

Ben is on the track

Posted by GYEBen - 12 Jul 2017 08:14

Hello to all,

I decided to open a new topic and write along my journey to the first goal - 90 days clean - mainly for myself.

I feel that this will help me achieve the goal. Having a place to write about my thoughts, my challenges, my successes and my failures that might occur along the way.

This might be a bit egocentric, but the reader I aim most is myself. I want to have a place I can go back to and read about my feelings along the way.

This is more a travel journal than anything else. If someone can benefit from it - that would be really great, although I am sure that I do not have many Hidushim to bring out as many better and wiser than myself have gone through this path before me.

OK, so.... 90 days...

2 down, 88 to go. and then more... of course.

I looked around the site, and it is really well built. Regarding my Motivational settings, I found that the strongest one I have for now is... my Personalized Chart!

Definitely not by chnace, I began my journey on the 17 Tamuz. approaching the 3 weeks, Ben Hametzarim, and an event just the night before (my wife caught me looking at a site...) triggered the urge to finally do something drastic and take care myself for good, seriously.

I knew about GYE because I had a short and failed attempt at recovery two years ago... I was not serious at the time.

So I found that starting now is the best anyone can hope for, when looking at the calendar.

My motivation to stay on track and clean continuously is strong: If I succeed, then I shall reach the first 4 levels still during the three weeks and get to Tisha BeAv a better person. But more significantly, I can reach level 7 just Erev Rosh Hashana! What a tremendous achievement that would be! What an opening for this year's Yamim Noraim!! And then B"H finally get to the 90 days during Hol Hamoed Sukkoth - meaning that Hoshana Raba would find me with a cleaner body and mind.

I know that all that seems a bit over enthusiastic... From the high of my 2 days streak I am already happy about an achievement I am so far from...

Nevertheless, I think this is a great motivation, and I know that I must take encouragement from anywhere I can find it because this is not going to be easy.

My Tefila this morning was already completely different than before. I felt that I could really relate to the words and found that almost every sentence was written with GYE goals in mind.

The only fact that I decided to go for it, open myself to external support, understand that I must ask for, and accept, the strength from Hashem to overcome my addiction - made me feel fresh and happy, the Kavanot flowing in as never before.

I now must keep this momentum, and writing here will help me for sure.

Ben

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by GrowStrong - 12 Jul 2017 11:04

Just remember, one day at a time... You only have to be sober for 24 hours...

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by dms1234 - 12 Jul 2017 19:40

May I ask: what exactly are you going to **DO** for sobriety, for recovery?

In my experience merely looking or knowing how many days i am sober isnt enough for me to keep being sober and to continue recovering.

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by GYEBen - 13 Jul 2017 05:29

Hello Daniel, and all friends here at GYE.

You ask an excellent question. Certainly what I need is DOING something about it.

As I was told - the issue I am trying to solve is a practical one - I've been DOING things... so the solution must also be practical - physically DOING other things to try and counter the action.

So, the first item on the list was to re-register on GYE. Done.

Now, registering is fine, reading around is great... but my own experience proved me that this is far from enough. GYE is providing a rather large set of tools - I decided to try all and see what fits.

Item 2 - forums - here I am, writing about myself, writing about my challenges and sharing.

Item 3 (i'll stop counting...) - I got myself a partner. We have exchanged emails... We have a lot in common and we start bonding... that's a good point, since this is a real person.

Next... I joined a 12 steps phone group... that's an experience I feel is very helpful!

Next... well... the 12 steps are not just nice words put together, I am working my way through the steps. Some of them I think I understand well, some other will require some deeper enquiry, but its battle plan (sorry for the military terms... I am quite extensively military trained...)

And of course, I started listing my arsenal of tools and 'things that work for me'.

A there are quite a lot, but I am aware that most of these are tactical weapons - good for dealing with a impulse to act out or a specific behavior that needs correction or eradication.

I must deal with all the situation at a strategic level - what changes and remedies I need to take upon myself in order to succeed in changing my life.

Going over the GYE site teaches me a lot.

The 90 days chart is a great tool, I think - never mind what some of the more serious people around here are saying about it.

I went over the board - and I understood that you - and many others - are right. The board in itself cannot be THE goal. Making it to 90 days or even more is not the issue. BUT it is one of the tools I can use to quantify the short term practical results.

I learn from the board some very impressive things.

First of all - honesty. Some Haverim here have long long streaks and an impressive track record and still have the courage to go back to the bottom of the board. 1 day.

