

Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 12 Mar 2020 18:45

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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 Realestatemogul - 23 Mar 2020 04:10

~~start a thread before convincing myself otherwise~~

Hey Jj123!

That's a really great point. inspiration for our general life is also helpful. I personally find that when I am in "productive mode" it filters through all areas of my life, shmiras habris included.

These are some super inspiring posts! You clearly have a lot of conviction and it should be a tremendous zchus for you to fight this battle!

I wish you mush hatzlacha and you should continue to inspire all of us!!

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 23 Mar 2020 16:07

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Another clean day :)I was going to write about 3 more tools that have helped me immensely, butwill instead write why I have decided against.

I've noticed again and again and again is that without fail, most, if not all of the ideas, approaches, tips and tricks I arrive at myself after much investment I've already read about time and time again.

"Huh? You arrived at it yourself AND you've read about it previously?"

Yessir.

You got it.

I've come to the realization that especially in matters of growth, you can know without knowing, understand without understanding, and learn what you already know. This too, I've heard and read many times. But now I've earned the idea myself.

Internalizing an idea takes work. It takes trial and error, requires careful thought, and necessitates experience. What works for me is nothing more and nothing less than a hodgepodge of what has worked, and continues to work, for others. That they have already thoroughly discussed, wrote about, and disseminated them does not take away from the fact that they are my Chiddushim, or novelties, as well. When I speak of them, they come from within, not without. They have found another home.

One more point, if I may.

Internalization is not binary. There are those for whom it pulsates through their veins, oozing from their every pore. Maybe someday I'll get there. But for now, I am happy with the small passageway I've found, and hope to continue building it slowly.

I think I am finally learning to listen.

Thank you for allowing me to share.

Cheers

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Realestatemogul - 24 Mar 2020 02:20

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That's a really nifty post.

I commend you for appreciating how important it is to take credit for ideas that may have already existed.

I just have a question: Wouldn't your post suggest that you should share with us 3 more tools

you have used to succeed. Both in terms of helping you internalize the ideas and because they are your ideas as well.

Either way, keep doing amazing stuff!

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 24 Mar 2020 18:04

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Hi REM,

First off, I read through your thread last night and you are awesome. Although I'm new here, I've been trying to work on this area for a while. It's vicious, the way falling and restarting messes with you, makes you feel hollow. At some point you feel like a fake, and rebooting feels even faker. The fact that you kept trudging on no simple feat.

Much respect my friend.

Re your post: Excellent point!

Thank you for pointing that out. As you said, the rest of the post is for me more than anyone else. There won't be anything new from here on out, but ain't that the point?

1) My filter:

It is so important. Having weak moments is normal, and a filter has the power to slow you down enough to give pause.

It's that simple.

(ps. goal of the week complete. computer filtered, loopholes closed)

2) Know your triggers, plan accordingly:

For me, right before going to sleep my thoughts would wander. It often didn't lead to a fall directly, but rather nudged me onto thinner ice. I started learning" a very small amount before

going to sleep, actually because I just wanted to fit a specific low key limud, or study session, into my day. At first I would make sure to understand what I was reading, but by now I'm just quickly reading it through. I considered giving it up since as far as Torah learning is concerned, it's barely productive. But I realized that it has helped me control a trigger, so I still do it every

Also using the bathroom/being bored with my phone is a big one for me. I downloaded the gye app and spend way too much time on it, no joke. It helps, but I need to pull back a bunch. I still plan on using it to avoid the triggers, to keep myself posted and thinking about my own progress, and, most importantly, to hear whay y'all have to say.

night. Don't think I've missed one for close to a year.

3) Hitting Bottom: There is a difference between feeling guilty and wrong, and having your stomach turned inside out. I had one really bad week that ended with a binge which left me shaken. Very shaken. I realized how much I'd regressed as a person and an Oveid Hashem, and it got me questioning who I am and my life trajectory. I signed up for GYE and fell that evening. That was the last wakeup call. The cognitive dissonance was ripping me in half. I was devastated.

