

The time is now...

Posted by TzviFree - 11 Aug 2015 16:52

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I figured I'll introduce myself here, and start writing my (hopefully) 90 day journal as well.

I'm from a yeshivish background, married, and have a couple of children.

I'm 30+, and have been looking at images since I was 10, though my struggles actually started before that. (8? 6?)

The longest clean streak I've ever had since then was about 14 days. That's right. 14 clean days in more than two decades.

I feel like I've tried 'everything.' Therapy, various programs (including something called Candeco, 12 Steps, and other programs)

There are times when I've decided that for whatever reason, Hashem wants me to go through life as an addict. There were other times where I felt that Hashem was rooting for me... Up and down, but mostly down.

I've been treated for depression, and B"H that's behind me. Through therapy I've made a lot of very positive changes in my life. But I just can't get through this addiction.

Although I've tried the Taphsic method before, it just caused me to lose A LOT of money. However, 13 days ago I tried a different approach. I made a neder that I'll give money to Hillary Clinton's campaign if I have a slip. And although the past two weeks have been, well, hell, I've been sober.

Sober, though, is a funny word. I haven't been sober, I just haven't acted out. I know that I have underlying challenges that influence my decision making, where I think that the computer is the best salve for my troubled soul. What my neder has done has given me the time to use other

tools that I've learned along my journey.

Beforehand, it'd be stimulus-response. I feel angry-computer. Stressed?-computer.

Etc. In my mind, really being sober doesn't mean abstaining from the computer. We all know that if my computer was destroyed, I'd still be an addict. Sober, to me, means feeling serene. Able to properly handle the vicissitudes of life without being too shaken. "Veya k'eitz shasul al palgey mayim..."

This morning I had a slip. Well, I define it has a slip, perhaps others wouldn't, as it wasn't so clear cut. As I'm writing this, I'm realizing that although I'm down over this incident, I'm satisfied that it didn't turn out a bad as it used to be. But, true to my neder, I have to give money to Hillary Clinton's campaign. (Do two wrongs make a right?)

I'm not taking my name off the 90 day chart, because I don't think the slip qualifies for that. So my journey continues...

Today is day 14.

My wife is a niddah, and has been for the past three weeks. We had a miscarriage then. We weren't stunned by the news, as we knew early on that this wasn't a viable pregnancy. It still hurt, though.

The silver lining in this is that I have the opportunity to really wean myself off of my dopamine drug. The hard part for me, though, is finding a suitable alternative. So far, music has been helpful. I'm hoping that, over time, my brain just doesn't need the same level of dopamine that I've been giving it for so many years.

Although I'm counting days, I'm really looking at this just one day at a time. I can't get overwhelmed - when I think about NEVER going back to the computer, I get really anxious. So, looking to be sober just for today

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by TzviFree - 14 Dec 2015 03:23

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I'm pretty lousy about updating, but I think that's a good thing.

One of the things that keeps me in my addiction is getting too stressed, and not knowing how to deal with it. I've learned that the one way I know how to deal with stress is my addiction, and that I had better learn something new or I'm going to have a problem.

B"H, I'm doing alright. 16 days - that's literally the longest streak I have had in my life, since about 7 years old. Wow. Just wow. I'm very excited and happy, hoping that this'll be 'the one,' - but isn't that depressing? Just 16 days out of DECADES of addiction?

Be that as it may, I'm looking forward to the time when I can look back and say 'Wow, I can't even believe I did that, it feels like so long ago!'

So far, what I'm currently doing is working for me. More on that 'formula' later.

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by markz - 14 Dec 2015 03:39

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Can't wait to hear...

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by TzviFree - 16 Dec 2015 19:04

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[markz wrote:](#)

Can't wait to hear...

You've been very kind to me Mark, thanks.

I wish I could point to whatever factors that specifically have helped me continue my streak. If it only it were that simple...

First of all, although I've always known this, but it helps to really feel that every person has to find their own path. I've tried a lot of different things, various programs, 12 steps, Candeo, therapy, willpower, etc. Each path helped me, in certain ways, helped me understand myself better, and helped me understand what does and doesn't work for me.

The problem I experienced, when trying each path, was that I wasn't being truthful about how I was doing. For example, if 12 steps wasn't working, I kept telling myself that it's because I'm not working the program. As they say, "It works, if you work it."

Same for any program. I made myself the problem. But deep down I knew that this program isn't working for me, simply because it's just not a good fit. Maybe I'm not 'there' yet. I'm not 'ready' for what the program has to offer. Whatever the reason, though, it wasn't working, and not because I wasn't trying hard enough, or didn't care enough, and so on.

