

My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 10 Jan 2013 09:02

I have been working on the Wall of Honor for 6 months now. On my first try I reached 90 days, but then over Succos I fell (hard as is always the case) a number of times. I have since been trying to regain my ground but been having a hard time. I made it to 5 weeks again and then about a month ago I fell again and have been staggering around since. See [here](#) for more of my story.

I have finally started up again strong at the very end of December and am now on day 17. One idea which I saw and liked was the \$90 for 90 days. So I am doing it with a twist. If I don't finish the 90 days I will give a dollar for each day which I stayed clean to a "tzedaka" which I really don't support. (It is a valid tzedaka just one whose mission I disagree with.) I have been starting to have a hard time the last few days and thought that posting was in order. So, I decided to make a real log of my journey. But not just 90 days clean but Biezas Hashem for many more.

Thanks for reading and Hatzlacha to you all.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 13 May 2014 07:02

Day 2, B"H still sober.

So one of the guys I called today to check in with, asked me a very pointed question which I need to answer for myself. "What am I going to different this time?" That is a hard one. I need to really think about it. And now that I write it, I seem to recall having written that before. I guess I
But seriously I need to come up with a real answer.

Hatzlacha,

NeedToQuit

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by TalmidChaim - 13 May 2014 17:40

Hey needtoquit,

First of all, let me just say kol hakavod! I spent an hour last night reading this thread from start to finish, and in all sincerity, your story "inspired away" every inclination to act-out lurking in my subconscious. So, thank you -- thank you very, very much.

I can completely relate to almost everything you wrote, even the TV and movie addiction ([My TV Debacle](#)). And I've also struggled with depression, both chronically (months at a time) and on a micro level (half a day here, half a day there). Actually, my latest "binge", a three-day fall, was precipitated by being a little down, or, I guess, depressed, after a tough exam. So you're in no way alone. And I would suspect that most mental-health professionals would assign depression as a root of a lot addiction disorders, seeing as how those behavior-sets require hours of social isolation, self-loathing and aversion to productivity. I mean, I have yet to meet a 100% socially adjusted porn addict. (Yes, some are better fakers than others, but fakers nonetheless.)

So, when it comes to your struggle, you're quite typical, textbook even. Take that as a source of inspiration please. That means getting yourself sober again, and way, way, way past your previous clean record, is well within your grasp. It'll be tough at times, sure, but in the grand scheme of things, that's the point. Again, not news to you, I'm sure; I just want to add to the chorus of support.

As for *your* addiction triggers, it's pretty apparent that TV and movies always show up right before your falls. Now, that's not to say that they're the original trigger. Maybe they're incidental; maybe they're just bell-weather spinning wildly before the hurricane makes landfall. Who knows? The point is, they're co-symptomatic, more than anything else you wrote about. And the fact your rather excellent prose centered so much on the travails of your TV-watching means, to me, that they can in no way be removed as just spectators from this equation. TV is either pushing you over the edge, or walking you, by the hand, to the cliff. Either way, it's laughing maniacally as you fall.

But bad metaphors aside (an English major would say I just committed the pathetic fallacy, but who cares?), you need to put TV in its place. Now, I'm not sure I'm the right one to coach you on

this, so please keep that in mind. I was not raised in a yeshivish environment; there was always a prominently displayed, big-ish TV in my home and I never saw programming and movies as forbidden fruit. But my obsessive-compulsive disorder has kept me binge-watching seasons of shows on Netflix for hours on end. This has not specifically lead to any falls, but has robbed me of precious sleep and optimal brain function. So, yeah, no question: We need to slay this beast! But how?

One strategy I'm toying with, at least for some of the shows I watch on a regular basis, is to simply spoil them for myself. You can read entire synopses of book and graphic novel series on Wikipedia. If a show you watch is based on an already published series, just look up what happens. Chances are the literary version of your TV series is already finished, and knowing the fate of your favorite character, or outcome to the show's latest arc, might be enough to take the allure out of the show. It might be enough to actually kill, or at least maim, the beast.

