

On the shoulders of those before me

Posted by LifneiHashem - 20 Nov 2016 20:53

Hi all,

I have been reading a lot of forums and found them to be at times a source of chizuk, as well as upsetting, at times.

Like so many others here, my struggles with P&M started in my early teens and continued until now. I assumed it would stop by itself when I got married, but here I am 10 years later and obviously that didn't happen. We didn't have internet for several years, so the while always an issue, it wasn't encroaching on my life on a regular basis.

About 3 years ago we got internet. It was a relatively slow progression, but at some point it became a nightly pasttime, causing a lot of wasted time and not enough sleep. This lead to missing minyanim on a pretty regular basis. The nightly watching was not exclusively x rated. I also started watching a lot of streaming TV. (I grew up on TV but moved more to the "right" in my late teens and "officially" stopped watching TV. However, over all the years I always kept an ear open to what was going on in pop culture.)

I tried stopping a few times over the years, but never with any success. At some point I realized this is a real issue and I can't just stop on my own. It was beginning to take ovr my life, and I was no longer really connecting to my family, that I could be in the room with them, at the shabbos table, but not really *there*. This past Rosh chodesh Elul I decided to stop for good and signed up on GYE a few days later.

BH now I'm at day 77, which I'm sure is my longest ever. GYE taught me that if I want to stop acting out, first I actually have to *guard my eyes*. I know this is really obvious, but for the longest time I felt that the acting out could be an isolated issue, and there was no need to stop looking at whatever crossed my path, and of course my favorite tv shows. I learned from previous posters the importance of avoiding triggers and the slippery slope.

Things have been going pretty smoothly, & I can honestly say I that for most of the past 2 1/2 months I had minimal desire to act out. I was tempted to believe that I was "cured", but after reading so many other people's experiences, I knew not to be fooled and i needed to keep my up my gaurd.

The reason I'm finally posting now is because today I am really, really struggling, and could really use some chizuk!

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me

Posted by LifneiHashem - 26 Jun 2017 12:58

Wow yesterday sucked. Onward!

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me
Posted by Shivisi_Hashem - 26 Jun 2017 13:10

[LifneiHashem wrote on 26 Jun 2017 01:35:](#)

So apparently slipping on Sunday has become a trend.

It turns out it is not healthy to look at even non pornographic photos of your favorite pornographic actor.

Yes a slip is a slip and I need to move on. I know guilt is not healthy and just keep going. On the other hand, even though I've come so far these slips make me feel like i haven't accomplished anything. It's been almost a year, including several months of feeling so light and free, almost (but never quite) released from the bonds of porn & holywood too. But these recent slips have pulled me down, way down. The momentum & inspiration are gone. Even the will is gone. As I've told many others, success at GYE actually requires guarding your eyes.

At times (like now) it's hard to even remember why I'm doindooing this. It's interesting, I firmly know I began this not because of the religious aspect that it's a sin, but rather because I felt I was losing control of my life. But at this point I think the strongest thing holding me back is that it's a sin. I can't seem to muster any other motivation. I miss it so much. Wow I can't believe this is me. What happened to me? I thought I was a new person but I'm not. That makes me incredibly sad. Which again leads me to wonder what's the value of going on and not just completing the regression.

Hi LifneiHashem,

please remember 2 things:

1) TODAY, when you work on yourself only for today, not looking at the past, and not looking forward, just TODAY only, that you dont want to mess up your today, which you started clean, then it will push you forward for the entire TODAY, when you have this lusty moment, just stop for a minute and think, "why should i mess with my TODAY"? Its not worthed to mess it up.

2) your nick says it all, LifneiHashem, remember hashem is there for you every second, anything good and bad you have in your life is from him, even this lusty moment, and he is standing in front of you, and he is willing to help you not to fall, so that might help you getting back with your will power, and remember a 1 slip brings another slip, so watch out,

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me
Posted by LifneiHashem - 29 Jun 2017 15:32

"why look backwards when it looks depressing...why look forward when it looks impossible..."

quote-Shivisi

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me
Posted by Markz - 29 Jun 2017 15:56

[LifneiHashem wrote on 29 Jun 2017 15:32:](#)

"why look backwards when it looks depressing...why look forward when it looks impossible..."

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More importantly "**why look inwards**"

why look inwardsif I have no clue what I'm looking for or looking at or how to deal with?

Ill leave it to you to figure out the answer

Its simpler to look outwards ;-)

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me

Posted by LifneiHashem - 29 Jun 2017 18:19

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Its simpler to look outwards ;-)Gotta figure out the question before working on the answer. What are you talking about?

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me
Posted by LifneiHashem - 29 Jun 2017 18:20

[Markz wrote on 29 Jun 2017 15:56:](#)

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me
Posted by lovealways - 29 Jun 2017 19:28

i like this post!

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me
Posted by Ihavestrength - 29 Jun 2017 20:25

I relate to everything you said. I started out with this because I wanted to feel strong, in control, in a word, like a man and not a child. (The hidden meaning behind all these descriptions is the desire to "feel good about oneself".)

?Soon however my motivation shifted. Life was so tough *even* being clean. I didn't feel strong, I didn't feel in control and I didn't feel like a man. I was easily irritated, I was anxious and I found it hard to get things done. It turned out that not acting out didn't solve my problems.

