

Taking Notes on my Journey

Posted by TheNextStep - 13 Mar 2022 05:01

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Hello, I am TheNextStep. I have been a member here for a month and a half. I have tracked my 90 days progress (and falls) and listened to some audios, but have been nervous about posting on the forum. I haven't been able to get a streak longer than 8 days, and more recently, I've been struggling to get past 3 or 4, and so I decided now is the time to stop going in alone, and post. Well today, I am fighting those nerves, and am making this thread. As the saying goes, "The opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it's connection."

My main goal is to post here every day or every second day, and give an update. I think a couple sentences or more should be fine, so that it isn't too daunting. I will also try to surf and post on the forum more often when I have time. Anyone interested can read my perhaps too-lengthy backstory below. If you skip it that's fine! Glad to finally join the forum and write this.

---[Lengthy Backstory]---

I found this website over a year ago, but didn't consider wasting seed to be a big issue back then, so I never joined. More recently I started thinking seriously about the sin of wasting seed, and also about marriage and started dating, and learned that in many ways the habit can harm a future marriage, since it does not just go away. Having a good future marriage, shalom bayis, etc, is my major motivation.

I joined the site near the end of January, and started using the 90 day counter. I thought, now that I'm serious, this counter should be enough and I should be able to just quit...with maybe one or two falls. Well, the first 3 days were easy, but shortly after 5 I found an excuse and had a fall. Then, 8 days (my best yet!), but again another fall. I had an idea that, if I continued falling, I would add more and more to my fight against it.

So I got into the audios, since I can listen at my job. I decided to save all of Rabbi Shafier's "The Fight" audios from this site, and pledged to listen to one a day at work. These were very helpful, but on weekends I didn't listen to any, and tended to have falls then.

Once I finished them, things started to get worse again. Now my streaks were down to 2-4 days. I decided something had to change, I can't just be passive listening to audio (or watching

videos) about the issue. That is why I'm here looking to the forum for help. I changed my username to "TheNextStep" to sort of mark the change.

I think I've identified a major underlying issue for me, which is I am very good at rationalizing. For example, you'll notice in my story that I've focused on wasting seed. That was my only original goal, but for the first month or so I had convinced myself that I could still look at explicit material. Please don't make fun of me for this, I know the name of this website...haha. (I also found out today that "Intentionally viewing improper sites" counts as a fall, so I've been doing it wrong.) There was a second issue with...I'll try to put it vaguely...improper touching but not finishing. This is playing with fire for one, but it also undermines the purpose of the 90 day challenge, since I was still partially maintaining a bad habit. If you read all that, thank you.

---[End of Lengthy Backstory]---

Rationalizing that, since wasting seed was my only mission, therefore things adjacent to it (like seeking improper material) were acceptable as long as I didn't cross the line, was the major cause of my unfortunately short streaks. I will be entering this next step without holding those as acceptable, and properly counting seeking illicit sites as falls. Finally, I made a pledge with a friend not to do it for a week, and that I will reward myself with ice cream if I can reach that mark.

Tonight marks the first day clean with the new pledge. I will be back tomorrow and for the next few months to log updates. I am open to suggestions.

Thanks, TheNextStep.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by TheNextStep - 27 Mar 2022 08:00

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[wilnevergiveup wrote on 24 Mar 2022 07:36:](#)

Thanks for this, this is still a struggle for me and at this point. Although I don't count streaks, when I fill in my F2F "daily reflection" I consider any touching a setback.

Thank you for sharing, it's good to know I'm not the only one with such an unfortunate setback. And I agree completely, it is a setback.

Day #15 - First time seeing the 2 week medal!

Haven't posted in a bit, but I'm still going. These last couple nights have been harder, I really think something about weekends, not having work (aka, a stable reliable thing happening the next day) is a contributing factor. And then Sunday is a routine change again. Touching is still an issue but I went a few nights without it, so I'll see how next week goes. If there's no improvement, I'll make a thread about it.

On life stuff, I have had some cool ideas for a project, so I have something to work on now. Maybe I'll talk about it a little if it gets past the idea stage.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by TheNextStep - 28 Mar 2022 22:41

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Day #16

Unusual but successful report today. Last night and today I started having weird (and inappropriate) images bombard my imagination. More than usual, and some kind of strange.

