

Chaim starting over - again

Posted by chaim77 - 26 Oct 2010 21:39

I am feeling so broken and distraught as I write this. I feel at a complete loss. I have struggled with this addiction and fought it for 20 years and it has beaten me again and again. I had 18 months of sobriety ending with a slip this past April. Now I struggle to get through one day without acting out.

Yet with all that I am so grateful I have found this site and this community. I have tasted extended sobriety. I believe that I can get back there, but right now I feel like I'm buried in a tunnel. I can't think. I can hardly focus. I can hardly even sit up and type this. All I can do is to groan from the depths of my broken heart. Help me, Father in Heaven! Please help me! I have nothing left. I can't fight this anymore. Not one more day. It's got me beat.

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Day 7 -

Posted by chaim77 - 02 Nov 2010 17:24

Long post, but it does my heart good to let this out.

I have lived 7 days sober as of this morning. It is incredible to look back and recall how much pain I was in a week ago. I am still in a lot of pain when I get my mind racing and dwelling on future worries or past regrets. For right now I am just trying to focus on right now and what I am doing. It may sound odd, but the greatest relief I've gotten over the past week has been just washing the dishes and cleaning up the kitchen at night. In those 20 or 30 minutes I just feel at ease and at one with the task – not worried about anything else or threatened or anything.

I've always lived my life wanting to be somewhere else – always looking for some angle or advantage or scheming some way to improve this or make this better. Then when I get into doing and working, I always feel I should be somewhere else or doing something else – even if I don't know what that is. I feel like this is my disease even more than the acting out. The acting out just masks the pain of this always wanting, always craving, always managing always trying to control and achieve and plan. It makes the present moment intolerable and painful to just be in the now and be okay and at peace with that – even if it is messy, even if there are unfinished things.

If I could just surrender to what I should be doing – what a gift that would be! I just feel that if I G-d wanted me to be a dishwasher and I knew that – I was in touch with that – I could just wash dishes and be elated because I knew that I was just doing what I was put on the earth to do. But the way it is and the way it's been I go nuts – I don't know what Hashem wants me to be.

I am sick and I know that I am “blocked off from the sunlight of the spirit.” Today I'm just trying to act as if. So when I am working on a project at work or talking to someone on the phone, I'm trying to act as if that's exactly what Hashem wants me to be doing at that moment and just surrender to it and not second guess myself to think about what else I should be doing at that time. Just let that go and do.

Of all the recovery groups I've seen, I've never seen recovery being lived out and the steps being worked like I have in this fellowship and on the calls. It's really humbling. G-d willing in another 4 weeks or so I will be able to start in with the other newcomers on the steps.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again
Posted by humanbeing - 02 Nov 2010 17:28

Ale Utzlach

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Re: Chaim starting over - again
Posted by ur-a-jew - 02 Nov 2010 21:15

Chaim, I have read through your thread and it is great how well you are doing. Sounds like you really starting to live life, hence the dishes. Hatzlocho.

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Day 8
Posted by chaim77 - 03 Nov 2010 15:59

I'm sober today, B"H. This morning started very good, but on the morning commute I got a sudden thought of how I could rearrange my schedule to act out today. While I never mamash lusted or fantasized, my mind was racing thinking about how I could create the circumstances to act out today. This in and of itself was enough to get my heart rate up and cause my face to get flushed. I got to work and was actively looking at my calendar and how I could move appointments. At some point I said enough. I knew I was crossing dangerously close to a threshold.

A couple hours down the road, it looks even more dangerous and I am frankly amazed that I did not stumble. Maybe it's because I said tikkun hakali today – who knows?

I'm not clear on why I was so queued up this morning but I think it is because I am facing some deadlines at work and I also haven't been exercising and my body is feeling bad from it. I'm feeling much calmer now. I made my first call to another fellow in the program and I have been trying to just be present and calm in doing my work, doing one thing at a time and not worrying about everything I'm not doing at this moment.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by chaim77 - 09 Nov 2010 15:05

It's been a while since I posted. I'm back to day one as far as a consecutive count is concerned, but I understand that each sober day is it's own count. The challenge has been to string them together in in consecutive stretch. I've had the opportunity to observe myself for many years in this and I know it takes a couple of weeks for the lust to totally seep out of my system. Until that time I consider myself to be somewhat still "intoxicated" - not that I'm necessarily acting out or fantasizing but it seems that the pathways in my brain and body are on high alert still and expecting another rush of chemical. It's a humbling place to be and this is the equivalent of the detox and withdrawal that a substance addict faces in their early days of recovery.

