

starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 03 Jun 2009 03:02

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I have just discovered this site two days ago and I think this is the first time in years that I really think that I can do Teshuva for my sins. I have been masturbating for 20 years and I have tried to stop countless times. Aside from my terrible addiction, I have been quite succesful in other areas of my life. I am what some people consideer a solid Kollel yungerman and I have a wonderful marriage. However, every step of my life has been tainted with my feeling that I am disgusting and that if anyone new the real me, they would run the other way. I have tried to stop in the past but I have always fallen down, often to a worse point than where I was initially. I one time made it all the way from Yom Kippur until Taanis Esther. That night I had a wet dream and woke up feeling so degraded that I instantly plunged deeply, falling to depths that I had not been to in years.

Because my addiction is not so strong, I have difficulty marking success with the passage of days. I would love some Chizuk from people who have dealt with similar situations and I think that I would benefit from some advice on hitting the bottom while still on top. I am ready to fight and I cannot be successful without the support of this forum. please help!

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by the.guard - 06 Jun 2009 22:06

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that's fine.

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 07 Jun 2009 13:14

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Day 8 has arrived and I am feeling really positive. Oddly enough, I can't say that I felt uplifted because as I have mentioned before, the recovery is such a focus that it distracts me from other things (like learning and davening). I have no doubt that this is Ratzon Hashem, because I have come to the realization that if I don't do whatever it takes to recover, my other option is to live with my sins without Teshuva until the day that I die(and beyond). I am willing to do whatever it takes and I am not allowing myself to get distracted from recovery, but i do hope that eventually I will be able to give other things my full concentration.

On a positive note, I realized that the difference between all of the fighting that I have done until now and my current battle is that I have always focused on my success in terms of my ability to

stay clean forever. This has not allowed me to appreciate small successes. Every time that I felt the YH strengthening, I felt that the point of the fight was gone. After all, eventually I would succumb anyhow. After that I would inevitably get depressed and feel that I wasted my time and effort (and gave up a bunch of potentially pleasurable opportunities along the way). In my short time on his program, however, I have come to appreciate every moment as an accomplishment. This is true in terms of Zechuyos and in terms of steps towards recovery. Also, by reading about the progresion of this disease I can realize that every time that I turn away, I have avoided getting myself deeper into trouble. This is true at any time, wheter I am counting days or not. I truly hope that this journey is one that I will be on forever, but right now I am taking it one day at a time and I am thankful to Hashem that He has lead me to be part of this wonderful forum.

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by the.guard - 07 Jun 2009 13:20

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BRILLIANT!! Finally someone who is truly internalizing the messages of the handbooks!

You have a beautiful attitude now for recovery... I hope Momo reads this post.

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by Dov - 07 Jun 2009 17:42

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Dear hoping,

You wrote a few things that hit home for me. Thanks for the reminders. I'll just reflect them back to you and add a bit:

1) I can't "*stay clean forever*" today. I can only stay clean **today**, today (...and forever will come later!) You expressed this fact idea very well.

2) Our own experience in failure is the best teacher of our powerlessness. (you said it better!)

3) Each and every time I avoid a look, fantasy, or addiction-driven action, I am being saved from deeper trouble. So right there it is precious! In the past, I'd have used the lust and have just

gotten worse and crazier from there.

I have seen a lot of people finally start learning what power they actually **have**, once they finally give up and admit they can't beat lust themselves. It seems that the Kotzker was right when he said that Hashem is "where people let Him in". Yes, of course He is everywhere, but the true extent of His power is unavailable to us until we are machniya ourselves and give the victory to Him, ie. *Hashem* eesh milchamah, not *us*. Hope this helps! Love, Dov

PS a nice vort from shir shel yom of Wed.: "Im omarti motoh ragli - chasd'cha Hashem yis'adeini" - interpret it: **If/when** I said (admitted in my heart) "I am tripping/slipping", **then** your chesed comes in and holds me up. (the poshut pshat is when i feel I am going to slip/trip, your chesed holds me up)

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 08 Jun 2009 12:53

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B"H day 9 is here and I am doing well. I had two thoughts yesterday that crystalized in my mind what a sickness I am fightng.

