

My long journey

Posted by yitzchokm - 19 Jul 2023 17:39

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I B"H have children and grandchildren and I have been struggling since the age of 6 in what evolved to M. I called out for help from my Menahel in Yeshiva and a few Rabbanim over the years but none of them were able to suggest an adequate solution. Originally GYE wasn't around yet and when it was around they probably weren't educated enough about GYE. In any case, it has been a terrible struggle for all these years. I tried every piece of guidance I ever heard about but I was overpowered and never succeeded, although I never gave up.

Somebody asked me a few weeks ago what my take was about such issues, not because he had them but because he had to address the issue since it has gone public in the streets with people promoting improper behavior. I did a google search and came across GYE. I have seen advertisements before but I thought that GYE was to help people decide to get proper filters. I was unaware of how powerful GYE is and that they address things like M. I cry because of the question of where have I been for all these years. I signed up to GYE and I am in the middle of the F2F program. I read a lot on the forum and I decided that it is time to post my story. I haven't tried to reach 90 days before but knowing my struggles and what I've been through I decided to get a head start and post.

I look up to all of you and am proud to join the GYE forum. Contrary to what some people believe that people who have struggles in this area have a lack in Yiras Shamayim I challenge this misconception. I believe that many if not all of us have much more Yiras Shamayim than the average Yid. We have a struggle that some others never had. Some of us had addictions and felt powerless over our struggles and others without addictions also felt powerless, notwithstanding our tremendous desire to be good. Without GYE it can be almost impossible for some people to transform their behavior and even with GYE it can be a long process. My challenge might be for life and I am grateful for GYE and for all the members who take the courage to post on GYE.

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Re: My long journey

Posted by chosemyshem - 31 May 2024 17:18

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R' Yitzchokm you will be sorely missed! Your direct, spot-on advice and comments were a voice of clarity on here.

The guys on the Yiddish site are lucky to have you. Hatzlacha!

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Re: My long journey

Posted by chaimoigen - 31 May 2024 19:37

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Yitzchok M, you are a special, sensitive, caring, growing force for Good. May the Rebono Shel Olam keep guiding and helping you grow from strength to strength. Machayil El Choyil!

With admiration, thanks, and affection,

Chaim Oigen

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Re: My long journey

Posted by frank.lee - 02 Jun 2024 07:21

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@yitzchokm, I feel you have added deep value to GYE, from your caring and level-headed posts on all topics, increasing understanding for people with imbalance or other issues, always bringing respect and calm to the dialogue, without diluting the message.

Hatzlacha!!!

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Re: My long journey

Posted by yitzchokm - 30 Aug 2024 20:15

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This isn't interesting for someone who knows me already but I am posting links to things I wrote

about myself in other threads so that newcomers who read my thread can read my posts in these threads as well.

1. <https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/1-Break-Free/399227-Along-my-journey>
2. <https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/2-What-Works-for-Me/399228-What-I-learned-over-time>
3. <https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/4-On-the-Way-to-90-Days/401756-Stepping-Stones>
4. <https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/43/409696-My-SSA-personality-and-background-information>
5. <https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/19-Introduce-Yourself/329691-bipolarmzl>

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Re: My long journey

Posted by yitzchokm - 11 Sep 2024 04:41

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Truth be told I looked back at my journal and I struggled during my 89-day streak and the first 40 days of my current streak but since then my hormone levels are low due to medication and I didn't struggle at all. I am not living with my wife and I don't know whether low hormone levels make a difference to anything. The question would probably be whether it is worth doing replacement therapy. It is a medical question and I am not in a rush to find a doctor for this. I have insurance but I tend to neglect going to doctors for technical reasons.

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Re: My long journey

Posted by yitzchokm - 20 Sep 2024 19:51

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Bright wanted a discussion about mental health and these struggles so I am posting everything that worked for my negative moods, many of them caused by bipolar disorder. I listed what worked in my experience but different things work for different people. Journaling and behavioral activation which I am going to write about came from education outside of GYE.

The negative emotions for which I am going to write solutions that worked for me are depression, anxiety, anger, stress, fatigue, and boredom.

1. For depression, exercise and socialization helped. A third thing that helped me a lot was behavioral activation. I made a list of all the possible things I can do in my free time. I made the list as long as possible, and I write everything I can think about regardless of whether it is something that I will really do in the end and regardless of whether I think they can be effective. Afterwards I choose 2-3 things from the list that I love to do the most. I keep a journal of my mood for every hour of the day which includes my specific mood from the emotion-wheel on the Flight to Freedom program and its intensity from 1-10.

I investigate by doing these activities while writing down my mood also in the hours before and after doing these activities. I do these activities a few times regardless of whether they made me feel better or not. After doing them a few times I check whether my mood became better after doing them. In the beginning it can sometimes only be a subtle difference. If they made my mood better, I continue doing them and if not, I replace them for other activities on my list. It is important to be an investigator because when someone has clinical depression it makes him feel that there is no way out of it and his efforts are futile. Therefore, simply investigating as opposed to testing and proving is the way to go.

Eventually you will find a number of activities that you enjoy. Keep doing them and eventually you won't be depressed. I used this technique for clinical depression and it worked. The way it works is because people who are depressed generally withdraw from society and regular functioning which feeds the depression which causes more withdrawal and they are in a depression loop. Behavioral activation gives a person a positive feeling which triggers more behavioral activation which triggers more positive feelings.

Very often at the beginning you have to force yourself to do these activities and it may even feel like they will make your mood worse. The real measure is how you feel after doing these activities a few times and not how you feel before doing them or after doing them once.

It is important not to do these activities instead of your regular daily functioning like work, learning and davening but rather do them in your free time. I am writing this because these activities made me feel so good that I lost some of my interest in working.

2. For anxiety, exercise and Urge Surfing help. A third thing that helps is journaling. There are two types of journaling that I do. One is when I have severe anxiety sometimes to the point that I am about to have a panic attack. I don't have the composure to process anything. I write down what happened and all of my raw emotions exactly as they are with all their severity without leaving out any details. This can lower my anxiety from level 9 which is just below a panic attack to level 2-3.

There is another type of journaling which I do when I have mild to moderate anxiety where it isn't as severe and I am able to process my emotions. I journal what happened including my emotions and then I use CBT to look at what happened objectively from the outside how it would look to someone else who doesn't have the negios that I have and how other people involved experienced what happened including their personality and psyche and how they deal with what happened. For those who aren't familiar with CBT, you can learn about it on the Flight to Freedom program. Essentially what I do with CBT is equivalent to what my therapist would have done in a therapy session.

3. For anger, exercise, Urge Surfing and journaling helped. My anxiety and anger were often intertwined because when I had anxiety it would usually trigger people around me which led to anger.
4. For stress, exercise, discussing it with someone and Urge Surfing helped. I have had to use Urge Surfing a few times a week for this.
5. For boredom, escape, and distract helped. Sometimes all I need was to leave the house and I would figure out what I was going to do once I was in the street. I usually either went to shul or to visit a relative. At other times finding something that I enjoyed doing helped a lot.
6. For fatigue, Stop, Distract and SOBER worked. SOBER is good for fatigue because it is short.

Nowadays, I don't usually have negative moods anymore but this only happened after going through an intermediate period since joining GYE of doing these exercises faithfully. I haven't had clinical depression since joining GYE and the things I wrote for depression were done before this period.

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