Adding to that, I put a lot of pressure on myself through various other means. I told myself I'll post on GYE every day. I'll contact my sponsor, or friend, every day. It came to a point that I wasn't allowing myself to work through my slips, I would tell them to others, and think that I worked it through. But I didn't - I was using others as a confessional, but not actually changing myself.

A bigger problem was that I had opened myself up to some people in a very vulnerable way, people who I actually wasn't ready to be this open about with, but did so because whatever program I was in at the time, pushed and pulled me in those directions.

However, believe it or not, this was not all a bad thing. Every thing that didn't 'work' was a step in the right direction. I was learning about myself, what works, what doesn't.

I've learned that even from a young age, I had no skill at all in coping with difficulty. My only way of lowering my stress levels was porn and masturbation. I learned that willpower alone will not suffice, I cannot attack this problem head on.

And I learned to allow myself room to breathe. Allow myself to process my challenges, my slips, and learn from them.

I had a great therapist who told me, a decade ago, that people are biological. We grow, we're not built. And growing takes time.

So, over two weeks ago, I woke up one morning, and said that enough is enough. In the past (I mentioned) I had this neder going, that I would give a certain amount of money to an organization that I didn't like. I decided to do something similar, but instead of a neder, I wrote a contract. I wrote it with an expiration date, and it has to be renewed every so often.

Why did I do it like that? Because I learned that when I shut down ALL avenues of 'escape,' then I don't succeed, I fail. I needed the ability to tell myself, "Well, just wait until tomorrow, then you can get what you want, and won't have to pay your fine."

Of course, I made the contract expire at a time when I would be around other people. That way, I can renew the contract without being in the throes of taivah. Which, BH, has worked so far.

But it's not the contract, really, that has made the difference. It's a tool that I use, but the difference has been me. I'm more careful about where I look. How I relax. What I read. And so on.

And again, I've learned not to do it in a dictatorial way, but to allow myself to 'breathe.' I've read

other people say similar words, and I always wished that they could explain what that means. It's not simple, but I allow myself to be me.

One realization I had at one point is that since pornography is the elephant in my room, it doesn't allow me to focus on my other middos, the positive nor the negative ones. I might be a baal kaas, or a baal gaivah, or I might be an anav, and so on, and I just don't know it!

I know I have other areas in my life where I am talented and skilled, and other areas that I need improvement, but my addiction was sucking up the oxygen, not letting any other aspect of myself to exist.

BH I am where I am now. It's 'only' 19 days, but it already feels like a while ago.

Semper Vigilans,

Tzvifree

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by Bigmoish - 16 Dec 2015 19:39

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So nice to hear real honesty once in a while.

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by ysftw - 16 Dec 2015 21:42

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Amazing...Thank you

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by TzviFree - 17 Dec 2015 14:04

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Thanks for your replies, I appreciate knowing that there others out there listening.

I forgot to mention, I try to read something on a daily basis in regards to addiction. Either from the new book that came out, 'Positive Vision,' or from a sefer that came out a while ago, 'Alel Ayin.'

It's not the information contained in those works that specifically helps me (although there are things inside there that do), for me it's the reminder of the struggle, the reminder not to be blinded by my recent successes. I can't assume that because I've been 'clean' for 20 days out of 20 years that it's all behind me.

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by TzviFree - 20 Dec 2015 19:25

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BH I'm at 23 days. That's about a quarter of 90 days. Never thought I'd see this day!

I wish I could point to what is working for me. I truly don't know of anything specific that I'm doing this time around than the other 10,000,000 times I've tried. However, that itself is testimony to - you just have to keep trying, and keep trying, and keep trying. It will come together.

I'd be lying if I said I don't miss it. There are times where I'm caught up in lust, but that's not even what I'm referring to. There are times where I reminisce, knowing that, if things work out, I'll never experience that 'enjoyment' again.

I try not to dwell on that. I am fully aware of how much of a hell my life had been. How I felt SO low afterward. I thank Hashem every day for where I am right now, and beg Hashem to not allow me to go back to where I was.

Times when I'm most vulnerable - when I'm very tired, and when I'm stressed. Add the two together, and it's a potentially fatal combination. Like I've mentioned, I'm doing what I can to not get stressed. That includes finding healthier outlets, but also working on myself to not get stressed in the first place.

Stress, for me, often comes from expecting one thing, and getting another. I don't lower my expectations, I try not to have any. Or, when things don't go my way, try to recognize that there is no 'my' way.