The next day, when I calmed down an iota, I sat down for two hours straight and wrote. I looked over what I had written from previous attempts, which was pretty depressing. I remembered the feelings of "This will be the time. I am prepared!" as I went through them. And the falls. Really depressing.

I wrote a story at that moment. It still hits a chord, even after rereading (and editing!) again and again. I captured that feeling of deep despair and the need to change, sprinkled in some hope. I have it saved somewhere, accessible when I need it. I'm sharing this because that horrible feeling fades from memory after a couple of weeks, and something that reminds you of it emotionally in any small way provides real motivation.

Cheers!

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Realestatemogul - 25 Mar 2020 02:41

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WOW!!! I am glad I did push you because you got some really great points there! I also would add that you definitely brought some new light to old points that I am positive people will gain from because I know I did.

Just to throw some more ideas into the mix:

1) I used to dread the idea of filters. I thought a filter meant I was weak and that I had no control. Boy was I wrong! I found that when I filtered my devices I cut off my main source of bad things. While, I was still on a low I made it much harder to sink further or to fall again. I can't imagine trying to stay clean without a filter. **\*\*The people with TRUE SELF CONTROL FILTER\*\*** It takes a lot of self-control to filter and DECIDE to cut yourself off and you have a lot to be proud of for taking that step!

2) It is so important to be aware of your triggers and be proactive. On the actual Torah part I will say that I also do something nightly and while some nights I just "read," after such a long time doing it I actually found my focus got better. Keep sticking to it and Hashem will help you focus and understand!

3) This is actually a point which I don't know if I ever saw mentioned, and if I did it hasn't been often, so thank you for sharing it with us!! While we like to focus on the positive, it is so important to remember how badly it feels to be sunk on the bottom. It really is a positive memory if it helps us stay in check. It shouldn't be a tool to let ourselves get depressed, but rather to remind us how much we desire to be close to Hashem and stay spiritually in check.

Thank you for sharing this post! Keep inspiring us and Klal Yisroel!!!

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 25 Mar 2020 18:25

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Thank you, and really great points on all fronts!

As you pointed out, really filtering—meaning you do not have access to its settings or the power to remove it yourself—is really tough. I had some filters that did not adhere to that for a while, but we all know how that goes.

Possibly the biggest weakness of all is not knowing and admitting to your own weaknesses.

Filtering takes guts, and owning the decision to filter is, as you said, the flex of all flexes as far as self control in these areas is concerned.

Again, a really excellent point.

On a more personal note:

A sincere thank you to everyone who has replied, "thank you"-ed and private messaged me thus far. It's a real boost and helps me more than you can imagine. I know that before starting this thread I hadn't expressed or developed my thoughts on these matters, much less had them challenged. I don't take it for granted, so thank you all.

Cheers!

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 03 Apr 2020 02:15

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Crazy story for you all.Literally insane.

Earlier today, I thought about giving in. I was (still am) a bit nervous, anxious, and down on myself, and wasn't feeling motivated. It wasn't a particularly strong desire per se, yet it was different because it wasn't a sudden urge to go against what I know to be right, but rather a something more gnawing, almost like I was looking for a way out.

Later this afternoon, I was online looking for a 100% benign picture I needed for something, and was in a room alone. The laptop I was using is well filtered, has accountability software on it, and I've never had an issue with it before.

No bad intentions or anything of the sort, just your good ol' run of the mill google search.I'm sitting there going through the results, and see something that could work for what I'm looking for. I try to right-click to open only the image in a new tab, but I get directed to a normal looking website where the image came from instead. It loads, and that picture comes up first thing.

Great—all I got to do is copy and paste and I'm good to go.

Out of curiosity, maybe to see if any better pictures are there, I scroll down.

Big mistake.

Huge mistake.

Porn, real porn, is literally staring me straight in the face. My mind races.

I quickly scroll up.

I scroll back down.

I scroll up.

*Oh my G-d this is actually happening.*

I pause.

I close the tab.

I take a deep breath, and slowly exhale.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 03 Apr 2020 08:00

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WOW!!!!!!