Secondly, it teaches clearly that just abstaining and waiting for the count to grow and the medallions to be awarded is not enough. Because doing so will for sure result on being on the

board forever, going up and down... that will not work for me.

I reached such a situation that requires deep treatment.

Introspection and reflexion are other tools I apply nowadays. Being honest with myself.

So - the first result is that I don't lie to myself anymore - I have a **SERIOUS** problem, I am sick - I must take care of myself or I will continue hurt myself and my loved ones and Am Israel in ways that will have no coming back from.

But I also found out something which left me amazed. I understand today that my recovery process started at least **ONE YEAR AGO**.

True, I am using the right words - sex addict, therapy, 12 steps... - only for a few days. But I am conscious, at this level or another, of my situation for years, and I wanted to solve it for a long long time, but never really did something about it. Or did I?

One year ago, I changed job. Voluntarily. I quit my last position - in spite of real effort from my employer's side to keep me in the team - and took a new and fresh start in a completely different branch of business. That was a gamble - for the time being paid off in more than one way.

My new work environment is much better for my recovery. For many reasons I won't detail here now.

And that was the occasion for several other changes - dramatically influencing my way of life, which eventually led me to this stage of actual actions to recover from my addiction.

It might seem superficial - but I changed my haircut. Or rather, I stopped cutting my hair altogether. I was used to very short trimmed hair since my days in the army... now I am going around with curls like a hippy from the seventies - and feel great about it.

Then, I changed my name. Well, not really changed my name but I changed the name used by all my fellow workers. Once again, a leftover from my army time - I went from Benji to Binyamin and once more... feel great about it!

My new job, in contrast to what I did in the last 25 years, does not require me to travel abroad so often (I used to be half of the time on airplanes, hotels, etc...) So my mileage status went down from Platinum frequent flyer in 4 companies to being just a simple mortal occasional traveler... and my life improved dramatically!

I can have a normal life again! If I only want to, and now, I do.

Regular hours, same minyan every day, I registered at the gym and I workout (very) regularly.

All that was actually setting the stage for my recovery.

So, OK, I am far from being done. But yes, I DO, and I will continue doing with your support and the teachings I learn here and in other places.

Braha VeHazzlaha to all of us!

Ben

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by jaygee - 13 Jul 2017 13:11

Hi Ben,

Well done thus far! You started your post as being more for yourself - a sort of travel journal- but you have already given chizuk to one member -- me!

Why?

Well for one, 17 Tammuz was the time where i decided to pull myself together (again). So i feel like we are embarking on the same journey to 90 days.

Ive been to GYE before too, and sounds like i used it a bit better than you did. And using the TaPHSiC method worked wonders. That was until it that sneaky yexer of mine got me.

And then it was a case of me saying, ok ill start it again, ill take another neder. But this kept being put off for a day, then another day, and yet another day. until days turned into months.

Each day progressively i got trapped a little further down. And each day felt a little more cr*p about myself.

My yexer, the cleverest one out there, somehow convinced me that there was no point taking the TaPHSiC neder again since ive failed it before, so id fail again.

But BH for GYE, because it has many tools.

And this is further chizuk i got from you.

So happened that i also needed to look seriously at what would work for me. 90 days was one. Im not one for posting and blogging etc, but i understand the value of community. And hashkacha has it that the post on top of this board today was yours.

You gave me the chizuk to post for the first time and thus take the theroetical understanding of this tool and put it into practice. So thanks for that.

May Hashem bless you to keep on upwards and onwards on your journey.

You can get in touch any time if you need.

JayGee

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by GYEBen - 13 Jul 2017 13:45

Hello JayGee,

You made me so happy by what you wrote!

What?! I can be of help to someone who has deals with similar issues? I would have laughed at anyone mentioning such a ridiculous idea even one week ago.

This is the power of this community - I write something, it resonates with you and then you reply, your post makes me stronger, and maybe someone else will be inspired by this exchange...

So my friend, we are here together on this route to 90 days of cleanliness... The calendar is with us... let's hold hands and continue till we reach the next level, and the next one...

I wanted to share another thing with you, and any who would care to read this. I had a hiddush yesterday evening I wanted to tell the world about. Yesterday evening, I had an urge to say the Kryat Shema Al Hamita - which I do not do regularly. One passuk jumped to my eyes:??

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? ' ?????????? Usually this refers to the Makot, but I had a different understanding. We know that Mitzraim is the source of all the lust as is said: ??? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? So I

understood this passuk as being a prayer to Hashem, 'I pray that you will heal me from Lust, as you promised not to hit Bney Israel with the plagues of Mitzraim.'

