

My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 06 May 2014 16:45

Hey Everyone,

Thanks, already, for the outpouring of support and motivation! I'm five days into this haul, and still very motivated.

My first thoughts (read: anxieties) moving forward, however, are related to what happens when this initial dopamine rush of optimism fades, as rushes are wont to do. We all know, especially as men with addictive and obsessive personalities, that there's a biochemical fix associated with new and exciting things. The GYE journey, for me, now, is new and exciting. But what happens after ten days, twenty days, B"H...90 days? I'm beginning to see the wisdom in the old adage, one day at a time. But I'm also eager to benefit from the erudition of the veteran (and freshman) tzadikim here on GYE.

Thank you so much!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 09 May 2014 16:21

Okay. I fell on Wednesday, then Thursday again. It's a familiar pattern: a set-back, then dealing with the resultant pessimism. It relates, I'm sure, to my OCD, perfectionism, and penchant for polarized, absolutist thinking. I suffer from that "all or nothing" perception.

What's more, I feel that my abstinence leaves me with a wellspring of desire that has to be, for lack of a better word, *exorcised* from body (read: removed through self-gratification). In other words, my thinking is: "Well, I fell... Might as well just jettison all of this pent-up sexual frustration and...BINGE on lust!"

So today's mission: *stem the tide*. Don't let a two-day lapse become a three-day binge.

I realize that this destructive binge capitulation is a sort of a paradigm, a way of thinking, for addicts. And I also realize that it's a chronic misstep for me, one that's responsible for countless hours wasted on horrible self-gratification. If I characterize my addictive behavior in units of time, I have a habit of turning a few hours of lust into days of dreadful self degradation (or, and I shutter to write this: neshama degradation).

So, that's my mission for today. With HaShem's help, and your support, I hope I could do it!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 09 May 2014 16:57

all good....until the last line.

[I also have what to say on the "neshamah degradation" line as well.]

b'hatzlachah

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 09 May 2014 17:05

Please elaborate, Cordnoy, if you have the time.

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 09 May 2014 17:10

"Hope" is not a plan....it's a prayer of sorts, but not even that.

"Neshma degradation" is a topic that has been bantered around here many times. It is similar to the fear of Gehinnom, the seriousness of the aveirah, etc.

Many of us here know that.

We understand the "chomer ha-inyan."

Some can deliver a discourse on the BAD WORD REMOVEDah of the baal haterumos l'gabei peru urvu and the Rashba in the sugya of moch, or how the Pnei Yehoshua and the Dibros Moshe explain the sugya.

Where does that get us?

As Dov is want to say, "Back to the bathroom floor."

so, while it is true that we are degrading our neshamah (and I'm not one to say that with this nisayon, when we pass it, our neshamah is elevated to even loftier levels), that will not be the deterrent....to many of us at least.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 09 May 2014 18:07

Thanks, Cordnoy. I understand some of what you're saying, and it certainly echoes a lot of the sentiments I've read in the daily emails as well, or at least, I think. But I am still confused about a lot of the thought I'm encountering here on the forums. A lot of it seems contradictory (probably just a function of everyone sharing their *own* advice).

I'm new to the recovery world, and have a tremendous amount to learn, but from what I understand, the underlying theme is that we have to essentially wrest the inclination to control and fight this thing from our psyches. That is, we have to accept that it's not within our power, as addicts, to rein in our problem; that only through giving ourselves entirely to HaShem, and effacing our egos, will we be able to live cleanly.

Of course, raising fences and taking action is a prerequisite for success here on our end of the battlefield, but in terms of how we envision the outcome of this war, why is *hope* bad?

In my posts here, I'm purposefully avoiding language that implies control, micro-management and a general sense that I can beat this thing on my own. At least, that's the vibe I'm getting from a lot of the people who've worked the SA program.

I might be over-thinking things, or maybe even missing some fundamental points entirely, but there's a lot of ambiguity in terms of how to approach recovery.

As for the whole hashkafah of focusing on hurting our souls, I agree that it, alone, has been unsuccessful. So, in your opinion, even reminding myself about that is counter-productive?

Thanks again for helping out this perplexed freshman!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 09 May 2014 18:22

You write so eloquently and clear and concise.

I am a freshman as well.

I am merely voicin' my opinion; it holds no more weight than anyone else's....probably much less.

