Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 13 Aug 2020 22:00

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New phone, new thread, new me?

I fell today.

But for the first time in a while, it hurt. I feel it has penetrated into me and made me feel regretful.

I'm not sure what hurts more, the fall itself or the fact I can't remember the last time I felt bad like this (and that's not because a lack of falling). Strangely I fell proud that I'm internally understanding the weight of my actions (and therefore falls) for the first time in a while. For far too long I felt that when I fell, it was like breaking a diet, "oops, let's try not do that again", but not much of an internal realisation of what I've been doing. No genuine sense of regret or that I had made a bad mistake. Overall I don't think I'm in an negative place, I just want to utilise my current feelings and use it to spring back up to greater heights.

Currently this is where I think I'm at:

I think I've been falling between every 2 days and every 2 weeks, probably with this frequency since Corona and even before probably up to Jan, off the top of my head. Unfortunately I don't think I've been putting in much effort, realistically I think I've just been waiting between urges and then falling, I don't think I've done much prevention on my part.

Just got a new phone and used the opportunity to fix up my filter a bit. **For anyone reading don't delay fixing your filter, I've found it has made a huge difference**. Not to be naive but pretty sure it's mostly working correctly now, no loopholes. (I did spend quite a while today trying to find one before I fell:grimacing:) Although my goal of 90 days should not be dependent on a good filter, even though I plan on having one nonetheless.

Earlier in the year I was struggling with porn but I think that was a temporary stage, long term it was less of an issue to me than masturbation, which I've struggled with for more than the past year.

I've been re-listening to a chabura by a Rebbe on the topic and I briefly bought up that I'm struggling to him, and I plan to speak to him more about it. This week I've been putting in the effort to try not fall and think about hirhurim, whereas in the past sometimes it was a matter and of just waiting until a good time to fall, not having any real method of prevention nor of fighting the yetzer hora. Already in the past few days I have had multiple times where I could have fallen but did not, and didn't follow my urges blindly. Obviously I need to be more preventative, but I still think this is a big step up from basically just hoping never to have an urge, because that's isn't the aim, rather it is our reaction to our urges. I think with this previous mindset of mine it

was going to be near on impossible to get to 90, now I'm starting to feel more confidence that it is achievable, even if I haven't been more than 2 weeks clean in a while.

I also plan to listen to the fight by the shmuz (was there website down for anyone else recently?)

I also want to be more active in the forums, both here and in other threads. I often lurk around, but I think I should really join in a bit more.

That's it from me for now, that's a bit of a megilla to read. Drop in to say hi, I wanna hear from you guys how you are all doing in your battles, it really helps knowing that we are all fighting this war together

Looking_to_improve
**Warning: Spoiler!**

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by OivedElokim - 15 Oct 2020 04:58
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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 15 Oct 2020 05:16
Please elaborate...
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OivedElokim wrote on 15 Oct 2020 04:58**:**

Please elaborate...

The concept of self control is not supposed to feel restrictive, as Harav Ihavestrength wrote it's done by uplifting our spirit.

I know this *mashul* is cliche but a fence at the edge of a cliff, although it is restrictive, is hardly perceived that way. We want the fence there and put one there willingly because we care for

our own safety.

Now obviously the clarity is not the same when it comes to self control because our desires mess with our brains, but there are two ways of learning self control, one is to say, "I really want this but I will control myself in the name of whatever (G-d's will, my diet, my marriage, etc.). With this mindset, your in for a long life of suffering because you are always desiring and are constantly telling yourself no. You will find yourself struggling too often and eventually will break.

A healthier way of working on self control is by changing our mindsets to understand what our *needs* really are and what is just our desires. we must understand that a desire that is unhealthy is not something that we want and have to restrict, rather it's something that we really don't want but still desire for some ridiculous reason that we don't understand but still have to deal with.

As long as it is something we *need* but can't have, it will be an endless struggle. When we change our mindset that it's poison that for some strange reason G-d put into our heads to desire, it's much simpler.

