

Towards 90! Just watch me!

Posted by GaviF - 05 Nov 2018 07:35

Hi all! I am new to this forum so please see my intro that I just posted as well, in order to understand my situation better! Also realise that I am very open to comments, debates and criticism and will only welcome these with much gratitude for your input and support.

For now, i'm going to jump right into speaking of my current 90 day journey!

So currently, I am on my 8th day in my current streak.

I believe that if I truly want this to be the last and ultimately successful streak, then I will need to treat it that way. Thus, as I have done in the past, I will once again ask the question of, "What actions could I take that would ensure that these negative patterns of acting out will never occur again?"

Thus, my stands that I take (of course bli nedarim/shavuas) are:

- To be cognisant at all times that this struggle takes priority over almost all other areas in my life. I will achieve this by:

- Reading over my motivations for ending this struggle regularly.

- Messaging my sponsors regularly.

- Keeping a count of the seconds that I have been clean from straying after inappropriate thoughts for prolonged periods of time (this has worked wonders for me in the past and lead to my longest streak yet, of about 50 days, the reason being is that it is a way to monitor myself i.e. if I do notice that I am starting to stray in my thoughts, then I automatically know that I am in need of chizuk, careful analysis of the current strategy, and greatly increased vigilance until I feel confident that I am back on track).

- Having awesome rewards along the way, stuff that I would otherwise have not engaged with. I will have these after these intervals:

14 days (this wednesday): ice skating with my brother

1 month - buy loads on Black Friday coming up! (maybe even a watch as well!)

2 months - to be decided (roadtrip? Buy a sound system for my room?)

3 months - to be decided

6 months - to be decided

1 year - to be decided

- Discussing with my Rabbi a few pertinent points regarding this struggle that I desire clarification about.

- If I do have an urge that is persistent, then to follow through with my strategy that I have:

- message my sponsor and support partners

- to rate the urge every few minutes to be very aware of what is happening and to make the situation ever more pleasant such as putting on music, then if it persists then to change the situation such as to tidy up my room and especially effective is to go on a run.

- also prob a great plan to take a stand on this forums that I will keep strong regardless and to chat with the private chat

- If I truly am struggling, then to go to all extremes such as actually meeting with my one sponsor/leaving the house/visiting a friend/driving to somewhere serene where I can be in nature/going to a restaurant

- If really nothing is helping then then I could go all out and call my Rabbi and even if need be binge on other stuff like series, food, etc.

- Eliminating compulsion from myself as a really strong correlation is present between compulsion in other areas (like browsing the internet aimlessly) leading to compulsion in the sexual areas. For this, I will treat compulsion in general very seriously. I have a count also for compulsion (i.e. seconds that I was able to spend not compulsively), and when I notice that I am starting to become compulsive, I plan to analyse my situation and refine my strategies for self &

time management.

- Being easy on myself and providing other outlets (like exercise), social connections and fun ventures to occupy the space that these compulsions where trying to fill. For this I think a great plan is to do every week:

- meet with a friend once/week
- have a cool activity each week
- exercise 3 times/week
- read my motivations/life-realizations for 20 min, 3 times/week
- post on this forum at least three times/week
- spend 30 min reading content on GYE or on this forum/week
- spend 30 min with NAC (a psychological technique I have learnt)/week
- 20 min with MTL techniques every day (methods from a self-development course I attended) of the week
- to post on this forum roughly at least three times a week
- to not lessen guard one bit unless I have thoroughly discussed the situation with either my sponsor or on these forums and only if it seems logical and rational to.
- If I am unsure about an aspect of this program or I sense a weakness in it, then to realise that it is priority number one to sort this out. Also, to realise that I am in a vulnerable state and that thus to be very vigilant whilst sorting myself out (such as doing it in a room that is accessible to everyone so that I am not spurred to stray during the process; such as making myself something delicious whilst working on my strategy - to make it more enjoyable). If I sense that I am in a very vulnerable state, then to go into a park or somewhere natural (even if I will need to drive far, though there is this serene nursery near to me!) and work on this stuff over there!
- Also to ensure that if heaven forbid, heaven forbid, I do stumble, to ensure that it is short lived and I pick myself up again quickly! Thus, to ASAP go to a serene place to work on the program. Also if anyone has any suggestions as to how to ensure that I would not binge were I heaven forbid to stumble i.e. like how to ensure that the stumble would not drag on for hours, thus

compounding the stumble, please suggest! (maybe like having a penalty for stumbling and making it way more severe if I stumble for a prolonged period of time?)

