

Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Looking_to_improve - 13 Aug 2020 22:00

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 a 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 Hashem Help Me - 11 Sep 2020 03:16

You write beautifully and intelligently inspire those of us reading your posts. Have you tried having an accountability partner?

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Looking_to_improve - 11 Sep 2020 05:47

Thank you HHM, it's means a lot.

I have, but we didn't keep in contact for so long. Maybe I should look for someone whose active on the forum?

halfway to my goal of 2 weeks

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Looking_to_improve - 11 Sep 2020 15:11

Went for a run today, didn't have any issues bH. Spoke to someone from the forums on the phone this afternoon (not sure if I should say who), really glad to have spoken to him, put things into perspective. He's doing a very big chesed making himself available to someone he doesn't know, halfway around the world.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Looking_to_improve - 12 Sep 2020 18:30

Shavua tov, another clean day bH

Into the double digits today

Had a few questions that are on my mind, wanted to hear your guys perspective and a few

other things to mention.

Do you think this area is one that one can be successful in before marriage, or is it one that you have to try very hard now, but will only be solved later? A poor moshul would be if you had a stained shirt, can you wash it off now in the washing machine, or right now can you only use a stain remover, and only later can you wash it in the machine when one is married. Obviously successful is subjective, but I mean reach a solid healthy level.

I strongly feel that it's the first one, but I'd like to hear what you guys think, perhaps my question comes from a misunderstanding, so I would like to hear your contributions.

Question 2: I've heard that davka in the area where one struggles is one's tafkid in life, where they are able to grow a lot, but on the other hand I've also heard that one has to realise they are successful and well grounded in other areas and this area shouldn't be too much of ones focus and let them fell too down about it.

It might not be a stira, that it is a person tafkid, but that sometimes focusing too much on a problem and getting too caught up can cause more problems than it helps, but I'd like to hear what you guys have to say about this question as well.

I realised today that I started my current count 1 day before my 20th Hebrew birthday, and according to Rashi one becomes responsible and punishable by shomayim when he turns 20, based on the misha in pirkei avos, Ben esrim lirdof. This isn't to say to the guys below 20 reading this to go wild, nor will I not be doing teshuva on what I have done, but I guess in some regard currently I'm yet to have fallen, and I'm more similar to the tahor neshama that Hashem's given me at this time.

Looking forward to hearing from you all, I'm really thankful to have you all joining me along the way, even just a thank you on a post gives me encouragement.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Im Tevakshena Kakasef - 12 Sep 2020 21:45

Hi, I'm new to your thread, but from what I've seen you look like a really great guy, and I'm gonna love to see more.

I wanna have a crack at the questions, but I don't have time now. So I'll comment to a) show my support. b) make this page easily accessible.

All the best.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 12 Sep 2020 23:21

Welcome ITK, thanks for introducing yourself. I think I've seen your name around, but tbh I think I should really leave the confines of this thread and explore the rest of the forum more often. What does singularity's profile say? Something like "sometimes the best way to help yourself... Is by helping someone else". I'd received a lot of advice, chizuk, perspectives and even a phone call this week from others, but I really should pay it back.

I had a moshul I wanted to share I thought of earlier, but it's getting late, just finished seluchos, so will try to tomorrow

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 13 Sep 2020 03:33

1. One can b'ezras Hashem be successful in this area before marriage. There are many single guys here that can attest to that. There are also many guys that have gotten married recently after BH cleaning up their lives. They and their wives are very fortunate. Obviously there will always be nisyonos - but that is true about married fellows too. Pas b'salo is a fact, but it is not a "cure all" like many single guys would like to believe.

2, Obsessing about being clean is not healthy. One has to be a well rounded healthy person. We all have alot to work on, be it our davening, learning, honesty, mentshlekeit, shmiras halashon, and the list is very long. Pornography/masturbation does not define a person. There

is a lot more to you and all the great fellows here than the "monstrous secret" that you and they carry around with them. lyh you and I and everyone else here will better ourselves in many areas in a wholesome and healthy manner.

3. Regarding the above, it does appear that our entire generation has a tafkid in standing up against the "tsunami of filth". So as each of us does our best and as our Rabbonim and Mechanchim guide us and set policies about this, together we are all b'ezras Hashem accomplishing this tafkid. But as mentioned previously, don't let it become an obsession.

4. Happy birthday....

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 13 Sep 2020 12:12

I'm gonna push off sharing the moshul for now, I've got a lot to write today...

I had a wet dream last night, (although I wasn't m"z, not sure if it's still called a wet dream. Anyway...) I think I controlled myself well yesterday, so I don't think it was caused by any thoughts I had yesterday, I think it was just a withdrawal symptom type of dream, if that makes sense, so I'm not so concerned for it.

