

90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by jmyers99 - 20 Aug 2024 10:29

When I saw this forum, I was thrilled, as I want to make a big push for 90 days. I believe after 90 days of abstinence, while still difficult, it'll be much easier to heal from there, as the brain's neural pathways have begun to rewire healthy connections instead of unhealthy ones.

Of course, it's easier said than done... but I believe anything is possible, especially with lots of effort, prayer, and support from others.

I'd like to journal on a daily basis and check-in on a daily basis. I'll report on how I did the day before, how the day went, and what I want to work on today.

I'm going to commit to doing this every day here on this thread. I need to do this either way, so I figure doing it in "public" on this forum will help hold me accountable, hopefully bring me words of encouragement from others, and potentially inspire others as well.

It will also be interesting for me to read this in the future.

I don't have a format for these posts yet, but I'll probably reflect on:

- How'd I do with my abstinence, boundaries, and self-care from yesterday?
- What went well? What didn't go well? What can I thank Hashem for?
- How am I feeling today?
- What am I working on now?

Today is my second day of sobriety since my last fall. I figured out a loophole on the computer that I exploited before patching it up. BH that loophole is fixed, but there's always a way around the technological blocks. Quitting isn't as simple as find the best filter in the world. It takes lots of healing and inner work to do this, but technology filters are a big step. Having an unfiltered device is like being in yichud with a woman, something even great sages in the gemara knew was dangerous. All the more so should we, much lower than them and with access to so much more, take precautions.

I patched up the loophole in a solid way and I'm getting back on my feet.

To start this journey, I'm doing several things.

1. I'm focusing much more on self-care and self-love. Giving myself time to just "be".
Having a more balanced and healthy schedule. Focusing on my good points.
Connecting more with people. Both here and in-person
2. Going to therapy to work through some past traumas and uncover why I'm so hard on myself, so I can rewire my brain and form healthier outlets for the stress/fear instead of turning to this destructive behavior
3. Having more compassion for myself. [See my thank you and goodbye letter.](#)
4. Posting daily here to reflect on and monitor my progress, and get chizuk from all of you. (Thank you!)
5. Implement a pivot plan for moments of weakness to immediately pull myself out of the issue instead of falling.
6. Putting up guardrails around where and when I use my computer so it's harder to fall

Maybe I'm taking on more than I should at once... but I really want to grow!!

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by 138eagle - 27 Aug 2024 21:33

[jmyers99 wrote on 27 Aug 2024 15:24:](#)

Day 8 (yesterday) was ok. I didn't fall BH. I did have some thoughts pop in though. I didn't do as good a job as normal letting them go. I entertained them for too long, but eventually did get up, walk around, and call someone. However, I did also start looking into ways to disable my filter. Historically I've been able to find ways to do it. This time, BH, I actually locked myself out of the admin account of my computer and gave the PW to a friend. I use a regular user account with permissions to modify settings, so I couldn't do it BH. I'm sad with myself for doing this and I like to think I would've blocked the loophole had I found one, but I didn't. The good news is, I genuinely think I've locked myself out on this device, and my phones are flip phones without internet access. I'm feeling good today and still going strong.

I count this as a small setback considering I even went down that path, but BH my safety net caught me. G-d willing I'll have continued hatzlacha.

I want to make more time for meditation and inner child work each day, but I've been too caught up in work for this. I need to make a priority.

Wow!

What a challenge!

Wow!!

What a triumph! To have made a conscious choice to put yourself in a position to keep yourself on the right track!!

Amazing!!

Sometimes we are not where we would like to be yet, it takes time. G-d does not hold us accountable for not being on level 2 when we are still on level 1. He holds us accountable for working on level 1. What you have done to put yourself in a position to remain strong in the face of a raging fire is truly amazing!

Regarding getting easier, I would like to share with you (and everyone her, including myself) a vort/mashal that I heard on one of my kids albums from Rav Fishel Schachter "?????". This is something that I have thought about a lot lately, and it has helped me.

A boy came home from school in a terrible mood. His father asked him what happened and the boy told him that just today he decided he was going to learn great and not misbehave. Then his Rebbi decided he was the one talking in class and sent him to the principal. He asked his father, why is it when I try to improve, just then things get much harder?

The father answered him, that when a person knocks on the door to ?? ??? to heaven, here is what happens.

First they ignore the knocking. Then if he continues to knock (because he really wants to come in) they send the satan to push him away. Meaning they make it harder for him to get in. If he continues to knock and push to get in, they send the satan to push him away even more. After not giving up for a while, then they will let him in.

G-d wants to test us to see if we are really serious about working on ourselves and getting in to heaven.

Recently when I was doing so well, I had some serious things that began to stand in my way. I spoke to one of my Rabbeim and complained to him, "Just when I am trying so hard it gets hard"?? And together we discussed this concept.

Yes, there will become a day when things will get easier. (I think it may not be too far down the road) but we need to make the commitment that we are here for the long haul.

Brother

We are here with you.

Keep Flying!!

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by BenHashemBH - 27 Aug 2024 21:39

You are doing great and your guardrails are helping you to cultivate the delicate seeds of change. Keep giving them nourishment.

