

Sholom's Mindfulness Recovery Path

Posted by tiefster88 - 22 Feb 2018 17:19

Hi everybody,

I am posting on this website for the first time. I have tried a few different methods in the past to recover. The highest quality for me was the mindfulness app programs for addiction by Judson Brewer.

In the past I was sober using this program for months and didn't have to struggle with difficult cravings as much. However after so many weeks I lost the emotional push to keep up with the program. Other things came up in life and this got pushed to the side. Eventually a craving came along and knocked me over.

This time I am going through the program again in combination with a Taphsic neder. I hope that posting my insights of the program on here can help me with my program and staying sober. If anybody else reads it and gains something that can help them then that would be a great bonus.

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Introduction

Posted by tiefster88 - 23 Feb 2018 12:01

One of the reasons I like mindfulness and think it is so effective as a means to self mastery and recovery is that the fundamental method used throughout is simple. Just "Pay attention to whats happening right now", nothing else.

Of course there are going to be different ways to use this in order to recover and various methods to get there and meditations to build up the brain in order to maintain this. But at the basic level its very very simple. "just pay attention to whats going on right now".

We make ourselves suffer so much by thinking about what happened in the past, we worry about the future and we don't always focus fully and connect with whats happening in the

present.

This leads to a lot of bad stress and emotions and our brain and body has learnt to self medicate itself using whatever our drug of choice is. This may have worked in the beginning but in the long term has only led to much more suffering.

Also we are constantly thinking about how we can get some more enjoyment or excitement in the future, the same that we had in the past. Something I have been thinking about at the moment which is causing me a lot of anxiety is "How can I book a vacation for my family that is going to be at least as awesome as one we have had in the past?".

Even if we are not stressed and feel good after something enjoyable we are thinking about how we can continue this good feeling with some acting out that made us feel good in the past.

We don't pay attention to the sensations that are going on in our bodies and the thoughts in our mind right now, which may be in the process automatically without our realizing, of bringing us towards acting out.

It is by not paying attention to whats going on right now that we are setting the stage for this whole process within us to take place and lead us towards the uncontrollable urge to act out.

By paying attention we can arrest this process at so many levels and eliminate urges and obsessions even starting in the first place and even if they do start we will be able to overcome them.

Of course none of this will be possible without Hashems help and we need to daven every step of the way just like we need to with all of our endeavors if we are looking to be successful.

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Setting Goals

Posted by tiefster88 - 24 Feb 2018 23:11

Another reason I like mindfulness is because it helps me to learn about myself and how my brain and body is working and why I am acting out. I am going to change my behavior by recognizing triggers and influences that seem to control me and lead to watching shmutz or acting out. This will bring me back into control of myself.

First I am going to set some long term goals that I want to get from recovery, so that I can look back on them to stay on track if I start to veer off course. And then some short term goals like certain mindfulness practices to take me on the way to meet my long term goals.

Long Term Goals:

- stay away from looking at shmutz
- stay away from acting out
- have less and less inappropriate thoughts
- have less and less cravings to act out
- feed lust less and less when with wife and connect in a more real way
- stop feeling depressed, guilty, awkward and ashamed
- stop feeling anxious
- be emotionally present
- be able to enjoy my family
- gain self control
- not have to be hiding a big part of my life anymore
- not feel that I am destroying all the good that I build up spiritually
- Improve my relationship with Hashem
- Be able to do teshuva

Short-Term goals will be changing every couple of days but for now in general

- Learn some mindfulness every day or two
- do some mindfulness meditation or exercises every day
- post about it on this forum every couple of days

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Re: Sholom's Mindfulness Recovery Path
Posted by lifebound - 25 Feb 2018 03:48

Great stuff. It looks like you have this really thought-out. With Hashem's help I hope it will work for you!

I know for myself I get discouraged when I set goals and don't stick to them. If that applies to you maybe keep in mind not to be afraid to adapt and keep your goals bite-size, in the

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Breaking the addiction down
Posted by tiefster88 - 25 Feb 2018 10:04

Thank you Lifebound. You make a very important point. I think that is maybe why it is important to have short term goals that are bitesized and long term goals that just keep you on the right path but can take months or years to accomplish. beginning at least. If that does not apply to you then ignore what I just said

By seeing how the whole process of lusting and acting out works and how this addiction gets formed we can begin to recognize this inside our bodies and begin to change this whole process.

