

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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Re: Reached 90 days!!!!

Posted by Ihavestrength - 15 May 2018 23:57

[tiefster88 wrote on 15 May 2018 12:24:](#)

Thanks Lionking!

I wasn't going to make a deal about it and wasn't sure anybody would notice:blush:.

This is only my 2nd time ever making 90 days. And my first time making 90 days not in SA.

When I was in SA for a couple of months, a few years ago I made just over a hundred days but was looking at inappropriate pics for a couple of weeks before 100, and fantasizing most of the time.

This time I haven't looked at any shmutz intentionally and have had a fraction of the lustful thoughts B"H.

There was one day recently where I started needing to go to the bathroom to wee all the time. I looked into at NOlap and it seems to be something that a lot of people going sober complained about. I Knew the only way to get the feeling away would be to act out. It was driving me crazy and I couldn't concentrate on work. It was soo uncomfortable!

All the mindfulness and Yiras Hashem didn't help at that point and only the Taphsic helped me. I wasn't going to lose \$500 dollars to get this feeling away. For me I need Yiras Hashem, mindfulness and a taphsic neder.

So just to list the things that I have done to reach 90 days of sobriety with very little lust compared to the past:

- 1) Both formal and informal mindfulness **every day**.
- 2) **Posting** the mindfulness modules on GYE.
- 3) A large **taphsic neder** with mindfulness built in.
- 4) Learning **Tanya** for the first time and practicing the meditations of Gedulas Ein Sof in there **regularly**.
- 5) Talking to a **Rav** occasionally about how I am doing.
- 6) Using mindfulness to **take my mind away from any lust thoughts** when they come up.
- 7) Using mindfulness to **focus on the cravings** to act out produced by emotions that came from triggers, until the cravings died down.
- 8) Using mindfulness to **deal with other negative emotions** like anxiety before they lead to craving to act out.

Great job, and continued success! I have definitely gained from your posting, and I thank you for that.

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Lust Deep in Our Bones

Posted by tiefster88 - 17 May 2018 09:58

What about when there are no triggers and lust is just there?

This feeling of not-good-enoughness seems to be so much part of you that it's etched in your bones. You can't do something to change it because it feels like it is part of you.

Sometimes we do something over and over and over so much that it becomes us. "We are what we think, having become what we thought". Thought becomes action, that becomes habit, that becomes our fundamental identity- Who we are! These thoughts become etched in our bones.

If we know how the system works then we can do something to fix it. Our bones are alive. When they get broken our bone cells, the osteocytes go about repairing the damage.

The etching problem is what habits are like. We keep etching lust into our bones every time we lust or act out. Each time we are lost on autopilot identifying with our emotions and habits we are etching those thoughts into our bones. This happens till the point where we wake up in the morning and can't remember being any other way.

Knowing how our minds work. **Seeing clearly that we have lust but not getting caught up in being identified with it. Stepping out of the idea that I am and always will lust and stepping into the idea of seeing the cravings for what they really are.**

What's the result of letting go and seeing these cravings and emotions with curiosity?
Unshakable happiness. We can get out of the way and stop etching lust into our identity and let ourselves heal.

If we can bring awareness to our feelings and thoughts of lust and realize that **we are not lust, we are a person who feels lust**, we have begun that healing process. Feeling lust is a lot different than being a lustful person. It might feel the same at the time, but each time we are mindful of our lust, letting it dissolve on its own we stop etching it into our bones. We let our bones heal, we let ourselves heal.

It just takes 3 ingredients:

1. Knowing how our minds work
2. Awareness
3. Time - we have to be patient with the process

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Sticking With It

Posted by tiefster88 - 22 May 2018 14:40

We started off learning how **habit loops** around lust get set up and how we fuel them by thinking fantasies that produce dopamine in the brain.

Then we got tools to get to know how your body feels moment to moment with practices such as the **body scan** and **RAIN**. These are basic but critical tools for changing relate to our cravings and emotions.

Of course old habits die hard. we started developing your mindfulness toolbox so we could learn simple tools to bring mindfulness to each moment of our day through practices like **noting**.

