

Doing the impossible

Posted by connected - 26 Jul 2022 13:53

After more than two decades of being convinced that it's not possible, I'm actually doing the impossible.

Welcome to my reflections on ninety days clean.

I had already given up and submitted to what I knew was a contradictory life. On the one hand, I love Judaism and have a deep appreciation for Torah and Mitzvos. I'd listen (and still do) to the finest educators our nation offers for hours, even creating relationships with a handful of them over email. On the other hand, there was one area in my life where I knew my desires and actions were the opposite of what The Almighty wanted from me.

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Why was the truth concealed so deep? I've pondered that question many an hour; here are some culprits that I feel had a detrimental effect on me.

There's the ever-present lack of clarity surrounding the whole topic of masturbation. Why is it wrong? Why is it bad for me?

Then there's the push from science. Not only does the establishment deny that it's harmful, the current psychological and scientific consensus is that it's good for you!

Then there's the multi-billion dollar porn industry doing everything in its power to normalize it, to the point where it's no longer a question of if but what genre. I'm not addressing here availability; I'm referring to the subconscious normalization. Making you feel like an outcast if you entertain the idea of declining.

From another angle, we have the academics - may Hashem send them a Refuah Shlema - busy proving that Chazal never meant, and couldn't have meant, masturbation. Especially if a Ph.D. suffixes the professor's name, they must know what they're talking about, no? I've fallen for this more than once.

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Yet, the whole time, I knew what was right and wrong. I knew that I was on the wrong side. No matter the number of people involved. Christianity is False; its 2.3 billion adherents notwithstanding. The number of Ph.D.s backing the theory of unguided evolution doesn't make it any more legitimate. So why was I falling for these tactics here?

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Treat life as a CEO would treat the business he built with blood and sweat. Realize that life is far more valuable than a business. Internalize that we get one shot at this, and that shot is now.

Over the next three months, I came up with the following points.

Make an honest Cost Benefit Analysis. On one side, life with P&M and a P&M-free life on the other. Add another column called "Illusions." One of the things I learned from EPM is that most of the items we consider as benefits from P&M belong in the illusions column. (e.i., It doesn't relieve stress; it just numbs and hides it - ultimately making it worse.) Get clarity of what you're trying to get rid of and what you seek to gain. And writing reasons like "Hashem doesn't let" will most likely get you nowhere. Sorry.

Be honest. Admit how much porn and masturbation are a part of you. Deep down, you don't want to let go. Admit that letting go of it will feel akin to cutting off your arm. Be prepared for that. You're changing. You're not going to be the same person anymore.

Think big. Don't make a goal of a week, a month, or even a year. These goals set you up for failure from the onset. Your goal should be to cut out this part of your life and never need it again.

Focus on the goal. Rav Noach Weinberg ZT"L always said, "Pain is the price we pay for pleasure." He would give the analogy of training for a big game. The trainee might be in pain and sweating bullets, but as long as he's focused on the game, he'll endure. Once he starts focusing on his discomfort, he won't last. Stop focusing on how hard it is to quit and how much you enjoyed porn & masturbation. Focus on the powerful giant you're creating of yourself.

There's no middle ground. You can't attempt to quit porn & masturbation while killing time on YouTube, or worse yet, Instagram, Twitter, or Tik Tok. These are two divergent worlds that cannot coexist. Whatever gains you acquire from quitting porn & masturbation will be squandered on Social Media. The same goes for Movies. The entire culture is promiscuous and attempts to push normalization at every opportunity.

Filter your devices. This concept might make you feel weak; "I should be able to control myself without a filter." Realize the falsehood in those statements and that they will ultimately keep you down. Find what works for you and do it. I installed Webchaver (with the filtering option) and got myself a respected member of my Kehillah, who I know would approach me if necessary. But remember, the gate on the GW Bridge is worth less than a simple wire cutter from Home Depot - for someone who wants to jump. I hear people complaining that they found a way to circumvent their filter. I think that statements like these show that you're relying solely upon the filter for protection. The essential work is internal; the filter is just there to protect you from the occasional urge or random popup.

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And most importantly, Daven. Ask The Almighty to hold your hand and walk you through this obstacle course called life. He wants you to succeed, but you have to initiate. It has to come from you.

After all is said and done, remember **never to let your guard down**. This project isn't something you can set and forget. Compare it to physical fitness; as long as you eat healthily, exercise, and care for yourself, you'll be fit and keep off weight. Once you stop, you'll fall back. It's a lifelong project.

Some short points:

- Realize that willpower is not enough. You can't just fight yourself for the rest of your life. You need to change your wants.
- Clarity is key. Have a concrete reason why you should stop. Why is this wrong? What is

it harming? How will life be without it?