I would say there are 5 main stages:

1. **Before** the craving- something happens good or bad, pleasurable, or uncomfortable in our lives- This we will call a **trigger**.
2. **Why**- We act out because there is a **craving** in our body telling our brain to use our body to act out. (tomorrow I will talk about how these cravings got formed)
3. **What**- This is **Drug of Choice** we use to act out. This is different for every person. It will usually be the kind of shmutz and bodily pleasure that gives them the most excitement and will release the chemicals most effectively and quickly in order to feed the craving and quiet them down.
4. **How**- This is when we are actually **acting out**. Do we pay attention to how we feel when we are acting out? How much shmutz do we watch? How many times do we act out? How quickly?
5. **After**- How does acting out make us feel after we have finished? What do we do differently that we would have done if we didn't feel this way from acting out? What kind

of emotions does it produce in the days and weeks after acting out? Does it make us want to do it soon afterwards again.

All this is happening automatically inside of us, each time we lust and act out. And that is why it has so much control. Because we don't really realize whats happening. Just by us realizing that this is what happens and remembering the feelings related to it and paying attention to them, the addiction is already losing a little of the power it has over us.

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The Habit Loop

Posted by tiefster88 - 26 Feb 2018 13:25

I just had a small craving before when I saw a title of something on a website that triggered me. I noticed the craving inside me then I remembered that I will have a huge taphsic fine of \$500 if I just act out. Even though just reading something lustful to me, on a site would not mechayev me to pay the money, I knew it could be the beginning of the end if I start to get involved. This small wave of craving will snowball into a much bigger wave if I feed it with that information and then I will really be at the risk of losing \$500.

As insane as it sounds I know from the past that at some point after many days of cravings building up it feels like it's worth it to me to lose even a lot of money to give into my craving and look at some shmutz. That's why I know that the taphsic neder can't work alone for me and needs to be done in conjunction with the mindfulness program if I want to have a chance. Right now when I still have my sanity I know that it's not worth it to lose \$500 in order just to read or look at some shmutz. So I didn't give into my craving. And guess what? I noticed that it's gone now! This is a very important realization in mindfulness noticing that craving come and will subside if we don't feed them.

So why do I get these cravings anyhow? Why don't most of my friends get them. True they are men and could get a craving if a woman tried to seduce them or something. By why do I get cravings so often even when I am just working or learning Torah and why do my cravings get so strong that I would be willing to go to such great lengths to feed them? like the times when I didn't have internet and travelled great distances to go to an internet cafe just to look at shmutz. Or when I walked around with my laptop around the street just to catch somebodies unlocked wifi and look at something even though somebody who knows me could have realized what I was doing and ruined my reputation.

Addictions are formed by a process which we will call "The Habit Loop". First something

happens in life, it could be good or bad. It's called a trigger. Have you ever been made fun of by your friends at school? What does that feel like? Not so good is it? We want bad feelings like rejection to go away as quickly as possible. So what do we do when our friends cheper us? When we get home we lye in bed and fantasize or watch shmutz, masturbate and we feel better.

So if you act out your brain lays down this memory, 'oh next time you feel rejected you should masturbate' now you start to associate a rejection with acting out and this is when craving starts.

The next time we feel rejected, we start to crave masturbation afterwards. The more this happens, rejection leading to craving, leading to acting out, the more this gets laid down as a habit loop.

This can work with positive emotions too.

What's tricky about habit loops is that the more you do these behaviors, the more automatic they become. Over time, you are not even consciously choosing these actions anymore. Its like you are on automatic pilot. You are not even flying the plane.

When we recognize each stage of the loop, how we are feeding it, and how we can step out to break the cycle. We can start flying the plane again!

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Reward Based Learning

Posted by tiefster88 - 27 Feb 2018 12:39

In science the habit loop is called Operant Conditioning or Reward Based learning. Our minds set up habit loops based on the results of our actions. Our minds interpret these as rewards and these rewards shape our behavior. We learn to do more behaviors that make a good feeling continue. This is called positive reinforcement. We learn to do behaviors that will make bad feelings go away. This is called negative reinforcement.

Together positive and negative reinforcement make up reward based learning. We are constantly regretting things we have done in the past and worrying about the future but not paying attention to what's going on right now. This doesn't feel good and we get cravings

automatically without realizing. We either act out on our cravings with fantasies then shmutz and masturbation or distract ourselves to any of these thoughts that don't feel so good.

