

The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 19 Oct 2020 14:49

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Hi this is supposed to be the first log describing what I'm going through and perhaps an outlet of my feelings and experience trying to fight the yetzer hora of hotzoas zera levatalah.

?Allow me to first introduce myself. I am a bochur of 24. Learnt in a yeshiva till the outbreak of corona. To be honest, I never fully understood what people meant when they said that masturbation is the nisoyon of the generation. Why would anyone from a logical perspective engage in such behaviour? It didn't make sense to me. That was till about two months ago.

In yeshiva I didn't have access to movies or unfiltered internet. When I came home I did. I also got my own computer for studies and although it was filtered, I was the one with the password. So I naively didn't think of it as a big threat. But one night my curiosity got the better of me and I checked out some pornography. That night I also gave in to masturbation and I realized all of a sudden that I've made a big mistake. A whole new pathway of what the brain might consider pleasure opened up before me.

Not much later I gave in a second time to masturbation ( not porn which I have since tried to avoid). And as time went by the frequency of my giving in became more and more. I know I have to find a way to stop this and I am trying. It just is so hard sometimes when my whole body aches and screams and the anxiety is just not allowing me to think clearly.

Sometimes I can hold back for a day or two three even but then eventually I end up giving in. The thing by me is that I am usually okay throughout the day, but when I lie in bed and am trying to fall asleep I am having difficulties doing so without having the urge. And that is usually when I cave. So I have tried listening to a shiur to keep me distracted, which has helped maybe once or twice, but with my emotions being so powerful it is hard to concentrate. I also tried relaxing music and it has helped although I do need to experiment with that more. (I know that from a halachic perspective music is not the best thing to do before falling asleep, but I think it is permitted occasionally and it is also permitted if it is not leshem simcha. Also I am not sure if relaxing music fall under this stringency.) Another thing I do is that even when I do give in I stop in the middle and pause for a count of sixty. It gives me back a sense of control and I feel it can help overall. Another thing I do when I feel weak and I know I might likely give in is I try to postpone giving in for x amount of time. Sometimes I am so tired of the fight that just to get rid of it, I give in. I know it's wrong, but I still do it. I really need some technique here to overcome this.

I am currently going with the mindset that this is like building muscle and that slowly but surely I'll get stronger and stronger. I just doesn't always feel like this. It also pains me when I read some of the consequences this challenge has on both a ruchniyusdige and gashmiyusdige

sphere. As a bochur, I feel like I am tainted and that I might have a bad marriage or children of lesser quality because of this. I am sure that there is teshuva, but will I really be able to overcome this before getting married? I truly hope so.

My current goal is to go through a whole week without giving in.

For me this is a true lesson on another front. It's what I wrote in the beginning: I never thought that this nisoyon could be so hard and yet here I am. So perhaps when people are going through things, that to me seem trivial and perhaps I'll even judge them sometimes, I'll remind myself that it could happen to me and even if it doesn't I don't know where they are coming from so don't judge.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 25 Oct 2020 20:51

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Good evening guys

On day 7 here.

Just one more night to go and I'll be past a week.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by Grant400 - 26 Oct 2020 00:35

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"Grant400" post=353840 date=1597612614 catid=1

I posted this originally in the balei batims forum, but I realized many don't have access so I decided to repost it here.

There is a thread that discusses this topic but when I tried to post on it it didn't work so I guess I'll start a new one.

The question was how to continue functioning and going on with daily life even while under a lust attack.

I found an interesting way to accomplish this. There is a very popular method in therapy called CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy). There is a takeoff of this called DBT (dialectical behavior therapy or something like that) which is used to deal with things like anxiety and depression which I believe can be used just the same for lust. Personally I find it really helpful and this is my main method for dealing with desire in this issue.