On that note, last night I was very tempted but I did nothing to feed it. I watched a clean technical video to get images out of my head and then I just went to sleep, face down so I wouldn't get tempted to touch. I have a feeling the unusual images might be a side effect of a new medication I'm on. Apparently it takes a week to settle into the body right so the next few days will be interesting. I think I'm ready for the challenge though, so far so good.

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That's all for today.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by TheNextStep - 31 Mar 2022 03:27

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I've been away from the forum a few days (I think 3), but it's because I've been keeping busy! Rabbi Shafier in "The Fight" series on this website (in the audio section) said that keeping busy, and studying were good ways to keep clean. I'm doing one accidentally haha.

Speaking of which, it looks like next week I will be given more duties at work...I was a little

Day #19 - Wow 19 days

Other updates. The weird thoughts went away mostly by the next day. Maybe I was just tired. I am not really keeping a count, but I have been touching a lot less.

Full steam ahead

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by TheNextStep - 03 Apr 2022 05:10

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Day #21

disheartened about that, but it'll keep me busy. Everything is for the good, right?  
Came phenomenally close to a fall today via looking. I saw, pursued a little, and then pulled away and frantically found something else to keep me busy until the urge quieted...A few quick take aways.

- I think slipping was more likely because of how incredibly tired I am. Weaker power I

suppose.

- I stopped before going too far in part thanks to one of the early GYI emails, where they say if you get right back to guarding, you can maintain most of your progress. So I was able to overcome the voice in my head that said, you've gone this far, just keeping going and finish.
- A while later, I was getting ready for bed and once again I really felt like looking. The same feeling came: I've already slipped a little, it's close enough to a fall, just follow your desire and finish your job. Well, interestingly a piece of advice from Rabbi Shafier's audios came to me. When the soton attacks, it speaks in your voice. Sorry for the cheesyness, but I said, ahah, it's just like the rabbi said, that's not me, that's a yetzer hara!

And so here I am an hour later heading to bed. It's nice that these tools, GYI's emails and Rabbi Shafier's "The Fight" audios also from this site, directly came into play. I'm going to bed now. If there are mistakes, it's because I'm tired!

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey

Posted by TheNextStep - 06 Apr 2022 03:42

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On Sunday I had a large struggle which I detailed in my previous post. Some of that struggle continued internally. Part of it was that I felt that I should have counted that slip as a proper fall since I did go to an inappropriate site, even though I exited it almost immediately. Regardless, an old inappropriate desires and images haunted me since then, I guess I reawakened something in my mind by returning to the bad habit, however briefly and wel, this morning I had a proper fall. So, here we go.

Day #0

When I centered myself, shut everything down, etc. I messaged my accountability friend and updated my count. I decided to put my fall as starting Sunday and ending today, so that the previous fight wouldn't be counted as part of my cumulative days.

When I get a chance (I think I'll have time Thursday morning) I will outline some new goals I want to add to my previous ones. For now, it's getting late and I have to go.

Before I do, I will say, I'm proud I got so far this steak! 21 days, three full weeks. That's my longest since joining the site! As Rabbi Shafier said (more or less) the way to fight is to get right back up, and that's my current mood. I'm up and ready to keep walking forward. I will reflect on what think I did right and what mistakes I did next time, as well as adding goals as I said before.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by Vehkam - 06 Apr 2022 12:26

Thanks for reading, and I'm looking forward to "the next step"  
You have a great attitude and you are clearly growing as a person. Thanks for the honest assessment and inspiration

If you like rabbi Shafier there is a good chance you will enjoy the battle of the generation of which a lot is based on rabbi Shafiers classes. Please consider joining me in reading one chapter a day - beginning again tonight.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by committed\_togrowth - 06 Apr 2022 19:20

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The way you're getting right back up is amazing and will certainly lead you to success. Don't worry about the old images coming back, they will calm down with time.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 07 Apr 2022 11:22

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What did you do to celebrate the 21 days?

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey

Posted by TheNextStep - 08 Apr 2022 00:41

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Thank you everyone who has replied since my previous post, and everyone who gave it a "thank you." I will start today by replying.