This is not our fault. We aren't purposely keeping our lust going. It's just how our brains are wired to try and make ourselves feel better as quickly as possible by any means necessary. We learn based on the results of our actions. When we understand that this is how our minds work we understand that these quick fixes are just that; quick. But they don't last. So we have to keep doing them over and over. They don't address the origin of our cravings. Our minds don't know any better all they know is that they feel a little better than they felt before. We can use mindfulness to hack our reward based learning system.

Mindfulness is paying attention, in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment and non judgmentally. We can use mindfulness to become really aware of not only the thoughts and sensations that make up lust but also how they have this strong push that says "do something!" This is really unpleasant make this go away!"

What if instead of trying to do something to make the cravings go away, instead we turn towards our cravings. Does even considering turning towards our unpleasant experiences sound scary. Don't worry this isn't as bad as it sounds.

If cravings feel bad what does curiosity feel like. What does it feel like when we are really curious about something. For example if you've just eaten a delicious dessert which tastes different than anything you've tasted before and you start wondering "what made that taste so good?" What does that feeling of curiosity feel like? Hmm What was that ingredient as we take another taste. That feeling of curiosity isn't so bad, right? We do this with anything we are curious about. We get closer. We pay more attention. It might even feel good.

So we might be able to be with our thoughts and sensations in a particular way that isn't as bad as we thought, by bringing an attitude of curiosity to it. We can take something terrible like lustful cravings and inject a level of curiosity and in that moment we might already be making it feel less awful. That's the non-judgemental quality of mindfulness that we are talking about.

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Stress test

Posted by tiefster88 - 28 Feb 2018 08:59

The stress test is a good first exercise to first try out this idea of bringing curiosity to our uncomfortable cravings.

Find a comfortable place, sitting lying down or standing up, as long as you can concentrate without getting too distracted. If you have a craving right now, even a small craving, lets see how you would describe it. If you are not feeling any craving try and recall a recent time when you were (without thinking of anything inappropriate of course) and relive that experience to see what you felt at the time.

What sensation can you feel most strongly right now, using only single words or phrases to describe how it feels in your body. Here's a list to pick from. Only pick the one that you fell most strongly:

- Tightness
- Pressure
- Contraction
- Restlessness
- Shallow Breath
- Burning
- Tension
- Clenching
- Heat
- Pit in Stomach
- Other

If you have to pick one side of your body or the other, is it more on your right side or the left side of your body. Pick one side.

When you picked one side what did you notice. Was there anything you noticed about being interested about what side of your body you felt the sensation on. Did being curious help to get a little closer to turning toward that sensation rather than trying to get away from it?

This helps us to support our natural capacity to be aware and even curious about whats happening inside our body and mind right now. Instead of getting caught up in a craving. If you noticed that by being curious even if you notices a tiny microsecond of being able to be with your sensations more that you have in the past. You have just taken a huge step forward to changing your relationship to cravings.

When we pay attention like this we learn to replace doing something with simply being curious. We hack in to our brains reward based learning system simply by training ourselves with a different behavior. We replace our habitual behavior of lusting or acting out, with kind curious awareness of whats happening in that moment.

This is what mindfulness is about. Learning to tap into these same processes that get us caught up to step out of them. Train your mind change your brain.

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Lust Craving Triggers

Posted by tiefster88 - 01 Mar 2018 09:24

A Freilichen Purim,

To become masters of our own minds we need to know how they work. Triggers are the things that usually get lust cravings going in the habit loop. Being able to recognize triggers helps us to be more easily step out of this loop. This is important because it's so easy to get caught up in lust fantasies. That loop easily gets spinning so fast that our mind is out of control. We don't know which way is up and we can't see straight because we are so wound up in a ball of lust.

What is a trigger? It's a cue in the environment that leads to lust cravings.

Triggers can be external such as hearing, reading seeing or even smelling something. It could be that we glance at a lustful headline as we are reading the news and that triggers us. See somebody in the street that triggers us. Maybe just hearing the voices of people outside can trigger us.

And it's also not just lust that triggers us externally, if something happens that hurts us, this can also trigger us. A boss shouting at us, a fight with our wife, our children being chutzpadik and on and on.