Don't (just) say 'no' to drugs

Say 'yes' to life.

Continued Hatzlacha

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 28 Aug 2024 10:52

Thank you both for the support. Today is day 10. I had a dream last night about a girl from my past. After 1-2 weeks I start having dreams that follow me around all day. This is the first one. I'm praying they'll stop and I can see this as an opportunity to grow... maybe this is the satan coming to push me away after my first knock...

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by redfaced - 28 Aug 2024 12:35

[jmyers99 wrote on 28 Aug 2024 10:52:](#)

Thank you both for the support. Today is day 10. I had a dream last night about a girl from my past. After 1-2 weeks I start having dreams that follow me around all day. This is the first one. I'm praying they'll stop and I can see this as an opportunity to grow... maybe this is the satan coming to push me away after my first knock...

Much ink has been spilled on these hallowed pages about dreams when a person is first becoming clean. Its a sign that your sub-conscious mind is struggling to hold on to the past - the past, that your conscious mind is closing the door on. Your sub-conscious mind knows that your conscious mind is stronger, and that you are reaching your goal, so its throwing everything it has at you.

Hold on tight brother - you got this

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by Muttel - 28 Aug 2024 13:34

Redfaced said it perfectly.

I had the same experiences about 12 days after I was clean (with wet dreams), it's showing your success!

Keep understanding that Pornography is poison that just makes you feel like a piece of cr*p when you release.....

Keep it up!!!!

With much brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 28 Aug 2024 13:46

Welp.. Day 1 again.

I fell. Before, I started journaling my thoughts / what happened. I'm going to leave those thoughts below, and then continue on with my post-fall thoughts.

I have a waze phone that I got that's locked to waze on a factory level. It has nothing else on it, supposed to be "kosher". I had a dream last night. I'm on day 10. I had thoughts all day. I tried to fight. My laptop is admin pw locked, and I have a filter on my device that monitors screen activity and sends updates to an accountability partner... but if i can get around this filter I fall hard. I've found ways to disable in the past, but since putting an admin password lock on my laptop, I haven't had access to do these loopholes. The only way was to factory reset mac which i don't want to do... but i remembered i have a device for waze only. It's from koshercell and is only for waze. I spent some time looking up how to factory wipe it but I couldn't, they do a good job of locking the device. however, i realized I could bluetooth file transfer from my mac to the phone, so I downloaded something and transferred the vid file to the phone which doesn't have a filter. I'm sitting here waiting as my file transfers. I have about 10 minutes left. I'm feeling an intense head rush and my body is trembling from the thought of what it's about to get. but my neshama is crying. My neshama wants to be pure. My neshama is pure. I know afterwards I'm going to regret it. I'm flushing the last 10 days, and in a sense, the last few years, down the drain. During the time the file is transferring, I could take the phone and I could break it. I would remove access to this for myself right now. and overcome this battle. I could stop looking and choose good over evil. I've been going to therapy for years because of this. I've been feeling bad about myself for a long time because of this challenge. I know that Hashem wants me to overcome this test. I don't know why I don't have self control right now. What's going on with me. Why can't I control myself?

I want to take some time to reflect on what's going on in my life that may be compelling me to use. I'm feeling particularly stressed about work. I started a business that scaled up to \$60k/month over the last year at its peak, some months making 30-40k in profit. I felt on top of the world.

However, nothing lasts forever. The strategy I was using to generate results for clients abruptly stopped working. It's industry-wide. Most of my clients churned because of it. I have a few left, but it's not looking good for them. I feel bad about not getting them good results. I feel bad about the failure as well. I also now have to ask myself "what's next?" It makes me feel like a failure. Maybe I had too much of my ego tied up in the business and now that it's not doing well, I feel not so good about myself. I believe it's common for men to tie their self worth to their income. I know that's not the right way to view things, but there's a big distance between the head and the heart. Maybe I feel like less of a man for the business going downhill. All is not lost - I am currently working on a pivot plan that i believe could make the business more durable for the future and sustain longer term growth. However, it's still rocky in the meantime. I see two possible outcomes: either the pivot works and the biz grows again, or the business fails and I shut it down. In the second scenraio, I'm financially very secure as I saved up a lot of money over the last few years, especially during the good months of the business. I could live without income for a while, likely even married. I've been learning over the last few years but never 100% full-time as I've always been working as well. This would afford me the opportunity to finally learn full-time. It's just scary to be without income for a while, and to feel like a failure. Being a successful entrepreneur has been a big part of my identity over the last few years, really since I was 14 or 15.

I think this is the main pressure/stress that's driving me to use right now. the problem is, when i'm doing this, i'm ignoring the problem, numbing my pain, and making myself feel even worse than before, despite temporary relief. And really, I should be far more concerned about this issue than I am about the income issue. This is my main flaw and struggle. It's something I carry with me all the time as part of my identity that I want to rid myself of and move on from.

