

Journey of one day at a time

Posted by Ihavenostrength - 10 Feb 2017 20:04

This is day one or perhaps it's day zero. I fell today. It wasn't much fun. I was clean for 32 days. That is about how long I usually go for. I really want to be done with this problem. I just want to be normal. My self esteem is crushed every time I fall. Somehow internal adversity is more painful than an external adversary. For if it's an external adversary, even if he's causing you pain, you don't take the blame for it. Only the pain. With the internal losses you get both. I suppose I'm my own worst enemy. Well I hope that was morbid enough for you, because I'd like to begin my journey.

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by Singularity - 23 Mar 2017 15:15

I'm all for sushi. What's this now?

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 23 Mar 2017 15:35

[Markz wrote on 23 Mar 2017 15:12:](#)

[Gevura Shebyesod wrote on 23 Mar 2017 14:49:](#)

Tell me again how much is required between fish and meat

Tell me again how much is required between meat and fish

Tell me again how much is required between wood and ford

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by lhavenostrength - 23 Mar 2017 19:06

Day 41: Nothing much to say today. But surely, that is ok. After all it does get hard, to write each day, on and on. Wisdom doesn't come easy for me, confusion and blundering though, always stand ready.

Trying to forget, or at least let pass, things I've learnt on an off chance. These I did take for truth, truly a shame, or shame it's good.

Perspective is all they say, to the man at the window, watching the bay.

Hard, hard, hard to unlearn the learned, but harder more, to keep that which only burns.

Sorry for that drivels folks

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by lhavenostrength - 24 Mar 2017 18:13

Day 42: It is hard for me to write clearly. Not because I don't want to be honest, but rather because it takes time and effort (especially when typing on a cell phone). It's much easier to write in riddles. To merely copy into words flashes of the feelings and thoughts that are rushing through my mind. Only when I write deliberately and coherently however, do I achieve any sort of clarity or relief.

I am very depressed.

Why?

Because I have depressing thoughts.

Until I stop thinking depressing thoughts, or at least until I recognize that they are just thoughts and not reality, I will be severely depressed. Until I accept that my happiness is my responsibility and that it is an inside job, I will be miserable.

No coping mechanism in the world will help me.

Not exercise, music, meditation, approval seeking, or masturbation will help. Well, they might help temporarily, but they won't solve the problem.

In fact, they probably will make it worse, because they reinforce the belief that something outside of me is the key to happiness and contentment.

A glimpse into my mind: "This weather is miserable outside, (cold, dark and gloomy) my living conditions are uncomfortable, (small, cramped and ugly). This sucks, this truly stinks."

"I have not accomplished anything this year, I'm a failure. I have no clue what I want to do with my life. I don't have plans for the summer, I don't have plans for next year."

"I am not particularly good at anything, and I have no drive to get better. I'm too lazy to be able to accomplish anything. I don't enjoy doing anything. I have no friends, noone loves me and I don't blame them."

What's causing me to be depressed? My circumstances or my thoughts?

Almost every circumstance is neutral, it's our thoughts that interpret them, based on our past conditioning.

An example:

(come with me again and take a look, this time into the mind of a happy man. He has kindly agreed to open up his mind to us, for a small licensing fee of course.)

"It's cold outside, I think to myself. Let me go open the window and get some fresh air. Wow, that feels nice. Refreshing."

"Oh, I can hear the purring sound of the wind, I could just close my eyes and listen to that forever."

"The snow is such a beautiful pure white, the darkness and overcast skies really bring out it's color. I'm truly lucky to behold such beauty."

So, sometimes blessings are curses and curses are blessings. Nothing fills the deep void within

me. How sad... Or perhaps, I'm lucky, for I need nothing (outside of me) to fill the void within.

Have a great shabbos everyone! I can't thank each of you enough for your insightful posts. I read them again and again.

