

My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 22 Jun 2022 20:57

This is my first post but I've been lurking for years. Years which I've shed many tears...tears of sadness...tears of shame...tears of fear...tears of anger. Anger at myself, my rabeim, women in the street and Hashem.

There were times that I felt hopeful and times that I felt hopeless. Surrounded by people yet so alone. Trapped in a prison that I had created with my biggest enemy my mind, as a cell mate.

I didn't understand why I was wired this way. Why I was the only one that a simple chol hamoed trip could be so disastrous. What was the use of everything I'm doing, of my trying to be a good Jew when I am such a bad person. If I'm chayiv misah bidei shomayim and can't do teshuvah, what is the purpose of my life.

I know, when I'm married and have "pas b'saloi" it will finally be easier. But it wasn't and what now. Not only is what I am doing affecting myself, but I have a wife and a couple of kids now as well.

Then I saw the ad "now when I shake the rabbi's hand, I no longer feel ashamed" (or something like that. Could it be? Are there other people out there that are like me??

I joined GYE and saw that not only was I not alone, but that some people had fallen lower than I had and had picked themselves up. All my life it had been drilled into me that the highest aspiration was to be a Talmud Chochom but now I saw tzadikim...real tzadikim, lamed vuvniks even. I learnt so much from so many people on the forums, that I decided to pick myself up and that I too could become a tzadik.

I was going through a terrible time financially and told Hashem, I can't make more of a hishtadlus for parnassah than I already am doing, please let this nisayon be the zechus I need. I was clean for 173 days, when previously, I had never made it past 3 days. I was convinced my life would change, I was starting over, becoming a new person, surely I was going to have Siyata Dishmaya. I started writing a book on shemiras einayim and the struggle but...

Not only did my financial situation not improve it got worse. I was so depressed in a place of complete Yiush that I fell after 173 days.

I was so angry at Hashem, Hashem I attempted the impossible, you know what a broken person I am inside. Why? Why? Why?

After that over the next few years there were more downs than ups. I felt that I had completely reverted back to my old self. Interestingly enough, my financial situation stated getting better. But I always had this tickling feeling in the back of my mind. What if I hadn't fallen after day 173, was that my Yosef Hatzadik moment and I failed???

I decided to try again, it's been about a year now of trying again, never making it past 2-3 days but now I'm at day 12.

Sorry for the long post but I will continue b'ezras Hashem with why I feel like it will be better this time around and why I decided to post.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 29 Jul 2022 16:48

[Sapy wrote on 29 Jul 2022 16:14:](#)

I think F2F has some great ideas, how did it work for you?

I'm in the beginning.

?Shabbos is going to be my 50th day without masturbation, I've only done this once before. I'm still counting the 90 days and beyond (I think psychologically it will help me) but for the next 40 days I want to switch my approach to less fighting. I'm still going to keep everything off my

phone and the gedorim the way I've been doing for these past 50 days because I don't want any more temptation than necessary.

To be honest this decision is giving me some anxiety but I feel like it's the right approach. One of the main reasons is, I'm going on vacation at the end of the summer and not a day has gone by since I started this 90 day journey that I haven't been obsessing about it, how difficult it's going to be and what am I going to do etc. I've also unfortunately been reviewing some of the sight and feels of vacation last year (and i'm not talkin about the sights i saw with my family) brought to the forefront by my constant thinking about this years vacation and this is not good.

I'm not really sure how to fight less but I would like to learn.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Sapy - 29 Jul 2022 19:09

Sounds great, I'll try to chim in with a few ideas which has worked for me when I have a few minutes.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by frank.lee - 31 Jul 2022 00:53

Can you clarify, to us or to yourself in case it is not already clear, what are you stressed about for vacation?

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Vehkam - 31 Jul 2022 14:11

[Lchaim Tovim wrote on 29 Jul 2022 14:19:](#)

Thank you guys!

@Trouble, you wrote "the purpose of the 'fight' is to change how your insides work; that will either result in not having temptation at all or being tempted and overcoming even though you are not on the battlefield any longer." Does that mean that while eventually I will hopefully leave fighting mode but for now that's the way it's supposed to be in order to change my insides, or am I supposed to be working somehow on my insides?

