

Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 18 Nov 2021 17:12

Hi everyone. This is my second thread on here--I haven't updated the last one in a while, and frankly, I need to be more open about my struggles than on that thread, so I'm restarting my journal.

I'm a fairly newly married mid-20s guy (no kids yet), went BT a few years ago and Torah is unbelievably important to me. When I think about what I want to accomplish in my life, the big things all have to do with raising a family and practicing Judaism. Despite this, I have really struggled to keep a consistent practice. When I went BT initially I was on fire, but that fire eventually smoldered and I became a pretty irregular davener/learner. Part of it was that I never addressed my porn problem until the last year or so. Since "burning out" I have always kept shabbos and kashrus fully, put on tefillin daily, followed taharas mishpacha, wore tzitzis/kippah, among other things, but my davening and learning has been lacking.

For more details of my specific situation, I live in a pretty "out of town" community in the US. My city has multiple shuls, eruvim, kosher food, learning opportunities, etc. but it's still a fairly small frum community. In fact, most of my friends are not religious as there's not many frum people around my age here.

Something changed in my brain recently, I don't know what it is, but over the summer I felt a real drive to increase my religious practice. I've always wanted to have a closer connection to Hashem but didn't have the drive for a while. These days I prepare divrei Torah to share at the shabbos table most weeks, daven shacharis with a minyan more days than not, started to add in mincha/maariv, added learning b'chavrusa once or twice weekly, prioritized hanging out with my few religious friends, and learning for at least a bit daily (minimum 30 mins listening to a shiur on my commute). I've felt like I'm going "BT Again" hence my name.

Sounds great, right? Well, I feel like I'm burning out again (hard to describe how exactly, but I've been struggling to get to minyan), and I'm still struggling with porn and masturbation (henceforth referred to as P and M). My usage of both has gone down immensely, though: in the last month I've refrained from M more than 75% of days and I've only looked at P three times. This is a lot of progress, as even a year ago both were multiple times a week if not daily.

My Jewish practice and recovery are deeply interconnected. When I use, I don't go to shul, and when I go to shul, I don't use. I really want to be more religious, I love learning and davening, I

want to be an active part of the Jewish community, I want to live a holy life, and I want to have kids who are frum and inspired. And I know that my P and M habits hold me back from this. If I can really make davening and learning integral parts of my life, I feel like I will be much better positioned to overcome my addiction.

If anyone has tips for me on my religious journey, please share. I'm also wondering about how to pull away from internet and phone use in general. Even outside of recovery, I dislike using the internet or my phone. I've deleted all of my social media which has helped. Does anyone know of a way to properly remove my ability to use the browser on an android phone (more permanent than disabling the app as I can't uninstall it)? I would prefer that my phone has no browsing capability, ideally keeping my current phone though I may buy a kosher smartphone in the future.

I will keep this thread updated for accountability.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by committed_togrowth - 05 Apr 2022 21:36

Hi BT Again,

I'm sorry you're going through a tough time, just to let you know objectively you are doing amazing! It's no fun being in a funk. Maybe try some small things that will bring some joy? Watching a feel-good nature documentary, lighting a nice scented candle, wearing comfortable clothes and reading a good book, things like that. I also find sometimes it helps to zoom out a bit, in my own experience my troubles (whether they are due to my own perceived shortcomings or external factors outside of my control) can dominate my perception of my life and make it seem like the whole thing is a dumpster fire. Try to think of a few moments where the hand of Hashem was super clear in your life. "I wouldn't have been where I am if xyz hadn't happened." Find those moments of really clear hashgacha pratis and use them to anchor yourself in the understanding that Hashem is guiding you each step of the way even though things are dark right now. Also, remember that you are a vital part of Klal Yisrael. Your avodah is important and does not take place in a vacuum. Your work in this area and all areas of your Yiddishkeit benefit not just you, but all of us. Thank you for your hard work!

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 06 Apr 2022 11:27

Tough times call for good friends. Call some chevra here... The chizuk, advice, and simple unburdening do wonders b'ezras Hashem.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 08 Apr 2022 04:30

Clean B"H. Some of the same issues as my last couple posts, but overall doing better and moving forward. Shabbos is always a nice reset. Really grateful for Webchaver, it's making a huge difference.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 12 Apr 2022 21:50

Clean B"H. Doing somewhat better mentally over the past few days (except yesterday) and having an easier time pushing away urges. Yesterday was tough, but I pushed through and have pretty solid ways to generally avoid such days happening again.