Triggers can also be internal. Thoughts and even body sensations can trigger lust cravings. Even just thoughts of lust or thoughts which bring on negative emotions can trigger cravings of lust. Take a moment to reflect back on your own experience. Do you have a thought pattern that

triggers lust for you? Thoughts about a something I did in the past, or something that happened to me in the past, certain feelings or sensations in my body, seeing or hearing something, other.

Feelings that we have previously associated with lust can also trigger more feelings of lust. Its like our body has muscle memory. If we sit or lie in a certain way, if our minds has previously associated this feeling with lust our minds might say "hey your lying like that, maybe you are lustful?" and then suddenly we are lustful. Just from that sensation triggering an emotional state that feeds back to our body and mind. Amazing how lust can be triggered by nothing more than a body sensation.

Awareness is very important first step of stepping out of the habit loop. If we can recognize that we are triggered no matter what happens, we have already stepped out of the automaticity of the habit loop a little. It's a positive 1st step in breaking the lust loop. With real results. Have you noticed the difference between being aware of your craving versus it being so identified with your lust that you can't even see it as a process happening to you. It feels like it is you, but it isn't. Like the difference between experiencing lust cravings versus I am a lustful person. Or like I feel lust versus I am lust.

It's so Easy to get wrapped up an identify with our feelings of lust that it feels like who we are. What's it like when you have even the slightest bit of distance between you and the craving seeing that it is not you. Thats worth exploring.

So imagine what it would be like to simply identify your triggers when they arise. See how much you can observe the process as its happening even identifying which triggers are most common for you. See if you can put on your explorers hat and work out most common trigger. Take out paper and map your habit loops. See if you can map your own mind. After identifying a trigger see what happens next.

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Close Call

Posted by tiefster88 - 02 Mar 2018 10:53

Last night when I woke up at 1am after Purim I had my first really dangerous moment since I started this recover path 2 weeks ago. I had a hangover from Purim but I wasn't tired because I had just slept a few hours and I was also feeling really guilty because I remembered offending a friend of mine at the seuda. It was really a joke but I could see he was hurt.

I was browsing through news sites and my social media for hours and then I saw something that was a bit triggering in a video. I realized right away, how I was being triggered after the mindfulness module that I posted yesterday. I also realized that the trigger probably had more of a pull on me because I had a hangover and was feeling so guilty which was causing a lot of negative emotion. So I think there was a big combination of positive reinforcement external triggers (That was the video that was lustful and excited me) and negative reinforcement of internal triggers(that was the feeling of guilt and the hangover.) Then I decided that it was time to lock myself out of my social media account of 11 years once and for all.

I was also just at a levaya this week for someone who died too young and life is just too short to be wasting it on social media and possibly triggering myself to act out. So then I was reading a website about how to fully delete my account. At the bottom of the website there was a link to an article about a story that was VERY triggering to me. I knew my taphsic doesn't cover articles only images but then I thought that if I take in the lust of the article I would probably get extreme cravings afterwards. I decided that everything would be OK and clicked it anyway. My filter blocked the article.

I thought about streaming through my phone which doesn't have a filter but my phone wasn't charged and my wife was right next to me in bed and I'm only 2 weeks in and I am still so excited about the recovery so I decided not to go for it.

I thought of a way of deleting my social media account by changing the password to something I don't know and deactivating the account. I did that and the account is B"H under my brother's old email so I think I got rid of my social media! It would be a real balagan to get back in. I don't even know if my brother still has that email.

I sent a sorry letter to my neighbor this morning and I hope I can make amends. I still feel a bit lusty today and am still curious about the story in that article. For me a big part of my lust is the curiosity. I have this feeling that I need to know what happened in that article. It would be so exciting for me to know about an immodest thing that was done. But these thoughts are just bringing me more lust.

The one good thing for me here is that this mindfulness program that I am doing is all about bringing curiosity to the feelings and sensations of lust cravings in the body. True I don't find this as exciting as fulfilling my curiosity about immodesty- but at least it is a way to use my natural tendency for curiosity in order to stay sober and recover. Also a good attitude in helping me to recover is instead of feeling bad about my curiosity because it is leading me to act out and ruin

my life, I can feel good about my curiosity because it is helping me to recover from habits that are causing me so much trouble in my life.

Have a great Shabbos!

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Breathing Into Cravings

Posted by tiefster88 - 04 Mar 2018 12:14

B"H still suffering from the hangover a bit, but excited to get started on a new week, full of mindfulness about my triggers, habit loops and cravings.