@yid from monsey I am absolutely willing to say that I am powerless and I guess that's why i'm in fight or flight mode. I'm to scared that if I am in a situation that there will be temptation that I will fall. That's why i'm doing my bet to try to avoid these situations.

@Vehkam you wrote "It is not about letting your guard down it is about gaining clarity about what you will and will not do and learning how to safeguard those commitments and values" What do you mean by learning how to safeguard those commitments and values?

@Sapy, I definetely want to learn how to live with the urge, I guess I don't feel that I'm there yet and just trying to avoid everything

@franklee It's interesting, I don't have any OCD tendencies in any other areas, I'm a pretty chilled guy as a whole. It's just with this whole lust thing, feeling that it controls me instead of me controlling it which is leading me to try to block it.

@kavey, that does not sound haughty at all. thanx for the chizuk

Hi. to answer your question directed at me. I will answer from my perspective and from how this question relates to me. In the beginning of my struggle there were lots of triggers all over the place that I needed to avoid. I was used to thinking from a highly sexualized perspective and there were many reminders of this wherever i went. My reactions to provocative billboards in the streets was strong. Passing an "adult establishment" while driving was uncomfortable and a source of anxiety. I was very concerned about falling back and was not confident that my resolve to stay clean would last. As time goes on, it is much more clear to me that this is not a

temporary inspiration. I know very well what i am comfortable looking at and what i need to avoid. I still won't look at a provocative billboard and prefer to avoid passing any adult establishments, but they are no longer a source of anxiety. I know that "i don't go there" and the fact that they are there is no longer a source of struggle for me. (there was a time that driving into nyc at night meant that i would automatically have an internal battle which i usually lost... now i can drive into the city and not even think about it)

What changed is that i now have clarity about what i will or won't do. I also have safeguards in place, which include reading every night, posting here etc... if ch'v i fell it would not go unaddressed. I speak to various people from time to time and if i fall back they will know very quickly. I have a therapist once a week and i need to be brutally honest. otherwise i would be wasting \$300 a week. All of these add up to strong safeguards.

I also have some sort of filter on my phone. I don't test it. I use my phone for the things that i need. I will search using google for any and everything that i need but i don't use my phone for any sort of entertainment.

I have whatsapp and use it as a means of communication. I am on several groups and see the statuses of my contacts. I have absolutely no concern that having whatsapp will be a stumbling block for me. I use it to communicate with my rav as well. I won't join a group that has any potential for material that needs to be avoided. I am clear on what is acceptable and i stay within those boundaries. If i was younger and had friends that were sharing inappropriate material then i would have to reconsider if/how i could use the app. Once you have the confidence and clarity of what you are willing to look at, you should be able to make good decisions on whether or not to use the app anymore. Since it has been a source of struggle in the past you will obviously have to change how you use it. You will also want to wait until you are VERY clear and VERY confident that it is no longer a source of struggle. This could take a long time but does not need to be forever.

i hope this answers your question.

best regards,

vehkam

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 01 Aug 2022 15:40

I've spent the past couple of days thinking reflecting and trying to process everything.

From the time I was a kid even before puberty, I was extremely sexual. Everywhere I went there were triggers.

?I guess the reason why I took such an extreme fighting approach was that I was trying to combat my hyper-sexuality. Trying to avoid any situation where I might be triggered. Trying to avoid being tempted. Trying to fight my feelings.

I'm not going to be able to go through the rest of my life not seeing anything I shouldn't though obviously there are certain places I shouldn't be going both in real life and virtually.

I think I have to accept the fact that I feel certain desires and learn how to deal with my feelings. It's not so much what I feel but how I deal with what I feel. If I saw something and now want to take a second look or more, I have to learn to not take that next step. If i did take another look, I don't have to think about it afterwards and fantasize or relive what I saw. If I'm turned on, that's ok, let those feelings wash over me, I don't need to take it to the next step.

Does what i'm saying make any sense?

If I can do this successfully (though I'm not sure exactly how), I hopefully won't get into the much bigger problems and red lines.

?The other night I went into bed with my wife and got extremely turned on but I knew nothing was happening. Instead of having sex with myself, I tried reading the white book. i couldn't concentrate so I just lay there telling myself, it's ok to feel this way, it will pass, trying to envision waves washing over me and eventually it did.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by Vehkam - 01 Aug 2022 16:19

[Lchaim Tovim wrote on 01 Aug 2022 15:40:](#)

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was happening. Instead of having sex with myself, I tried reading the white book. i couldn't concentrate so I just lay there telling myself, it's ok to feel this way, it will pass, trying to envision waves washing over me and eventually it did.

