

MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 04 Nov 2012 13:48

My heart is pounding out of my chest right now as I put these thoughts on "paper". This is the first time I am being completely honest about my problem, and it is very scary.

I am writing this mostly because I think getting these feelings and thoughts out of my head will be cathartic and if by chance I can help someone else, that would be wonderful.

I have been struggling with this problem for better than 20 years. I started with these thoughts and actions at a very young age. While I can't remember exactly how old I was I am sure I was not yet 10 years old, I think that 8 is a closer approximation. When I got my first computer at age 16 with an internet connection, it got a lot worse.

I went through up and down periods sometimes falling "only" once a week, sometimes everyday. I am still not sure if I would consider myself addicted to p***, but I sure as heck am addicted to m*****. For me the p*** was always a means to an end and not an end itself. As soon as I finished being mZ"l, I would turn off the p*** because I found it disgusting. I only wished I had found it so disgusting 5 minutes earlier.

I tried to stop many times only to fail after a week, two weeks even three weeks. Maybe when I first got married I was able to hold off a little longer, but even that did not stop me forever. It is funny I never davened to Hashem to take away my urge for lust. For some reason I felt that if I didn't stop on my own my Teshuva would be imperfect and I would not be completely forgiven. This past Rosh Hashana I realized that this line of thinking was getting me absolutely nowhere. They say by Neilah, you should take on one Asei and one Lo Ta'asei to work on the coming year. Like a broken record year after year, my Lo Ta'asei was always the same. Clearly my thinking was flawed. This year I davened to Hashem to help me kick this horrible habit. So baruch Hashem, since Erev Yom Kippur I have kept myself pure. I have had 41 clean days now, and I can't believe how easy it has been. Not to say I haven't had temptations, but nothing a small slap in the face and telling myself, "I am not doing anything stupid today" hasn't stymied. In the past my hands would literally start shaking two weeks into my trying to stop with the need for physical relief.

I think I wrote enough for today, hopefully I can update more tomorrow with my 42nd clean day (6 weeks).

Kol Tuv,
MBJ

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by think good - 04 Nov 2012 16:09

Welcome aboard.

keep posting and tell us how you are winning the fight.

Much Hatzlocha

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 05 Nov 2012 08:18

42 Days clean, 6 weeks done.

Baruch Hashem, I have not had any serious hirhurim to look at p***, but I have a constant battle to control my eyes.

It may be November, but the weather is still plenty hot here, and the girls are dressing accordingly. Although the truth is I should not kid myself, I still want to check out even the most modestly dressed women. However the more they show the harder to look away.

I know the phrase that I have seen here many time "The more you feed it the hungrier it gets". I know that is the truth, when I stare at a girl, I don't feel better, I don't feel like I scratched my itch, I feel the need to stare at other girls. ??? ????? ???. Despite all my trying for the last 6 weeks, it is a struggle everytime to look away. The only good thing is that it usually strike only when I am on the train back and forth from work. I try my best to do other things like read, puzzles or work. It helps a little.

This morning I added a tephilla in my Shemoneh Esrei that Hashem should help me control my eyes, this morning went fairly well.

I guess I am so grateful that unlike my other times I have tried to quit, the taivos for mz"I have been less strong, but I am still frustrated that I feel I have made no progress in this.

In the end this is probably something that I am going to struggle with my entire life. It is better to struggle and just look away and feel that bit of pain than to worry that people will see me staring and look at my Kippa and say "Look at that Dati guy staring at that girl".

MBJ

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 05 Nov 2012 18:04

I relate deeply to your struggle. Keep sharing about it in detail here and with safe friends and advisors. Can you call your wife or another real person in your life while you are on the way home on the train? If it's a subway and you can't, is there something you can do that is real life oriented - not Torah or kedusha-oriented (that will not work), but normal relationship/basic real life oriented - that you can be busy accomplishing in the traincar? Can you get into conversations with the guy sitting next to you on the train - be he Jew or gentile? You will discover that doing that will totally clean you. You will be yourself - a good decent man - instead of getting sucked into fantasy of that pretty woman's body, the other one's face, etc. That compulsion is all about fantasy and the unreal....but shmoozing with a human being on the train *is* real. Regardless of whether it is a plain gentile or an accomplished Torah scholar.