Breathing into the craving is a simple 30 second exercise that we can do at first, to start breaking the habit loop when we are feeling a little lust in our body.

Take a moment and ask yourself what is the sensation that I feel most strongly in my body right now. Take a moment to locate where it is. See if you can get really curious. Do you feel it more on your right side or left side or if it's in the middle? Do you feel it more towards the front or the back of your body?

Bring your awareness to your hands. Just check to see how warm or cool they are right now. Can you feel them?

Which hand is warmer the right or the left? or are they the same temperature?

Now that warmed up curiosity a little, check in again and see where the lust feeling is strongest in your body right now.

Now imagine slowly breathing in through your nose and right into that body part. Let that breath go right into your craving and hold it there for a few seconds. Now let your breath out. Let's do that again. Take a slow breath in imaging that kind caring breath going right into your lust craving. Let your breath hold your craving for a few seconds in a kind warm embrace. Then breath out. Let it go. See if any of that lust releases with your out-breath.

You can use this any time you want.

So last week we started bringing mindfulness to our triggers and becoming aware of our habit loops and how certain triggers lead to cravings that make us want to think about lust which then lead to more stronger cravings to think about more lust which lead to even more cravings and eventually the cravings are so strong that just thinking alone is not enough and we need to think more strongly about lust. So we search for just the right pictures and videos to help us think stronger about lust. And then the cravings are even stronger so then we have to masturbate as well to fulfill them. And then we just have strong cravings for days and days and we don't even care because we think we are terrible, so we may as well just give into all of them because we have failed anyway. And then after a few weeks the acting out just gets too much and we can't take it anymore.

Just becoming aware of these habit loops can help them start to unwind on their own. We all have this capacity.

This breathing into cravings is the first step in bringing mindfulness to our cravings, instead of feeding them or trying to distract ourselves until we cant avoid them anymore. W can try a different behavior which may actually be rewarding in itself.

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Body Scan Meditation

Posted by tiefster88 - 05 Mar 2018 11:54

The body scan is a really great mindfulness exercise to help us get to know what different sensations in our body feel like. This will help us gain more control over cravings and urges. It will also help us improve our concentration. This is a great exercise when we need to take a minute to de-stress or to help us sleep.

I personally use this body scan as the tanay in my taphsic neder because I personally find that it really calms my body down as well as cravings I may have. Often at the end of the body scan my body actually feels numb as though my body is asleep but my mind is still very much awake. That is not the goal of the meditation but for me I find this very powerful. That is why if I do this meditation for 15 minutes then the amount I would have to pay if I act out goes down and if I do it for 15 minutes and the longer 45 minuteversion from John Kabat-Zinn then the amount goes down even further.

I will write the meditation out here below but for the first, you know 30, 40 times at least you probably will want to do it as a guided meditation while listening to the recording. You can get the 12 minute ones for free on the Eat Right Now or Unwinding Anxiety App.

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The Body Scan

Sit in a chair or lay down in a comfortable quiet spot. You might want to sit if you're feeling sleepy.

Allow your eyes to close gently.

Take a few moments to just notice the movement of your breath.

Now when you're ready bring your attention to the physical sensations in your body, especially the sensations of touch or pressure where your body makes contact with the chair or with the floor.

On each outbreath, allow yourself to let go of any tension you might be feeling in your body.

The intention of the practice is as best you can to simply bring awareness to each sensation that you feel as you focus your attention on each part of the body.

If you find your mind wandering just gently bring it back to the awareness of your body.

Now take a moment to just thank yourself for making the effort to be here right now. Notice what this feels like in your body.

Now bring your awareness to the physical sensations in your abdomen. Becoming aware of the sensations there as you breath in and as you breathe out.

Having connected with the sensations in the abdomen, bring the focus of the awareness to the toes of the left foot. Focus on each of the toes of the left foot in turn, bringing a gentle curiosity to the sensations you find, just noting what they feel like. A sense of tingling, warmth, pressure, pulsing, or maybe no sensation at all. If there are areas you cant feel just keep your focus there and notice whatever you can about how that area feels.