Thanks JayGee for making my day!!!

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Re: Ben is on the track
Posted by Markz - 13 Jul 2017 15:17

Hey Ben - Welcome!!

Sorry i didn't say hi yesterday, but I couldn't get my head around the long post

KUTGW!!

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Re: Ben is on the track
Posted by GYEBen - 13 Jul 2017 15:24

Hello Markz!

That's perfectly OK...

I know I can get a bit carried out when I start typing...

I do not expect anyone to actually read all my rambling... it's more for myself!

But I appreciate very much your support!!!

Ben

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 13 Jul 2017 18:51

Welcome Ben. Its fellows like you who hit the ground running, ready to work, use many and varied tools, and connect with real people that make it. Hatzlocha. Iyh you will inspire many of us.

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by GYEBen - 14 Jul 2017 04:35

Good morning to all my friends here at GYE,

It has been less than a week and I feel at home here.

This proves how much all of you guys are warm and welcoming and supportive. I am full of admiration for all of you who have been struggling and take the time and effort to answer every single thread, relate personally to newcomers, express genuine interest with real concern about each and every member success or failure.

That is a real Hessed, a example to follow - no matter what the current situation of anyone is.

Regarding the 90 days journey, so far so good. Too good actually...

True, it has been only 3 or 4 days (depending on how you count - doesn't matter) but I remember myself really struggling for a 4 days streak when I tried (a zillion times) to do it by myself. Really struggling.

And now, I don't feel any special effort... I know that this is the elation of the beginning...

I fell also that when I reach for the computer now, it is with the clear intention to come over here in the forum and post something about my day, my night,... and for now I did not have even the idea to go to some other sites.

I certainly pray for this to continue - but I know that it will not come without investing myself tremendously in the battle.

I have a partner - maybe even two...

I am taking steps to join an SA group. I feel that this is what will really help for the long term.

I do not fool myself to think that, even if I stay 'clean' for hundreds of day, I am cured from my disease. Let's say that if I stay 'clean' for as long as I have been 'dirty', I will consider talking about a success.... That brings me to the age of...84!

Well... One day at a time....

Stay strong my friends!

Benjamin

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by Singularity - 14 Jul 2017 10:24

Welcome, ben!

This place is great, just don't wolf it down in one go.

Keep inspiring.

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by GYEBen - 16 Jul 2017 08:26

Shavua Tov to all you wonderful people of GYE,

All is good, all is very good because I finally got to be tested in my strength of will and I believe I passed - just passed - but that is a big encouragement - or so I feel.

So, last week was a turmoil of decisions and developments.

First, my wife caught me in the middle of the night on the phone - for the zillion'th time - and that truned into the firm decision to stop once and for all - for the zillion'th time too.

BUT, I can't explain why, it was different than all the times before. No hesitation, no half way - I decided to go for the full thing.

So - deletion of all accounts and IDs on the video and photo sharing sites, deletion of the 'shadow' email accounts, a few other severing actions and then : GYE account, I started posting on the forum, started counting the days, applied for a partner - got a partner!

Joined a phone conf call... Got punched in the gutts by Dov - THANK YOU DOV!!!!

I was welcomed on the chat by a fellow GYE-er... Turn out to be the best guy on earth... I've got me a sponsor!

And tonight - I shall attend my first live SA meeting.

OK - all that in just a few days - I can consider myself very lucky - or rather thank the Hashgacha for taking care of me like that.

The results were also good - I never felt better in my mind and body.

My Tefila is improving daily, I finally got to reach my weekly goal of 30 km running, I feel more energetic, at work everything is sudenly going better...

All was good. A bit too god actually. Because I caught myself wondering 'maybe I am not actually addicted?! maybe it was just an habit or out of lazyness or whatnot... See how easy it was to stop! I don't even have to fight it at all...'

And that turned on a red light. STOP! or rather HALT!!! (I've been reading the white book...)

This though is dangerous and will lead me directly back to square one - while I am barely at the start of square two. Thanks to wiser men than me, I have a questionnaire... "Am I a sex addict?" I passed the questionnaire again - and, bingo! I passed with flying colors! The answer is YES, definitely. OK - so continue working on it and stop thinking you are cured because you passed a few days free of porn!

And this morning was a refresher. I woke up around 0500 (thats more or less my regular time), but in a state of half consciousness, I had this very suggestive dream... And I brought to the front of my mind all the words I have learned, heard, exchanged with fellows here on GYE - and I consciously pushed the dream away. It took a few minutes - but I stood up and went to the minyan with as a man with a purpose... Hachnaa...