1) I unfortunately had to be in a Goyish area yesterday while it was very hot. The entire time I had to avoid looking up and I was staring at my feet most of the time to avoid seeing Pritzus. This was such a constant battle that I came home with a severe headache. I had never even noticed the Pritzus before. I could not believe how desensitized I was. The amount of Tumah that has gone into my head without me being consciously aware (aside from all the stuff I was aware of) is scary. (BTW it is amazing how I was being attracted to and repulsed by the same things at the same time. Talk about the complexities of human nature!)

2)How come I am so worried about the possibilities of getting caught in recovery, while i never had the same level of concern when acting out. It is easy for us to resist certain measures of recovery for fear of getting caught, but this argument fails us immediately when contrasted with the overall possiibility of getting caught if we do nothing.

On another note, I am working on step 3 and I am having much difficulty. I am not sure if the

problem is that I do not understand what is meant by giving my addiction over to Hashem or whether I am just resisting internalizing it. Is this just a general need to strengthen Bitachon, or is there something more specific related to my addiction? i would appreciate if someone could explain this to me better and give me tips on how to internalize this ideal. Yasher Koach!

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by London - 08 Jun 2009 17:07

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Dear Reb Hoping

I really took a lot of strenght from your battle on the street. Regarding what you wrote on about step 3, Step 3 reads "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of G-d as we understood G-d." I have no problem handing over my addiction to Hashem, I do not want any part of it, however I have major difficulties handing over my entire life to Hashem, I like to feel that I am in control, that I will do things my way, but as they say how do you make G-d laugh, make plans. The truth is that I have to turn my entire life over to Hashem, He knows whats best for me, I try to remember to ask my what does Hashem want from me now, and in times of difficulty, ask Hashem that His will should be done not mine. I find this step very difficult but in truth this is the way that we as Jewish people are brought up, I just need a reminder from the steps. The Third step prayer is an amazing prayer which I do not say often enough The THIRD STEP Prayer [As adjusted from the book Alcoholics Anonymous, page 63, line 14] God, I offer myself to You — to build with me and to do with me as You will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Your Power, Your Love, and Your Way of life. May I do Your will always.

London

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 09 Jun 2009 12:14

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Day 10 already! This "one-day-at-a-time" thing really does add up!

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 09 Jun 2009 20:18

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African hunters have a clever way of trapping monkeys.

They slice a coconut in two, hollow it out, and in one half of the shell cut a hole just big enough for a monkey's hand to pass through. Then they place an orange in the other coconut half before fastening together the two halves of the coconut shell. Finally, they secure the coconut to a tree with a rope, retreat into the jungle, and wait.

Sooner or later, an unsuspecting monkey swings by, smells the delicious orange, and discovers its location inside the coconut. The monkey then slips his hand through the small hole, grasps the orange, and tries to pull it through the hole. Of course, the orange won't come out; it's too big for the hole. To no avail the persistent monkey continues to pull and pull, never realizing the danger he is in.

While the monkey struggles with the orange, the hunters simply stroll in and capture the monkey by throwing a net over him. As long as the monkey keeps his fist wrapped around the orange, the monkey is trapped.

It's too bad the poor monkey could save its own life if it would only let go of the orange. It rarely occurs to a monkey, however, that it can't have both the orange and its freedom. That delicious orange becomes a deadly trap.

I don't know if this is true but I just read this. I realized that the difference between human and animal does not lie in the fact that animals have such strong instincts; humans have some of the same types of instincts. The difference is our ability to let go of the "orange". Every person has their own "orange" and it our job to recognize it for the trap that it is and just 'let go'.

