

The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 19 Oct 2020 14:49

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 - 17 Nov 2020 21:51

Hi there everyone. A gutte choidesh.

Day 30

After having been on the forum for almost a full month, I wanted to make a rough summary of my personal strategies. Feel free (I really mean it!!) to add anything to this list as you please in the comments below. Or perhaps write about an idea that resonated with you.

The Game Plan

1. The first thing we want to do is set the 'rules of the game'. The facts:

- a. The more you feed it the more you need it.
- b. As much as these urges feel like hell, they won't kill you. In fact, its potency will pass if you let it.
- c. Know that not giving up is part of winning the game. The Steipler promised that anyone who didn't give up, would eventually win this battle.

2. Getting motivated

- a. In order to win this you must really ask yourself in an honest way: why do you want to stop? How is this detrimental to me? What would I gain from having a life free from this? If I would continue this for the rest of my life, how would this hurt me? Who am I cheating with this? Try to really visualize and internalize each point.
- b. Make a goal. A goal that is realistic, but at the same time pushes you right out of your comfort zone.
- c. Commit.

Let's define commitment: commitment means letting **no reason** interfere with my original decision. No excuses. Be ready to overcome the barriers that stand in my way.

3. How do we overcome the barriers standing in our way?

- a. Know what triggers you. Avoid them! This will help you avoid a fight altogether.
- b. We can't always avoid triggers, so know how to deal with urges when they appear. Distract yourself, but don't try to force the urges out. Rather calmly accept them as they come. These urges are not you. This means that you have the choice not to give in.
- c. Be prepared.

Being prepared both on an emotional and intellectual level can go a long way when it comes to overcoming challenges.

- i. Know what you can expect: urges like hell, urges on tired days when you just feel you need or deserve it, ...
- ii. On an intellectual level: recognize the lines the yetzer hora is telling you and find an appropriate response. (But don't start negotiating with the yetzer hora. Remember, you committed.)
- d. Remind yourself why you are fighting.

4. What else can help?

- a. Daven. How would we ever manage without the help from Hashem? Don't just daven for yourself, daven for others as well.
- b. Find some place you can be open about this. Post on the forum each day. Find a trustworthy confidant. Talk to a therapist.
- c. Keep yourself busy. Make the focus of your life something else. You don't always need to check on yourself to see how you're doing. Allow yourself to move on.

d. Borosi yetzer hora, borosi torah tavlin. What more is to be said?

5. Dealing with failure

a. Don't expect failure.

b. If you do fail (chas v'shalom):

i. Forget about guilt and self-pity. Pick yourself back up, dust yourself off and move on.

ii. Remind yourself that you are a Tzelem Elokim and that even though this action isn't right, it nonetheless doesn't define you intrinsically.

6. Staying on track

a. Be your best friend. Compliment yourself. Allow yourself to be proud of yourself.

b. Keep track of your wins. Keep a daily log.

c. When feeling an urge, remind yourself what it took to get to where you are now.

d. Remind yourself why you are doing this.

e. Remember, just like all good things in life, overcoming this takes time. Allow yourself this time and don't panic if this is taking longer than you wished for.

f. Help others. Give others chizuk. Guide them. Teach them what you've learnt. Be there for them. Besides for the tremendous zechusim, you will feel that this in its own right will push you to stay clean.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Grant400 - 18 Nov 2020 03:28

[anonymousmillenial wrote on 17 Nov 2020 21:51:](#)

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them. Besides for the tremendous zechusim, you will feel that this in its own right will push you to stay clean.

What an amazing post! This offers so much in such a clear and concise manner. Thank you for this!

I just want to add two things to the staying on track category that work for me like magic when confronted with an urge.

1) Truly think about how horrible and upset you will feel if you fall.

2) Think about how much you will actually enjoy the acting out (not so mindblowing) vs. how much the Yetzer Harah is making you feel how amazing it will be (OMG! Spectacular!)

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 18 Nov 2020 04:07

Mazel tov on 30 days. Incredible journey documented so well. It should be given to newcomers who don't believe that it is possible to break free from all this. Hatzlocha and please keep inspiring with your intelligent honest posts.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillenial - 18 Nov 2020 19:53

For the toeles of the oiler, I've attached a link to a slightly updated (thanks to Grant) "My Game Plan" as a word file.

drive.google.com/file/d/14DivyxIncoLrUKCdWw0cGz5in2CKDxEh/view?usp=sharing

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 18 Nov 2020 20:40

Day 31

Can you believe it? I am past a month already.