I am now fully aware that I wont be able to do it by myself and I am ever so thankful that I have you all here, to help me surrender and be able to open my hart, my mind, open my life to others, welcome the good influence and the Hessed flowing from everywhere and everyone, that is

what will - eventually - enable me to find peace.

I am a bit overfown by emotions as I write here...

I'll stop for now...

Have all a wonderfull week, full of joy and Kedusha!

Ben

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by MayanHamisgaber - 16 Jul 2017 17:11

Good positive steps KUTGW

Just one question: How is the wife taking all this? Is she getting help too?

Warning: Spoiler!

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by GYEBen - 17 Jul 2017 06:53

Good morning to all my friends here on GYE,

I must start my day by posting something here, because I feel that this is one of the actions that keep me on the track.

Although I do not have an urge to go and surf on some sites I know too well, I have a strong feeling - just behind my head - that if I only release the tension and the attention I give to recovery slightly - I will fall back in no time.

The idea of 'allergy' to lust is helpful for me at this moment. I know that it is dangerous for me, no matter what the quantity or quality - so I must keep away from it. Just as I'd keep away from Nutella if I was allergic to nuts (God forbid!!! - I just love Nutella!)

Anyway, I have so much to tell about...

I had this life changing experience yesterday evening - I attended my first SA meeting.

I am still trying to analyze exactly how this makes me feel and how it will influence me.

This introspection by itself is a new experience for me. I see now that I am crippled.

I have a great difficulty to express my emotions even to myself, and feel almost incapable of exteriorizing anything, but negative energies.

Yeah, I can get quite expressive when I am mad at something or someone... But then I realize that this is just an expression of being mad at my own self.

OK, so let's stay focused for a second, SA meeting.

I met my sponsor (for the first time) a few minutes before the meeting and we had a very nice

chat - I felt I could be completely open and speak about my addiction, what I did, everything... And somehow, I felt comfortable to share. That was a great introduction. And then I entered the room, slowly filling up with guys, normal guys, nice people, all smiling and apparently very happy to be here. You know, just some friends gathering for a common activity that they like, appreciating the time together.

Everyone smiled at me, welcomed me heartily, made me feel really comfortable and already part of the group.

Then we had the introductions. These nice guys spoke easily, without any decorum or pathos, about their past and present issues. And I realized that it is possible to speak about being a sexaholic. It is not that we are normalizing the thing.

The tone was not - "SO, I am a sexaholic, so what?! Sue me!!!", not at all.

It was entirely on the level of - I realize that I am sick and that I need help. We found out that being together, members of the fellowship is a great way to support the healing process. Many good people have gone through similar issues in the past and have designed a process that will help us overcome our illness and start living again as God intended us to live, as WE want to live. Let's learn from them, implement the process, support each other and learn how it is to be free.

No guilt, not (too much) self pitying, no judgment. Acceptance, openness, care and love. Of myself and of others.

I looked around and I told myself that, yes, I belong here. Although these guys are all different, certainly very different from me for the most of them. But we have in common a fundamental thing that is really part of what defines me as being me.

In another context, I would have been very judgmental of them. And realizing that makes me despise myself. How can I? On what base?! And then I realize that this is also part of the symptoms of my illness. I am in general very judgmental of others and that is a sure sign that I need help - help from all those that I just dismissed as being not enough this or too much that.

Well, the fact that I am able now to write these things here, and share them with the world (here it's safe... but I will share them also with my sponsor and IYH with my new friends, in the real world) is a sign of a starting recovery process, or so I want to believe.

So yes, I am sick - but I take care of myself! I am taking real very tangible steps in order to cure this illness and become a better person, an healthy member of the community, a good husband, a better father, son, brother, friend, employee...

A Ben Adam, finally.

I felt so much care and warmth in the welcome messages each one of the attendees addressed to me that I had to speak also. And I did just that. Hesitantly, searching for my words, I tried to convey a simple message: I am grateful to all of you guys for accepting me here among you.

The meeting went on and was over in no time. The hour passed so fast I found myself out of the door, chatting with the guys, exchanging phone numbers, and then... I was alone behind the wheel of my car, driving back home.