Like riding your bicycle the more you practice any skill, the better you get at it. The same thing goes for mindfulness. It isn't called mindfulness perfect after all. It's called mindfulness practice. And practice makes perfect. But not just any type of practice makes perfect, perfect practice makes perfect. And what is perfect practice when it comes to mindfulness? Well perfect practice relates to the quality of our attention. We can try and force things mindlessly going

through the motions or **we can drop in and just notice and be with them.**

Throughout the program we have been playing with this effortless quality of attention. **When we see what we get from our actions, if they are burning us like a hot coal, we naturally let go. This is effortless.** If we are truly curious about something, we are naturally drawn in. This too is effortless. When we notice that we are getting in our own way trying to force ourselves not to lust or whatever, just that noticing helps to draw us in and also **let go**. And when we really let go and get out of our own way, this too is effortless.

Now this effortless quality of attention that we all have inherently, can be subtle and sometimes downright confusing for those of us who have spent our entire lives making things work through effort. Often we just increase the effort when we are stuck or spinning our wheels. We have been learning ways to not only see what you get when you push harder which is often more pain, but to also learn how to step back and see more clearly, to broaden our perspective. This is the **un-resistance** that we started playing . These skills come from simple things like **noting** practice, which helps us step back in those moments where caught up, **loving-kindness** practice, which helps us not beat ourselves up and the simple quality of curiosity. **Curiosity** helps us remember that life's an adventure and we are part of this adventure, instead of something that we have to be in control of.

Remember that mindfulness is something that you already experienced over and over and you can keep experiencing it each moment you remember to.

From a pragmatic standpoint, these past few weeks have been very short. Whether you've been practicing every day or you haven't gotten into the groove yet, **we are just getting started.**

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Growth Mindset

Posted by tiefster88 - 24 May 2018 10:02

According to one definition a Mindset is a set of assumptions, methods or notations held by one or more people or groups of people. It's a person's worldview.

A mindset can be so habitual that it colors how we interpret events. It influences choices we make and how we learn. It can contribute to a mental inertia or group think when individuals with similar world views come together and start feeding off of each other. Mob mentality.

Developing a particular mindset has to do with reward based learning. Trigger - Behaviour - Reward. Our brains learn for example, if we are stressed, we should think about immodestly dressed women and then we will feel better.

Different people see the world different ways. Some people have rose colored glasses, some dark colored glasses. The more we wear glasses of a certain mindset, the more we forget they are on our face. They become part of us.

There are two kinds of opposing mindsets. One is called growth and one is called fixed. If you believe your success is based only on your innate ability i.e. what you were born with, you will fit in to a fixed mindset. But if you believe progress is based on hard work, learning and training, you are said to have a growth mindset.

This gets clear when we look at our reaction to failure. **Fixed mindset people dread failure** because its a negative statement on their basic abilities, a reminder of their **inherent limitations**.

Growth mindset people don't fear failure because they realize their performance can be improved and learning comes from failure. They ask "If we learn, does that even count as failure". **This will allow a person to live a less stressful and more successful life. We are always learning and growing from our experiences.**

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Growth Mindset & 2nd Gear - Learning from Failures
Posted by tiefster88 - 28 May 2018 11:19

In second gear we saw, you ask "what did I get from this?" and explore all the results of our behaviors when we find ourselves stuck in a habit loop.

If we believe that we are a certain way and that its impossible to change, it will be much harder to change. Our fixed mindset “this is how I am” will keep up stuck in a fixed mindset habit loop.

- Trigger - get tripped up
- Behaviour- think that we'll never change
- Result- we don't change

We throw our hands up in defeat thinking forget it. I'll never change. We are getting in our own way simply by being stuck in this loop. Or solidifying the idea what we can't change which is a fixed mindset habit loop unto itself.

This is what first and 2nd gears are all about.

1st gear is recognizing if we have a fixed mindset habit loop- mapping our the trigger, habitual behavior, result. That whats 1st gear is all about.

When we do this we can dive into 2nd gear and ask “what do I get from this”. What do I get from telling myself that I am as good as I get right now and that I can never change.

2nd gear helps us feel the pain of fixed mindset habit loops. Holding onto that hot coal - thinking it will warm us up.

2nd gear also helps us see the limitations of being in a fixed mindset habit loop itself. And what happens when we see these results clearly. We get less excited to keep feeding them. We become disenchanted with this old type of behavior.

