

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 KliShavur - 05 Sep 2021 18:09

Hey guys

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by KliShavur - 05 Sep 2021 18:10

Hey guys

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by KliShavur - 05 Sep 2021 18:12

Hey guys

Wow, It feels like forever since I made that post; so much has happened since then. I've gone through so many phases and changes that it's even hard for me to keep up!

There's a great comfort in knowing that people can relate to my story *and* also have come such a long way towards self-improvement. One of the hardest parts of that phase was feeling alienated - like there's no one who can relate to me or my situation.

Thankfully, I started going to therapy and I'm very happy with my therapist. I did bring up my porn use and he kind of just said that there's not much that I can do about it. Kind of echoing what *willnevergiveup* (and others) said. I'm in therapy to deal with the pain - pain that I try to avoid by using unhealthy coping strategies. That doesn't mean that I should be reckless, it just means that I should not set my expectations high.

It came out that a lot of my low self-esteem comes from childhood trauma. My father would beat me very often even to point that I couldn't attend yeshiva due to my injuries - my parents were afraid that the black and blue marks on my face would get them in trouble. My mother has BPD (and schizophrenia) and she was extremely emotionally abusive. I can elaborate on my childhood but I'm not here to make anyone feel bad.

So between my both of my parents and having gone to a chasidish cheder, where I got hit on a daily basis, I guess I should be thankful that I haven't turned out worse. You'd probably be surprised to hear that I was in denial that my childhood was that bad. You know, some people had it worse. And it's true. But I'm coming to terms with it and accepting it and the respective painful feelings.

So here's a little update on my life. I would like to share about my religious practice first. I basically stopped practicing entirely. I'm down to washing my hands in the morning and keeping kosher. That's pretty much it, really. I don't keep Shabbos, I don't daven or put on tefillin or learn. It's not that I'm rebelling, it's that I just can't. I'm not exactly sure why but that's how it is. I tried forcing myself for so long and it only hurt me. I really don't know how I'm ever going to get back on that horse. The idea is that hopefully I will detox from my bad relationship with Judaism and form a new and healthy one.

Hope you guys are well!

Best,

KliShavur.

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?

Posted by YeshivaGuy - 05 Sep 2021 22:28

I am in awe of you.

You have been through so much pain and are now confronting it head on.

I myself am engaged in trauma therapy (though I think from less intense trauma than you), and understand a little bit about the pain and difficulty of the process.

You have a deep desire to be close to God and to do His will, and are going through a difficult and important process.

If I was you, I don't think I'd want anything to do with anything...

It takes superhuman strength to maintain the mindset that you currently have.

I really hope you don't go through shaming from your family or community for your current religious state, because no one knows you but God. They don't understand the scope of your pain.

I am again, in awe of your strength, reaching out for help to deal with your past. It is so so essential to moving forward in Judaism and in life.

I don't have a particular eitzah, though I hope I conveyed to you the thoughts in my mind.

Feel free to reach out anytime.

With much admiration,

YeshivaGuy

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by gettingthere9 - 06 Sep 2021 03:34

Wow! I cannot really say that I understand your pain. It's way beyond my threshold...

I have no words except you are so brave and courageous for coming out and opening up.

Here's my take.

The first thing you should focus on is getting 'healthy'. You can ask around here and most people will tell you that if you don't take care of the emotional pain and trauma first, you are fighting an (even more steep) uphill battle.

A lot of people here to varying degrees have 'emotional baggage' and many times that's a big part of where the issue comes from. So good for you that you are taking care of that (through therapy or whatever...) and don't give up because you can do it! And you will do it eventually!

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by AlexEliezer - 06 Sep 2021 18:27

Hey KS

Welcome.

Wow, you really struck a cord with me.

I was beaten by both my parents, and my mother also had BPD.

I was hit in yeshiva.

And I went off the derech as an older teen.

I am very happy to hear you are in therapy.

As I read through your first post, what stood out most was your relationship (or lack thereof) with your family. Then you clarified it well in your second post.

I found therapy very helpful.

I learned that I was not the evil person I was made to believe I was.

I learned to separate, to tease out my true self from the bruised mess of a person that came out of my parents' home. P and M were a place to hide from my pain. Where I could fantasize about anything and take my mind far away, get high for a while.

Then come down and feel the emptiness of my real life.

I moved out of my parents' home before my 18th birthday and never moved back. I had ups and downs. Mostly downs for a long time as I struggled to discover my true self. And my true potential.

Today, decades later, I can look back and see the loving hand of Hashem guiding me and pulling me through. Not that I felt at all connected to Him then. But He was definitely there. I only see it now.

Send me a PM if you'd like to talk.

Wishing you a very good, sweet year,

Alex

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Re: How will I get back on my feet?
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 09 Sep 2021 13:48

Wow, the pain that you must be going through is unimaginable. I am tearing up just reading through your and Alex's stories.

It's always interesting to bump into a post that I wrote over a year ago, I usually cringe (I wrote that?!) and wonder what was with me back then. My life is mostly the same, still ups and downs, still going to therapy and still not what I was back then but okay with who I am now.

Although my story is nothing like yours therapy really helped me. I think the most important thing right now is to find yourself a place in your spirituality that you are comfortable with. Rabbi Twerski writes all the time and I think it is relevant here that spirituality can be defined by anything that is uniquely human. Kindness, self control, love, being there for others, working on growth, and doing what you are doing; working on being able to live a healthy and stable life are all things that only humans can do. You may think that the only "spiritual" things you do are kosher and washing your hands in the morning but in reality, every time you choose to live a happier and healthier life you are doing something spiritual. Making choices is spiritual and choosing to break the cycle and take your life back is something to be very proud of. Don't be ashamed, not around here.

If there is one thing in my previous post that I would write again it's that this is a slow and gradual process and skipping steps is like overwatering a plant and drowning it.

AlexEliezer is one of the most inspirational guys on this whole site so I would take his outstretched hand and see if you two can connect. His posts are super powerful and I am sure that reaching out to him will really help share the burden.

Keep it up and please please please update us more often.

All the best,

Wilnevergiveup

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