

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 stopsurvivingstartliving - 31 Aug 2024 18:05

Wow! Great decision to leave the house. I think the best thing to do is leave the house before the urges can come which is before your friend leaves.

Hatzlacha Raba!

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by hopefulswan89 - 01 Sep 2024 15:32

[stopsurvivingstartliving wrote on 31 Aug 2024 18:05:](#)

Wow! Great decision to leave the house. I think the best thing to do is leave the house before the urges can come which is before your friend leaves.

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I'm not sure I agree. There are more nisyonos on the street

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by BenHashemBH - 01 Sep 2024 16:30

[hopefulswan89 wrote on 01 Sep 2024 15:32:](#)

[stopsurvivingstartliving wrote on 31 Aug 2024 18:05:](#)

Wow! Great decision to leave the house. I think the best thing to do is leave the house before the urges can come which is before your friend leaves.

Hatzlacha Raba!

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Welcome Brother,

Could you elaborate on why you think that a potential nisayon in shemiras einayim on the street is worse than an imminent nisayon of potential porn and masturbation in the house?

I don't think you have the right perspective on this situation.

Kol tov.

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 03 Sep 2024 12:51

Hey folks, the trip ended and I'm back at yeshiva. We had the first day of elul zman today. Trip went well overall. I had a few moments where thoughts popped in here and there, mostly me feeling guilty about what happened in the past triggering new memories, but I was rather quickly able to shut them down. I just realized it was a test in the moment and moved on.

I'm going to do my best to live a healthy lifestyle that gives me what I need in terms of self care. I'm working on positive self-talk and continuing to journal here, connect with others in the forum, etc.

That said, I'm 6 days past my last fall right now, and I've found that by day 7-12, the urges get stronger and more frequent. I start investigating ways to use (messing with computer settings to see if I can get around filter) etc. My setup is pretty good, but in the past I've been able to find loopholes. I think this time I actually have it fully blocked such that I can't remove filter at all, but, that's what I thought last time. Once I start going down that rabbit hole, it's game over.

I'm curious if anyone has any advice to help me stay in this positive mindset where I don't even want to start going down that path, and/or any strategies to employ once I start feeling a pull.

I'm predicting I'll start having sexual dreams sometime over the next few days - that's when it's

harder for me to hold on.

Cheers. And chodesh tov

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by jmyers99 - 03 Sep 2024 13:40

I am experiencing an urge now after realizing my flip phone can received downloaded files and play media. I am NOT going to fall.

Below is what I'm doing about it immediately after posting. I will return and update you all below with what happened.

Sitting in the office after my trip, I was thinking about how I'm about a week in. The last time I downloaded a torrent from the pirate bay on my computer. The computer has screen monitoring software that alerts a friend when I fall. I can get around it by downloading a file without opening and transferring to a device that isn't protected. I had a "kosher" smart phone that I used in Israel but realize it could receive files and fell. I then got rid of it. I still had a "waze only phone" which literally only had waze on it from a software level and couldn't be reset or erased. Made by a frum company. But the phone COULD accept files via bluetooth, so I fell with it and then smashed it. I just realized my FLIP PHONE also has bluetooth and a media player... and thoughts started creeping in. I started thinking about falling. But I decided instead, to go out and buy a new flip phone that does not have even a media player on it. This way I cannot fall. Then I'm going to snap the old one in half. It's Elul. I'm so tired of this. I want to change. I don't want to fall. Yes, it will feel "good" in the moment, but as soon as it's over, the cycle of shame, sadness, grief, and fear of ruining my marriage, etc. will overwhelm me. I will feel much worse than before, not better. This stuff is poison. I don't want it anymore. I could fall right now. It would be very easy. I could fall in 5 minutes from now. but I'm NOT going to. This is a test from Hashem. As soon as I'm done typing this, I'm going to close my computer, walk outside of the office, buy the new phone, transfer the sim card, and I will break the old phone. I'll need to transfer my contacts etc, but that's a small price to pay for cleanliness. Hashem has placed before me a blessing and a curse. I am choosing blessing today.

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by Muttel - 03 Sep 2024 14:00

You can do this!

With a ton of brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by jmyers99 - 03 Sep 2024 14:41

Update. I left my office and walked to three different phone stores. I was looking to buy a phone with ONLY call/text and nothing else. No media player, no bluetooth. But all of the phones had ability to play video. While they didn't have a browser, I could exploit the loophole of transferring a video file from the computer to the phone. The only phone that didn't any video ability at all was a SUPER kosher phone with no text ability. I would even be willing to go without text, but the Israeli company that sold these "kosher sim cards" were so old they wouldn't accept an american card. Basically I wasn't able to buy the phone I wanted. I'm going to look on Amazon or something for a phone like this, but unfortunately, if the video has any video playing ability, this trick is exploitable.

I know ultimately it comes down to my own self control, and I can't always rely on technological loopholes. For example, just as easily as I went to the store to buy a kosher phone, I can buy a non-kosher phone as well... but it's important to put up barriers/friction. If I have an easy path in front of me to use, it's very hard for me to stop myself. Tbh, I'm very proud of myself for even stopping myself, getting up, and going for a walk to try and stop myself. That was me choosing right from wrong. I feel I did my hashtodlous in that moment to avoid falling. I'm still left with an open loophole to exploit. iyH it won't happen. I have to work now, but I'm going to look online to order something here. Open to any suggestions if anyone has any.

It's crazy that even my flip phone without internet is still not really kosher. I feel like there's no

such thing as a kosher phone...