The aesthetic of the medium of television story-writing, as opposed to real literature, aims to, by the end of the show, put the viewer in an emotional state that guarantees his return viewership next week. It's why we're able to watch entire seasons of shows in one night on Netflix. I mean, when's the last time you watched an eight hour movie? It only works with TV. If TV can be considered a form of fiction, then it's cheap; it's nasty; and it's meant to keep us begging for another fix. Yes, it's the crack of the literary world. I'm writing this to raise your awareness of this fact, and also, to raise mine. I was riding high on sobriety this past Sunday, until I saw some provocative imagery on TV. I didn't fall, but it was enough to jostle me out of my state of optimism. And that's dangerous too.

And as for movies, nowadays, they're no better. Yes, some have artistic integrity, but most of the blockbusters are not meant to appeal to the higher reasoning centers of our brains. They're just limbic system candy -- empty calories.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by needtoquit - 19 May 2014 06:48

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

I wonder if that should be a prerequisite....stop for seven days and then let's discuss.

I'm not sure, cuz' for some, that alone might be difficult.

On the other hand, like you wrote, it puts one into a better state.

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b'hatzlachah

I agree, without some solid sobriety it's impossible to have a reasonable conversation. *B"H* I've now had some sober time and it has helped immensely. I'm once again able to clearly realize why I need to quit, because when I'm lusting I'm dead inside and it is really much nicer to be alive for real not just with a beating heart.

TalmidChaim,

Thanks for that feedback. You have some very good points. I do think that my "use" of TV/movies (while may sometimes be a trigger) is more of a *siman* (sign) than a *seeba* (cause). When I'm depressed or stress, which is usually, I turn to one escape or another, either lusting or watching TV/movies.

In more recent news, today is day 9 sober, *BA"H*. I had a few of those moments today when I was sitting minding my own business and the lust just washed over me like a wave with no obvious trigger. Moral of the story is, I'm still an addict. *Shabbos* and today were a little challenging because I was away for *Shabbos* so I had strangers to look at, mostly dressed very *tzniusdikly* but that doesn't stop us. It is always easier to objectify the women we see if we don't know them. But with Hashem's help (He did most of the work, I think) I survived none the worse.

Hatzlacha,

NeedToQuit

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by TalmidChaim - 20 May 2014 01:05

Great work, needtoquit. Keep up the good work. You're an inspiration.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by needtoquit - 27 May 2014 16:20

So after being a little depressed that I didn't get as much done as I would have liked to being off to stay up until about 3 watching movies. And as if that wasn't enough, they both had some very triggering moments which I didn't skip. Now here I am late for *Shacharis*, tired, depressed, feeling guilty about looking at women in the streets in the gorgeous weather yesterday, scared I'll act out, lonely, disappointed with myself. So, I decided instead of walking into *Shacharis* for the last 10 minutes I'm going to post and hope that talking this out helps.

I've always suffered from low self-esteem and it has been kicking in more and more recently. I just don't feel that I'm capable of the things that I need to be. I don't feel very much job fulfillment or that if I had more responsibility, I'd be able to keep up with it. I haven't been keeping my *sedarim* like I should be, I'm way behind in *Daf Yomi*, I'm not getting as much exercise as I should be, I'm not working on school as much as I should be. What I'm I doing right already...?

I know that these are probably exaggerations and that I really am doing well in some area's, but from my perspective, the facts don't matter my perception is the only thing that matters. That's why for year's, even when my Rav, Rabbayim, or parents told me how great I am, it had no affect (even when I intellectually believe them).

I also came to the forum to read my past posts and realize that as depressed as I am now, it was much worse 2-3 weeks ago when I was drunk on lust all the time. I've been on Dov's call a few times in these 2 weeks. I should have called someone a few times yesterday to admit that I was lusting. I have lots of excuses, I was with my mother, my cell battery was almost dead, my headset wasn't working, but at the end of the day the point is I didn't call.

Sorry for jumping all over the place.

Hatzlacha,

NeedToQuit

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by TalmidChaim - 27 May 2014 16:41

Hey needtoquit,

First of all, it bears repeating how awesome you are! It's blatantly obvious to those of us here on GYE, reading your posts, and I could only imagine how obvious it is to those who know and love you in the "real" world (non-GYE realm). I just want you to know this, in case the trappings of addiction and depression have diverted your attention from that plain fact... You're very, very intelligent, sensitive and possess a wisdom about the world few people are ever granted.