It's still a struggle, but at least it's one that makes sense.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 15 Oct 2020 07:26

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Football was good last night. Came back and spent a while trying to test out my filter. Didn't get through and didn't slip or fall, but really shouldn't have been doing it. After being on my longest streak, and not having any urges or negative thoughts for most of it, it brings you back down to earth realising you are still a 20 year old foaming at the mouth because he might have access to social media.

?Stayed up till 2:30 or 3 on GYE, so weird night all around.

"Ihavestrength" post=356210 date=1602721067 catid=4

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We act based on our beliefs. So if I believe that completely filtering my devices is necessary for me not to look at inappropriate things, then if I am not filtered, I will feel like I can't help myself but look.

This is very true. I think there's a fine line between being preemptive and aware of what can cause you problems, as opposed to creating problems for yourself where there wouldn't have been otherwise had you not thought too much about that situation.

This is why I actually do not use filters.

Do you use accountability software or something else instead?

That said, maybe you can reframe your use of filters to something like, "I use it so I don't accidentally find schmutz", or "I use it so if I have a weak second and search something, it will act as a reminder and I won't have already looked at inappropriate things". Hope that helps!

I think this is the correct mindset, just it can be hard lemaase to put it into practice. Even with the correct mindset, you still have to fix loopholes otherwise breaking through becomes trivial, and this feels like you are pushinh all the work of prevention onto the filter, and away from our own self control

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Im Tevakshena Kakasef - 15 Oct 2020 10:49

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Who knew a quick question would launch such a wellspring of intelligent answers?

I totally agree with the group here. When restricting access completely, it doesn't help you get clean. I can go to yeshiva for 6 months and stay totally clean, then come home and fall all over again.

As in the often used analogy, think of a muscle. So a guys bench pressing. He tries benching 250 pounds, and it falls on him. How should he proceed in the future? If he takes off all the weight, it won't fall on him anymore. But nor will he get stronger, and if he is forced to bench press in the future, he won't be able to stop it falling on him again. So he takes off some of the weight. First he benches 10 pounds. Then 20. Then 30. Or he exercises his arms and chest, in other safer ways.  So when he benches again, he can do it.

Same by taiva. We use our spiritual muscles to 'bench press' the taiva, to avoid acting out or doing aveiros. But if we just totally abstain, and then for some reason if the taiva hits, we have no way to resist. In fact, it can even strengthen the taiva. So we fall. But if we build our spiritual muscles over time we get stronger at resisting taiva.

This muscle building can happen in two ways. We can resist little bits of taiva, and increase the taiva a bit at a time, or we can work in the positive spectrum, adding love and fear of Hashem into our lives each and every day. Both build the spiritual strength, albeit the latter is far safer and secure.

So in practice, like Ihavestrength said, filters can't and shouldn't be used to avoid the nisayon totally. Cos if so, when the nisayon does hit, and unless you live in the middle of Benei Berak, it will, you won't be ready. A filter limits the ease in which we can act out, and that's about it. It pushes the battel into easier territory. It makes the weight we are benching a 'should I test my filter, just to see if it works' weight, as opposed to a 'if I type in 4 letters I can have all the shmutz at my fingers' weight. But ultimately, we need to work on adding fear of G-d each day, plus resisting some temptation each day.

Fixing loopholes is only necessary if you find loopholes. And finding loopholes is mostly going to happen when you look for them. So if you try and resist testing the filters limits, and use the filter as a safeguard only, then you are benching a lighter weight. Which helps build muscle for the real challenge in the future.

Sorry if this was rambly or preachy in any way. I have filter issues myself, so don't think I'm being high and mighty. Just giving my take.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 15 Oct 2020 11:05

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I fell this morning. Was very tired from being up late last night, and should have just gone to sleep, like I did afterwards, but I was very patient and driven to fall. I went on a social media site which I thought was blocked, then it stopped working after a few mins, I should have left it there and called it a slip. Spent a while trying to get back to it, then eventually when I did, ~~I spent 3 hours looking at memes and sports highlights,~~ I acted out.