After falling, I took the device I used and smashed it on the concrete until the screen turned white and threw it away. That was my last unfiltered device. Really, the manufacturer filtered it from the beginning such that it couldn't access anything, but the media player and bluetooth file transfer wasn't totally blocked... you couldn't see the media player button or open it, but if you transferred a file to the phone, you can open and view. I exploited this loophole.

fall was 10 minutes. I broke the phone after. That's my last device. I have a flip phone and a locked laptop with a screen monitoring software installed. Of course, these are just first lines of defense, but they do help. There's definitely more internal work to do here.

What's crazy is Hashem gave me so many chances to stop myself.

1. I had to wait 15 minutes for the file to transfer, during which time I wrote the above notes and STILL fell
2. When I was just about to start, someone walked into the room
3. I moved to another area, the whole way thinking "what am I doing"
4. When I got there, my accountability partner was there - for the first time ever - who I was actively deceiving in the moment by avoiding the accountability tool (we meet weekly on Fridays and I'll open up to him then, but still...)
5. When I moved once again, I forgot the device I was going to use and had to go retrieve it

Oh, and this is the REALLY crazy part. Another close friend of mine who I've shared the struggle with sent me a text. This is in his words. "You'll never believe the dream I had last night. It was me and you a few years before we became religious. We were in Israel together and I had just fallen with a girl. You (he's talking about me) said to me 'dude, it's so hard to avoid women! The struggle is real!' but I responded to you 'don't worry man, in just a few years time, you'll overcome this challenge and you'll be so proud of yourself.'

This is crazy. What are the odds he'd have a dream about this the night before I fell?

So many stops along the way to snap out of it, and yet I fell.

This is a pattern I have. I've been going roughly 11 days, give or take a few days, and then I fall. Usually within the first few days, I'm able to avoid falling easily. I still feel a lot of shame from the fall. By day 2 or 3, I'm back to a state of normalcy, where I feel like enough time has passed between me and the fall that I'm a "new man" and intrusive thoughts are more easily dealt with.

By day 7 or 8, I start having sexual dreams. Those dreams usually stay in my head and thoughts start coming more aggressively. I start feeling pulled into the habit much more strongly around day 10, and often start exploring loopholes in my defense system until I fall.

Not really sure what to make of this, probably going to pick myself up and continue on, trying to keep my head held high.

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 28 Aug 2024 13:50

Just to add on to my previous post - I haven't had good sleeping hygiene or been sticking to my self-care routine. I'm on break from yeshiva, and instead of waking up early/crushing the day/going to bed on time, I've been staying up way too late watching movies and waking up late, missing shacharit, etc. Not really sure why, but I have been. I don't even like movies/TV in general, I don't want a TV in my house. I grew up with this stuff and I know how bad it is, but I found myself at night watching programs into the wee hours of the night. I think this threw me off. Sleeping in, missing davening, starting my work day before a proper breakfast, exercise, etc. to center myself, feeling bad about the routine, and work not even going well, probably compounded.

I'm going to stop watching shows at night, get to bed on time, etc. tonight

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by Muttel - 28 Aug 2024 13:57

I don't have much to say at the moment, just sharing and expressing that I feel your pain.....
I've been there and it feels terrible.....

Here's hoping things improve for you.

Would love to connect in a form you're comfortable with if you're down to reaching out.

With much brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 28 Aug 2024 14:01

Sure, I'll PM you

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 28 Aug 2024 14:06

Sent you a DM here and an email

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by BenHashemBH - 28 Aug 2024 15:07

Dear Brother,

It's hard and it hurts. I'm sorry.

You have such an awareness and positive energy of persistence that I'm sure you'll be crushing it again and motivating even more people as you pick it back up.

Hatzlacha

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by Muttel - 28 Aug 2024 20:26

jmyers99,

'Twas amazing talking to you earlier today and hearing your drive, successes, hurdles conquered, glass ceilings shattered. We also spoke about our vulnerabilities, challenges, and yes, our falls and failings...

I must say, I hung up so taken by your maturity and spiritual growth you've experienced over the last 4 years!!

Keep trucking, climbing, and growing!!!

With a ton of brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 28 Aug 2024 22:04

Thank you! After our call I started reaching out to more members. You inspired me. I spoke to two more GYE forum members today and will hopefully continue to forge more relationships here. I'm also excited for the program I've heard is coming soon that creates small groups of guys to chat through the struggle and grow together.

Onwards and upwards

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 30 Aug 2024 14:35

Hey everyone, BH yesterday was a good day. I didn't have any falls. Today either. Took the last day or two off of updates because I took a trip up north in Israel before the new zman. I went hiking today in zichron yaakov which was awesome. Spending shabbos up north before swimming / hiking by the kineret on Sunday/Monday.

I think this is a nice way to reset and relax before the new zman and "get back on my feet." It's obviously much easier to be clean when active and with friends, so I think the next few days will be a nice rebound.

I've been working more on positivity and being happy with myself. Muttel was telling me that knocking yourself and feeling bad about yourself is a big reason why we fall.. and the tanya talks about negative self-talk like this as well being a big trick and weapon of the yetzer hara. Working on positivity is an important step. I've also been connecting with more folks here in the community on the phone which has been super helpful. Looking forward to meeting more of you!

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