Can you use this, chaver?

- Dov

PS. I find that simply closing my eyes - not despretately hard and tightly, but just gently - works far better than 'looking away'. I do not need to open them until I really need to open them, do I?

and PPS. When you get home, are your relationships with the people Hashem put in your life vital ones - are they geshmak? Or are they strained and tiring? This will make the sweet magical relationships we imagine around us on the train so much more powerful and attractive.

It all goes hand-in-hand.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 05 Nov 2012 20:39

Thank you for your insight. It is interesting what you say about not Torah and to some extent you are right. I guess the YH works extra hard because not only do I stop learning, but I am also looking, two for the price of one. Although for me as long as my head is down and I am engrossed I am OK. But while I can do that with Torah, it is far easier when I am doing the daily Sudoku, or solving some equations or doing some sketches for work. Unfortunately, I am just not the guy to strike up conversations with random strangers, and my wife is usually too busy with the kids at that point to have talk at any length.

I find now, that I am so conscious of this not trying to look, that the compulsion to look is even greater. It is funny because last week I had the thought, that because I am trying to not look, all I can think about is looking and that trying not to look is making it worse. However, I immediately saw my error. Before I started this path I was looking just as much then as I am "not looking" now, it just became such a part of who I was and such a part of my daily routine that I didn't even notice. Histaklus had become so second nature I didn't even realize how much I was doing it.

My relationships with my kids are great. With my wife, well it depends. Somethings are better than others, she is under a lot of stress and I can't always help her even though she wants/needs me to. But the funny thing is we have a horrible phone relationship (another reason I can't chat wither her on the way), she is almost always angry at me on the phone. But when I get home from work and take some of the burden of the kids off her and she relaxes for a few minutes, then it seems everything is OK again. Moving to a different country, having 3 kids under 6, being stuck in the house for over a year will do that to a woman. I understand that now.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by reallygettingthere - 06 Nov 2012 03:40

I know the feeling. I actively struggle with looking. It's like my entire being is on auto pilot. My head, and eyes, and and neck all know what to do without me making an active decision (unfortunately).

I can make a conscious decision not to go to p\$%* websites pretty easily, but feel an internal struggle when actively "not looking".

Nu, that's where I am now. So, my nisayon is to turn away when I find myself looking. Is it s struggle? Yes. I but ever since starting my 90 journey, and I've found that looking away is easier. (easier,not easy)

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 06 Nov 2012 04:11

Reallygettingthere - closing eyes is far better and easier than turning away. Try it and see. It's

no solution...but it is a tool. The solution is integrity and that does not take '*more yiras Shomayim*'. Rather it takes work, a real G-d, and support...and time.

MBJ - you can wrote short letters to your children on your way home, or to your wife, or read light kosher novels or historical books - or read recovery literature like AA. Some of that stuff is actually good reading and not work, but almost fun.

I still think that conversations are far more powerful, even with goyim. Rav Noach Weinberg used to do exactly that, all the time. He wanted to learn from people - all people. It is just the thing that puits - or keeps - me in reality rather than fantasy. And it keeps me honest.

Hatzlocha!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 06 Nov 2012 08:26

Last night on my way home from work was terrible. I felt so unable to control myself, I literally put my face in a book and didn't pick it up until it was my stop. I thought to myself, is this were I am the rest of my life if I am to keep clean, am I such a pervert that I can't even pick up my head in public and not get lustful thoughts? It was depressing to think that.

This morning was different however I was able to look around, not stare, but at least keep my eyes open. If I happened on something particularly interesting then I quickly refocused my attention without any problem.

It comes down to that my problems with looking are like my problems with mz"l, I have to know my state of mind and act accordingly. Sometimes I do have to put my head in a book and not lift it up the entire ride, and sometimes I can act like a normal person. This does not make me a pervert who has to live in a cloister, it makes me someone working on myself. I can only hope that if I persevere and keep working, those times that I can see a woman and see another human being and not a sex object become a greater and greater percentage of the time.