Here's how it works:

Let's say someone has a fear of driving a car because they are afraid of accidents. Every time they sit in the drivers seat their mind begins to obsessively tell them how dangerous it is. What they do to calm down is to answer the anxiety back and begin listing reasons why they shouldn't be concerned. What this does is create a circle of obsessing. Because as they try to convince themselves not to fear the fear fights back and it's an ongoing struggle which never ends.

In DBT the patient is taught to "accept" the thought. Meaning instead of wrestling with it make a decision of what you want to do right now, and if that decision is you want to drive the car then you tell the fear when it pops up "Hey good friend! I know you! You don't want me to drive -but I want to -so even though you make me terrified and make my heart beat faster I want to continue on with my life". Now the reason to continue with life could be because I want to drive, eat, relax...whatever but you are not going to debate and convince yourself out of the fear but rather accept it and bring it along for the ride in the passenger seat...and continue with your life because that's what you want to do right now.

This gives one the ability to function WITH the fear. This will eventually remove the fear from your mind. Because fear is the minds way of encouraging you to do an action to prevent danger. Anxiety is the same message when there isn't any danger. By ignoring it and not reacting eventually the mind gives up. Obviously this isn't what you are saying to yourself...your

goal isn't to remove it from your mind but rather to live with it side by side. If it leaves then that is a beautiful side benefit.

So in regard to lust one can use the same method. Instead of trying to resist the desire which will just cause one to continue obsessing endlessly via saying to ourselves " wrong, disgusting, not gonna happen etc. rather accept the desire and lust. Say "yes I would enjoy that, yes that woman is beautiful, yes I wish I could be with my wife now, but I'm continuing with my life and continuing with what I was doing" without trying to change the way you feel or think. We know ) if I tell you not to think of apples for a minute, all you will do is think of apples or think about not thinking about apples which is the same thing. By not engaging lust in a conversation it will be easier to continue your activities and and will eventually cause you to stop obsessing over it.

Grant

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by Grant400 - 26 Oct 2020 00:51  
we can't eradicate a thought (think shemona esrei

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Grant

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 26 Oct 2020 15:18

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Grant, you hit the nail on the head! Great post!

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 26 Oct 2020 21:19

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Hello everyone

I made it. Day 8.

Thanks to all of you who have been cheering me on all this time.

Now I have to decide what my new goal is. I think I'll go for another week.

This morning I had a really strong urge and I sort of felt like I deserved to give in because I had worked so hard till now and that this could be my reward for all the hard work, just not needing to work and giving in. Of course that would be very counterproductive. It's like a smoker who decided to quit saying after a week that he'll reward himself with a cigarette.

I really don't know how I'll survive another week.

I need to take it day by day.

Baruch Hashem I made it till here.

It's like the Chinese proverb "A journey of a thousand miles starts with just one step."

Well, week 2 here we go.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 27 Oct 2020 21:47

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Okay, day 9.

What can I say about day 9?

Most of the day was fine. Although had a period where I really felt like just collapsing and giving in. Baruch Hashem it passed.

I sometimes am just trying to observe what my yetzer hora is telling me.

Today he told me: "You're already holding far enough for someone who has just started. No one will blame you if you just give in at this point. It takes time to build your muscles."

I'm telling you, the thoughts we have to deal with.

Sometimes pure insanity.

May Hashem always give us the clarity of mind to see right from wrong.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 28 Oct 2020 03:02

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Beautiful thread here. Some really great posts. A good inspiring book next to your bed would be beneficial, as well as a real live partner to share chizuk with, and share challenges with. My opinion - it is what got me through that beginning period with withdrawal, fear, doubt, and total lack of self worth.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 28 Oct 2020 12:44

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Thanks so much HHM. I really appreciate that.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 28 Oct 2020 12:58

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Hi everyone,

Day 10. Baruch Hashem still clean.

Today I wanted to share with you another one of my 'life experiences'. As I wrote in my first post, till a few months ago I had never dealt with masturbation and real porn. But that doesn't mean it was my first encounter with issues in kedusha.