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by chosemyshem - 03 Sep 2024 15:20

[jmyers99 wrote on 03 Sep 2024 14:41:](#)

I know ultimately it comes down to my own self control, and I can't always rely on technological loopholes. For example, just as easily as I went to the store to buy a kosher phone, I can buy a non-kosher phone as well... but it's important to put up barriers/friction. If I have an easy path in front of me to use, it's very hard for me to stop myself. Tbh, I'm very proud of myself for even stopping myself, getting up, and going for a walk to try and stop myself. That was me choosing right from wrong. I feel I did my hashtodlous in that moment to avoid falling. I'm still left with an open loophole to exploit. iyH it won't happen. I have to work now, but I'm going to look online to order something here. Open to any suggestions if anyone has any.

It's crazy that even my flip phone without internet is still not really kosher. I feel like there's no such thing as a kosher phone...

Fantastic post. Really struck a chord. Good on you for getting up and taking a walk instead of acting act. Being able to turn to an alternative response like that instead of diving onto the grenade is huge. Truly impressive!

If you want my take on the flip phone thing. You are correct. There is no such thing as a kosher phone. There's always gonna be some hack you can do with your computer, some number to call, some secret little way of taking a picture of someone or something with the crappy 2-megapixel camera to pleasure yourself with. That's because the problem is not the phone. Suprise! The problem is you.

Short of cutting off your hands, eyes, male organ, and a large portion of your limbic system, there is no perfect filter.

That being said, as you wrote, it is crucially important to put up barriers/friction. This is

especially important in areas you've fallen before. To give an example from my life, I filtered my office computer despite significant worries that it would cause me problems at work. There are other computers at work though that I have not even tried to filter despite having access to them. And after all this, I still act out on my filtered office computer but have not had the slightest issue with the other unfiltered computers in the office.

Here's my point. Filter whack-a-mole is a stupid game to play. Looking for loopholes, acting act with the loophole, and then closing the loophole can become an endless cycle that is not significantly better than the cycle that goes on without any filter. Filters are essential for most people's recovery* for two reasons. 1) It blocks the easy ways they've been habitually acting act to give them some breathing room to recover (this is crucial as an initial detox and as a speed bump further along the way) and 2) unfiltered internet often becomes synonymous with acting out in our screwed up brains and just having "unfiltered internet" activates a desire to act out for many people. (I'm not minimizing how essential these two points are.)

Reasonable minds can differ about this. And there are many people on here who will attribute their cessation of porn abuse to just limiting their access to porn by iterating over and over till they got the perfect filter lockdown. But if you're in the cycle of looking for loopholes, the way out is probably not by just blocking this loophole. Because there's always gonna be another loophole, and you're always gonna wanna make it open and then it'll always be an uphill battle. Yes, block this loophole that you've find or at this point it'll probably keep on weighing on you. But then it won't be that "now I have the perfect filter setup and won't fall". Then it'll be "I have a little breathing room, a little sobriety, to work on recovery".

Talking to myself here because this is the cycle I'm stuck in. But stop fixing loopholes. Stop looking for loopholes. Just stop playing the game.

*I'm not talking about any halachic requirement for a filter or the need for a filter to protect others. Just about how a filter helps recovery.

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 03 Sep 2024 15:23

I agree, filter loops are endless. There's always a way around it, but still, need to plug as many holes as possible.

I researched a few models that seem like good candidates. I'm checking their compatibility with carriers in Israel and then I'm going to purchase one.

A phone I've used in the past that's great (but I broke and replaced with a flip phone that until just now thought was unable to play videos) is the Light Phone. No camera or images/videos whatsoever on the phone. It's great.

www.thelightphone.com/

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by proudyungerman - 04 Sep 2024 17:24

[hopefulswan89 wrote on 01 Sep 2024 15:32:](#)

[stopsurvivingstartliving wrote on 31 Aug 2024 18:05:](#)

Wow! Great decision to leave the house. I think the best thing to do is leave the house before the urges can come which is before your friend leaves.

Hatzlacha Raba!

I'm not sure I agree. There are more nisyonos on the street

Welcome to GYE!

It seems like you joined just a few days ago.

You seem to have had success in this fight, would you like to open your own thread and share a little about yourself and your journey?

On another note, can you please explain your logic in this reply?

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by jmyers99 - 04 Sep 2024 17:27

update.. I fell. I was able to find a frum store here and I bought a flip phone that only has calls, no texts, no camera, no gallery, etc. it literally only calls. This way I can't get around the loophole (until the next one comes up... but at least I filled this plug.)

I also am happy with myself for initially resisting and choosing to leave/go find a phone. I ultimately fell, but this was the first time in a while that I initially even chose the "right thing" when I was feeling a strong pull.

I also called my father to explain why I got this new phone. I told him what was going on. He actually caught me once when I was 10, but we're close and I decided to come clean with him. He was very supportive about the whole thing. It felt good to share with him.

I'm going to prepare a longer writeup on my reflection from this time around, mainly articulating my cycle of ups and downs that I find myself in. I'm going to present the loop to my therapist and try to seek advice on how to "break out" of the cycle.

THanks folks.

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey

Posted by jmyers99 - 08 Sep 2024 11:06

Day 5, doing well. Haven't been posting here daily, want to get back in the habit. I'm feeling good overall, despite my challenge, I'm having a better perspective on my self-worth and have a positive outlook on what's to come. Thanks for the continued support chevra.

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by jmyers99 - 10 Sep 2024 17:00

Day 7, still doing well. I've been working hard on a positive mindset and healthy schedule. It's paying off!

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Re: 90 Days of Teshuva: My Recovery Journey
Posted by odyossefchai - 10 Sep 2024 17:47

Wow, every day clean is amazing. Even if it isn't attached to another day.

I have alot of admiration for you! I don't know how you find the strength!

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