When you are ready let go of the awareness of your toes and bring your awareness to the sensations on the bottom of your left foot. Bring your awareness to the sole of the foot, feeling all the sensation there. Now bring your attention to the top of the foot and then to the ankle. Now moving it up to the calf. And the knee. Detect and note as best you can all the sensations in those areas. You might think of your awareness as a spotlight moving slowly through the body bringing into focus any sensations in that area. Again if there are areas where it is difficult to detect sensations, just feel as much as you can.

Now bring your attention to the left thigh. Notice the sensations there. Maybe you feel the

pressure of your leg against the chair or the floor.

Throughout this exercise your mind will inevitably wander away from the breath and your body from time to time. That is entirely normal it is what minds do. When you notice it gently acknowledge it noticing the mind has gone off and then gently return your attention to that part of your body.

Now send your attention down to the right foot and to the right toes. Continue to bring awareness and gentle curiosity to the physical sensations, allowing whatever sensations are here to just be here as they are. Notice now what you feel on the bottom of your right foot. And in the top of the foot. And now the ankle. Pulsing pressure tingling perhaps warmth. Bring your awareness now up to your calf and notice the sensations there. Now to your knee.

If you feel any pain and discomfort in any of these areas just be aware of it and as best you can let the sensations be as they are. Now gently guide your awareness into your right thigh. Notice the sensations. Then to your hips. And to your waist. Feel your weight on the chair or the floor and all the sensations. Become fascinated. What are the sensations that make up your experience right now?

Now move your focus slowly up to your abdomen. What does it feel like? Feeling it rising and falling with each breath. You can start with your skin noticing the sensations there. And then move your attention over to your internal organs.

Now move your awareness into your ribcage. Just feel as many sensations as you can. Now up to your chest and your shoulders. You might note pulsing when you notice your heart beating. Or movement when you notice the movement of your ribs when you breathe. See if you can bring a childlike fascination to the sensations. As if you are exploring them for the first time.

If you notice your thoughts wandering or if you become distracted by a sound, or feel restlessness just note that as thinking, sound or restlessness and then gently guide your attention back to the sensations in your body.

Guide your attention now to the fingers of your left hand.

Feel each finger and the places where they contact the chair or your body. What happens when you pay attention to the whole hand at once, just resting in awareness of it. Now up into your wrist and forearm. Notice all the sensations here. In your elbow upper arm. In your shoulder. Notice any tension or tightness.

Now gently guide your attention to the fingers of your right hand. Feeling each of them separately. Notice any tingling or urges to move them. Notice if there are fingers that you are unable to feel as well as the other fingers. Now guiding your attention into the palm of your hand, and to the wrist and now the forearm. Up to the elbow Now focus on your upper arm and shoulder.

Let your attention now come into your neck. Notice if there is any tightness and tension and just note it. Perhaps as pressure, tightness, tension heat or whichever sensation is most predominant. Now bring your focus at the back of your head. See if you can feel the hair on

GYE - Guard Your Eyes

Generated: 1 August, 2025, 19:44

your head. Bring awareness to your left ear. And over to the right ear. Now into your chin. Focus now on the sensations in your face. Your teeth. What do your teeth feel like? What does your tongue feel like? Be curious, your cheeks your nose see if you can feel the temperature of the breath and if that changes when you breathe in and out.

Now pay attention to your eyes and the muscles around them. Have you ever paid attention to them before? What do they feel like?

Now move to your eyebrows and forehead. Be curious. Bring that childhood fascination to each part. Now bring awareness to the very top of your head.

Now after you scanned the whole body this way spend a few minutes being aware of the body as a whole.

Now very slowly and gently while still maintaining an awareness of your body, when you are ready, gently open your eyes. Allow your awareness to expand to fill the entire room.

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How I used the body scan meditation

Posted by tiefster88 - 07 Mar 2018 11:30

Last night I had a call with a new manager I have at work that was very unsatisfactory. I was very emotionally hurt afterwards.

All these thoughts were racing in my head about how I should just quit and do something much more important.

Then I started being mindful about how I felt this strong contracting, closed down feeling in my chest which were the negative emotions of disappointment, resentment, anxiety I started to realize that my thoughts may well be created by those emotions.

I decided to do the body scan meditation. Afterwards I felt great. All the feeling of contraction was gone and there was a great feeling of relief in my chest. It was like taking medication to remove anxiety but just way way better and I wasn't exhausted afterwards.

The body scan meditation alone just gives me so benefit, I should really use it every day. I can't

think when I would fit it in though. The only thing I can think of is waking up half an hour earlier and going into my guest room and doing it there. Let's see if I can do that.