Growing up, movies and series were a given. Everyone in my family besides my father would watch. We even went to the movies sometimes. We value Torah and Yiddishkeit but we were to a degree as some might call it 'open-minded'. I just want to define when it comes to movies that there are three types:

- 1) Movies made for kids.
- 2) Movies that aren't fit for kids. There is violence and more but not in a too graphic way.
- 3) Movies whose ideas are of a mature nature and they are also expressed on screen.



(As a yid I wouldn't recommend any level of the 3 if not necessary but especially not level 3. If you've never been a watcher you can truly pat yourself on the back. If you are/were a watcher, you know what I'm talking about.)

As a kid we would stick to levels 1-2 and whenever there would be something not appropriate we would fast forward it or look away. But around when I was 14 there were days when I got bored and decided to look at the scenes we would usually skip. It wasn't explicit but enough to trigger guilt and shame inside myself. I already felt tainted and just continued to watch bad things. I would look out for those scenes in movies. Never real porn, but for a yid, not ideal either. (To some of you reading this, you might think that there are worse things, but to me then this was really bad.) The worst of it all was the guilt. To me I was an abomination, a failure in Judaism. It was eating me up inside. I had no one to share this with. I felt I couldn't. I felt that if I would, all would be lost. I had a reputation to keep. The reputation of a good kid. And sharing this with my parents, forget about it, because if they would find out, they would never look at me the same and I wouldn't be able to bare that shame.

And so, I went around life for years with this burden. I felt like a two-faced guy. I felt like I was cheating the world. Like, if they only knew who I really was. Whenever someone would compliment me on something choshuv about me, I would say to myself " Yeah right! You wouldn't say this if you'd know the 'real' me." Or even when someone would be nice to me I would feel to a certain extent that I didn't deserve it.

I tried stopping it. Some tries were more successful than others. But the bad feelings were always there lurking in the back.

Then I finally went away from home to yeshiva. I was thrilled. No more movies and no more computer and no more guilt. I really started to shteig in yeshiva and for quiet a few years I didn't touch movies, even bein hazmanim. But the burden was still there. Even some of my learning was motivated by the hidden guilt that was lying underneath it all, trying to cover it up. I was hoping it would all go away with time.

Then one night, in yeshiva, I had a close friend and he was sharing some his most intimate struggles with me. So a tiny crack in that bolted door of mine opened and I decided to reciprocate just a bit. It was really hard and I was shaking but for the first time in my life it got out. Although not the full burden was lifted, but some of it was. I was able to feel validated by a another person even with my mistakes and that made a huge difference. After that the underlying guilt was still there, but not as strong.

Fast forward a couple of years.

Panic attack! Anxiety! Therapy!

Painful, but at some level I was happy. Finally someone I could be open with. And so I shared this experience as well with my therapist. Again, I felt validated. Besides for that there were a few things that he told me that really shifted my perspective on the whole thing.

Baruch Hashem today I have a much healthier outlook when it comes to these things. Yes, I struggle with masturbation, but I don't let it take over my life the way my struggles way back did.

I would like to share some of the lesson that helped me with you. Perhaps you can relate to my struggle and this might deem helpful. Some of it is also based on things I've gathered over the years as well. Here they are:

### **Eight things that helped me have a healthier outlook on struggles:**

1) No matter what you do in life, you're always worthy. Hashem will always love you. Hashem's love is unconditional . You heard that right: UNCONDITIONAL. You're a tzelem elokai mimaal. Pure in its essence. All the bad stuff is just a covering, not the real you.

So when you think you're faking because you're hiding the 'real' you when you did something bad, perhaps it's advisable to remind yourself who the real you is. (There is a book in English called 'GPS' based on the Nesivos Sholom that deals with this in greater length.)

2) This bad action doesn't define you!! There's so much more about you that's great. Focus on that instead!!!

3) Do you really give yourself the amount of credit when doing mitzvos the same way you're punching yourself in the stomach when doing aveiros? If not you're not being fair to yourself.