Happy to be past the 3-week mark as well! I think I've only been here twice before. G-d willing I'll never be back here again. I've also passed a month without porn. Absolutely THANK G-D for WebChaver--complete game changer. Hope everyone's Pesach prep is coming along well.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 19 Apr 2022 20:19

Fell on both days of yom tov and each of the two days since. The stress, anxiety, and depression I've been dealing with just built up and became too much. The good news is that the

porn images/fantasies have largely faded away at this point and none of the falls involved porn fantasies, so I'm taking that as progress--it's been 5 weeks since I intentionally sought out anything inappropriate online (aka since I installed webchaver). I have to stop falling though, especially when it's becoming a daily thing. I'm still most vulnerable right after waking up.

At this point, I really need to focus on addressing the mental health stuff that leads me down this path. At its core, the P&M are mostly just comforts/emotional crutches. My plan for addressing this is to get daily exercise, socialization, and meditation in. I can't miss days on any of these three things if I want to recover. Once I've stuck to this for a bit, I can see what else I can add to my plan.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by committed_togrowth - 19 Apr 2022 20:55

One suggestion I might add to your plan is also to work in some easy and low hanging stress relievers. Exercise and meditation are great solutions. In my experience though, when I'm really low I might not actually have the will power or commitment to actually do them. In those instances, it might be good to use some easy yet harmless distraction/mood lifting like watching nature documentaries (in my case) or whatever benign feel good thing you happen to enjoy. Moving the balls of physical, mental, and spiritual health down the field all at once can be really hard. Of course all these goals depend on each other and are interrelated, but when I expect myself to get an A+ in all areas, and that in and of itself is my recovery plan, then my ambitions can fizzle out and I can end up wallowing in the failure of not attaining these goals. Apologies for the long winded response, but all this to say you might consider being easier on yourself and accepting maybe a B+ instead of an A+ in physical and mental health and doing things occasionally that look "unproductive" or like a "waste of time" in order to give yourself some space to breath. The underlying goal for being easy on yourself during certain times of course is to excel over the long term in all areas!

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by whitepaint - 19 Apr 2022 22:54

you can get youre phone tagged in lakewood

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 25 Apr 2022 18:47

Was B"H clean over a very nice yuntif, then fell twice yesterday. On the bright side, I now mark 45 days of not intentionally viewing porn or borderline stuff and I'm proud of that accomplishment!

A bit on mental health. I have some diagnoses for various things... My thought process used to be that P&M didn't make my mental issues worse, but were just a symptom. When I started working on my recovery, I thought that they were the sole cause of my problems. Now I know that it's somewhere in between--I really do have some underlying problems, but P&M definitely are a piece of my mental health struggles.

The fact is that I know how to make myself feel better. I literally always have some kind of tool I can use, but actually motivating myself to do anything is such a barrier. Lots to do this week in all areas of my life, so this is on my mind.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 27 Apr 2022 18:28

Clean BH. I had a big urge yesterday because someone mentioned a social media app that I used to look at shmutz on. (Kind of crazy what most of the world considers to be appropriate.) I felt like trying to access it. Thankfully I have webchaver so I couldn't do that, and right away I headed to maariv and davened about it, and BH Hashem took away the urge.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by committed_togrowth - 27 Apr 2022 19:50

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 28 Apr 2022 17:47

Clean BH!

Heard a great idea from the Piacesno Rebbe HYD in a shiur--that after we daven for help with a difficult situation it is often ready to come down from shamayim, but it is waiting for a physical container of sorts. Often this is a mitzvah that we do. So I am continuing to daven for Hashem's assistance with this nisayon and making sure to do all them mitzvos I can.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 02 May 2022 22:49

I fell this morning after a week clean. However, I have just marked 50 days clean from looking at anything inappropriate, which is honestly huge. The images are fading, and I am progressing, even though I'm not perfect.

In the past 6 months, I have been clean from porn for 173 out of 181 days. That's 96% of days without something that used to be an almost daily habit. Meanwhile, I have been clean from masturbation 88% of days in the same period. That used to be every day, multiple times a day, just a couple of years ago. I enjoyed counting that up to put things in perspective, since I was feeling pretty down after my fall.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 May 2022 11:10

Keeping your eyes clean is a tremendous life altering accomplishment. Keep a separate count for it and celebrate milestones. Be proud of where you are at. It is incredible.

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Re: Want to be BT again

Posted by BT Again - 09 May 2022 04:19

Had a couple more falls last week, but had a clean weekend. I made a new Taphsic after not having one for a couple months. I found it helpful in the past but my previous one was pretty punitive and the whole thing kinda fell apart. IYH, will help this time.

Also established a solid recovery plan for the first time, with weekly step work, weekly listening to recovery shiurim, and daily exercise/meditation/socialization/learning.

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