- Have a vision of a better life without it that inspires you. (You're calm, focused, and in control in situations that would otherwise make you agitated.)
- Have a vision of a worse life with it that disgusts you. (You're eighty years old, the grandkids came to visit you, but you're busy masturbating to porn clips from the then-current youth. Or whatever works for your imagination.)
- List the benefits of continuing. (Pleasurable, relieves stress, etc.)
- List the drawbacks of continuing. (Promotes selfishness, distances you from your wife, etc.)
- List the benefits of stopping. (Learning to deal with life properly, gain confidence, etc.)
- List the drawbacks of stopping. (Giving up a piece of yourself, painful withdrawal period, etc.)
- Clarify long-term vs. short-term (in all four categories).
- Understand that P&M creates the stress it claims to relieve. It creates a vicious cycle that keeps you coming back for more.
- Don't be a dry drunk. Realize you're not giving it up but getting rid of it. Do it with grace and happiness!

As the delightful RavGav would say, "Any questions, comments, stories, jokes, attacks, please keep the verbal; non-physical. (Shomer Negiah...)"

Stay Connected

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Re: Doing the impossible

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 26 Jul 2022 15:00

Thank you so much for this..

Be honest. Admit how much porn and masturbation are a part of you. Deep down, you don't want to let go. Admit that letting go of it will feel akin to cutting off your arm. Be prepared for that. You're changing. You're not going to be the same person anymore.

This was something that absolutely terrified me. Honestly, I'm probably still working on coming to terms with this.

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I had to learn this the hard way, again and again and again. Hopefully I learnt this lesson for life. What do you use to replace these outlets with something more kosher?

Don't be a dry drunk. Realize you're not giving it up but getting rid of it. Do it with grace and happiness!

This is the first time I've attempted to stop while viewing my relationship with lust as no different then the relationship the alcoholic has to his bottle. I don't know that I'm doing it with happiness yet but it definitely has been helping me this time around.

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Re: Doing the impossible
Posted by Kavey - 26 Jul 2022 16:51

Beautiful and well written

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Re: Doing the impossible
Posted by Avrohom - 26 Jul 2022 17:02

Great post! Real clarity - I need to Chazer it a few times - thank you! One line in particular that I think can be life-changing:

"connected" post=383913 date=1658843608 catid=2

- Realize that willpower is not enough. You can't just fight yourself for the rest of your life. You need to change your wants.

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Re: Doing the impossible

Posted by sleepy - 26 Jul 2022 18:05

[Avrohom wrote on 26 Jul 2022 17:06:](#)

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Re: Doing the impossible

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Sounds true enough.

Although it would be nice to have a number for the "certain amount". Otherwise, chances are that we'll give up before achieving that (un)certain amount.

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Re: Doing the impossible

Posted by Teshuvahguy - 29 Dec 2022 20:44

[connected wrote on 26 Jul 2022 13:53:](#)

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Now, this post is what we call a 90-day high.

It was closely followed by a 90+-day low.

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Re: Doing the impossible
Posted by chosemyshem - 05 Aug 2024 17:18

[connected wrote on 26 Jul 2022 13:53:](#)

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Some short points:

- Realize that willpower is not enough. You can't just fight yourself for the rest of your life. You need to change your wants.
- Clarity is key. Have a concrete reason why you should stop. Why is this wrong? What is it harming? How will life be without it?
- Have a vision of a better life without it that inspires you. (You're calm, focused, and in control in situations that would otherwise make you agitated.)
- Have a vision of a worse life with it that disgusts you. (You're eighty years old, the grandkids came to visit you, but you're busy masturbating to porn clips from the then-current youth. Or whatever works for your imagination.)
- List the benefits of continuing. (Pleasurable, relieves stress, etc.)
- List the drawbacks of continuing. (Promotes selfishness, distances you from your wife, etc.)

- List the benefits of stopping. (Learning to deal with life properly, gain confidence, etc.)
- List the drawbacks of stopping. (Giving up a piece of yourself, painful withdrawal period, etc.)
- Clarify long-term vs. short-term (in all four categories).
- Understand that P&M creates the stress it claims to relieve. It creates a vicious cycle that keeps you coming back for more.
- Don't be a dry drunk. Realize you're not giving it up but getting rid of it. Do it with grace and happiness!

As the delightful RavGav would say, "Any questions, comments, stories, jokes, attacks, please keep the verbal; non-physical. (Shomer Negiah...)"

Stay

Bumping this really excellent post.

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Re: Doing the impossible

Posted by AddictNoMore - 22 Aug 2024 04:51

Beautifully written , many bullet points hit home Thank you for sharing

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Re: Doing the impossible

Posted by thompson - 22 Aug 2024 13:58

oof

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Re: Doing the impossible

Posted by redfaced - 22 Aug 2024 14:35

[thompson wrote on 22 Aug 2024 13:58:](#)

oof

Very well said, Sir!

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Re: Doing the impossible

Posted by proudyungerman - 22 Aug 2024 14:38

[redfaced wrote on 22 Aug 2024 14:35:](#)

[thompson wrote on 22 Aug 2024 13:58:](#)

oof

Very well said, Sir!

To be precise, that was said very well, sir!

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