4) There is a clear distinction between guilt and regret. Guilt comes from the yetzer hora. It's there to make you **feel** bad. It's not productive in any way, it just drags you down in self-pity. Regret on the other hand is realizing the mistake you've made, learning from it and moving on. Proper teshuva comes from regret, not guilt.

5) You think you're the only one struggling with this? There are so many more people struggling with this. Perhaps it's safe to say that almost everyone is dealing with shmiras eynayim to a certain extent. No need to feel like an abomination.

6) No one is perfect. Yes, even you aren't. And guess what, you'll never be perfect (in this life at least) otherwise you wouldn't be here on earth. All we can do is strive for perfection, knowing that we'll never reach it. So don't be too hard on yourself. Learn to accept yourself as you are with all your imperfections.

7) Find some way to reach out to someone with whom you can share your struggles with. This is one of the things that most people in my opinion find the hardest. And yet it's so important. But I also feel that a forum like this is a great way of sharing, getting chizuk and feeling validated and I would therefore consider this an option of sharing as well.

8) Last but not least. Your self-value shouldn't come from others. It should come from yourself. If you have a challenge that to others might seem like nothing, but you know that it took strength from your part, allow yourself to be proud of yourself. You grew. No one knows,

but all that matters is that you know. If all we care about is the validation from others, so some days we might get it and some days we might not. It's fickle and not stable. Work on validating yourself. Be your best friend. See yourself in a good light. Yeah, there is always something we can work on, but realize that mostly there is much more good than bad. The problem is we just don't allow ourselves to see it.

So that's that. (There are probably a few more, but can't think of them now.)

I wish I would've known these things at the beginning of my falls. And even though I knew some of these things on an intellectual level, I wouldn't feel them on an emotional level. I can't say that I've fully integrated these concepts, but to some extent I have. Baruch Hashem, my confidence has gone up, my self-esteem has gone up. Is it always great? No. But that's life. We all have better days and worse ones. At the end of the day, I realized that these struggles and falls are what made me grow.

These things take time to sink in, so it's worthwhile going over them on a constant basis. For me, these ideas really helped. So I'm sharing this with you because maybe you can benefit from this too.

Have a great one.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 29 Oct 2020 04:41

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Hey buddy, you are going to make one good mentor/mashpia one day, and iyh a great tatty too!

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 29 Oct 2020 21:33

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Day 11

Day 11 and Baruch Hashem still clean.

I still feel the urges and sometimes it's still strong, but I feel less compelled to give in. It's like I am a tiny bit used to feel the urge and just being 'comfortable' having 'his' presence around, knowing that I don't need to react to 'him'.

Don't get me wrong, I sometimes would love to give in and sometimes I dread I will, but I need to remind myself what the consequences are and that the pleasure of giving in is just not worth it.

The fact that I am holding on day 11 doesn't mean that I have to stop being vigilant.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by Grant400 - 29 Oct 2020 22:36

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[anonymousmillenial wrote on 29 Oct 2020 21:33:](#)

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GOLD! Read this every day. Seriously. We all should.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 30 Oct 2020 14:44

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Day 12

Still clean.

A great and clean Shabbos to all.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 31 Oct 2020 21:50

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A gutte voch on day 13.

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Re: The struggles of a human  
Posted by anonymousmillennial - 01 Nov 2020 21:32

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Hi there.

Day 14.

A bit more to go and I'll be past two weeks.

Honestly, I don't have much to say.

Yeah, I have the urges. I mean, kinda boring, no?

Yeah, I have moments where I just wanna give up because I just don't care anymore. But don't we all?

So, what's my point?

My point is that even though I have absolutely nothing to say and absolutely no big chidushim to add, I am still writing here because just the writing is enough to keep me accountable. I don't need to say much. Just 'hi, had a great day' or 'hi, rather had a rough day'. It doesn't really matter. As long as I check in every day, I know and I feel that what I do makes a difference.

And that's what matters.

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