I am lucky because I have to drive a bit over an hour to get back home - and that was the perfect occasion to try and take all this in, digest the experience. Slowly realize that all this was for real. It was really me sitting there and speaking those words that never passed my lips before, speaking almost openly about what really bothers me in my life with fellow men that understood me. I did not just witness an ethnologic experience or so a documentary about I don't know what. I am part of this - and this feels good because this feels real. I can connect, I can start breaking the walls I have built over the years, sealing my heart from the outside. Brick by brick, I shall dismantle all until my heart is free again, exposed to the bright sunlight, the running blue water and the green valleys. And then, only then, will it be able to expand and grow, receive and give love and tenderness. Then, I hope, I will be able - for the first time in my life - to really make love.

There is a lot of work ahead, but the goal is definitely worth it! And I intend to enjoy each step on the way!!!

Hazak Veematz!

Benjamin

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Re: Ben is on the track

Posted by GYEBen - 18 Jul 2017 08:39

Good morning to all my friends of GYE,

Another day passed, another day of recovery – making progress and learning slowly how to surrender.

The 90 days chart indicates 7 full days. That is a landmark for me.

In the past (not so distant...) I have tried many many times to 'stay clean'. Usually I made it to four days until I fell again. All these attempts have been made with no other tools or motivation than my own self decision, and of course were doomed to fail since I tried to overcome the problem by sheer force of will.

I understand now that this was only strengthening the personal issues which led me to be in trouble in the first place – guiding me with certainty downward.

I clearly remember that once I made it to seven days – but my motivation was completely wrong, and the fall of the eighth day was not only inevitable – it was planned! So I can hardly regard this period of 'abstinence' as a 'clean' period at all. It might have been free of 'acting out' but it was filled to the edge with lust...

So this last seven days are a kind of Ze LeUmat Ze of that week I still remember vividly.

As of today, I feel fine. I do have some flashes of lusting coming every now and then – but I feel that I learn how to let them come and go without paying too much attention. I am enjoying myself too much with my new activity! I am busy working on my learning and understanding of who I really am, or rather who I want to be, and acquiring the tools just to do that. This is very satisfying and a source of joy.

I also start to see the effects around me...

This leads to answer the question(s) of MaayanHamisgaber above...

What about the wife?

Well, we are going through a process here as well, as expected.

She is aware of my struggles and problems - up to a certain extent.

When I started the whole process, I told her about the fact that I was doing something new to take care of myself, without providing too much details.

We had some difficult times this last week, but we are now adjusting and learning how far and how much to share.

I'll be a bit more specific. I eventually told her that I joined an online community dealing with the 'issue'. That I take part in conference calls, that I am now part of a physical support group (without naming SA - but she has some idea about it), that I have a partner and that I have a sponsor. I also told her that I was writing daily on the forum.

I refused, and she understood, to dig deeper and share details about the content of any of the above exchange.

You have to know that during my marriage we encountered a lot of problems (like any other couple) which were certainly caused and increased by my personal struggle and eventual addiction.

She, as any human being - especially in our crazy generation - is not void of her own issues.

Her reaction to that was to go and learn counseling. She actually spent years of training and studying in various ways about marriage counseling, Jewish psychology, personal coaching etc. She now works as a therapist, counseling very successfully many people on various subjects - including sexual addictions / problems of various kinds.

This did not make my life, our life, easier... But it did provide the tools and terminology to speak about it, and a high awareness of the psychological side of our relationship.

I believe that now that I am working, with the help and support of all of you guys here, on rebuilding myself and get a life, all these efforts she had invested and the experience she gained will become very beneficial. I am also aware that this makes my situation a bit more complex.

But I must say that now, she feels also that I am undergoing something different, something that never happened in the past in my life. And she becomes very supportive and helpful, restoring the trust. We have to learn together where to put the limits. Yesterday evening, to one of her questions - coming from genuine concern and love - I answered "that's none of your business." But I said it in a caring and loving way (or so I wanted to) - and she accepted it with a smile.

I am a bit afraid of the intermediate effects this process might have on her. I am positively certain that everything will turn to the best eventually, but there might be some 'lows' in the middle if we are not synchronized in the process and one advances a bit faster and leaves the other behind...

Awareness, care, love, respect, ... I think that these, together with a lot of help from Hashem, will make us succeed in building the home we always dreamt we would have.

This is also a great motivation, now that I can conceive that it is an achievable goal.

My Tefila is becoming more and more significant with every day, and I had some new (for me) understanding of a few words here and there. In order not to forget them, I decided to start a new topic in the [BEIS HAMEDRASH forum](#), thinking it would belong more there than here.

You are of course welcome to read and comment - at your own risk!

Hazak Veematz!

?Benjamin?

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