I know all of this is a very ambitious plan, but seeing that this area is such a cornerstone for living a Torah life and forming deep connections with ourselves, Hashem and others, I see it fit to be as serious as I can with this struggle. I have been struggling for many years and it seems that to beat this, it seems for me, that I will need all the resources that I can draw on. I hope to post often about how I am doing with regards to following my strategies and in general with this struggle. If anyone has any doubt as to whether I can follow through with this, I hope to prove you wrong! This is it, watch me!

P.s. I am immensely grateful to all on this forum for creating such a rich environment to pursue our goals and grow in such a pertinent area. A special thank you to those who have supported me, continue to support me and those who will pg support me in the future - truly I don't think I could ever do it alone. I pray Hashem sees our noble efforts and tightens our bonds of connection to him for us to delight in his glory and climb to ever increasing heights.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!
Posted by mzl - 05 Nov 2018 08:45

This is a very ambitious plan. Hope it works.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!
Posted by DoBetter - 05 Nov 2018 15:47

Oh wow! By formulating such an ambitious plan you're already a few steps ahead!! I wish you much hatzlacha in carrying it out.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 06 Nov 2018 02:44

Welcome Gavi. Great ideas. Keeps you very focused and proactive. Keep posting. Hatzlocha!

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!

Posted by GaviF - 11 Nov 2018 13:52

Thank God I am on 14 days, 2 weeks! (I did miscount that last Wednesday would be my 14th day but actually it is only today!). Though, I did land up going ice -skating, partly as an acknowledgement to my progress! (as well last night I chilled with some friends till late!). So I suppose it has been a week since I posted and thus ripe time to be posting again! (there were a few times that I sat down to try post but found that either I was not in a conducive state or just never had enough time to compile a proper update (though it probably is a good plan just to post something, even if not complete!)).

About the ice-skating: it really was super enjoyable, and kind of made me realise that I probably am a little bit too limiting on myself in terms of experiencing fun activities and just enjoying myself (as it was a really intense joy I was experiencing, one that I had not experienced to such an extent in a long time!). I truly think that it could be much easier to tackle this struggle, if I have other means of experiencing intense positive emotions. Thus, I really do agree with the idea of trying to implement at least one really cool activity, every week!

So I did nor necessarily follow the program I outlined for myself down to a tee, but I did follow quite a few aspects and did some other stuff that possibly could substitute for some of the other stuff.

Below are some of the stuff that I can recall that I did: I properly signed up for that 90 day chart thing on this site (for some reason I was taken off at some stage).

I also did some actions to help others with this struggle (I have been in contact with someone high up in a school and have been discussing possible interventions in schools to make resources and education more accessible to the students regarding the dangers of pornography).

I tried to combat my 'perfectionistic' tendencies and thus have been attempting to launch into action (without pondering all the little flaws and fears) and to embrace whatever outcome comes about. It really has been liberating living in this way and pray that I can continue to live similarly.

I did some fun activities (ice-skating, meet with friends on Shabbos as well as Motzei Shabbos).

I did exercise enough!

It will come out that I only posted this update for the week, instead of having three updates. I do think it would have been more beneficial to have posted at least once more.

I messaged two separate people about my progress (and spoke briefly to two others about it).

I have been counting the seconds that I have not even strayed after a thought (for a few seconds): currently 1.226 million seconds!!! (i.e. a little over 14 days)

I did read over some of my motivations – though admittedly not for 20 min, 3 times... I think I could benefit with more of this. I think that maybe it was a little bit too much for the sessions to be 20 min, I think I should try with reducing it to 10 min, 3 times a week and see what happens!

I did not land up reading over GYE content or doing my psychological exercises (NAC related as spoken of in my program outline above)– but I suppose I was involved with quite a few other stuff and I was actively working on myself in these areas, so I am not so concerned about this.