I can try to imagine myself on day 1. Day 31 seemed like such a dream, unattainable in a way. And yet, here I am.

I guess that's life. What seems so far away sometimes, just requires persistence and dedication, taking it day by day. And before you know it you'll have reached places you've never imagined you could've reached.

It's like those famous stories of gedolim finishing shas because of an accumulation of 5 minutes here and 5 minutes there.

That's the message.

Value the small things because before you know it they all add up.

Have a great one.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillenial - 19 Nov 2020 22:26

Day 32

Some days I just feel the cravings again. Not necessarily in that all-pervasive way that I felt during the first few days. Rather, the feeling is more like, it's there and I can't really bother fighting for it and in some way I just want it.

That's when I know that I am in the 'dark-orange' zone. It's then that I need to remind myself of the efforts I have made so far and the reasons I want this. I have to rekindle the spark that was able to push me through days much harder than today.

Sometimes I just feel like saying to Hashem 'just take the urge away already and if you don't at least let me give in' 'why are you putting us through this?'

What's the answer? I don't know.

Perhaps it's an opportunity for us to reach levels of kedusha from the depths. Perhaps.

It's called yesod for a reason.

Yesod. Foundation.

In essence it's quiet ironic that the last tests before moshiach are in regards to the foundation.

Anyway, I am think I'm flying off at a tangent, so I'll stop right here.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by starting - 20 Nov 2020 06:34

My 2 cents.

Between 30 and 40 days is hard. It's like 'I just stayed clean for a month and it felt awesome' - for 1 day. After that it's more like 'is it worth such an effort? It's not like 32 days is a special number, is it worth doing this for a year just to get that euphoria of having achieved a *shleimos* (*complete, perfect*) thing?'

Within a few days we start to appreciate that it the yetzer hara speaking.

Every day is special. Every day is a huge accomplishment.

It's not about a month clean or a year clean, it's 30 times a completely clean day.

It's 32 times a clean day and tomorrow will be 33 times a clean day, a huge achievement!

Keep it up

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 20 Nov 2020 12:26

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You're so right! I didn't even realize it till you mentioned it. Up till day 30 I felt like I was truly building up to that month, day by day. But now I feel a bit like I'm in 'no man's land', being between 30 and 90 (which seems so far away).

But as you're saying, we need to really internalize and appreciate that every day clean truly is a beracha.

Thank you.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 20 Nov 2020 12:48

Day 33

TGIF takes a whole new meaning on these early winter Shabossim when friday could sometimes be so busy, there is little to no time to think about doing things that I might later regret.

Gut Shabbos

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 21 Nov 2020 21:46

Day 34

Ever had that feeling when you're sleeping and don't know if what you're experiencing is reality or just a dream?

Ever had that in regards to acting out?

Well, I had such an experience over Shabbos.

It really feels weird.

I am still clean, but I am not sure if I even started to act out in real life or not and then stopped in the middle.

I don't know.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 21 Nov 2020 23:51

I've definitely had that before. It's a surreal, strange experience. I have acted out in those times and I was told that it isn't considered a slip. Thank you for your amazing posts and keep on going!

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 21 Nov 2020 23:57

[anonymousmillenial wrote on 19 Nov 2020 22:26:](#)

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Wow. I don't know what you mean by dark-orange but you totally nailed this one. Sometime kedushah seems so far away... I wonder to myself why it's even worth the effort. "Hell is so close and heaven's out of reach.." Thank you for reminding me why I'm even trying.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 22 Nov 2020 11:28

Hi

Good news and bad news.

Bad news: I messed up and fell.

So what's the good news? Perhaps the silver lining that I've never made it to 33 clean days before.

Analysis:

1) What happened?

I was lying in bed yesterday for over an hour trying to combat these urges. I was trying to remind myself of everything that we've discussed and yet at the end I for some reason gave up.

2) Why?

I'm not sure. It was brutal. It could be that there were a few factors involved. I had a headache throughout the day. I wanted to fall asleep already. I for some reason wanted to give in. It was as if I was searching for reasons to rationalize giving in, telling myself that it's normal to give in at this stage. I fought. But it was a losing battle. It was as if I didn't care anymore. Even afterwards I didn't even feel so bad about giving in. Rather I was more in a state of wonder of how this could happen after 33 days being clean. I thought I've moved on. It seems I haven't. But truly bad I didn't feel. What does that say about me? I don't know.

3) How do I proceed?