That is strong!!!!!!

You are my inspiration! Keep it up!

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Guard1 - 05 Apr 2020 11:14

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Hi Jj123 and thank you for your inspiring posts. I wanted to give you some advice based on my small experience on this issue, so that you won't fall as I did.

I had almost the same nisayon a few days ago and I felt after a 5 months streak. What you just did is huge, at this very moment where you closed the tab, you were like Yoseph running from Potiphar's wife ! Imagine what should have been the satisfaction you gave to Hachem at this moment !

The Ramban says that the techouva is complete when we are faced with the exact same challenge and refuse to do the aveira : this is what just happened to you, you just proved to Hachem and yourself that you don't want this anymore.

But this nisayon is not 100% finished : you discovered a loophole in the filter. My experience told me that when I am aware that there is a loophole somewhere, it is just a question of time before I fall into it again. Even if you don't remember exactly how you found this loophole, when the urge will come back, you will have no trouble finding it again.

So I would encourage you to close this loophole as soon as possible. But be very careful not to fall into it again while doing it. There will be a new nisayon at the very moment where you will block the loophole in the filter, and the y'h' will come back really strong, telling you to take profit of this loophole one last time ! So block it in a secured context where you're sure you will not go back to this site.

Also, having several 90+ days streaks, I realized that my falls usually began on google search. I took me one year to accept that I had to block google search if I wanted to stop falling. You might not be ready to do it right now, as most of us can't imagine using a computer without google, but I did it and I can tell you that I can live without google and any search engine.



You could just take a few days to save/register all the websites that you need and could need in the future, and then completely block any search engine on your computer. And if some day you really need to find a website on google, you could just ask a friend or family member to do it for you.

My y'h' fought really hard so that I don't do it, but I did, and the battle is now much easier. Without google, how could you find a loophole or see an image you should'nt ?

You might not be ready to do it now, but as you said, sometimes we know things but don't internalise it. It took me one year and a few falls before I internalized it and take action. I you

Hope this helps ! Wish you to continue going forward as you do and to be free from all of this very quickly. Pessah is coming and during these times Hachem is releasing some spiritual energies having the power to set us free, physically and spiritually. We just have to do our part, and show Hachem that we WANT to be free.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Realestatemogul - 14 Apr 2020 04:02

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Guard1 that is incredible!! You too are like Yosef for preventing being in the situation!

want, consider that I did the internalisation work for you

On a side note, did you have a good filter before you got rid of google? My filter blocks all images in Google. Don't get me wrong, I'm super jealous that I am not yet brave enough to take that leap but I do wan't to make sure there are no loopholes.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Guard1 - 14 Apr 2020 17:00

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Realestatemogul, I had kind of a good filter, maybe not the best, but a good one. But I think that with google open, there is no filter that is 100% effective. A good filter will be almost impossible to break ... almost.

The question is, for someone determined, how much time would it take to find a loophole ? For a bad filter this "security" time would be a few minutes, for a good one, it could be hours. The aim is just that it is difficult enough so that when you have an urge, it will give you the time to think twice and take back control of the situation. But I assume that with a good filter, you will have to voluntarily search for a loophole in order to find it, it won't happen by chance.

Only with search engines filtered, you are sure that you will never be able to find something. If you can't even search, it's sure you can't find.

It can also happen that the filter doesn't work at all for a reason... We have to be prepared : how would I react if my computer wouldn't have any filter right now ? Would I be able no to act on my lust thoughts and to keep my distance ?

To me, the objective is to reach a state of mind where theoretically, even without any filter, you would be able to control yourself. Having a filter is just a protection that will give you some time to take your distance from lust, to clean your mind and to let the change happen deep inside, so that you don't want it anymore. Of course even once you've reach this level, you will still need a filter, just in case.

I think a good way to change deeply is to take the habit to focus more and more and "meditate" on the bitter sensation that comes after a fall, that sensation of being unable to control yourself and to be far from Hachem.

