

On the way... Again

Posted by Hopefulposek - 26 Jul 2023 16:54

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Hi everyone,

I made it to 90 days once before and then had a fall shortly after. I have made several attempts since then but have not been successful. I'm hoping that starting this thread where I will post updates and insights throughout this journey will help me stay motivated and grounded. Any chizuk or advice in response to the updates my journey would help me on the way. Thanks everyone for being such a supportive community.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by BenHashemBH - 24 Jul 2024 16:45

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[hopefulposek wrote on 24 Jul 2024 15:33:](#)

Something which comes up many times on here is how to have a normal intimate relationship in a marriage. I had a pretty bad intimacy and it was causing problems (I basically told my wife that it was so bad I would rather her not go to the mikvah). and we had talked about it before and I had talked to rabbeim before but there did not seem to be any progress. I talked to my therapist about it and he suggested something which we tried with some improvement.

At one point we (my wife and I not my therapist) decided to read books on improving intimacy together. This was, surprisingly, actually helpful and i now believe that at some point in the future we can have enjoyable and positive intimacy.

At the same time I feel that it would make a big difference to go to a sex therapist as a couple in order to have someone directly help us with our unique situation and problems.

IYH I will keep on posting

I might have some resource ideas that could help, but it depends on where you are at and what you are going through. Let me know if you'd like to talk more about it.

Hatzlacha.

Yes, please stay in touch!

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 12 Aug 2024 16:25

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Hi, Posting to keep grounded. B"H still clean and things are going well. Still have normal guy taaveh but feeling ok with where I'm holding. Intimacy is unsatisfactory and lots of frustration triggers at home, but that's part of life. the key is understand where the frustration comes from, give myself space to feel those feelings and slowly come to terms with the current situation. One thought which has helped me tremendously in combating anxiety which preludes frustration many times aimed at my wife (which can then lead to feelings of frustration in intimacy, manifesting in desires for other women who will "better understand and please me"), is that "I will take care of myself. I will make sure that I am cared for in whatever fashion necessary." I was surprised at how much this helped me, but I found it useful. I believe because much anxiety is catastrophizing situations ending in my being miserable, or not being able to do something exciting or important to me, and this thought reminded me that even if my wife is not going to be able to help me with what I need, I will help myself.

On the point of the frustrating intimacy, I found one thought which had helped me in the past but I had stopped using it for no reason. But first, my initial thought which helped the frustration in the intimacy is "I don't need sex to survive and be happy." This is fundamental in combating an addictive/compulsive behavior which one uses for emotional regulation and escape. Constantly (daily) reminding yourself that what you have taught yourself and what your brain is telling you is false. However, even though this helped me be ok with not having sex anymore, I still had the frustration when we would have sex and it felt like a chore, like I simply existed for the sake of pleasuring my wife. So I changed the thought a tad and found it helpful, "I don't need lust to survive and be happy." Not %100 sure why it helped me so much, but I remember not being resentful and frustrated during intimacy then, I think pshat is that now I'm happy with whatever level of enjoyment I get from being together with my wife even if it doesn't have a lustful atmosphere to it. I am separating the lustfulness from the sex and therefore find the pleasure and meaning in just being together.

There will still be the physical discomfort of getting all revved up and then denied the release, but it's also not comfortable to see a very attractive girl, get aroused and then not masturbate. It is ok to be uncomfortable. I think the best thing for that is to discuss with my wife (which I have tried already unsuccessfully) that it is extremely uncomfortable to be left without release at the end of intimacy, but I'm not sure because once you tell her then if she doesn't fulfill it will create frustration.

On a related note, I would like to get back to regular journaling, I fell out of it a few weeks back and it makes a discernable impact.

Hope this is helpful for the hopefuls out there, just got to keep learning about ourselves and be honest with our situation.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 12 Aug 2024 16:31

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Wow, I just looked back at my diary and found that in the past year I only "fell" 4 times. that is probably the most shocking sentence have ever typed out. It is completely unbelievable that a guy who used to be motzei zerah almost every day (and many times twice a day) can reach this point. Thank you GYE and Thank you Ribonoh Shel Oilam!

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 22 Aug 2024 14:37

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Re: summer vaca reality check

This week I took my wife and kids out to american dream for a fun filled day, and I got a nice dose of reality of where I'm standing in guarding my eyes. I found myself taking many second glances, appreciating the beauty of the different nice ladies who were in the mall as well as admiring their style of dress (or lack thereof). interestingly enough I didn't find myself sneaking peeks into the various and numerous lingerie stores there, I was just "distracted" by the many scantily clad young females.