Maybe I am wrong, but I tihnk that has to be a big part of the recovery. Besides not doing things, like not looking at p*** and not mz"l and not staring and random women in public. I have to positively change my pespective. I don't (or at least rarely) check out women that I know, be it co-workers, friends' wives etc. Those women are not just pretty hair and a pretty face with a nice body they are people, therefore I relate to them as such. I have to work on myself to view strangers in the same light. They are people too, human beings with a ??? ?????? in them, not just a sum of their body parts.

43 Days GO!!!

MBJ

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 06 Nov 2012 17:36

Your post is deep and meaningful to me. The fact that you notice that you do not generally check out the women you really know and realize that it is because they are too real for you to play with in your mind as objects, is super precious.

Interesting: we discover that it is not changing our attitude to them that brings us to behave differently...but it is *behaving* differently toward them that *brings* us to have a different *attitude* toward them. So davening for them, not ogling them like pretty fish or cars, and being useful to people, are all things that 'delust' us, one day at a time.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 06 Nov 2012 20:27

Just first of all dov, thank you for taking the time to comment on my posts, I love a good dialogue. I am very grateful to this anonymous forum and the wonderful people on here. Just typing out these words does more to get me to solidify these thoughts in my mind than hours of thinking could.

As to what you said, just saying a few words to a girl is usually enough to get me to chill out on lusting after them. A causal comment in passing, a simple question or answer, it is amazing the power of a few words.

[dov wrote on 06 Nov 2012 17:36:](#)

Interesting: we discover that it is not changing our attitude to them that brings us to behave differently...but it is *behaving* differently toward them that *brings* us to have a different *attitude* toward them. So davening for them, not ogling them like pretty fish or cars, and being useful to people, are all things that 'delust' us, one day at a time.

I am so new to this journey I have to ask, will all this trying not to see women as lust objects lead me to eventually not view them that way. I can honestly say, and it is quite pathetic, that I

don't think I have viewed a female stranger as anything but an object of lust my entire life.

I would welcome the day that I can look a girl and my first thought not be, "is she hot?, let's inspect to see what is hot about her". Part of me fears that just not looking is not enough to bring that kind of change to how my mind works.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by Dov - 07 Nov 2012 04:52

Messilas Yeshorim: "v'Hachasidus ha'amiti - rachok hi m'tziur sichleinu!" We generally have a poor concept of perfection and piety. And that was written to normals. *Addicts* have a *twisted and* poor perception of perfection.

The perfection and piety you seek seems to me to be a way to abdicate your more reasonable and more likely Ratzon Hashem: just being OK. No, we need to be great. It seems the only way out for us. But that is a lie our disease tells us. And it always has - that's why we kept acting out and flopping even though we were feeling like we were growing holier.

Sure, in long term sobriety and recovery you may always notice a woman's breasts first, or her figure, etc...but what is bad about that? It's just hard-wiring, and quite meaningless. It does not need to lead you to really *interact* with her as though she is a sex candy machine, and that's the point. The old ba'al mussar said on his deathbed that if someone held out money to him right now - he would still feel the desire to reach for it. Was he saying he was a failure? No way. He was saying that he was a success *precisely because* he never pretended to himself that he was pure as the driven snow - or deserved to be. He recognized he had the proclivity - but that did not dictate his behavior. He lived a life of success in freedom from ahavas mamon...but having the desire and seeing it operate in him was not a failure.

To you I believe, it would be a failure. And I am here to say that's a pity. It need not be that way. You *can* grow up along with all us addicts if you need to, and get freedom from acting out your lust by G-d's Chessed, one day at a time. He gives the reprieve daily - like the monn in the desert - so that we recovering drunks, druggies, and perverts do not ever believe that we beat it and are above it all now. For that pride would make us so holy that we would not need Him any more.

Hey - hatzlocha!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 07 Nov 2012 08:44

Thank you for the reality check. I think for me it comes down to that for basically my entire life I have had this singular view of women and I need a recalibration. I need to learn where that recalibration is.

The truth is I started thinking along those lines last night. (My train ride home, once a time for relaxing, reading and checking out pretty girls, has become a time for struggling and introspection.) I was thinking, how do I look at a male stranger? I see if he is a good looking guy, I see how big he is, I look at his demeanor, how old he is, I make judgements about him based on his age, dress, skin color etc. The most holy way to look at a person? No, but a normal average way of looking at a person. I am able to look at him and see if he is a good looking guy without lusting over him, guys are not my cup of tea. It is more of an objective appraisal. Like I can listen to music and see if I like the song or not.