Today I've been trying to check in with Hashem to ask what He would have me do. I know I'm a long way from experiencing the sunlight of the spirit that I am seeing with the other chvere in the program, but I am pretty certain of a couple of things. The main thing is Hashem wants to give me the gift of this day sober today.

Hashem is calling me to keep active and busy today. As I was getting ready this morning, I felt a strong desire to make a list of things to do. I've always loved making lists, but this list was a bit different. Typically I make lists that I try to accomplish everything on the list. It was basically a list of all the things I could do today instead of acting out. It isn't a list per se – but it's more of a menu of options.

I believe that Hashem wants me to make a call to another fellow in the program today.

I believe that Hashem wants me to be useful and helpful to others today.

I also believe that Hashem wants me to practice some fearlessness today. I know that as I get into working the steps that fearlessness is a requisite for doing a thorough job. Today I am going to need fearlessness to “white-knuckle” my way through the withdrawal of the past day of acting out.

Usually I would be so angry and so full of self-hatred at this point in my acting out cycle. It is only through the gift of GYE that I know I am not alone in this anymore and I have hope where once there was only despair.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by aa1977 - 10 Nov 2010 10:06

Chaim, great to read your post. Beautiful way of putting - that you believe Hashem wants you to do this and that today.

It's not all sunshine and singing on the hilltops for everyone here. Certainly not for me, and I'm sure for many others. I don't see how the sun will shine for me. I imagine it will one day.

I also get the sense that once people take that first step through an SA meeting door - that's it. They never look back and become filled with joy and an inner sense of peace. I'm sure that isn't the case (Dov help us out here), but that's the sense I get.

Maybe we're meant to live without any joy, we just have to do what we have to. 'White-knucke it' forever. No, we know for sure that's not the way. But i know that i haven't found the way to joy yet, and maybe you haven't either, and lust has been the best substitute we could find.

Hashem should help you, me and everyone here find real satisfaction and joy in our lives.
Amen.

Chazak v'ematz

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Day 2 and a good morning so far
Posted by chaim77 - 10 Nov 2010 16:08

AA, thanks for the encouraging note. I appreciate all the support I can get.

This morning I opened up the big book to read the story "Acceptance is the Answer" on page 407. The author is a real hard-driving high-achiever, "type A" personality. I really relate to him even though we're in different lines of work. The author reflects on his resistance to the program – how the meetings revolve around drinking and here he is with 1,000 other problems looming much larger in his eyes. I really have been relating to his quote in response to another fellow who shares his definition of success as not drinking for that day – "Man,I've got a thousand things to do today before I can brag about not taking a drink today!"

The author then turns around and says that "Today there is absolutely nothing in the world more important to me than my keeping this alcoholic sober; not taking a drink is by far the most important thing I do all day."

This story really strikes home because I am so Type-A and I have all these goals and projects, checklists, commitments and activities that feel like they are screaming out for me to get in and on top of. My instincts tell me to get my life together, then you can or will stay sober. I know this is an illusion. In my acting out virtually every area of my life is in some state of neglect and

unmanageability. My every instinct is to jump in and start planning and plotting to put the pieces back together but I know my instincts are wrong and that today I really need to stay sober – to not escape or hide from the world – but to accept it and myself as I am.

The author finishes the next paragraph by returning to his “problems” saying “I am amazed at how many of my problems, most of which had nothing to do with drinking, I believed – have become manageable or have simply disappeared since I quit drinking.”

Just here on day two, after a binging for so much of the past month, my instincts are skewed, but I’ve made it down the road in the recovery and I know a lot of problems simply evaporate. I look forward to this, but even more, I look forward to learning to be present and accept my problems as exactly what G-d wants for me and as opportunities to grow as a man in recovery if only I will be willing.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again
Posted by frumfiend - 10 Nov 2010 20:44

Chaim your posts are profound!

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Re: Chaim starting over - again
Posted by david712 - 10 Nov 2010 22:31

Chaim,

Wow. Beautiful posts. So on target. Keep on reading on your own until the calls start again. Get in touch with some of the chevra and keep in touch.... And keep on posting.

