

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 starting - 23 Nov 2020 06:31

33 days? Awesome!

Fought for an hour? An hour of victory!

Picked yourself up already? Wow!

Next move? Probably internalise grants' message

Just one thing that could help:

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

I was trying to remind myself of everything that we've discussed and yet at the end I for some reason gave up.

It may be the time now to rewrite a list of methods/posts that speak to you and choose only 2 or

3 things to focus on beshaas nisayon, depending on the mood.

Sometimes you want a more spiritual based post, sometimes a distraction idea, sometimes just seeing someone else's success or attitude.

By focusing on one approach at a time your mind is more focused on the fight as opposed to grasping at straws, some vague ideas that would be very powerful when really internalised.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillenial - 23 Nov 2020 19:39

Hey everyone.

First day clean again.

I am kinda trying to figure out how to proceed. Should I start with day 1, day 2,... (a bit discouraging)? Or maybe continue with day 35, 36,... and the clean day count will be in the sidebar. Or maybe just drop the whole count thing altogether. Let me know what you think.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Grant400 - 23 Nov 2020 21:17

[anonymousmillenial wrote on 23 Nov 2020 19:39:](#)

Hey everyone.

First day clean again.

I am kinda trying to figure out how to proceed. Should I start with day 1, day 2,... (a bit

discouraging)? Or maybe continue with day 35, 36,... and the clean day count will be in the sidebar. Or maybe just drop the whole count thing altogether. Let me know what you think.

Day 1. With cumulative days keeping track.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 24 Nov 2020 02:59

A mountain climber worked hard and trudged up the slope of a steep mountain. Day after day he sweated in the heat and in the rain, constantly focusing on the goal - the distant peak. On day 33 he stumbled into a ditch. He slowly pulled himself out and cleaned himself up. As he was bandaging his wounds, he repaired the shoes that had caused the fall. Then he sat down and enjoyed the view from 33 days up. While climbing he had never bothered to look down. Only now did he realize how far he had come and how beautiful the view is. Realizing it called for a celebration, he pulled out a bottle of expensive scotch and made a l'chaim with Hashem. After imbibing the warm liquid, our friend stood up, shook off the remaining dust, focused on the peak and marched onward - with a satisfied smile on his lips.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Grant400 - 24 Nov 2020 03:07

[Hashem Help Me wrote on 24 Nov 2020 02:59:](#)

A mountain climber worked hard and trudged up the slope of a steep mountain. Day after day he sweated in the heat and in the rain, constantly focusing on the goal - the distant peak. On day 33 he stumbled into a ditch. He slowly pulled himself out and cleaned himself up. As he was bandaging his wounds, he repaired the shoes that had caused the fall. Then he sat down and enjoyed the view from 33 days up. While climbing he had never bothered to look down. Only now did he realize how far he had come and how beautiful the view is. **Realizing it called for a celebration, he pulled out a bottle of expensive scotch and made a l'chaim with Hashem.**

My kind of dude! Mountain climbing with an expensive bottle of whiskey tucked into his rucksack for emergency lichaims. (Although I would hang out with the bourbon swigging mountain dudes first!)

Now that's what I call a scotch on the rocks!!!

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Grant400 - 24 Nov 2020 21:18

Hey! @AM: What's up? How's it going?

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 24 Nov 2020 21:58

Day 3/36

How am I doing?

Great question.

Honestly, still a bit disappointed. I know I shouldn't be. But at the same time I also feel proud. It's what you guys have told me that that is part of the journey. It's to be expected and I really did break a record.

?It's just that my disappointment is not necessarily in this fall itself, rather it's in the first time I gave in, a few months back. Before I gave in a first time, I didn't have to count days. I didn't have to think about this. There were no records to be broken. I sometimes miss those days. Simpler days.

After I gave in for the first time, it was like I activated a part of me that was lying dormant. A sleeping dragon. A dragon that now needed taming.