I do allow myself the human feeling of frustration and disappointment, but I try to temper it with the understanding that Hashem runs the world, and even if I don't see how things are working out, I can be assured that they are.

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Re: The time is now...  
Posted by abe2710 - 20 Dec 2015 20:35

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Tzvifree

Wow you should feel proud of yourself. i am certainly proud of you!

keep going Hashem should help you get to 90 days and beyond to 120 yrs!

i sooo understand what you say that you sometimes feel that you miss the "enjoyment" i find it so hard sometimes to remember how empty and horrid and depressed i feel after i fall, all i can focus on is how "good" it would be to watch just one more time...

Keep it up!!! we all know deep down that if c'v we fall we will feel soooooooooo bad life is soooooooooo much more enjoyable without porn and masturbation

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Re: The time is now...  
Posted by TzviFree - 22 Dec 2015 01:29

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Well, today has been pretty difficult! I can honestly say that if not for the contract that I signed, I would have slipped.

The fact that it would have stopped my streak cold was not even a factor. I was totally ready to go back to my old behaviors. And I had access to an unfiltered computer. B"H I had this contract, and I was able to tell myself to wait until tomorrow.

That being said, I'm focused now on doing things that are a healthy outlet for me.

I have noticed that although I have an addiction to porn, there's a specific fetish that is nigh impossible for me to fight against. General pornography is difficult enough, but when I think about this specific thing, if I'm within 1 mile of an unfiltered computer, my day is done.

And I woke up with this on my mind. So, like I said, it's been a rough day.

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Re: The time is now...  
Posted by markz - 22 Dec 2015 03:57

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If you're EST tomoro is in 1:02hr

I know it can be tough. How's the fight going??

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Re: The time is now...  
Posted by BenTorah.BaalHabayis - 22 Dec 2015 05:30

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What do you mean by "contract"? Are you referring to Taphsic?

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by TzviFree - 22 Dec 2015 14:31

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[markz wrote:](#)

If you're EST tomoro is in 1:02hr

I know it can be tough. How's the fight going??

B"H, thanks for asking. Ebbs and flows. Still doing well, but had a really really busy night last night, and didn't get to focus on self-care. I'm feeling this thing boil up inside of me, and I need to dissipate it before it burns me alive.

[BenTorah.BaalHabayis wrote:](#)

What do you mean by "contract"? Are you referring to Taphsic?

Kind of. My version thereof. I mentioned in an earlier post that I wrote a contract with myself, that if I have a slip (as defined in the contract) I will give a specific amount of \$ to an organization that I really don't like.

The contract expires every couple of days, so I have to renew it (in fact, it expires in about an hour from now. Gotta renew!)

All that being said... 25 days! Holy cow!!!

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by TzviFree - 24 Dec 2015 14:11

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Well!

Last night I had came really really close to falling. Essentially, saw something, which triggered the thought of, "I'm not going to look for images because I need them... I'm just curious if such and such exists." Which, of course, it did (because all pornography exists.)

I looked for maybe about 10-15 seconds. Quickly turned off my laptop, and davened to Hashem to help me out of this situation. BH I was able to go to sleep with much more of a problem. But this morning I awoke feeling that familiar pull.

I consider this a slip and not a fall, as it strikes me as similar to the exception to Rules 2 and 4, that if you see a link and click, but then catch yourself within a few seconds, etc.

However it's defined, it's actually NOT disheartening! Why not? Because I KNOW that I need to keep 'on top of my game.' I never deluded myself into thinking that I can become complacent, so this isn't getting me down. However, it's does inspire me to keep doing the work.

I might not have told myself to become complacent, but that's just what happens over time. I'm quite happy to have received this reminder as to the work that needs to be done.

I'm only recently hit the amount of clean days equal to the amount of YEARS that I've been addicted. Can you fathom that. Addicted for about 25+ years, and been clean for 25+ days. OBVIOUSLY a LOT of work needs to be done.

That being said, I'm still feeling pretty awesome. 27 days!!! I **NEVER** thought this day would truly come! 27 days! It's like a dream!

If you would have told me 28 days ago that I'd go almost a month without porn or masturbation, I would have been incredulous!

BH! And with Hashem's help, will hit 30 days soon.

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Re: The time is now...

Posted by heiligeryid - 24 Dec 2015 15:47

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You're unbelievable!

You didn't give in to t he yetzer hora, even though you slipped for a few seconds.

I'm confident that you'll make it till the top!

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