We need to look carefully at our habit loops and their results and ask ourselves “whats the results of being in a fixed mindset?”

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What Does Growth Feel Like?

Posted by tiefster88 - 04 Jun 2018 10:46

Exploring the Results of fixed vs growth mindset

Which of the mindsets feels better?

It's important to feel what it feels like to be in growth vs fixed mindset because this is how our brains learn. We only change behaviour when our brains are convinced that there is a true value there.

What does it feel like to think that we can't stop acting out? Take a few moments to feel it.

Now take a moment to feel any 3rd gear moments where you surfed lust and just let it be **without acting out in action or thought, until the lust dissipated. What does that feel like? Better than being limited or stuck?**

When you feel fixed on thoughts of lust can you get a sense of narrowness, contracted-ness, stuck-ness or some other feeling like weighed down, or closed down?

Now compare this to being curious. When you feel those moments of curiosity, learning, growth, do you get this feeling of expansion or warmth or opening?

When can actual feel and experience growth vs fixed mindset. When we get stuck in a feeling or who we are in fixed mindset the posterior cingulate cortex gets highly activated.

When we let go of these beliefs by being curious or mindful this brain region quiets down. When we pay attention to what it feels like to let go our brains learn to do this more.

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Re: Sholom's Mindfulness Recovery Path
Posted by iampowerless - 07 Jun 2018 15:55

Hi i'm really enjoying your mindfulness posts! Anyways for those who are curious about mindfulness and want to know what is it and how to apply it to your life here is a great app that teaches you step by step about mindfulness. i'm posting it here hope it helps out someone

play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.va.mobilehealth.ncptsd.mindfulnesscoach

Regards Yankel

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Getting back up quickly
Posted by tiefster88 - 24 Jun 2018 10:45

I fell after 4 months clean. That was my longest clean streak as far as I can remember!

It's a long story about why I fell but some of the factors I think were not davening to Hashem enough, stopping mindfulness meditation for a few days, knowing my Rav would be mevatel my neder because it was going to go to an evil charity, feeling sorry for myself, feeling bad about myself, thinking lustful thoughts, fear of changing.

The main change I need to make is to rely on Hashem more. The 12 steps didn't work so well for me when I went there years ago, because I was nowhere near rock bottom and didn't see myself getting there. Even though I had been through considerable emotional pain and wanted to change, my ego was just too strong. I wasn't willing to nullify my wants. "half measures availed us nothing".

Mindfulness has been a ig improvement because I have learnt to control my thoughts much

better, which I had no control over before. I also learn how to not be controlled always by my emotions which tell me to lust. Mindfulness made my life way better all around.

Still although it has been therapeutic, it has been too much "kochi ve'etzem yadi" and I have not brought Hashem in enough and ask Him to help me when struggling.

I fell for four days but now I am getting back up and am going to start again! I have made a new and improved taphsic neder.

In the past I could of been acting out for months until I reached the stage where I was ready to go sober again but this time it has only been 4 days! I look at that as I sign of great improvement. I was mindful during some of the acting out and especially after I really FELT the pain, the sorrow, the embarrassment, the awkwardness. And I was in a really bad mood and hadn't been in a bad mood for weeks and weeks when sober. I couldn't connect with my wife and kids and I really felt it. That gave me the emotional strength to start again so soon. Although I am not proud of acting out and wish it had never happened.

However I am not going to beat myself up. I know that Hashem only loves me. I am going to take time to be mindful and feel Hashems love surrounding me.

This time I am going to continue being mindful and noticing my cravings as they come up, but this time instead of just paying attention to them as much as possible until they dissolve, I am going to try and remember to ask Hashem to please take them away. If a lust thoughts comes up I would like to note it as thinking, ask Hashem to take the thought away and then anchor myself to whats going on in the present moment.

I know it seems complicated to amalgamate the 2 separate programs of 12 steps and mindfulness, but we can't do anything without Hashem or as good as He can.

I hope I can work out a simple mehalech to totally be with Hashem and be in the present moment, aware of my thoughts and emotions and learning how to let go and give them up to Hashem.

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Re: Getting back up quickly
Posted by mzl - 24 Jun 2018 11:37

Well, congratulations on four months.