OK so reality check, even though I do not find myself struggling to turn to pornography regularly I still continue to look at women in the street and draw in lust from seeing them.

Plan of action:

1) get more sleep, I was very tired and this has historically always made it difficult for me to challenge my natural desires.

2) Avoid places of danger. I can't always avoid seeing people dressed immodestly but I can limit myself from going to areas which I know will be inundated with those folk.

3) To avoid drawing in lust I will use a trick which I found successful in the past. When I see a pretty girl think "That is an attractive women. Ok true, now lets move on with life. Her being attractive has nothing to do with me because she is not meant for me and is not part of my life. " It's like seeing a big juicy steak and thinking, that looks really good but the it has no bearing on my life. I don't push it away or try and ignore her because that is a war of attrition which I will lose. Rather it devalues there attractiveness by stating in my mind that it has no value to me.

4) A point in the struggle that made things worse for me a few months ago was when I was talking to someone (don't remember if it was a rebbe or therapist but one of the 2) and I mentioned that I didn't find my wifes style of dress attractive, in fact I find it very unfashionable, as well as her bearing and posturing I felt (from my expert opinion) that she always presented herself in a way which was unattractive. However the problem was that I didn't have the words to describe what she did "wrong" and what she could do or wear differently which would help. After that conversation I noticed that I started checking out every woman I saw with the mindset of "I want to know what I find attractive so that I can tell my wife to help her." I really thought it was L'sheim Shomayim, and it doesn't matter if it was or not (I think this is key to tell myself because even being honest with myself I think it was L'sheim Shomayim) because it recreated the habit for me of checking out women in the street. I have since realized that I cannot fix my wife's style, and basically she will wear what she wears and I may come to find something about it that I appreciate (maybe in the future, if I totally get control of myself in the street, and we create an overall connection, so very far in the future) So... I want to realize why I started getting back into this habit and recognize that it is no longer applicable.

5) The Y"H tells me that if I look at the pretty young lady who is barely dressed it will fill me up with good feelings, feelings of pleasure and excitement. But after many hours of conducting test I have proven this to be false. True, if one is ok with masturbating then getting filled with desire in the street will make the build up so much more exciting and it turns the whole world into a virtual candy store for my brain. But if you are not planning on masturbating, which I am not, then looking at something inappropriate will trigger a feeling of desire (which granted will feel good for a little bit while the stimulant is still there because the brain connects it to the expectant reward), but when that desire is not fulfilled it will quickly because an uncomfortable feeling of thirst and hunger for this drug that is beyond my grasp, and the more you build it up (which will feel better in the moment) the worse you will feel when it doesn't get fulfilled (and there is no Haavah aminah the my wife will fulfill me at the end of the day because it is not reliable and never is good enough to fulfill my desires). A good mashul is to water being filled up behind a dam, if there is not water then there is no pressure and stress. the more you fill it up the more pressure it creates. If the dam is allowed to open, then the more water filled in beforehand will increase the amazing rush of water that comes pouring though at the end. but if it is not allowed to release then it just creates the pressure which feels very uncomfortable and stressful.

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Re: On the way... Again

Posted by hopefulposek - 23 Aug 2024 16:20

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OK got some more time now to continue my, hopefully useful, rambling. I do feel that I used to devote much more time to GYE back when the struggle was much greater for me, and now that I don't feel the fight as much I have put it on the back burner. But for me that means only checking in and posting when I have spare time which is almost nonexistent. Though I'm not sure this is a bad thing.

I mentioned in my previous post that I was checking out women in the street ostensibly L'sheim Shomayim. I don't think I am so pure of heart and beyond the base instincts, drives and desires of man that there is no dark voice pushing me to gaze at women for pleasure purposes, however I felt that even without that voice I would still gaze at them in order to attempt to "fix" my wife, and that if it weren't for the issues in my intimacy with my wife, the voice would not be successful in getting me to look. therefore I try to respond, not with the hammer of "You are doing this for lusting. Stop." but rather granting that my intentions mirror my feelings, after introspection, and still formulating a response to the inclination to look.

I recognize that others may not agree with this approach but i think there is value in it. Still it needed to be recognized that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, granted it was done for a good reason, not maliciously, however to result was still tremendously detrimental.