Vekham, thank you for the pointer towards the book Battle of Our generation. I believe I saved the pdf and read some, but I don't really like reading off a screen. Tomorrow is pay day, so I think I will just buy a copy. As for a chapter a day, I'm not sure I have enough free time during the week but I might commit to a page+ or something per day at my own pace.

committed\_togrowth, thank you, good point about the images. Yesterday was tough, like my imagination on temptations reawakened, but it's cooled down a lot today.

Hashem Help Me, I'm pretty sure I got ice cream for 14 days but nothing for 21. I think the timing of the "slip" interfered with me doing anything.

## **Day #1**

(The 90 days tracker says 2, I'm not sure how it counts days, but it often seems ahead by one. Maybe it's in a different time zone than me.)

One major lesson I learned from this fall and that "slip" before it is that going near the old habit seems to awaken those parts of my mind. After the "slip" on day 21, my mind was filled with images - memories from before I decided to quit. It was that which pushed or tempted me to the fall a couple days later. After I recommitted and restarted, yesterday I had a similar issue but this time I was more ready. Now today, the temptation is much lower, and I feel like I'm getting back on track.

Lesson: A small step in the wrong direction can perhaps reawaken tempting thoughts/urges. Knowing that helped me more effectively resist after restarting.

New goals / commitments:

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- I have made new goals relating to touching, which I will not go into detail on.
- Keeping "the fight" in mind. In the first couple weeks of my streak, I was listening to Rabbi Shafier's "The Fight" every day near the end of the day. The days leading up to the slip and fall, I had stopped. I think keeping some sort of daily reminder, be it relistening or reading from The Battle of the Generation once I get it is important so I will do that.
- I might add more later, for now I think I addressed two major weak points in my journey out.

Also, the change at my

work has started and my new route is longer than before. I'm working harder and last night anyway, I pretty much just fell asleep when I got home and ate. Usually I would not be happy about more work, but in this case perhaps part of it is in my favour.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
 Posted by Vehkam - 08 Apr 2022 03:26

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I am more than happy to buy the book for you. (or anyone else who can use it). The chapters are not long. Probably about five minutes on average.

Long post, but I promised a proper one with goals, and so here it is  
 It sounds like you are really thinking through things and I am sure that you will be successful.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
 Posted by TheNextStep - 08 Apr 2022 06:58

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I am more than happy to buy the book for you. (or anyone else who can use it). The chapters are not long. Probably about five minutes on average.



It sounds like you are really thinking through things and I am sure that you will be successful.

Thank you for the offer! I actually got paid at midnight, so I have invested in the book myself. I think having some skin in the purchase will be for the best though...it should be here Monday!

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by TheNextStep - 10 Apr 2022 19:50

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Day #5

Had a struggle this morning but it didn't go far. I went to find something else to distract me.

Also, the book came in today...a day early. It's quite hefty!

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by TheNextStep - 14 Apr 2022 20:47

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Day #1 (again)

Well, I'll comment on the previous streak. I made it to 7 days. It was perhaps the most difficult run I've done. Temptation was very high, and I can't remember exactly why I fell. Probably, I should have posted more about it here.

I thought getting more work at my job would help, and I think it did on some days, but other days I was simply exhausted and therefore more susceptible to temptation.

I don't really have any new goals this time around...right now. Just going to keep going and start

again.

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Re: Taking Notes on my Journey  
Posted by TheNextStep - 17 Apr 2022 20:04

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Okay here we go.

Less defeated this time hahah

Day #0

An interesting and important observation this fall; it's not good. And I mean that literally, it feels bad to do...even looking. Everything was bad haha. I'm actually really happy, I think this can be a tool. We know it is bad, well, maybe we can feel that it's bad too. I think it was Maimonides who said, to reach the middle way we must sometimes overcorrect to recenter? Maybe these clean days are doing something.

Philosophy aside, I also started The Battle of the Generation. I like it so far, and I like the citations.

Let's see, a plan. Well if I get tempted I'll have to remember that it's not good, literally. It's just a waste of time, not really enjoyable. Another thing is actually sleep, it's harder when I'm tired. Maybe I'll take it a little easier at work too. I'm getting used to the new workload.

Here's to another week. And ice cream!

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