How I am doing at the moment: so currently, I am feeling a little less motivated and in a slightly tricky state (I thus just sent messages to two people to inform them of my current state and in order to motivate myself to spend some time fixing any cracks in the program and figuring out what exactly are the weak areas currently). I do have a little bit of an urge but it is mostly in control and I will keep close tabs on it, even as I type out this message (if it starts becoming intense I will change activities).

I suspect the current tricky state could be a result of just feeling a little bit overwhelmed by the demands on me at the moment in terms of projects and stuff that I am involved with. Also coupled with the fact that despite the demands, I am on holiday and thus also am a little bit more all over. So, I suppose I am in like a no mans land and a little confused as to what I should be doing each moment in order to balance the responsibilities I have with also trying to relax a little bit. I.e. trying to be in a routine, but still feel easy and flexible and have fun. But, I do plan to post again once I have completely figured out stuff more thoroughly.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 12 Nov 2018 21:10

Beautiful post. Keep them coming! And its wonderful that you are already looking to help others. Hatzlocha.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!

Posted by GaviF - 16 Nov 2018 08:38

So, wow, tg, it s 19 days!

Last night I had a 'slip', but tg, no fall! I am still happy with myself as when the slip occurred I dealt with it very effectively, possibly better than I ever have. Basically, I was quite frustrated from spending hours (at times compulsively) trying to optimize my laptop, when I had more important matters to attend to. Then, when an advert for inappropriate stuff caught my eye on my brother's laptop when I briefly was using it, I almost magnetically seemed completely compelled to look for a few extra seconds and to click on the link. Luckily my computer anyway blocks inappropriate sites and thus anyway nothing was viewed. I caught myself quickly, though still the rush of chemicals was mad and I felt immensely compelled to follow through. Though, I quickly messaged a few people, was invited by the one person to his house to chill, spent about an hour and a half at him, came home, still was feeling a strong urge so decided to go to bed and to NOT at all costs to go on the computer. I climbed into bed and once again was flooded with urge. I jumped out of bed to get my phone so that I could listen to some calming music (internet browsers are blocked anyway on my cellphone so my phone isn't an issue), messaged two of my supporters whilst listening to music, set the music on a timer to go off after a while and thank God, soon after fell asleep. In the morning, I skipped going to my normal activities and instead went to an internet café in order to analyse the events which happened last night. I am busy writing this at the internet café, already after having spent two hours analyzing and subsequently fortifying myself to continue my journey.

I will persevere, I have no excuse to lose any hope. In fact, I feel stronger than ever before. I dealt with the situation better than possibly I ever have and thus, I view the play of events in the past day actually as a battle that I came out on the top, I thus commend myself.

I came up with further strategies, in summary, very briefly they are:

- To at all costs, NOT go on the computer if I am experiencing any compulsive emotions (or to END the session, as soon as I notice that I am compulsively pursuing something)
- I realised that frustration is counter productive and that if stuff is not going well, it actually can be viewed in a positive light, as an opportunity to act beyond myself, to be calm in the situation and thus to actually grow from the situation. To embrace and be grateful for the opportunity of growth before me.
- A Strategy for when an image pops up to pursue and I happen to be in a compulsive state (though for sure the first step is to avoid these states at all costs)
 - o Shut down the computer – until you are sure that your compulsion has tamed.
 - o Be sure to message my supporters immediately – that indeed you did turn away
 - o Say a prayer to Hashem
 - o To realise that I have overcome like situations in the past, and that certainly I am capable of overcoming the current situation.
 - o Dealing with a compulsive urge that seems 'just too strong' (i.e. if music/moving to work somewhere else, is just not working):

Get out the house! – whether for a walk/a run/to see a friend

Thus, I did have to reset my epic count of over 1.5 million seconds of not even 'slipping'/dwelling on a thought for more than roughly 3 seconds. I am currently on 38 000 seconds, and counting!!