Now about the depression... That word gets thrown about WAY too much in our society, but for some people -- and I'm sure you know this -- it's a real, diagnosable disease that needs real treatment. And it's certainly not for the forum members here to make that official diagnosis, nor you, actually. Have you considered seeing a therapist, or even just a medical doctor who might be able to refer to the correct specialist?

First of all, there's no shame in it. I've been there, done that. I had (still have?) OCD/Generalized Anxiety Disorder and probably some depression thrown in there too, and was treated by professionals. Many very respected, "normal", decent people I know also were treated by professionals for these issues as well.

I would definitely consider this.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by needtoquit - 27 May 2014 18:15

TalmidChaim,

Thanks for the feedback.

[TalmidChaim wrote:](#)

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[TalmidChaim wrote:](#)

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I would definitely consider this.

Firstly, I think that someone can be depressed while not necessarily being clinically depressed.

I have in the past visited a mental health expert on the strong recommendation from one of my Roshei Hayeshiva. His conclusion was that I didn't suffer from clinical depression. Granted that was a number of years ago but it seemed to me that his reasoning was because I still did enjoy parts of life, just not learning. While I enjoy learning infinitely more than I used to, I also still enjoy other parts of life. I'm looking forward to a week vacation with some friends in the summer, actually fixing a problem which is my job at work, finishing Shas with Daf Yomi in another 3 1/2 years, getting married. And even in the here and now, I enjoy bike riding in the nice weather, the sounds of the birds outside my window, BBQ-ing also in the nice weather, getting together with friends on the rare occasion that I can, even playing sports sometimes

).

Maybe I should see someone again, but at this point I'm not convinced yet.
(though I'll deny it if you ask me in public

I was just reading the Big Book after finally pulling myself away from YouTube, including some which I shouldn't have watched. I'm up to its discussion of the 4th step. [Big Book 4th Ed. pg 66 wrote:](#)

It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. I think that describes me to a T. Whether it's my parent, who love me and are really trying to help; the dean of my college, who really does like me and wasn't trying to stab me in the back; my boss, who really does appreciate my work; or Hashem, Who loves me far more than I love myself, I just resent that I can't move all the pawns on the board to the places "where they belong".

Hatzlacha,

NeedToQuit

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by TalmidChaim - 27 May 2014 18:25

Needtoquit,

I'm glad to hear your take on it, and far, far be it from me, or anyone else here, to say that you're clinically depressed. I think way too many well-meaning people like playing psychiatrist and diagnosing their friends. So I make a point never to do that. But as someone who went through the stress of *clinical issues*, keeping the option of professional help a real possibility in my mind was a very helpful mental exercise. It kept my denial at bay, which, for most of us, is the difference between recovery and acting out.

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by cordnoy - 27 May 2014 18:48

NTQ

Welcome again.

sounds like you are takin' some action which is real good.

it also seems that you are takin' inventory in your life as to what is workin' and what is not.

Perhaps post a bit more or connect to some of the people here.

Depression is never good.

Let's think of ways to get out of that rut.

It should be b'hatzlachah

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by Pidaini - 27 May 2014 22:34

Welcome back!! long time no see!!

I feel myself a lot in that post. I often have that feeling of "what am I really accomplishing?" and I get all upset about it. But as you wrote, it's only your perspective that counts, and so I ask you, how do you know that your perspective is correct?

Let's take Daf Yomi as an example. You thought when you you started that you'd be able to

learn a daf a day, hence the name daf yomi (I'm a genius, I know). Something happened once that you couldn't make it, be it a mood swing, or not feeling well, or something at home, whatever it be, and you missed one. Obviously tha will cause some setback, and rationalizations of why not to continue, yet you kept on trying.

So what happens to me at such a juncture is that when this bad mood comes about, I judge myself according to the expectation that I had when I started the project, and that was one blatt *every day*, and I didn't do that, so I'm a failure!!! But is that really where it's at? Are our expectations for ourselves really *right*?

I find that a lot of my expectations of myself are simply egotistical "Mr. Perfectionist" stuff, and my job is to tell that Mr. Perfectionist that I'm progressing and that's the thing that counts, effort, not results.

So I need to take a deep breath, look at who I really am, and accept that. Obviously there are always things that I can do better and more, but only one step at a time, one day at a time. It won't work instantly, and it's not supposed to.

KIT brother! KOMT!!! KOP!!!

