyday and see what works best for you of all the tools here (12 steps, Taphsic, phone partner, forum,

webchaver, filter, etc)

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 03 Sep 2020 19:06

And you've got to post some more too...

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by OivedElokim - 01 Oct 2020 18:31

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 03 Sep 2020 19:06:](#)

And you've got to post some more too...

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by YeshivaGuy - 14 Dec 2020 06:05

Hows it goin buddy?

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by KliShavur - 05 Sep 2021 18:06

Hey guys

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