

How I Made it to 90 Days

Posted by FighterWithFire - 02 Apr 2023 03:47

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*(This post will serve as both a recap of how I made it here, and simultaneously as a letter of gratitude to Hashem and my supporting cast.)*

5 years ago, I was sleeping at home alone for a couple of weeks while my family was on vacation. The computer I was using was filtered, but I needed the password for a (normal) site that was inadvertently blocked. My parents gave it to me without question (probably thinking that I wouldn't remember it, as it was long and complicated). You can probably see where this is going.

Just a few days later, I saw something that caught my eye on Vimeo. (Figure out what it was.) In a few hours, I went from watching the clips on Vimeo to Google searching various terms and phrases. Most of the links I clicked on were blocked by the filter at first, but of course, that no longer was an obstacle. Soon, I was spending my entire nights (literally) watching the Vimeo clips and looking at images-with nobody around to notice-and breaking down in tears in the morning, thinking what an awful creature I was to do such a thing. When my family came back, I resolved to never view such filth again.

But just a month later, I went back to bypassing the filter. As I went from images to actual sites and videos, I was so shocked by what I saw-I didn't know such things existed growing up-but was desensitized quicker than you could blink. (Quick note: I have never struggled with masturbation, not even once. I simply don't have an urge to do it-I'm not sure why, since the struggles with P&M are often connected, but hey, I'm not complaining.) As I began to get addicted, I realized I had to get help, and thus joined GYE soon after.

This was 5 years ago. In all that time (fast-forwarding a bit here), despite frequent use of GYE and trying almost every tactic in the book (from TAPHSIC to the partner program to getting the entire filter changed-all without telling my parents about my struggles), I never once hit 90 days clean.

Until now.

Today is my 91st day clean. And I feel better than I ever have, physically, spiritually and

personally.

So, first and foremost, I am overflowing with gratitude to the Ribono Shel Olam, Who has given me everything in my life and continues to be with me at every single moment. I love You, and will never forget that not only are You are the one and only king of the world, but also my eternal, everlasting, loving father. Thank you for everything.

But before I thank everybody else who has helped me along the way, I'd like to share what tactics and strategies helped me along the way (in no particular order of importance).

1) **STAY AWAY FROM ANY POTENTIAL PITFALLS.** I know I said I'm not writing in order of importance, but the significance of this rule cannot be overstated. Do not put yourself in any situation that could trigger or lead you to fall in any way. To give some examples, never use an unfiltered device for any reason (even if it's not yours, such as a public computer in a library or airport), block mostly harmless sites that will still serve as triggers regardless of their purpose (we all have these-don't convince yourself "I need it", or "It's really not that bad"-DON'T TAKE THE CHANCE), get off of social media if you have it (you will ALWAYS wind up seeing things you don't want to see on Twitter, Facebook, and ESPECIALLY Instagram), and stop watching movies that have even remotely edgy content. It just compounds the problem if you're not setting up safeguards.

2) **GET HELP.** Talk to somebody-be it a Rebbi, therapist, GYE mentor or even your parents if you feel comfortable (I didn't, because B"H I found that my miracle working therapist and the incredible GYE mentor I had-more on him later-were enough). It obviously depends on your situation and the Rebbi/therapist/parents in question, but if you trust them and love them, go for it. It will pay enormous dividends, both practically and mentally.

3) **BE REMORSEFUL, BUT NOT GUILTY.** This comes from a line I read in the book "Positive Vision" by R' Avraham Neuberger: "It is important to distinguish between destructive guilt and constructive remorse." Guilt doesn't help-it just makes you feel lousy and weak. Remorse is regret-feeling bad about the ACT, not yourself. The difference between the two makes an enormous difference.

4) **BELIEVE.** Not just in Hashem and his omnipotence (which of course is necessary), but in YOURSELF. You are stronger than you know, and the fact that you are committed to fighting this monster that is now rampant in our world is proof. Keep fighting, stay strong, and never tell

yourself that you are a loser/bum/Rasha/failure or any other form of negativity. You are a fighter and a warrior. Remember that.

And now for the rest of the thank you's.

To my miracle worker of a therapist, you know who you are. Your care, support, advice and guidance have played a role in my life that cannot be overstated. I wouldn't be here today without you. Thank you.

To my incredible aforementioned GYE mentor, Hashem Help Me (HHM), THANK YOU. It all started to turn around when I picked up the phone just under a year ago and spoke to you for the first time. The phenomenal and incredibly meaningful guidance, help and support you have given me over the last year have been indispensable in my growth. Without you, I wouldn't be where I am today. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To my parents: you will probably never see this, as you may not be aware of this monster that I've been fighting for so long, but your love for me is what kept me going throughout the worst of times. You're the best parents in the world. I love you, and thank you for everything.

And finally, to my fellow fighters: thank you for all of the support, motivation and Eitzos you've given me over the years. But as we (hopefully!) all know, 90 is just a milestone. It's not the end. When push comes to shove, it's just another day. Time to move onward and keep climbing. The fight goes on.

One last time: Thank You Hashem.

May we all merit to keep making Hashem proud as we continue to fight the Yetzer Hara and make a Kiddush Hashem every day, and may we be Zoche to see Moshiach come Bimheira Viyameinu!

With grit and gratitude,

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