Life was out of control *with* not acting out. So, I started slipping because life was so painful. I needed the escape. The only thing that was stopping me now was that it was a *sin*, and that wasn't enough, so I fell.

It was then I realized acting out wasn't my problem.

Wanting to stay clean was my *issue*. **Wanting to be able to look in the mirror** was my **problem**.

A strong desire to be complete/whole, otherwise known as *perfect*, **starting with fixing my most glaring flaw (acting out), can** be debilitating.

Without the recognition that all humans are imperfect, and the compassion for ourselves and others that follows this realization, it's difficult to grow, and in fact even live in this world without much constant pain.

The solution is to accept the basic fact that to be human is to make mistakes. (We tell ourselves we make worse mistakes than others but that must be foolish talk. Firstly, how can one truly know the going ons of others, and secondly, it truly does seem that **most people** fail in the area which is most difficult for *their personality*, only achieving true success with **much labor**.)

I would say it's **totally fine** you slipped. Congratulations, now you know you're not an alien. You're human. It's the height of hubris and arrogance to be sad when you slip/fall. (your mistakes and internal struggles are not tougher than anyone else's.) It's not noble to demand perfection from oneself, it's arrogant. You want to feel good about yourself, which is a mistake. **You already are great**. We all have good and bad things about us. When you overcome this challenge, trust me, you will still have other issues to deal with.

Have a little compassion for yourself and cut some slack for others as well, we are all just doing the best we can, making mistakes at every turn.

Peace

P.S I may have used the word "you". I don't mean you in particular. It's's the plural (general you). I don't know much, but when I read your post I felt I could have written that a short while ago, so I thought I might have something to share. Best of luck!

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me
Posted by LifneiHashem - 29 Jun 2017 21:25

Thanks for your comments. Truthfully, I was just feeling so low that day and once I felt better the next day I reread my post and definitely doesn't describe my real feelings.

One of the first chizuk emails I read after signing up for gye had such a simple yet powerful insight that I constantly need to reiterate to myself: Thoughts are fleeting. I remember those early days lust attacks & my first reaction was that it's all over & there's no way I'm going to get past this. There's no way I'm going to live with this feeling forever. Somehow I pulled through and lo and behold the feeling slipped away just as easily as it came. Fortunately after several months of guarding my eyes the lust attacks became much less because as time goes by the images flashing through my mind became weaker). Of course there are always other triggers like boredom, stress, loss of motivation etc.

Now at this stage in the game I once again need to remind myself that thoughts are fleeting. Yes I felt like garbage on Sunday and to the point of having zero motivation and in danger of falling. And the reason those thoughts were so powerful was because it feels like that is the new reality, like I will always feel that way. But thoughts are fleeting! The next day I was fine, recommitted to being successful and motivated to make it happen.

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me
Posted by YidFromMonsey - 03 Jul 2017 14:09

[Shivisi Hashem wrote on 26 Jun 2017 13:10:](#)

[LifneiHashem wrote on 26 Jun 2017 01:35:](#)

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me

Posted by LifneiHashem - 03 Jul 2017 19:18

Just another litvak & chussid brought together through gye.

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me

Posted by LifneiHashem - 28 Jul 2017 02:49

Unfortunately very serious slips happening. The progression is so obvious and predictable: 2 weeks ago was super stressful and rewarded myself with "chill time" AKA YouTube clips of Hollywood movies etc. last week less stress but already ensnared by pop culture so continued to surf. This week bored of that stuff & surfing other stuff, stopping short of actual porn which would require me to restart my count. I'm having such trouble recapturing my momentum. I'm so close to a year yet once again feel like back to square one with no progress.

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me

Posted by Ihavestrength - 28 Jul 2017 12:56

It doesn't have to be a progression. Today is a new day. Amount of days isn't everything.

Maybe take your focus away from trying not to act out and put it into positive things which will put your attention elsewhere.

I think it's also important to realize there is **nothing** lust has to offer you in terms of real happiness. You are not depriving yourself when refraining. The only way it feels like deprivation is if you hold onto the fantasy that it has real value.

You can do it! You are worth it!

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Re: On the shoulders of those before me

Posted by LifneiHashem - 28 Jul 2017 13:33

Thanks for responding. Its an amazing thing to be able to post & receive feedback/ chizuk.

Yes today is a new day but there's no denying a clear progression which needs to be rectified. When I first started a year ago i stopped watching anything secular or even listening to the radio. I was petrified to even touch my iPad when alone,

and didn't. Unfortunately that has eroded starting a few months ago and its progressed to this point.

Realizing there's no real value is a nice philosophical thought, which can definitely help strengthen ones resolve to make proper gedarim, but does little to help once those walls have eroded and I'm back on the front lines facing lust attacks caused by my own breach of guarding my eyes.

Yes amount of days isn't everything, but it sure means a lot to me. Just a short 300 days ago I couldn't imagine the possibility of P&M plus pop culture not being a major part of my daily existence and life. For a good part of this year it was behind me, a nightmare that I had awoken from. Even now that I've let myself be pulled back into the trenches I can't go all the way back to square one, which losing my count would equate to. At this point all I have left is my count.

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