The idea is not to beat myself up on what has happened. That indeed would be foolish. Rather, accept reality and deal with it the way it is. That's life. We all will encounter twists and turns in life that we might not have expected.

I remember when I first started to experience strong levels of anxiety and the ensuing panic attacks, the pain wasn't just the anxiety. Rather, a strong part of the pain was the unexpectedness of it all. I never thought that I would need a therapist. And I never thought that this would happen to me, that it would pull me out of my routine the way it did.

And for a long time, I was living in the past, trying to hold on to who I used to be. Desperately trying to clutch and hold tight the image of the 'perfect boy' that was, only to realize that that 'perfect boy' isn't anymore.

Upon further scrutiny, though, and with time, I understood that that 'perfect boy' never existed. Yes, there are certain things that I would've done better before. I might have had more confidence in certain areas and I might have become less quickly tired. But on the other hand, I've learnt and matured a lot from all of this.

Either way, there is no going back in time. We need to accept the present as is and learn how to deal with it. Because if we live in the past, it will always haunt us, it will always be there, lurking in the shadows, trying to make us feel bad, trying to take us down.

Indeed, life is a mountain we must climb. The scariest is to look back.

But looking forward, that's what can give us hope and that's where our bechira lies. So let's focus on that.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillenial - 25 Nov 2020 20:27

Hey fellow GYE'ers

I hope you're all having a great day so far.

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(koheles 10:2)

I once heard a great pshat which applies this posuk to learning gemara, but the yesod can be applied to our situation as well.

The pshat is as follows:

When we're learning a mesechta and we feel overwhelmed with how many dafim we have left, our focus should be to the right, to the pages we have accomplished already. Focusing on the pages to the left wouldn't be wise because we might feel overwhelmed. But when we focus on what've done already, we see what we can do, and it gives us the koiches to continue.

I felt that yesterday I was really giving a beating to focusing on the past. But is focusing on the past really so bad? Well, turns out, it depends.

Take today, for example. I am utterly emotionally drained. I can hardly sit on my computer right now to type. I feel like just dropping in the couch and go for a 10 year sleep. What keeps me going? It's because I know that there will be a tomorrow where I won't feel this. How do I know? Because I've had a yesterday like this before, I've made it through and had good and even great days afterwards.

The past is like a double edged sword. We can use it to drag us down. To make us feel hopeless. To make us feel like we lost all. Or, we can use it lift us up. To give us confidence. To remind us of the times when all the odds were stacked against us, and we persevered and made it through. A reminder of who we truly are and what we truly are capable of.

So yes, life is a mountain we must climb. But sometimes if we're brave enough, we can look down to see how far we've made it, so we'll know we can make it all the way to the top.

(Oh, before I forget: day 4/37.)

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 26 Nov 2020 06:00

I think that focusing on the past by acknowledging how far you have grown is a great thing. In the 90 Day count. there are two counts. There is your current streak which is mostly irrelevant to your overall growth and breaking free. Then there is the "Cumulative Clean Days" and that is the more accurate count for where you stand today.

Focus on that, watch those numbers build. Once you have them, nothing can take them away.

The fight is not about the streak, the streak is just there as an incentive. This fight is about training ourselves to live without this garbage, one day at a time, and that is exactly what you are doing.

Keep it up!

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Markz - 26 Nov 2020 06:42

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 26 Nov 2020 06:00:](#)

I think that focusing on the past by acknowledging how far you have grown is a great thing. In the 90 Day count. there are two counts. There is your current streak which is mostly irrelevant to your overall growth and breaking free. Then there is the "Cumulative Clean Days" and that is the more accurate count for where you stand today.

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The fight is not about the streak, the streak is just there as an incentive. This fight is about training ourselves to live without this garbage, one day at a time, and that is exactly what you are doing.

Keep it up!

Bro, if that works for you great.

Personally I prefer not to see Cumulative Clean Days because on the other side of the scale there's Cumulative Dirty Days and I'd rather forget about those - thanks.