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 18 Nov 2018 04:25

Incredible post! Inspiration for all of us. Keep it up.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!
Posted by GaviF - 19 Nov 2018 15:25

I did stumble last night, day 21. I view life as a dynamic journey. I don't believe we have the authority to judge ourselves. I did invest heavily and fought hard. Even if I lost the battle last night, I won many prior to that one. I certainly learnt loads along the way. I cannot expect life to be a smooth slope upwards, no one is perfect. It rather has many ups and downs (which we often don't even know which are the ups or the downs!) – from a bird's eye view, I seem to be growing and overall moving upwards, thus I am content and happy with my journey! I am happy with striving towards perfection, but certainly, I realise that being human, it is most expected that there WILL be bumps along the way!

My main gain from my stumble has been the realisation that I was doing perfectly well until towards the end of last week when I strayed after a thought and had a slip. I had to reset my 'no thoughts counter' and from then onwards, I was bombarded by thoughts and urges for the next couple of days. I do realise that if I prevent thoughts from starting off, then it is far easier to deal with this struggle. Generally my thought counter more or less mirrors my acting out counter. Once the thoughts come, already I am in 'danger land'. Thus, I have placed strong deterrents in place to deter me from straying after thoughts purposefully!

I have realised that life is not always going to be out there on a platter and I won't always have time to be involved with all the preventative and helpful techniques (many of which are outlined above). Thus, it is useful to distinguish between them (as I have done so below) for clarity and prioritisation's sake.

Essentials (I made a summary of the below for myself to simplify even further!):

- To be forgiving and loving towards myself by realising that life, the dynamic journey forwards, is perfect how it is currently (maybe ill elaborate on this a little more at a later stage – but hope it makes a little bit of sense!)
- As soon as notice stuff off kilter – such as even if I notice I strayed after a thought purposefully, to immediately act to ASAP message a few of my supporters and ASAP to go out the house, to like a coffee shop to figure things out.
- Be cognisant of my deterrents in place for straying after a thought, looking at light content and looking at full out content
- To follow my outline for when I have an urge (as stated in a previous post) and if/when I encounter an unusually difficult urge, to at all costs, take action to prevent it, even if extreme
- To never use a computer if I am in a compulsive state & to cease computer use ASAP if realise am in such a state

When have time, is a great plan:

- Read through my prior realisations

- Update others on my progress
- Exercise
- See a friend
- Go out for fun
- MTL and NAC techniques (see previous posts)
- Post on the forum

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!
Posted by mzl - 19 Nov 2018 16:03

I kind of like your tone and your attitude, but can you explain why this system should work?

You don't have to, I'm just trying to understand what to expect.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!
Posted by GaviF - 18 Dec 2018 15:45

Quick update:

In terms of GYE count - day 29 and in terms of my 'seconds without purposefully straying after thoughts' it is on 2.53 million seconds (i.e. the length of my 29 day count). It really does seem true, for myself at least, that primarily focusing my efforts on the inception of urges, i.e. the initial thought (and triggering situations and emotions), this struggle is far easier to deal with. Once again, I am in no way expecting that I am going to go for the rest of my life without straying after thoughts, although for sure I am aiming towards this. If/when I stray after a thought, I merely wish to jump into action and follow through with the strategies, as outlined to some extent in my previous post.

I am taking each day as it comes. I no longer am expecting perfection. I wish to invest my all into this struggle, but I do understand that a large part of the journey is about accepting each stage of the journey and letting life, and that it is not in my power to predict the future or

certainly not to control it.

I wish to acknowledge my will and efforts over the past many years, including that of this current streak, which is but another leg of the journey I started years back, and to which I endeavor to continue on for many, many years to come.

I am immensely grateful to Hashem for opening me up and connecting me to the world (and reality) ever more, as I progress along this journey.

Wishing all you much growth in your own personal journeys.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!

Posted by GaviF - 20 Dec 2018 17:21

Day 31

Yesterday night I arrived with my family for a beach holiday. Today was particularly challenging seeing the environment (even walking down the road can be a challenge).

Be-ezrat Hashem I will keep strong. My plan is that if I am to attend the beaches, to do so without my glasses and to do so especially in the early morning when not many will be at the beach. Though, seeing the environment, it is a great challenge.