Thus, in your mind, watching these things will be more and more associated with "bitterness and being far from Hachem" instead of being associated with the illusion of pleasure that comes with it. We have experienced many times how deceiving and bitter it always is to go after our lust, even though every single time we thought that it would be great.

We have to use this experience and train our brain to feel this bitterness again when we have lust thoughts, so that these thoughts are more linked to the bitterness that comes after the act,

than to the illusion of sweetness that comes before and during.

Maybe you could just give it a try for a few days, to block any search engine (having prepared before all the websites that you need), without any engagement, a few days just to see ?

Hag Sameah everyone ! Wish us all to be free from what doesn't make us closer to Hachem.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 17 Apr 2020 16:35

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Day 0

Im annoyed how nonchalant my reaction to falling is.

The last thing i want to do right now is work on a plan to keep going. I know that its integral that I do, but i really dont want to. I know it will help, but even the thought of doing that is painful.

Dont get me wrong, i also dont want to wallow in the mud. I also know that what i did before isnt meaningless and is an important building block. I also know that the streak isn't the most important thing. Isn't making things easier though.

Any suggestions from people who fell after a nice streak?

Honestly im getting a bit jaded about all of this by now, and its taking its toll.It hurts.

ps. thank you guard1 for the advice i was foolish enough to put on hold.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 18 Apr 2020 19:11

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Hey Jj123, sorry to hear that you fell.

The most important thing is to get that 0 into a 1.

In your 90 day chart there is a number for "Cumulative Clean Days".

You will see that even when you fall you still have a lot of money in the bank.

Take some time and feel good about yourself. Feel good for coming to guard your eyes, for taking steps to get better and for all your accomplishments.

Although the 90 day chart is a big part of the drive, falling will never take away all the hard work that you put in to get to this point.

Focus on your accomplishments and remember that you are not immortal and falling is not the end of the world.

We are all rooting for you!

Hope to hear from you real soon.

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Guard1 - 18 Apr 2020 23:13

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Jj123, as said by wilnevergiveup, don't consider that you're back to 0, every effort you do adds up, it's not about a number of day, it's about getting closer to Hachem. Sometimes this requires a fall, so that you realize that you can't win alone and that only Hachem can help you.

You're not the same after this fall than after the previous one, and the previous ones. Look at the general trend and don't focus on this particular fall : are you overall getting farer from lust and closer to Hachem ? All you have to do is get up and keep moving forward, it's a long term fight.

Use this fall and this realisation that you are not invincible in a positive manner : set up new protective measures, decide to be more strict in keeping you're eyes and thoughts clean, and decide to be happy and close to Hachem beside the bitterness that follows the fall.

Show to Hachem that your will is still to get closer to him, don't use this fall as an excuse to fall more and more.

Sometimes you fall, and when you get up you're actually one step further than before the fall. That fall helped you to reach a new step that you couldn't never have reached before.

There are two free will : before the fall, you have the free will to fall or not. After the fall, you have the free will to be sad and fall further, or to understand that Hachem wanted this, in a way, and to remain happy and keep fighting.

Also I would like to add that to me the notion of "fall" should be considered on a longer term and with the dynamic that follows : If one just "falls" once and then quickly gets up and continues to walk as if nothing happened, then the word "slip" is more suited.

Keep moving forward whatever happens !

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Re: Loosing the luster

Posted by Jj123 - 19 Apr 2020 02:40

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Day #2

Thank you guard1 and nevergiveup. I really appreciate it. It was hard to sign back into gye after, and that is something I can be a bit proud of... I fell 3 times in 2 days, and posting helped me regain control. Theres a whole shift in perspective that comes with a fall, and hopefully I can use that to my advantage. I think I mentioned at some point before i fell that this time is different because i committed for the long run. Nows my time to prove it.

Something I thought of over Shabbos that helped me:

The only thing more painful than getting up is not getting up.

Anyhow, I'm giving myself a few days to really recalibrate my gedarim and plan. For now i plan on ordering something for myself in a week (motzei shabbos) if i make it there. Too painful to go back to the drawing board right away.

Thanks again for the encouragement.

All the best

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