Peace

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Re: Journey of one day at a time
Posted by eslaasos - 24 Mar 2017 18:22

[lhavenostrength wrote on 24 Mar 2017 18:13:](#)

"I have not accomplished anything this year, I'm a failure.

You have inspired and encourage me and others with your insightful posts and your strength of character.

"I am not particularly good at anything

Well, this anonymous blogger thinks you're great at writing, and at being able to identify and then express what is going in in your head.

What's causing me to be depressed? My circumstances or my thoughts?

For me the answer is both, often in a vicious cycle.

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 24 Mar 2017 20:14

ihave, you are being a little too tough on yourself. you have done so much for so many of us here with your incredibly thought through posts. sounds like a good friend to schmooze with would be helpful. whatever it is you need, may Hashem help you find it very soon. have a simcha'dik Shabbos!

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by Ihavenostrength - 26 Mar 2017 04:56

Day 43: Went away for shabbos and had a nice time B"H. It's quite interesting... Whenever I go

You have to be so careful when dealing with people. So many people have something going on. Every person has an entire life. You have to lean towards sensitivity. I only need to reflect on my life for a moment to see the truth in this. How a kind word can help, how an unkind word can bring someone even lower.

Gut voch!

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by MayanHamisgaber - 26 Mar 2017 05:02

Thanks for the thoughts me likes them

Great to hear shabbos was good

KUTGW

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by Ihavenostrength - 26 Mar 2017 17:40

Day 44: What causes what? Do other life problems cause this addiction or does this addiction cause other problems?

I don't know, I can see how it can go both ways, even just in my life. I guess whichever one it is, what is of primary importance is to take positive action towards change in whatever area requires it.

There are practical ramifications though. For if acting out/lusting is causing other problems, perhaps achieving sobriety will cause other problems to cease to exist (hence removing the need to focus on them).

As for me I'm not too hopeful that sobriety will be my all-encompassing salvation.

Even if my problems grew out of the void which acting out created, it doesn't mean they'll go away with not acting out anymore. All it means is that they may have not developed if I'd actually matured, instead of self-medicating with masturbation.

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by GrowStrong - 26 Mar 2017 18:27

[lhavenostrength wrote on 26 Mar 2017 17:40:](#)

Day 44: What causes what? Do other life problems cause this addiction or does this addiction cause other problems?

Its my understanding that life problems cause addictions which then cause other problems compounded.

I don't know, I can see how it can go both ways, even just in my life. I guess whichever one it is, what is of primary importance is to take positive action towards change in whatever area requires it.

Totally agree. We have a lot to work on but change through honesty and positive actions is the key I think.

There are practical ramifications though. For if acting out/lusting is causing other problems, perhaps achieving sobriety will cause other problems to cease to exist (hence removing the need to focus on them).

Yes, logically that's correct, but the only way to really achieve sobriety I think is going to be by facing the core feelings we are running away from. And it's very likely the two sides of the problem are directly related.

As for me I'm not too hopeful that sobriety will be my all-encompassing salvation.

I think it can be if its accompanied by honest change. If its just reprogramming bad habits without fixing any core emotional issues then its possible it was not even addiction in the first place.

Even if my problems grew out of the void which acting out created, it doesn't mean they'll go away with not acting out anymore. All it means is that they may have not developed if I'd actually matured, instead of self-medicating with masturbation.

The mere concept of self-medicating implies there was something that wasn't well at the start of that journey.

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Re: Journey of one day at a time
Posted by Shlomo24 - 26 Mar 2017 19:34

[lhavenostrength wrote on 26 Mar 2017 17:40:](#)

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Excellent. I have many parts of my recovery. 2 major parts are therapy and SA. Therapy doesn't keep me sober and my sponsor isn't my therapist. But they are both part of the same issue. I have something called addiction. It is a disease. My brain is wired differently than other people's brains. Why am I a lust addict? I have no idea. When I check in at meetings I say, "Hi, I'm Shlomo and I'm a lust addict. I have a progressive disease that started between the ages of 3 and 5 with sexually themed dreams and it progressed to anonymous acting out with other men." My progression happened over many years, but I know that I have an addicts brain. I believe that the core issue of my addiction is my addiction. To say that it's anything else is to say that it's not an addiction. There are many genetic aspects of addiction (my father has been to OA and he is definitely a food addict).