When you call it a fight for a streak, that sounds like a shot in the dark, where the storm can easily return.

But the goal is not the streak - wow I'm so many days clean (btw Thank Gd today I'm at +-185 although I didn't update my counter), rather the goal is a sobriety date where we found what works for us to seriously happily break free in a solid way - each man to his own, whether thru therapy, SA, chopstix, forum etc... lyH by you!!!!!!

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 26 Nov 2020 08:24

I guess it would depend on the circumstance. Say we start counting from when we arrive here (that would be the number on the chart) and I have 300 cumulative days clean what does the number of days "dirty" have to be for us to feel like we are failing?

Even If I am only clean for 50 cumulative days, what are my "dirty days" 10, 20? My point is that the goal is progress. Yes, many don't see progress this way but anyone who gets decent streaks (more than a couple of days at a time) and when they fall it takes them a shorter amount

of time to get up, should be seeing progress. Progress I think is defined by being in a better place overall than before. Shouldn't someone who is making progress focus on it?

Listen, different strokes for different folks, what works for me may not work for someone else and that's okay.

...rather the goal is a sobriety date where we found what works for us to seriously happily break free in a solid way

Just curious, does the sobriety date change when you fall? Do you have to stay clean in order to keep your sobriety, does one fall screw it all up? Or once you find your path to sobriety, you are sober until a full relapse.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 26 Nov 2020 19:17

Day 5/38

First, I would like to thank everyone's support and comments. It means a lot and always adds another dimension.

Today I just wanted to express a certain point, that sometimes is on my mind. When dealing with struggles like this, sometimes I just want to know, "What does Hashem think about me? Does he think highly of me or perhaps he is disappointed that I got myself into this to start with?" I sometimes feel like I am desperate for some feedback from Above, and I am not receiving any. Just give me one word. Just to know that I am ok. And if not, then at least a pointer into which direction I need to go. How much effort to exert. What is considered too much, what is too little.

Sometimes I feel like I'm tapping into darkness, full of hidden expectations, without a pointer if I am doing ok or enough. And it's not just in this area. Really it's a question that encompasses our whole Avodas Hashem. How do we know when we are taking on too much or too little? Is there any way to find out?

Pray tell, fellow GYE'er, do you ever experience this? And if you answered in the affirmative, how do you deal with it?

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 27 Nov 2020 00:19

Most people here started watching pornography and masturbating at relatively young ages (between 11 and 15) - before they really understood how serious of an issue they are. By the time they realized that these actions are wrong and unhealthy, they were hooked. Being that this is a very private issue, they were embarrassed to discuss it with anyone. Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, etc, just triggered more escaping and acting out. From this perspective, one is almost an onais regarding these actions. On the other hand, these same guys, as mature adults, reach out for help, share personal challenges and courageously document their challenges. This defines who they are - loyal servants of Hashem who are bringing Him tremendous pride.

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 28 Nov 2020 19:15

I fell.

Again.

What do I do? How do I proceed?

As always, giving in has it's bittersweet effect, with more bitter than sweet mixed into the punch. It basically ruined my Shabbos.

I tried falling asleep with a book. And I did. But the light woke me up at 3 am. I went to close the light and when I went back to bed, the urges were there and I ended up giving in.

I need a new tactic. Perhaps I finally need to reach out to someone. My motivation is also taking a hit. I feel less motivated than ever. During my first run, I would not give in no matter how intense the feeling. Now, when I've reached a certain intensity I'm already more willing to give in. And with my brain realizing that I am willing to give in, the urges intensify until it's, as they say, 'Game Over'. On the other hand had I made up my mind that no matter what, I would not to give in, then I just wouldn't feel them so intensely. [It's a bit like the famous Ibn Ezra on the commandment of Lo Sachmod (ayin shom).] My problem is that it takes real dedication and motivation to make up my mind like that, so I feel like I need to bolster those areas.

Anyway, I wish everyone a gutte, clean voch.

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