My stance that I will try to execute:

- to keep strong throughout. Certainly seeing our human capabilities, I am able to do this.
- to keep to my strategies
- to pray to Hashem for aid
- to go to all extremes to pull through, if need be
- to be real about the situations and honest about my situation and to take necessary precautions (such as messaging people before entering potentially dangerous situations).
- to be very cautious
- to keep busy

- to update the forum regularly

I realise that this is a test from above (seeing the situation that I find myself in) and plan to embrace the situation to strengthen my connection with Hashem and to show Him that He means way more than the perverse drives in my head.

I realise the severity of straying after one's eyes and the potential immense consequences from such an act, and thus plan to be real about the situations. If I notice that even with my above strategies, I seem to be straying to a degree, then even greater caution will be necessary.

Any suggestions of advice will be much appreciated. Please realise that I am with my family and thus it is expected for me to be joining them on the activities and that it is not a simple matter to simply just not go to the beech whatsoever. Realise that staying in the apartment the whole day alone would be likely even more challenging in terms of this struggle.

Please pray for me

Thank you

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!

Posted by GaviF - 02 Jan 2019 08:44

Day 44

- I arrived home from the beach holiday Monday night and thank God, I did manage to push through the Nisyonos – and learnt a lot about myself along the way. Most importantly I learnt that I seemed to be splitting my personality. Whenever I would find myself being drawn a little more than usual after thoughts/stuff, I would dissociate this aspect of myself. What would land up happening is that my whole being would transform: I became very negative, borderline depressed and full of obsessions and compulsions. What I realised is that when I dissociate these parts of myself from myself and associate it to 'another immature, compulsive being that lives in my head', I am limiting my natural resourcefulness and connection to what is happening around me, as now it is not the Me that I associate with. This way of being is highly destructive as it is very difficult to return to my 'normal' cautious, real and responsive way of dealing with what occurs around me. Often these states in the past would spiral out of control for days on end, all the while being highly compulsive and riddled with debilitating urges, until the inevitable complete fall. I am now learning that I am just as much these destructive behaviours as I am all the other behaviours that I express. That I am not fundamentally changed if I express behaviour that does not meet my expected standards. I am learning to embrace myself even in the

moments that would send me into such deep disappointment that my only escape from the reality was to completely dissociate these aspects of myself from myself and pretend they were not a part of me. I am learning to develop a deep love for myself and for where I am at this moment in time, even if at times I may stray. I am learning to realise that yes, the same me that contributes and grows is the same me that in the past has done some destructive actions. Only if I be real to myself about reality will I be able to respond to reality – and draw from my resourcefulness that is accessible to me, from my real being. This approach helped tremendously for the last days of my holiday and please God I will learn more to be more accepting towards myself and real about the fact that I am not an infallible, perfect human – and that life is a journey, not a destination.

- I hope to draw from this past period that if I was able to be strong in such a depraved environment, for sure I have it in me to push forward against all boundaries. It is not just this that I will be taking forward with me in my journey ahead, but the countless times that I have unleashed my power from within and overcome.

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 02 Jan 2019 12:27

A similar idea to what you are saying is that one who accepts himself properly recognizes that he is permitted to have feelings. Whether feeling low due to an unproductive day, rejected due to being criticised, worried due to financial or other stress, or some other negative yet completely human feeling, those unsettling emotions are valid! We must allow ourselves to feel them and deal with their causes. Instead of silencing them and shoving them under the carpet by running to the computer or masturbating to some mind numbing fantasy, pick up the phone and unload to a chaver, or if you are married - to your wife (who will appreciate you being open...), or take out a pen and paper and work through the real life issue you are experiencing along with all those disconcerting emotions. Similarly, if triggered by an immodest sight in the streets, stop and accept that you are ok for having that imperfect human reaction of being turned on. No panic necessary. Believe in yourself and dont knock yourself for having the same reaction most, if not all healthy frum men would have when seeing what you saw. Staying calm and being accepting of one's imperfections is a major tool in staying clean. It may go against the grain of our seeming genetic Jewish perfectionism, but it works.....

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Re: Towards 90! Just watch me!

Posted by GaviF - 05 Jan 2019 23:44

Spot on, thank you for adding! Ye, definitely extends to all areas of my life... Like even tonight I was swept up by this 'other being' all because of my frustration with myself for being hesitant with sending a message to someone....

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