

Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 12 Mar 2020 18:45

Im on day 33 and had small slips in the past few days. I thought I'd start a thread to keep myself more accountable and honest. Don't have much time now, but I'm taking a moment to

Cheers

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by DavidT - 12 Mar 2020 19:04

~~start a thread before convincing myself otherwise~~

Great move!

We'll be waiting for your posts so we can be here for each other and grow together.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 13 Mar 2020 03:39

[Jj123 wrote on 12 Mar 2020 18:45:](#)

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Cheers

Welcome! Keep posting. May Hashem help you continue!

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 13 Mar 2020 03:51

Lately I've slipped a bit. Taking an extra second before looking away, picking up reading material that I know I probably shouldn't. Nothing scandalous, but specifically because it is inconspicuous, it's especially dangerous. I've been on what feels like a hamster wheel for years, and I know that becoming less vigilant with details is a recipe for disaster.

Whenever I have hit the reset button, be it a half hearted or earnest reset, the motivation is there at first, but it has always petered out, be it a matter of weeks, days or hours. After a fall I'd hate myself for it, and restart. But as time went on, I felt less guilty about it. I never really gave up on the fight, but here I stand, still addicted. This time I changed my mindset, realizing that I'm embarking on a journey knowing getting up after falling will be the hardest part. A fall isn't the end of the attempt, but where the tough work begins.

Now I find myself in one of those spots where even though with G-d's help I haven't fell, I don't have the same spark, that same fire I had on day 1.

It scares me.

I know that if I fall it'll set me back and just make it harder for me to progress. But still I find myself becoming weaker. All the glitz and glamor of a fresh start with a new perspective and new tools wears off, and all the tools in the world can't stop a seasoned addict.

I could have all of the practical gedarim and filters and kabbalos and more, but bottom line, if I'm not motivated, its game over sooner or later.

My brain knows all of the right reasons to be motivated. If you ask him, he'll tell you what I wrote on peice of paper a month ago.

But it's not easy, building a bridge to a heart which has slowly buried itself beneath layers of ice.

I guess sometimes it can take a month of small improvements to realize just how numb and cold a person has become.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 13 Mar 2020 07:43

Wow! My exact feelings, Thanks for validating.

This is exactly what happened to me. At first it is exciting, then it all gets boring and the Y"H

creeps in. He doesn't usually come in right away like a bulldozer, rather he sneaks in when you are off guard.

I also have had some struggles when the excitement wore off (I am at 20 days) but I realized that I wasn't struggling with my regular triggers as much as I was before. In fact I think the Y"H decided not to worry about triggers (because I was being very careful) and instead creep into my brain whenever I was off guard. The interaction went something like this;

Y"H: Do "x"

Me: Why the heck would I want to I am X days clean...

Y"H: Ok don't do anything but at least think about something...

Me: Again why the heck would I want to...

Then the Y"H stops talking and makes me think about something perfectly fine, then starts a train of thought and before I know it I am thinking about something that I shouldn't.

The Y"H is good, he knows his beans! He never gives up, so neither can we! He always learns new tricks to adjust to our growth, so we must also continue to make new tricks to deal with him.

I find it helpful to have two motivators, one, an incentive, something that makes it exciting like a goal and something I will do/buy when I reach my goal. And the second is the reason why it's important to you (your wife, your learning, your guilt etc.).

The goal will make it exciting but it will wear off so I try to make shorter goals, for example every week I will splurge on something small and when I reach the 90 day goal, I will get my real incentive. This helps keep the goal on your mind and breaks it up so it's not overwhelming.

I also sometime find my Y"H negotiating with me about my incentive. He is a good negotiator. He usually convinces me that I am not going to enjoy my "prize" as much as I am going to enjoy this moment of pleasure. This is why we also have to have a real reason why you are fighting.

I have to always review and remind myself why am I doing this; in my case the guilt and feeling of betraying my wife who loves me unconditionally. I tell myself; how can you possibly act out? you would do anything for her, do this for her also it's the most important.

Whatever the reason is that you committed to stop, you have to build that into something powerful.

One last thought, Rabbi Akiva Tatz often speaks about the fact that everything in this world has two stages, first comes an amazing inspiration and we feel like we can take on the world, then the second stage called "reality" starts. That is when the real challenge begins. He explains that when we make a commitment Hashem gives us the inspiration in order to use it as a goal. He says, you see what you feel now all inspired? Its a gift from me, now I am going to take it away so that you can work on yourself to reach this level through your own work.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 15 Mar 2020 03:17

Thank you for your reply!

Learning that what I'm experiencing resonates with others is quite calming. "Hey, this is to be expected. Nothing to really fret about."

And that's also why I really like your application of Rabbi Tatz's idea. I was thinking about it a bit as I was walking back from shul, and it made my smile; what emerged from it is that specifically not feeling inspired is a source of inspiration! It's a true indicator progress.

I guess I just have to be careful not to use it as an excuse to become complacent...

Cheers

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 16 Mar 2020 02:38

Goal for this Week:

Strengthen My Filter

I currently have a web chaver filter equivalent which also blocks websites. Same one I was

using before I started this count, at which time I uncovered two decent loopholes. A bit petty that I've waited until now to fix it. Yet it's quite awkward asking the person with my filter password (who also gets alerted if I visit anything blocked) to add seemingly harmless sites to the blacklist. But no excuses; simply put, I haven't been brave. I got a new computer so I have an pretext since I'm going to have access to the filter settings when I to ask to configure it.

Not something I'm proud of, but hey, it's the truth.

Totally unrelated good news: I figured out how to access beer emojis on these forums!!!

Cheers

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 16 Mar 2020 02:42

Attention IT: beer-emoji-loophole non-functional! It this intentional?!?!!!