But you can ignore all of that. Because I need to work my program regardless of the causes of my addiction. Living in the past is not going to keep me sober. Getting a better self-esteem isn't either going to keep me sober. (I actually don't have a low self-esteem).

Also, getting sober did not solve my problems. I only started to realize my problems once I actually got sober.

This is my experience, strength, and hope.

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Re: Journey of one day at a time

Posted by Ihavenostrength - 27 Mar 2017 05:47

[GrowStrong wrote on 26 Mar 2017 18:27:](#)

[Ihavenostrength wrote on 26 Mar 2017 17:40:](#)

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The mere concept of self-medicating implies there was something that wasn't well at the start of that journey.

I was 11 years old when a friend exposed me to pornography. I don't think I had any real emotional problems back then.

I wasn't looking for an escape.

I remember it like yesterday... I was surprised that such pictures even existed.

Pornography and masturbation are extremely addictive. Even more acutely so for a young child or adolescent whose brain is still developing, the prefrontal cortex (part of the brain related to decision-making) especially. Their executive control is quite limited. I didn't stand a chance.

I suppose the first year or so I may not have even been aware that there was something wrong with these behaviors. When I did realize, I felt bad and wanted to stop. This went on for some years.

Then it wasn't about wrong or right anymore. It was about wanting to walk as a man among men.

As I got older I was able to exert more control, to hold out for longer periods.

Sorta random but on my mind:

Tangentially, I used to be a good student. Always got good grades without trying very hard. I was popular. Around the time I started acting out I started getting in trouble in school.

I'm not sure they were related. I had a terrible teacher that year. Very, very strict. Unfair. I still got good grades and was still popular.

As the years went on (failure gets more painful when it's? long lasting)... I don't make friends easily anymore, not well liked, (I think anyways) I find it hard to focus, to learn new things. I used to love reading... Now I find it difficult.

Interestingly, the cognitive impairment may be a direct result of this addiction. Addictions cause low dopamine levels in the brain. Dopamine regulates motivation and focus. It's hard to learn or feel motivated with unnaturally low dopamine levels. (Incidentally I may have found a little cure today, I'll write about it soon iy"h. No, it's not a pill.)

Yale researchers have apparently found that 90 days of abstention resets the brain somewhat. That is very heartening. (Although I can't find the original study anywhere, I only see it mentioned in various articles. If anyone can point me to the study I'd greatly appreciate it.)

Good night

(Had these thoughts running through my head and wanted to get them out there, hopefully this was somewhat coherent.)

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Re: Journey of one day at a time
Posted by Singularity - 27 Mar 2017 07:38

[lhavenostrength wrote on 26 Mar 2017 17:40:](#)

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Beautiful insights all around

I used my drug to deal with my issues. Now life is much more difficult because I need to deal with the issues without a crutch. But I have a serene sense of satisfaction that I am actually dealing with issues. Living like an adult. Not like a baby.

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Re: Journey of one day at a time
Posted by GrowStrong - 27 Mar 2017 10:20

Many kids (most according to some mechanchim I spoke to recently) are exposed to porn in todays world at one point....

They don't all become addicts or start to have porn problems....

Yes executive control is limited but so is the tendency to self medicate limited to the feelings of the child and their situation.

Whats not important is whether you are an addict from birth or due to circumstance or whether you just have a bigger YH than most.

Whats important is what tools you are able to use to help you personally break free from what you struggle with and then you should be blessed to take your strength and insight to help heal and give insight to the rest of the world like you do for us here....

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