I am the anti hope fellow on this site, and people have caught on. It is not a bad thing to hope. My stress is that action is required. Hopin' that things will be different, for we hope that it will, will not get us anywhere.

Your second paragraph is an excellent one. It should be required reading for SA members and groups (which I am a proud member of). I, however, have not gotten there yet. Yes, I know that I cannot recover on my own. I know that I will be addicted to lust for the rest of my life. I know that if I allow those thoughts to fester in me, I will eventually get a hold of my ultimate lust desire, and therefore I know that I cannot fall into that trap. All fantasies (with wife included) are shut out. There is no place for them inside of this lust-festered brain and organ of mine.

Did I give myself entirely to Hashem? I don't think so.

Did I efface my ego? Perhaps...partly...maybe.

Am I livin' cleanly? Yes...for right now....and frankly my dear, that is all that counts.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by gibbor120 - 09 May 2014 18:34

Hey TC. You expressed it very well. There are different views on this site. You have caught on very quickly to some of the yesodos, but *lo hamedrash haikar, ela hamaaseh*.

You seem to be well on your way.

Have a good Shabbos!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 09 May 2014 18:40

"You write so eloquently and clear and concise."

Likewise, Cordnoy. You made some very quotable remarks there yourself. And I'm no Shakespeare, just very obsessive-compulsive when it comes to writing, and really, everything else as well. I agonize way more than I should over syntax and sentence flow with my posts, haha. I'd probably find the forums more enjoyable if I just put things down, stream of consciousness.

But yeah, the hope/anti-hope debate is definitely not made-up in my mind, and your points are very well-taken.

And just meditating on all of this is probably a useful exercise in and of itself!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 09 May 2014 18:40

Gut Shabbos to you too, Gibbor, and everyone else!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by gibbor120 - 09 May 2014 19:55

You might want to check out the Dr Sorotzkin link in my signature. He has some good stuff on

perfectionism. It helped me to let go a little. I try to control everything, but I'm happier when I

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"let" Hashem control everything some things
Re: My 90-Day Journey
Posted by TalmidChaim - 09 May 2014 19:57

Wow, thanks, Gibbor! Your signature is veritable arsenal of resources!!! That's incredible.

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Re: My 90-Day Journey
Posted by TalmidChaim - 11 May 2014 07:07

Well, despite my rather verbose declaration of staying clean on Friday and preventing a 3-day binge (see above), I fell. It was before Shabbos (I feel so disgusting writing that) and precipitated by the tiniest, most insignificant little thought: "Maybe I should just [you know]. Why not?"

So it happened, Shabbos started not too long afterward, and well... Thank G-d for Shabbos; really, thank G-d for Shabbos. I stayed clean sun down to sun down, one day, and now I'm here, writing this, spiritually renewed and back on track. On the bright side, if this really becomes THE streak, then it's nice that it began on a Shabbos.

Installing filters would definitely be a deterrent, and would eliminate some of the more overt temptations in my life, but there's a deeper problem at play here. Friday's episode was a classic out of the old addict's play-book: I didn't really want to act out, and didn't really have that much of a desire to do so, but as soon as the nasty thought popped into my head, and the prospect of another fix dangled in front of me, I couldn't resist. I really think, one way or another, I would have found a release. However, the internet is definitely my drug of choice. And removing that variable from my life will, 100%, change the calculus of this struggle. So, no excuses; something needs to be done about it. I'm going to look into filer.net, and work on this *"Why not? What the heck?"* tendency of mine.

Onwards.

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by TalmidChaim - 14 May 2014 00:57

So I fell again today, after four days or so clean. This is going to be harder than I thought. I'm not exactly sure what precipitated the mindset that led me to the fall, but I'm sure it had to do with all this free-time and isolation. Obviously, I need to just get out and do something productive. Being a student doesn't mean I have to sit around and do nothing during my down-time.

Anyway, after the fall, the first thing I did was reset my 90-day count and post on the forums. GYE is definitely an anchor for me. And on the bright side, GYE and the 90-day count has helped me maximize my clean days. I haven't had frequent clean stretches like these since I started down this path. So something is working, and I have to keep this up!

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Re: My 90-Day Journey

Posted by shivisi - 14 May 2014 01:00

Keep on Truckin' TC!

we're all cheering you on here!