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by London - 09 Jun 2009 22:02

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Dear Hoping

What a sad and amazing story at the same time, in the SA White book on Step 1, it brings down this same story, and I will quote the preceeding chapter

"Before finally giving up, wh had tried one or he other of two options: On the one hand, we expressed our obsession by acting it out. On the other hand, we tried surpressing it by drinking, drugging, eating or by fighting it with white-kuckle will power. And with what a show of promises and resolutions! Many of us swithced from acting out to supression, back and forth. Neither option brought us the peace we sought so desperately. Expressing the obsession made it progress relentlessly, on and on, and suppresing it only made the pressure build inside until something had to give. We never new there was another option - surrender. What a beautiful word to those of us who do it! Surrender is letting go!"

The SA White Book continues after the monkey story

"Merely knowing and admitting we were powerless over lust, or whatever form our acting out took, didn't help until we gave up our right to do and let it go. There was no mistaking this change of heart when it happened; we knew and those about us knew. There is no faking surrender. And thank G-d, when we did give up and stop fighting, He was always there, waiting with open arms. Instead of killing us as we had feared, surrender killed the compulsion!"

For me the solution is simple as above, but as I have been told it's simple but hard. But with tools like this forum it makes the battle so much easier.

London

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 10 Jun 2009 12:16

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BH I am up to 11 days. Yesterday I was feeling depressed and I actually felt a pull to lock myself in a room and act out. It was the first time since I started posting that I had this Tayvah. It was also the first time that I felt a connection between depression and my addiction. I know that this is written about alot, but I guess I never paid attention. Being able to understand what was motivating me was very helpful for me because I understood the logical sequence of events and I was able to project to the future what would happen if I acted out. Because of everything that I had read on this site, I was able to realize that I would be much worse off if I caved in to the YH. If I fortify my realization that I am not actually driven solely by desire but rather using the lust to resolve a diferent issue, it is easier for me to take an honest look and decide whether my actions are really going to help me in the long run.

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by Noorah BAmram - 10 Jun 2009 13:14

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Hoping, your struggle and honesty inspires me!! Please keep posting your triumph and equally as important keep sharing your trials and difficult days. It let's me, and I'm sure other on this holy forum, that to struggle is "normal".

Permit me to share with you one of the most beautiful words of chizuk that I've ever heard, from the great tzadik Rav Don Segal shlita.

The pasuk says "sheva pomim yipol tzadik vkom" the literal meaning is a tzadik falls seven times and gets up. Asks Rabbi segal; at what point does he become the tzadik? Only after he gets up. If so the pasuk would read better "seven times he falls and vkom tzadik" when he gets up, then and only then is he the tzadik. Explains the mashgiach, the possuk is teaching us that even when he is down is the tzadik. In other words a tzadik who is down is still a tzadik, as long as he brushes himself off and keeps picking himself up from the floor.

This vort has sustained me many of times when I was down in the gutter".

As with most thing a very difficult concept to internalize. The bal- duver will do anything and everything to fight this idea.

its no exaggeration when all the people on this forum are refereed to as "Tzadikim". Who more then anything illustrate this beautiful idea of "sheva pomim yipol tzadik vkom"

I'm sure R Don SEgal would agree wholeheartedly:)

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by Dov - 10 Jun 2009 17:29

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London -

Hecheyisoni - you have breathed new life into me today, when I am finding myself struggling so much! Thank-you! Dov

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by Efshar Letaken - 10 Jun 2009 18:48

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The story with the Monkey is Gavaldig! And yes I felt depressed a week into my clean cycle as well. I guess that's how it works for some reason.

I'm sure R' Dov, R' Ykv , R' London, R' Jack (I haven't seen him around lately) or The Heiliger Gaurd or anyone of the other Pros can explain the reason behind it for they really know the ins & outs of this addiction very well. (unlike me, I only know what all the Pros on this Forum say & I keep on consuming as much info on this battle on a daily bases. I learn along the way)

Ashrecha Yisroel

Efshar Letaken

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by the.guard - 10 Jun 2009 19:00

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Dear hoping, your story is amazing. After davening to Hashem the night before for help, he led you to this site the very next day! And now when you are struggling with depression, we sent out a Chizuk e-mail today (#500) that can help you exactly with that! Hashem is sending you so many messages of love....

See also Chizuk e-mail #428 on [this page](#) for more on dealing with depression.

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