""Today I've been trying to check in with Hashem to ask what He would have me do."" What an

amazing way to look at life.

Keep up your great work- with hashems help.

David

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by aa1977 - 10 Nov 2010 22:34

As they say here in the handbook, we have to let recovery become our main priority.

A month of bingeing is screaming that message to you too.

What's the worst that will happen if you put those other projects on hold for a month or two?

Obviously there are things that need to be taken care of. I have no idea what you do and how many responsibilities you have. But i feel that, just like Hashem gives us a fall before an ascent, sometimes we have to do it ourselves. I.e. purposefully take a break from things, work out what we absolutely have to do, and then make as much time as we need to heal ourselves. That's what I'm trying to do now with myself. Instead of reading for a day or two, feeling some relief and then jumping back in - i want to really give myself time now. As much time as it needs. And i know that if i do this, when i come back to everything else afterwards, it will be so much better - for me and everyone else.

Much love

AA

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Re: Chaim starting over - again
Posted by briut - 11 Nov 2010 01:18

[aa1977 wrote on 10 Nov 2010 22:34:](#)

sometimes we have to do it ourselves. I.e. purposefully take a break from things, work out what we absolutely have to do, and then make as much time as we need to heal ourselves. That's what I'm trying to do now with myself. Instead of reading for a day or two, feeling some relief and then jumping back in - i want to really give myself time now. As much time as it needs. And i know that if i do this, when i come back to everything else afterwards, it will be so much better - for me and everyone else.

I'm only guessing that you're talking about taking a little time to fall as part of re-constructing your reasons for being here and your commitment to some further growth.

With that as my assumption, I'm going to issue what I fear is a minority opinion here, namely -- good show, chap! As long as you're really repositioning yourself and not just hiding your head in the sand (or elsewhere) about your goals and game plan -- I see nothing wrong with avoiding the kind of manic push into something that often leads to burnout. Slow and steady really can win the race sometimes. (Wait, did _I_ just say that??!)

Don't let anyone, including yourself, deceive you into thinking that you've got to push with all your effort, all at once. YOU get to decide. That's one man's view, at least.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again
Posted by Kedusha - 11 Nov 2010 16:19

No, I think AA is talking about taking time off from his other responsibilities to allow him to focus on recovery.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by chaim77 - 11 Nov 2010 18:55

Thanks to all for your comments on yesterday's posts and Baruch Hashem I am sober today. Last night I had a nissayon that I was nervous about. I had an after-hour business event and I was also expecting to be home by 6:30 and ended up getting home an hour later. I did call to let my wife know as soon it was clear I was running late, but this is after being gone several evenings the last week for a board meeting, a chavrusa, a party for a siyum and a boy's night out all in the last week. My wife mentioned this in an offhand remark and my first reaction was to take it very personally – to be irritated and resentful and most of all defensive. I was tired from the switch to day light savings and not having eaten. Plus I have been very cranky in general over the past couple of days.

After a brief pause, I thought to myself – you know I have been gone 4 or 5 of the last 7 evenings, so maybe she has a point. She went in the other room and I followed her so we could be alone and I said “you’re right – I have been gone a lot, too much.” She simply turned around and smiled and thanked me. That was the end of it and I was wound up to be angry until we put the kids to bed so I could defend myself.

So we went to bed with shalom bayis last night. This morning I had a really good sales appt. but it was in a “triggery part of town.” Right after I woke up, I just drew a line in the sand via the taphsic method. I didn’t even vow for 24 hours, but just until 5:00 today. The day time is the worst time for me since I am in business for myself and have 100% discretion over my time during the day.

I got to listen to a great call this morning with Steve talking about the yetzer hara starts on the outside. As long as we’re battling on the outside, the battle is ours to win, but as soon as we get it inside us it’s a whole different battle. It’s that first potato chip, that first lust, that first web search, and the we got it on the inside and we are extremely vulnerable. .

So this is day 3.

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Re: Chaim starting over - again

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 11 Nov 2010 19:05

You have the right attitude. You are taking the correct approach!

(It is expected that you may be unable to it keep up *every* moment. It is important to remember: **Progress, not perfection!** Don't be disappointed if the momentum stalls. It is only a temporary lull. Ultimately YOU WILL PREVAIL - if you stick to it!)

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