Honestly, I don't know. It seems that even with all the strategies, a person could still fail. It's a blow to my ego as well. I thought I had it all figured out, and here I am, humbled by this experience. Perhaps that's why I fell. "*Al taamin beatzmecha ad yom moscha.*" But truly, I don't know what could've prevented this. What could I've done so that this shouldn't have happened?

I also don't know if the next round is going to be easier or harder. Harder because that initial excitement of the first time round probably won't be there. But perhaps easier because I did train myself throughout the past month to restrain myself. I now know that it's possible.

I don't think those clean days are wasted days. I'm not talking about the maaleh of clean days in their own right. Of course, every clean day was a great beracha. I'm talking about the clean days having built my muscles for having more clean days in the future.

Really, I'm open to advice and to some chizuk as well.

Perhaps a piece of chizuk to myself. It says in the gemara in kidushin (49b) that someone who is mekadesh a woman on the condition that he is a tzadik, even if he is a rasha gomur, she is mekudeshes. Why? Because perhaps he had a hirhur teshuva.

But this further begs the question: so what? So what if he had a hirhur teshuva, he still is a rasha?

The answer is the following:

When we think of a rasha we think of someone who does a lot of bad and when we think of a tzaddik we think of someone who does a lot of good.

The gemara over here comes to tell us that we've got the wrong perspective. A tzaddik is not someone who does a lot of good. Rather, a tzaddik is someone who is heading in the right direction. So even a rasha gomur, with a hirhur teshuva could instantly turn into a tzaddik, because now his direction has changed.

The chizuk is that even if we sometimes fall, as long as our compass is set to grow and become better, we're still tzadikim.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Grant400 - 22 Nov 2020 14:30

[anonymousmillenial wrote on 22 Nov 2020 11:28:](#)

Hi

Good news and bad news.

Bad news: I messed up and fell.

So what's the good news? Perhaps the silver lining that I've never made it to 33 clean days

before.

Beautiful news! No "perhaps" necessary.

Analysis:

1) What happened?

I was lying in bed yesterday for over an hour trying to combat these urges. I was trying to remind myself of everything that we've discussed and yet at the end I for some reason gave up.

You are human, although a mighty fine one! The title of your thread should remind you. You didn't give up! You fell. No one who is just starting to get themselves in check and lasts 33 pristine days, if they "just give up". Right now you are just learning how to properly combat your desires in this area, we can't expect an overnight overhaul. Anything valuable in life only comes through tenacious perseverance and grueling hard work. So far you are doing a tremendous job!

2) Why?

I'm not sure. It was brutal.

If you "just gave up", would it have been brutal?!?

It could be that there were a few factors involved. I had a headache throughout the day. I wanted to fall asleep already. I for some reason wanted to give in. It was as if I was searching

for reasons to rationalize giving in, telling myself that it's normal to give in at this stage.

Normal! Normal! Normal!

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Here's my opinion from personal experience. When I was doing terrible and out of control and I would try to behave halfheartedly, when I fell I felt horrible. Why? Because in addition to healthy understanding of how and what needs improvement, there was boatloads of unhealthy guilt because I felt like a piece of trash and undeserving of all the good in my life. After starting to remain clean in a more serious and proper way, I started to understand that I am a different man. A new man. When I unfortunately fell after a while, after the same brutal battles as you or mistakes, I didn't feel so bad. Why? Did I suddenly become a callous unemotional non religious person? No! On the contrary. I understood that this isn't who I am anymore. Yes, I fell and I will fix it. That's it. Simple.

So in my opinion, this not beating yourself up is a good and healthy thing.

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Honestly, I don't know. It seems that even with all the strategies, a person could still fail. It's a blow to my ego as well. I thought I had it all figured out, and here I am, humbled by this experience.

Yes strategies help, but the real change in our brains take time. Why is it a blow to your ego? If you have an ego, it means you are human, and humans aren't angels and can't expect radical changes and miracles.

Perhaps that's why I fell. "*Al taamin beatzmecha ad yom moscha.*" But truly, I don't know what could've prevented this. What could I've done so that this shouldn't have happened?

Again, relax. No one here expected you to remain clean forever. You just started rewiring. You couldn't have done anything to prevent it. Not yet. Stay around continue learning and inspiring (as you so amazingly do) and you will learn how to prevent it. Eventually.

I also don't know if the next round is going to be easier or harder. Harder because that initial excitement of the first time round probably won't be there. But perhaps easier because I did train myself throughout the past month to restrain myself. I now know that it's possible.

Who cares? Only one way to find out...

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Beautiful!

You wrote the first chapter of your amazing new journey of spiritual, emotional and intellectual growth. We eagerly await chapter two!

Grant

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