Another insight, which I feel has a lot of value in reminding myself. Having "better" or "more" sex with one's wife will not make the desires for other women go away. Now before all the rotten tomatoes are thrown, I want to clarify, a lot. I recently had a problem, it had been a while since I had been together with my wife and then after we were together, the next day I was going down the street and was feeling urges to look at the women there. How could this be? Didn't I just get a release? Shouldn't my desires be tapered down?

And when I am not together with my wife, I know that I end up having more urges, but are those coming from a feeling of pent up tension? More often than not they come from feelings of frustration triggering a desire for escape from the uncomfortable feelings which takes the for of the old drug: porn.

These 2 points pointed me towards this idea: there exists a base desire for sexual release in every (I assume) man. Regularly being together with ones wife will fulfill this base desire and therefore temper it from searching for a release outside the marriage. This doesn't have to

involve anything particularly exciting or attractive or desirous, simply getting the release will help with this aspect. The other, often more dominant, aspect of desire comes from what we have created through our life experiences. This can take the form of expecting a certain level of pleasure and excitement from being together with ones wife, when this is not fulfilled it results in frustration (not a physical sexual frustration but an emotional frustration) and you may search out this level of pleasure with someone or something else (be it porn drugs or alcohol). It can also take the form of constantly desiring the pleasure, which results in looking around on the street and also feeling frustrated when there are dry spells.

the result is that have "better" or "more" sex with your wife is treating the symptoms rather than the disease.

Based on this I would have said that if one is getting frustrated that the sex is not enjoyable, instead of trying to make it more enjoyable, instead try to focus on the idea that you do not need those levels of pleasure to live and be happy, this should have the desired affect.

However, I don't think this will always apply, and I think there are also holes in the practical side of this argument.

There are times where sex is unenjoyable for a variety of reasons, not just because your wife isn't a porn star and knowledgeable in all the various pleasurable activities which you have learnt so much about. In these situations it must be addressed, and I won't pretend to have the magic cure for all of these situations. The basic strategy is to go see a sex/couples therapist, as well as talk to your wife about it, as long as you are able to do so in a way which won't cause more harm than good.

There is also a need to avoid boredom in sex, not because doing the same thing over and over again won't tame the base desire, but rather because if it's boring then you will end up not doing it. So there does need to be some level of excitement, however it's not that it needs to be more pleasurable, rather it just needs to be interesting (to both you and your wife) and exciting, which usually makes it more pleasurable as a side bonus.

So, having the "better" or "more" sex won't fix a problem, if it's a problem with you still in a mental state of needing more pleasure and assuming your wife will be your vehicle for this. But it can help to have "different" sex, which will be "better".

Written from too little experience, but with much hope for the future.

if anyone has more helpful insights or comments please post

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by BenHashemBH - 23 Aug 2024 18:42

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I think you are spot on. Presuming that the frequency and quality of physical intimacy is at a healthy level (whatever that level is for different people at different times), then having a persistent craving for more will never see the desire satisfied. Just like money.

Thank you for takin the time to share your wisdom. Kol tov.

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by hopefulposek - 28 Aug 2024 16:08

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BH Its been getting a bit easier to keep my eyes off the women in the street, hopefully the habit will become ingrained and easier as I continue. Had a few victories recently so got to treat myself. Also BH intimacy is getting better, "better" but I'm getting happier with it, had a big victory where I wanted to be together but my wife was tired, and I was OK with it. Told myself, it's ok tonight's not a good night and you don't need sex to be happy, and it worked!

I was reading the B of the G this morning, and it reminded me to be mechazeik myself that no matter how long you are clean for the YH doesn't give up and you can't become complacent. At the same time the book talks about not over focusing on the struggle because this can cause it to be harder. the question I'm struggling with is: Is there a point in time to move off of GYE in order to not keep it on my mind, or will this contribute to complacency? I notice there are many guys who post regularly on the forum and have been clean for a while which would seem to indicate that staying connected is a good path to take, and I've seen fellows post about leaving GYE and then falling back to the old ways a year or 2 later which supports this, I'm just wondering if anyone hears the other side as well. (this is discounting the tremendous value of staying on to help guide other newer members, which is a cheshbon in its own right)

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by hopefulposek - 28 Aug 2024 16:15

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I had this semi crazy idea a few weeks ago and I want to put it out there and get some feedback.