The dream was quite vivid, short and direct, so I woke up with my heart racing. Not sure if it was because I was excited and aroused, or because I was a bit shocked and startled, it probably doesn't matter so much. Took me a minute or two to control myself, I was thrown into the deep end and my mind was set on one thing. BH I managed to get a hold of myself but even after was still surprised, I haven't had a dream like that in a while so I guess it's a good sign of withdrawal symptoms kicking in. I'm glad that my reaction when waking up wasn't just to continue in the direction that my mind was going.

Still need to clear my mind a bit more from it, I haven't really seen something like that for a while...

I'm closing in on 2 weeks, so I'm going to set my next goal at 3. I think HHM indicated that

motsei rosh hashono and motsei tzom gedalya can be quite difficult, so I'm not going to set my bar too high for now, I think the coming week will be a good achievement.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 13 Sep 2020 14:44

You are 100% correct that the dream is withdrawal. It has been written about extensively on the forums. Basically, unless one causes a wet dream by pursuing lust throughout the day, it is actually a good sign when it happens. In short, it means the subconscious mind has come to the realization that the conscious mind has decided to put an end to this "pleasure".

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Ihavestrength - 14 Sep 2020 02:50

[Looking to improve wrote on 09 Sep 2020 22:50:](#)

Been rereading my thread. It all flows into one big mush to be honest.

Here's where I'm at, at the moment:

I think I've been relapsing around every 4-7 days, and I think my most days clean was 14-15.

This was almost a year ago, from my first message on the forum, I could have written it yesterday...

?I feel like a person in the sea trying to get to the shore, but stuck where the waves are crashing. Every time he gets up, he sees the shore and thinks he's not far off, until wave crashes through his back, knocks the wind out of him, and under the water he goes. Struggling for air, he gets up, catches his breath, wipes the salt water out his eyes, looks towards the shore, just in time for the next wave to come crashing over him again, and suck him slightly further out.

I have salt water in my eyes now as I write this.

It's like a washing machine, all loud and powerful, shaking all around, but it's just spinning on the spot, the most it will move is a few centimetres, in an arbitrary direction. It's going nowhere quickly.

I understand that it's the yetzer hora trying to get me down, but from an objective standpoint it really looks like I've made close to no progress. I've been struggling in different forms in these areas since probably puberty, and I'm turning 20 next week, and all I have to answer for at least a year of trying to improve is that I haven't got worse. I must also be grateful for that, but what will this coming year be like? More of the same? I understand that not everyone will join gye and take off into space, but will it take 7 years of work to overcome the last 7? I don't want to drag down a wife into my problems in 7 years time. Obviously it will always be a struggle, even after 90 days it won't be easy and the problems don't disappear 24 hours after the 89th day, but when will that be an issue I have to contend with? At what point will I reach a level where I have a solid base? When will I get close to a third of 90 days? I'm feeling quite disheartened. After many of my failures I've tried listening to shiurim, I've spoke to a Rebbe, adjusted my filter, posted on the forum, yet seemingly the only stone left unturned is me. Perhaps these aren't long term solutions, but surely there should be some indication I'm going in the right direction. In other areas of life if you didn't progress for a year, wouldn't you say this isn't your thing, find something else suited to you? That's not an option here, but what can I change, if many things I change, which I would have thought are proper steps in the right direction, just become quick fixes which really aren't a fix at all?

Hey brother! Just read from this post until the end of your thread. I don't have the answers to your questions, but I feel a duty to comment nonetheless. Let me just say that I was where you are. In my case, I started struggling when I was about 10. When I was 20 I was still struggling very much. But I didn't give up and it paid off. I'm not perfect, but I'm miles from where I used to be, and obviously still trying to improve everyday. Life isn't an all or nothing proposition and progress can't be measured in days clean alone. If you want someone to speak with I'm always happy to chat, feel free to reach out. KUTGW!

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau

Posted by Looking_to_improve - 14 Sep 2020 21:51

Another clean day under the belt bH. One sleep away from 2 weeks, and a pretty solid 2 weeks at that. Now isn't the time to get too complacent, (not that there really is ever a time for that), this coming week could be hard. My davening this week has really improved, not sure if it's because I've been making progress in this area or visa versa, I just hope beH it's something that

I can keep consistent over yomim noroim and beyond.

Here's the moshul I wanted to share a few days ago. Over many years, I've got into the habit about delving into the thoughts in my head when I lie down to sleep. Even if I'm not m"zl or don't masturbate, it definitely doesn't put me in the right mindset and only gets me desiring more. Not sure if you guys will find it relevant to you, but to put it in writing will help me actualise and concretise it:

There's a warehouse that stores expensive goods, with a big neon sign, the company's name in writing for all to see. Every thief wants to make it big time, break in, take the goods and go, but obviously the gate outside of the courtyard is locked with a combination padlock and thick chain, which stops the gate opening more than half an inch.