I guess all of my experience getting around filters payed off somehow

ps. I guess it's a good sign I'm not as good at figuring out the chinks as I used to...

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 19 Mar 2020 03:49

Day 40!Is it weird to say I'm proud of myself for making it this far?

I still remember that knot in my gut when I binged really badly 40 days ago, and realizing that it happened 40(!) days ago is a great feeling. And knowing that I've earned every last inch if it makes it twice as good.

I can say that three things have really helped me thus far:

1) Mindset: I'm in for the long run. Period. If I fall (and I might) then I'll have to get up. I saw the idea of making a red line somewhere on these forums, and decided to make mine "double dipping", if you will. Whenever I have an urge, I think "so, you could do this right now if you want, but if you do then you'll also reboot after and this stuff ain't gettin' any easier." It makes the thought that much less sweet.

2) The 90 Day Chart!!!

This is related to the previous point, but it's worth fleshing out, I think. I know that it took a lot of effort to arrive where I am now. If I fall, the 40 will morph into a big, fat, and terrifying 0, and no matter how bad I feel, no matter how sincere my teshuvah, the only way to undo that is by, well, going another 40 days clean. The thought kinda grounds me and let's me ride out the wave.

3) This Forum

The fact that I'm formulating my thoughts and struggles allows me to defog my brain a bit, and think more clearly about these matters. It's also nice to know that some people out there somewhere are following jj123's progress, and are rooting for him.

One last point:

I originally was going to write that I am grateful to G-d for giving me the strength to go 40 days clean. I really wish it were true. I really do. But I couldn't write it, since it's honestly not something I'm really feeling too much. And it makes me a bit sad. G-d used to be invited into my life a lot more frequently, but now I'm lucky if I get one half-hearted ????? in by the time the week comes to an end. I can attribute that in part to getting sucked in by this stuff, but can I really assume that once I attain some degree of control over it, that fire will come back on its own?Cheers

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by DavidT - 19 Mar 2020 11:38

[Jj123 wrote on 19 Mar 2020 03:49:](#)

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week comes to an end. I can attribute that in part to getting sucked in by this stuff, but can I really assume that once I attain some degree of control over it, that fire will come back on its own? Cheers

Hi

this is one of the most amazing posts I've ever read.

I hope and pray that you should be able to keep going in this great direction and that others should be inspired by you as well.

one point if I may, Hashem does not judge a person by his feelings. We need to believe that we believe... rest assured that Hashem is extremely proud of you and loves you unconditionally... thank him with your mouth even though you don't feel it, the feelings will eventually follow...

keep up the great work and keep us posted

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 19 Mar 2020 20:02

DavidT thank you so much for your kind words! They are much appreciated.

Maybe a point or two in response:

Is it really true that Hashem doesn't judge a person by his feelings? Especially in this case where I am the one who brought these negative thoughts and attitudes upon myself through my behavior, perhaps my feelings are my own fault.

Second, the idea that thought follows action is an important one. I was wondering how applicable it is here. I think it makes a lot of sense when applied to action, say acting kindly even when feeling the opposite. Thanks, on the other hand is a thought. The words are only a means of expression. In other words, a kind action is kind, regardless of the thoughts it masks. A thank you might not be a thank you at all if it is not an expression of gratitude.

Please let me know what you think!

Thanks again.

Cheers

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by DavidT - 19 Mar 2020 20:32

[Jj123 wrote on 19 Mar 2020 20:02:](#)

DavidT thank you so much for your kind words! They are much appreciated.

Maybe a point or two in response:

Is it really true that Hashem doesn't judge a person by his feelings? Especially in this case where I am the one who brought these negative thoughts and attitudes upon myself through my behavior, perhaps my feelings are my own fault.

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Please let me know what you think!

Thanks again.

Cheers

First, if a person puts himself in a challenging situation, or even if he strengthens his lusts by constantly giving in and now faces overwhelming battles, he still receives the same reward for

struggling to overcome his desires as if it had not been his fault. Although bringing the struggle upon himself adds to the gravity of his earlier mistakes, it does not take away from the greatness of his accomplishments.

The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 7:4) explains that by sinning, ba'alei teshuva activated their desires and became more susceptible to the pull of sin. Their desires are many times stronger than those of a person who never sinned. For them to win their battles, they must exert much more effort.

The lower we have fallen, the higher we can reach!

Second, there is an amazing "sefer hachinuch" that might give you some insight on the subject of feelings come after the actions:

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 19 Mar 2020 22:20

Thanks again for your response.

As of the first point, if I am not mistaken, we are more or less in agreement. We are judged for feelings that we caused, but it doesn't take away from the greatness of undoing it. If anything, a position regained is a more meaningful one.

As of the second, I'm not if there is any indication that the Chinuch is referring to speech as well. I hate to get technical here, but it's brought in the context of an action, and all of the counterexamples are actions as well. It seems like the idea is that repeated action defines character traits over time. I guess I'm just not convinced that speech would fall under this category as well.

Giving a gift to someone who I should be grateful toward has the power to change me, but do empty words of thanks have that ability as well? (In fear of of getting even more technical, speech is not considered a full fledged action in halacha)

As usual, please let me know what you think!

Cheers

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by DavidT - 19 Mar 2020 23:35

[Jj123 wrote on 19 Mar 2020 22:20:](#)

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As usual, please let me know what you think!

Cheers

Good question.

I'll need to do some research on this, but what comes to mind is a concept by emunah. "He'emanti ki adaber" I believed because I spoke." Usually one speaks what he believes. What's the meaning of believing what one speaks? King David was instructing us that speaking out matters of spirituality actually has the power to effect and realize belief.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by 18gye - 20 Mar 2020 05:30

This was very helpful. Ty

Stay strong.

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