For me, one of the critical parts of breaking free was to take up running seriously, I started going at least 4 times a week, but also keeping track of my times, building up to farther distances and really investing in it with time money and energy. One of the big struggles in this that I encountered was that all the races are mixed and contain pritzus (even without the blatant pritzus stam I don't think it's a good thing to be part of a mixed race both from a taavah view as well as just not feeling right for a yeshiva guy), I tried looking for mens only races and was unsuccessful, then I thought: Why not make a race (5k, 10k half or full marathon) benefitting GYE? Ok so there are probably a host of problems that would arise, but that was my crazy idea, wanted to know if anyone else would be interested and feels its a good idea to pursue.

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by proudyungerman - 29 Aug 2024 03:25

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[hopefulposek wrote on 28 Aug 2024 16:08:](#)

Also BH intimacy is getting better, "better" but I'm getting happier with it, had a big victory where I wanted to be together but my wife was tired, and I was OK with it. Told myself, it's ok tonight's not a good night and you don't need sex to be happy, and it worked!

Amazing! The more I do that, the happier I am...

I was reading the B of the G this morning, and it reminded me to be mechazeik myself that no matter how long you are clean for the YH doesn't give up and you can't become complacent. At the same time the book talks about not over focusing on the struggle because this can cause it to be harder. the question I'm struggling with is: Is there a point in time to move off of GYE in order to not keep it on my mind, or will this contribute to complacency? I notice there are many guys who post regularly on the forum and have been clean for a while which would seem to indicate that staying connected is a good path to take, and I've seen fellows post about leaving GYE and then falling back to the old ways a year or 2 later which supports this, I'm just wondering if anyone hears the other side as well. (this is discounting the tremendous value of staying on to help guide other newer members, which is a cheshbon in its own right)

My understanding is that those who keep in touch with friends from here, whether they are



active on GYE or not, end up stayin' clean. But better to ask those who have been there...

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by adam2014 - 29 Aug 2024 10:17

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I think that running is a great outlet, but having a men's only race or a race to benefit GYE would shatter the anonymity that is so important to many of us. Having this be a safe space where we can all say things we would never say publicly is vital to this site. I find it hard even to donate money to GYE. I fear having my "secret" exposed on a credit card statement. I am unsure how you could pull it off, but if you try, I wish you nothing but the best.

I do have to say that, as a runner, having a pretty girl running ahead of you would add another challenge to an already challenging event.

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by hopefulposek - 29 Aug 2024 19:32

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[adam2014 wrote on 29 Aug 2024 10:17:](#)

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Yeah that's definitely a big problem, haven't thought of anyway to get past it, but still hopeful. How did it work with the american dream trip? Were people embarrassed to go?

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by hopefulposek - 29 Aug 2024 19:34

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I just got a new phone and it hasn't been filtered yet. I am posting this as an accountability. I will IY"H post when it gets filtered which will hopefully be today or tomorrow.

Thinking that I should probably give the phone to someone else to hold until it gets filtered...

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by upanddown - 29 Aug 2024 19:57

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[hopefulposek wrote on 29 Aug 2024 19:34:](#)

I just got a new phone and it hasn't been filtered yet. I am posting this as an accountability. I will IY"H post when it gets filtered which will hopefully be today or tomorrow.

Thinking that I should probably give the phone to someone else to hold until it gets filtered...

Great job! Noticing the pitfalls is key to overcoming the temptations.

This type of situation, is something that EVERYONE has at one point, getting a new device or resetting your device. I wish there was a good solution for it. Giving it to someone only works if you have friends who won't judge you, which is not easy to find..

Anyways , looking forward to hearing from you once the filter is installed..

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Re: On the way... Again  
Posted by hopefulposek - 30 Aug 2024 00:07

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[hopefulposek wrote on 29 Aug 2024 19:32:](#)

[adam2014 wrote on 29 Aug 2024 10:17:](#)

I think that running is a great outlet, but having a men's only race or a race to benefit GYE would shatter the anonymity that is so important to many of us. Having this be a safe space where we can all say things we would never say publicly is vital to this site. I find it hard even to donate money to GYE. I fear having my "secret" exposed on a credit card statement. I am unsure how you could pull it off, but if you try, I wish you nothing but the best.

Yeah that's definitely a big problem, haven't thought of anyway to get past it, but still hopeful. How did it work with the american dream trip? Were people embarrassed to go?

What if everyone who joined would also bring a non gye friend, of they have someone they are comfortable asking? Then no one would know who is in gye and who isn't, thoughts?

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