In the moment my main thought was why am I doing this to myself? It doesn't feel good in the moment, even more so when I'm tired. This feeling comes almost immediately.

Where do I go from here? I've emailed my filter company to try get it changed, not sure why it's not already blocked. Going to aim to get to sleep tonight clean, it's a small goal, but I need to start over again immediately, can't let myself fall multiple times. Disappointing to be back to day 0, but I've proven to myself that I can make it much more than 2 weeks which I've been stuck in for a while, so I've definitely made a lot of progress, I'm not back to square zero (one), just day zero. I made it 44 days,(and 365 cumulative days) so almost half of 90, and most of it were really solid days, I think I can get to 90 and beyond now.

Seems a bit ironic that after is this talk that the filter isn't the be all and end all, that the main thing I'm changing is my filter. I think I might need some long term plan of how to approach future situations where I can't filter every website except GYE. I don't want to put myself in a situation of nisayon, but I can't be overly reliant on controlling my situation (which I won't always

be able to do), as opposed to controlling my reaction.

Will probably post tonight to let you know how I'm getting on

"Grant400" post=354849 date=1599694846 catid=4

You are right at the cusp of breaking your record.

Thank you Grant, I was

Strap your hiking boots back on, pick up your gear and continue your climb up the mountain. There's beauty and happiness waiting for you at the summit. I promise.

Your admiring friend, Grant

Definitely not at the summit right now, but I think I've made it past this plateau

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Im Tevakshena Kakasef - 15 Oct 2020 11:45
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Sorry to hear about the fall buddy. Just get right back up and go strong. 44 days is a month and a half, super impressive.

Looking forward to seeing those numbers rise.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 15 Oct 2020 11:50

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Thank you

Looking forward to being 2 days behind you for a while

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 15 Oct 2020 14:48

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Your attitude about moving on after a fall is great. Like the mountain climbing mashal from Grant, if you fall in a ditch, while bandaging your knees, enjoy the view from as high up as you have gotten. Don't look at the fall as rolling down to the bottom.

Regarding filters and restrictions, there is long term and short term. For most people who are beginning to get a handle on this, filters, restrictions and the like are simply common sense. Honestly, if a guy has a bad habit and has access at his fingertips, he is going to cave in fast. On the other hand when faced with "an overwhelming urge", but no access, he has a good chance that those few extra minutes will allow him to distract himself, reach out for help, etc. Maybe some guys get to a level that they can in the long term do well without filters etc, but most guys i have spoken with have no interest at this point in giving them up. "We daven every day "v'lo li'yedei nisayon", so why should i keep open access?" A little inconvenience is much better than a lot of frustration and depression from continuous falls.  Besides, across the boards, all rabbonim urge for whatever restrictions are possible, so if we listen we have that much more s'yatta d'shmaya.

I know that there are some (rare) exceptions - guys who are driven to break through filters etc, who have been advised differently. My comments are for the vast majority of us.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 15 Oct 2020 22:04

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Spent too long this evening looking for an opening to fall. Didn't find one, but not very happy with how I'm acting. Looking forward to choref zman, will have a lot less free time.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 15 Oct 2020 22:54

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Couldn't stay a few hours clean without falling again. Disappointing

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 16 Oct 2020 11:00

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Fell again this morning.

Need to try stay clean until shabbos and including motsei, and get going again

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by OivedElokim - 16 Oct 2020 20:40

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Be strong brother. You got this!

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 17 Oct 2020 19:47

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Shavua tov

Clean over shabbos, bH. Had some intrusive thoughts on Friday night, probably dwelled on them for too long.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 17 Oct 2020 23:07

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Struggling to sleep, it's 2am, feeling quite restless.

Not the greatest prep for choref zman, but looking forward nonetheless. Been reading through my threads again...

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