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Re: How I used the body scan meditation
Posted by ieeyc - 07 Mar 2018 12:51

unbelievable ,i got to try these things out! thanks!

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Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk's Lesson
Posted by tiefster88 - 08 Mar 2018 20:20

I heard a really beautiful story today. It's printed in Chassidim Anshe Maaseh by Rav Kitov.

Reb Zisha and the Noam Elimelech were once sitting after tikkun chatzos and Reb Zisha asks his brother Reb Meilech "Meilech my brother, Adam Harishon included in himself every single human being. So that means that you were at least a cell somewhere in his body. As he reached out to eat the eitz hadaas, which caused so much misery and death and destruction in the world, couldn't you have sent a very sharp pain? And if he would have paused for a moment, he would have gotten over it and he would never have eaten it and the world would have lived happily ever after. Why didn't you do that?"

Reb Meilech answered "Zisha my brother, I remember that moment very vividly and not only didn't I cause him to stop, I pushed his hand to eat from it!"

"Well why did you do that" asked Reb Zisha "It caused so much misery and suffering in the world"

The Noam Elimelech said "Imagine that he would not have eaten and the world would have come to its tikkun and shleimus and we would stay in oilam haba forever. So we would be sitting there in oilam haba munching on the fruit and the nochosh would slither by and would say, "You know it's really nice here, but it would have been A LOT nicer had you eaten from the eitz

hadas. And there would be this tiny tiny thread of doubt, in our minds.

NOW we have no doubt as to how much pain and suffering and bad there is in the eitz hadas. Better to suffer for 6000 years and to be CERTAIN about the truth, than to be in gan eden and have some sliver of doubt about whether it's right or not.

When a person does something and he suffers the consequences, the ONE thing that he has is there is NO DOUBT.

What I took from this story for me is that somebody with a lust addiction is really the lucky one. We are lucky because we have seen lust bring so much suffering, guilt and destruction in our lives. And we are so affected by lust that we cant even as much as have a lustful fantasy in our heads without it bringing on more and more craving which is most likely to eventually lead to more and more lust until we end up doing things that make us totally miserable.

I have seen all of that but often after a while sober I start to forget that this is where lust brings me. I start to think, "ah a little bit of lust won't hurt. I wont get affected by just a 5-minute fantasy. Who can control their brain anyway? Surely just a few immodest pictures wouldn't do any harm? And besides nothing really terrible ever happened from the lust. You are still in one piece. Nothing bad really happened. You were never suicidal. You never got divorced. It was OK. Everything will be OK. And these cravings! They have been so uncomfortable and are just getting worse. Every day more cravings. You can hardly concentrate on your learning anymore. You are a nervous wreck! Just a short news story about something immodest wouldn't do any harm! Go ahead.

If I had really hit rock bottom then maybe I would never take these thoughts seriously. I would know deep in my bones that lust will kill me. And maybe I would have surrendered myself to Hashem if I really had hit rock bottom. And maybe if when I saw other people who had hit rock bottom from lust and I really believed that this is where I am headed then that would have been just as good. But that is not the case.

So should I just act out some more and try and find out and truly learn that lust will kill me or not. I would rather not. I have had enough with all the suffering. The guilt. The disconnection. The disappointment and the waste. The sholom bayis problems. The feelings of inadequacy.

But maybe there is another way!

If through mindfulness training I can learn to take my triggers and even their underlying causes less seriously and my feelings of cravings less seriously and I can start being mindful when

remembering that even though the rewards of lust were quite a good feeling (OK maybe even a really really good feeling...) they weren't THAT amazing. There are OTHER good feelings in the world. Connecting to my family. Connecting to Hashem. Learning a beautiful piece of Torah. And was it really good enough to warrant all that suffering that I had.

“And look you can control your brain now. Look how strong you are at controlling your brain after all that mindfulness training. You can easily divert your mind to other thoughts if a lustful thought jumps into your head or even if an inappropriately dressed women walks by.

And if that disenchantment is going to stay. If taking triggers, cravings and rewards less seriously is going to remain and that aversion to lust, I am going to have to keep this mindfulness practice up. Even when I'm not motivated. And if I want to keep up my ability to control what I think about, I will need to keep my brain in tip top shape by exercising it with mindfulness practices every day.

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