With women the problem is not seeing a woman, or even doing that objective appraisal of her looks and dress etc. The problem is when that objective appraisal becomes more intense and I feel the need to look and look again and the horrible 'turn around to check her out as she walks by', which really is quite obvious and obnoxious.

[dov wrote on 07 Nov 2012 04:52:](#)

Sure, in long term sobriety and recovery you may always notice a woman's breasts first, or her figure, etc...but what is bad about that? It's just hard-wiring, and quite meaningless. It does not need to lead you to really *interact* with her as though she is a sex candy machine, and that's the point.

What you say here is a breath of fresh air and really does take a load off my shoulders. However, where I am at this point in my recovery is that there is an extremely fine line that protects a very slippery slope between that objective appraisal that is inherently human to that more intense lusting that is harmful.

Don't get me wrong, I don't think that I would go off and look at p*** and mb just from staring at a pretty girl on the train. I do feel, like I said earlier, that this recovery has to be more than just not doing stuff, it has to be about relating to people, specifically women in a more healthy way. My hope is that with those lessons I might be able to repair some of the problems between my wife and I.

44 Days KOT!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by Dov - 07 Nov 2012 22:11

Well, if I really believe/know that I reinforce and build on my twisted way of relating to women whenever I drink in their images and use them, then I will enable my G-d to give me the healthy mind by not looking at them, by praying with my whole heart for their benefit as fellow humans, and by trying to be respectful and useful to everyone around me.

Yeah, just *not looking* is ridiculous....building up credit? Gevalt. Like I am doing Hashem a big favor...

Loving is the opposite of lusting, and neutralizes it. But it's gotta be real love so we first need to spend enough time *not lusting*, before we can even *recognize* true loving and start using loving safely. Our 'loving' has been so confused with lusting, that as you said they are really hard to tell apart. Nu. We can grow one day at a time.

So in 12 step groups like SA, us guys learn how to love people starting with other men instead of women. Loving other men by faithfully sponsoring them, sharing with them, and being there for them. It then spreads to our spouses and families. We learn to sponsor them - rather than rule them; to share with them - rather than 'change' them; and to be there for them rather than whine about how they are not here for *us*.

We also discover that we really have no idea what real love is until *after* we have first been clean a few months or years. Our hava amina was to beat our lust using our sincere piety and goodness...but we only find out what those things **are** after a while being clean.

You relate?

Lastly, you write about how gals take your mind in with lust, but guys don't. I just want to point

out that not all dependencies are lust-related. We sometimes get all twisted up in resentment or inventory-taking of people we see in shul, on the train, wherever. Rarely do we even realize we are doing this. So true, I do not typically lust after men - but ego-lust can be after anybody, and its results are nearly as horrible for me. The high-mindedness and power-struggling - usually all imaginary - mess people up terribly.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 08 Nov 2012 10:09

When I read other people's posts they make it seem like everytime the mb or watched p***, they felt they had done some horrible horrible aveira and destroyed thier portion of olam haba, but for me I never felt that. I always new superficially that what I was doing was a big aveira, but it was never enough to depress me about it. While I did make those resolutions every year, when i fell, I wasn't upset about the fact that I committed this horrible horrible sin, just my lack of will power, so that when I did give up on my resolution, I happily went about my business.

I have been trying to think what my motivations have been that have led me to be as successful as I have ever been to this point in my life in stopping, so that should I fall ?"?, I can look back on these reasons.

One big change was my son. I have two wonderful daughters, but my son was born this past year. I realized that this place that I am in right now, I would never want him to get there, and if he ever did, I would want to be able to help pick himself out of it. I can't do that if I am still stuck in the same place.

Furthermore, one of the reasons that I started so young was my environment as a child. If I don't clean up my act, my son will be living in the same kind of environment that caused me to stumble so young. Only if I clean myself up, can I hope to create an environment around him that doesn't promote this hyper sexualization.

MBJ

45 Days

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by nederman - 08 Nov 2012 13:08

It makes sense. You need a zechus to do tshuva. Making a baby is a zechus.

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