Everything you wrote makes a lot of sense to me...

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 01 Aug 2022 17:31

[frank.lee wrote on 31 Jul 2022 00:53:](#)

Can you clarify, to us or to yourself in case it is not already clear, what are you stressed about for vacation?

sure. Girls (jewish and non jewish), bathing suits, daisy dukes bikinis on top, and more (don't want to get to explicit), all day every day

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Vehkam - 01 Aug 2022 17:46

ouch! why are you going there?

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 01 Aug 2022 17:57

[Vehkam wrote on 01 Aug 2022 17:46:](#)

ouch! why are you going there?

Trust me, this is one of the safer (more kosher) places to go and is very popular by the frum oilam. Unfortunately, this is just the reality of most places during the summer. it could be that most people don't notice all this but g-d gave me a super sensitive radar system

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by chancy - 01 Aug 2022 17:58

First of all , you brought back some memories with that song reference..... Thank you....

Secondly, From reading your posts, it seems like we might share some of the ssme issues. I can tell you from my experience, the hardest thing was and still is deciding that i CANNOT and WILLNOT go to a lot of places where others have no issue going.

Of course i would love to go to a beach resort any day of the week, or course i would enjoy going to a water park! But long decided that wouldn't be able to live with myself and be honest to God by going anywhere i know there will be crazy triggers that i will not be able to overlook or ignore.

So i find nice places where there hopefully no triggers and i pray there shouldn't be and i do whatever i can to avoid them. Why make it harder on yourself? For example, i had to fly a few weeks ago and i knew itll be hard for me, i took off my contacts and wore glasses even thought everyone asked me what happened, i didn't answer anyone, it was still very hard but was able to take off the glasses now and then and walked blissfully in an airport in middle of the summer with lost of scantily clad women, it was such a liberating feeling! I sometime wish i can do that all the time.

So i sincerely hope you thought this thru and you put the safeguards in place before going on this trip. If not, you still have time to make changes. Remember, you are doing yourself the biggest favor in the worlds!

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Lchaim Tovim - 01 Aug 2022 18:04

I'm not talking about going to the beach or even the pool which I will not go to this time around.

This is in the hotel lobby and hallways, amusement parks, farms and other attractions

This is why I am starting to feel that I can't just avoid everything, need to learn to live with this.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by Vehkam - 01 Aug 2022 18:36

[Lchaim Tovim wrote on 01 Aug 2022 18:04:](#)

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for sure. that is definitely doable! one of the important things is to make sure that you know what to expect and how you want to react. The hardest challenges are when you are caught by surprise.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim

Posted by chancy - 01 Aug 2022 19:39

Ok thats a start.....

I usually go to a private house or to a very quite hotel.

?Hotels are very triggering for me its not worth it for me.

The best is a private villa or a hotel off the beaten path. If i may ask where are you going to? i can give you some ideas.

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Re: My Journey L'chaim Tovim
Posted by Trouble - 01 Aug 2022 19:49

[Vehkam wrote on 01 Aug 2022 18:36:](#)

[Lchaim Tovim wrote on 01 Aug 2022 18:04:](#)

I'm not talking about going to the beach or even the pool which I will not go to this time around.

This is in the hotel lobby and hallways, amusement parks, farms and other attractions

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for sure. that is definitely doable! one of the important things is to make sure that you know what to expect and how you want to react. The hardest challenges are when you are caught by surprise.

personally, lct, as we spoke on the phone, i think that all this planning and obsessing is wrong for you - at this time. you're going to a place where there are triggers and challenges - deal with it! you wanna walk in lobby and beach w/o your glasses, fine, decide that now and move the hell on! you wanna walk in hallway directly behind your wife holding on to her backside, also fine! wanna hang the white book on your bedpost, the bee gees' book on the bathroom towel rack and chayeil olam on the fridge, so be it! for extra precaution, have the numbers from some of the

fellows here on speed dial and use accordingly. [if i'm one of them, i'll answer only if you send pictures first.] now, get on with life!

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