If this were me I would say that there was one reason only, the fact that your neder was being annulled. And that would bode well for the future because you made a new one already.

I don't know what mindfulness means but it sounds interesting.

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How much effort does it take to grow?
Posted by tiefster88 - 02 Jul 2018 10:19

A growth mindset is not just about effort. **Growth isn't about brute force.** We have to learn to love challenges, to be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep learning. What does it feel like when we start loving the challenge? This is where curiosity comes in. Does it feel open or closed when loving the challenge?

Curiosity and love draws us in and gets us interested, so the effort comes from a different place and arises out of an effort of being curious and saves us from having to muster the strength to run at the wall again. It's like 2nd gear. Bowing to our behaviors as teachers to see what we can learn about ourselves.

We can try and force change by shifting from 1st to 3rd gear instead of just exploring our behaviour in 2nd gear. This stalls our car and we don't learn from the process. **In 2nd gear we don't need to force anything. We can just love the question itself "what can I learn about my mind?"**

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Re: How much effort does it take to grow?

Posted by mzl - 02 Jul 2018 11:40

Wow, I don't know a lot of these concepts. And that's nice. Thank you.

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Turning Towards Difficulties

Posted by tiefster88 - 08 Jul 2018 11:14

How can we be intrigued by our mistakes?

Turning away from negative emotions after acting out, make them worse and turning towards them, doesn't make them worse and we can start to learn from them.

Turning away from difficulties doesn't help anything but when turning towards them, we can see the issues more clearly. We can see our contributions to situations more clearly and when we are tripping ourselves up. Then we can start to learn from them and when not to make mistakes again and look out for habitual behaviors to catch them earlier in the future.

Once we feel the moments that really hurt our mind will start navigating away from the blame and shame habit loops to really being curious. Even intrigued by the mistakes. This feels better and helps us to improve faster by turning towards them.

We are less afraid when making mistakes when we know we will learn something. We can enjoy the challenge of making mistakes more because we can feel the forward movement associated with this. Not being stuck in a fixed mindset.

What does it feel like when we turn away from mistakes and ignore them or beat ourselves up instead of just being curious about them and trying to learn from them? Can I see this as my teacher? It's hard to get angry with teachers when they are here to help us learn.

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Re: Getting back up quickly
Posted by mzl - 08 Jul 2018 12:24

[tiefster88 wrote on 24 Jun 2018 10:45:](#)

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At first it sounds as if you are innovating, but I wonder if in fact mindfulness is there in SA as well, where it takes place in phone calls to the sponsor etc. because when you explain what you are experiencing to someone else you are suddenly able to capture it, define it so to speak, and also filter out any distortions.

This is well known to programmers who can find bugs in their programs when they explain a bug to someone even though the listener never opens his mouth.

You are also saying that mindfulness as you applied it so far was not enough and now you are surrendering certain desires to Hashem. Surrender is a form of acceptance, but it sounds to me as if mindfulness is also a form of acceptance. I find support for this in what you wrote below regarding turning towards your fears and being intrigued by your mistakes.

To me the real test will come as time goes on and mindfulness and surrender lead to repeated stretches of happiness, whether you see the interruptions in between as a sign that I can never solve this by myself and therefore my life is now "unmanageable" or whether you see them as a fact of life because you are working hard on this and doing your best.

Interesting stuff.

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Re: Getting back up quickly

Posted by tiefster88 - 10 Jul 2018 11:03

For sure SA is full of mindfulness. Very often sponsors will tell a sponsee to start noticing their triggers. Where does the big book ever worry about triggers? It says that you can go to bars with friends and don't need to worry because you will no longer have any cravings.

The main reason I want to surrender my desires to Hashem is because I think that certain addictions may be spiritual in nature rather than only chemical. Although paying attention to emotions can give oneself control over his emotions, still if there is a spiritual hunger that one is covering up with lust then that still needs to be fulfilled in some way. So the person will get other problems. Maybe addiction or maybe other symptomatic issues altogether.

Just learning how to control ones emotions with ones brain doesn't take care of why the person was reaching for that drug of choice in the first place. The person must be missing something. In my case being a Jew I would want to fill that with dveykus to Hashem which also seems to be something that worked for many alcoholics in AA in taking away their cravings for alcohol. I can tell that this is what I am lacking.

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