A thief of the street walks up to the gate, disguised by shadows and tries his luck, and starts going through the combinations trying to see what makes it click. A lazy guard thinks to himself, "What harm can this guy be? He's only moved the gate an inch in half an hour, it will be another half an hour until he moves it another inch, I'll put my feet up and sort it out later" This guard is a fool! *If the gate opens an inch, it opens all the way!* The thief is in! He can still be stopped, but it won't be easy. He might need to chase him and grab him to the ground, or call in police cars to chase after the getaway vehicle, perhaps even follow him with a search helicopter. Maybe he won't be caught, and you'll only be able to track the goods when they are sold and do some forensic analysis.

Often the end of the day, I think I've controlled myself well, time to put my feet up, let my mind wander, what harm can it be now? I'm going to sleep now anyway, do I really need to control myself to this extent?

If it's the last topic on my mind that day, and I sleep on it, it's only making it worse, making it more of a topic. The forensic analysis team is gonna be getting some phone calls, we're gonna need to track down the goods.

What's the easiest way to stop the thief? The guard doesn't even need to touch him. All he needs to do is flick a switch, remove the darkness and the thief knows he's been caught. Whistle, or make a sounds behind him and get the thief to doubt that he's alone. He'll call it a day and head home completely of his own accord. Identify him by removing the shadows and make it clear and obvious who is there.

Stopping these thoughts seems hard, and it can be, especially with thieves walking passed the

warehouse every night. From the street, everyone knows the **immense value of the treasure inside**, and wants to break in. But just a small misdirection, even though we may feel tired, such as just opening our eyes, or changing the subject of our thoughts, can stop so much more later on. Being aware of the yetzer hora being there, and identifying him early on can often stop him in his tracks, he's gonna call it a day.

How many lights were switched chasing the thief, tracking the goods and analysing his DNA. How many times do we have to change our thoughts or open our eyes later on in the process. Being on guard, even when we want to put our feet up, goes a long way.

Sometimes only 1 digit of the combination will need to be changed for him to get in, or he may jump the fence, and we have methods to deal with those scenarios. The fact one foot is in the property, doesn't mean its game over, but early prevention will make a big difference later on.

It may be quite a specific scenario, but when it's something that's become habitual to me over many years, it's something that I need to work on to improve. I hope this might be helpful or applicable to a few of you, I'm not really sure if it's so common or not.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 15 Sep 2020 19:38

Another clean day bH, felt a small urge this morning, but nothing big in the scheme of things.

I feel like I'm starting to find my stride, now's the opportunity to be thankful and grateful to Hashem, and to gain a positive association and mindset with this topic.

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Im Tevakshena Kakasef - 15 Sep 2020 20:01

I don't have long, but I have to congratulate you on the 2 weeks. You're smashing it!

p.s. I haven't forgotten about those questions...

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 15 Sep 2020 20:49

Thank you ITK, looking forward to hearing your responses

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Re: Restarting the journey, after a plateau
Posted by Looking_to_improve - 15 Sep 2020 21:31

I've been reading my diary in the 90 day chart section of this website. Perhaps why I felt I was making no progress was because I was not making any changes either. In the last month or so I've reached out to 2 people and spoken out where I'm at, and also changed my filter. Too many times when I fell over the last year, the thing to change would be too vague, or clearly not done as it was also written the next time I fell. Occasionally I would fix small things with my filter, but only after it caused me anguish and I acted out multiple times before changing it, and even that would only be a drop in the ocean when I still had many other (not as inappropriate)triggers available on my phone.

So far I've felt I'm really avoided fights with a long stick, a wide berth. Compared to previous streaks, I've had fewer urges. But looking back it starts to look more obvious, that when I walk down the yetzer horas alley, and *I've made no meaningful changes, of course he's going attack the same weak point, time after time after time after time*. Of course a boxer will attack the place where he's already damaged his opponent, and drag him into a rut, with punch after punch.

It's a shame and disappointing that I didn't notice this sooner, but I guess this is what people refer to when the yetzer hora doesn't want you to fall, he wants to get you down. Although I didn't always feel mentally or emotionally down after acting out, I think he was successful in preventing me deciding to make long term, not short term changes.

Awareness of a problem is the start of the path to s solution, not the end of it.

I hope now that beH I'm out of the ring, out of the rut, avoiding the alley and not getting dragged down into fights. But even when I am, making sure that I don't consistently have the same achilles heel

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