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by needtoquit - 31 May 2014 02:55

[Pidaini wrote:](#)

Welcome back!! long time no see!!

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KIT brother! KOMT!!! KOP!!!

Thanks. It is nice to be back. I'll try and that is all we can really do in life. And now for the meat and potatoes...

[Pidaini wrote:](#)

I feel myself a lot in that post. I often have that feeling of "what am I really accomplishing?" and I get all upset about it. But as you wrote, it's only your perspective that counts, and so I ask you, how do you know that your perspective is correct?

Of course my perspective is wrong but it isn't really relivant because it is the only one which I have.

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I find that a lot of my expectations of myself are simply egotistical "Mr. Perfectionist" stuff, and my job is to tell that Mr. Perfectionist that I'm progressing and that's the thing that counts, effort, not results.

Yes, based on my current situation I'm not doing so bad. But I can't just ignore the original plan because, to me finishing is what drives me. At some point, I am going to wake up one morning and realize that I'm so far behind that I don't stand a chance. Yes, when I'm not depressed, I realize that it is a ridiculous fear which has no place in *real life*.

This morning after sleeping on your post I realized just how not bad I'm doing. I actually chazar the Daf Yomi as well with a chavrusa. And currently I'm only 40 blatt behind in chazara. That really isn't so bad for 12 months of Daf Yomi with chazara.

[Pidaini wrote:](#)

So I need to take a deep breath, look at who I really am, and accept that. Obviously there are always things that I can do better and more, but only one step at a time, one day at a time. It won't work instantly, and it's not supposed to.

Yes, progress not perfection. If I was perfect, I'd be dead.

Hatzlacha & Good Shabbos,

NeedToQuit

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by Pidaini - 01 Jun 2014 08:33

Thanks for the response!!

This past Shabbos I was in a TERRIBLE!!!! mood!! I was all uptight about everything, you know how everything pops up all at once when these moods come. But since I knew that all those things only come because of the mood I was able to tell myself "Don't take all those thoughts/feelings so seriously!! When you feel a little better you can look at them again objectively and see how you are really doing!!"

so when [needtoquit wrote](#):

Of course my perspective is wrong but it isn't really relivant because it is the only one which I have.

Yes, at that time that's all I have, but if I know that, then it becomes quite relevant, it's an entire different battle!! The battle changes from thinking about "how am I going to finally do more exercise, get more learning done, daven better, help more at home, etc" to thinking about "I'm in a bad mood, I need to remember not to fall for this illusion!"

[needtoquit wrote](#):

because, to me finishing is what drives me.

As is default setting (by me for sure). but in truth that is the chiddush about ODAAT!! If I did what I could today, let it be half a blat, let it be an entire blat yet a blat behind, then I have finished!! I have finished for now what I am supposed to do!! If a time comes when I can catch up..Great!! and if not....THEN THAT'S NOT MY JOB!!!!!! and here it comes.....ACCEPTANCE!!!!

Of course, finishing Daf Yomi is a great thing, but are you positive that that's what Hashem wants? an easy "1,2,3," 7 years? I doubt it, Hashem has malachim that can do that for Him! He wants our struggles, our setbacks, and us saying "I'm gonna do what I need to do now" it is us that wants the finished product, the goal, the "medal"!!!

This is something I need to hear again and again and again, to keep my eye on the *right* "goal"!!!

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Re: My days (even more then 90)
Posted by needtoquit - 06 Jun 2014 08:39

B"H, still sober today, day 27.

I had a really great *Shavuos*. I did manage to catch up by about 10 blatt and really felt more connected to Hashem through my learning than I have in a while. I even had a few really great insights.

However, all that didn't protect me from my addiction. More than once, I had strong urges which weren't even caused by any obvious triggers.

Hatzlacha,

NeedToQuit

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Re: My days (even more then 90)

Posted by yehoshua - 06 Jun 2014 12:36

I feel u. I don't know what to write. I feel u.

Can I just say this though... I am learning not to take credit or fame for something I did, I let Hashem take it, cos I am trying to give it all to him. So then I just read one page or just take out the garbage and let Him take care off all the fear, hero feelings. I just take it.

And I feel the same way. You know, i read some place that, u don't **deserve** to be happy, it is you're **right** to be happy. So I wish in my head every time i see a pretty girl: Hashem bless her to be happy and bless me too.

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