

Relapse Prevention - How to deal with falls

Posted by MenachemGYE - 26 Jan 2020 10:29

When people have a fall and watch porn, they often think, "Oh well, I guess I messed up today anyway, so I may as well continue for another few minutes". "I'll start fresh tomorrow."
"Actually, this week is messed up already, I'll start again on Sunday..."

This kind of thinking is called the "what-the-hell effect" (excuse my language...) and it could really delay your progress. Some people feel so disillusioned after a fall, that it takes them days, weeks or even months until they try again...

Experts call it this type of thinking **Abstinence Violation Effect (AVE)**.

What do you do if you're driving a car and made a wrong turn? With Waze you'll let the app recalculate and get back on track. You might arrive a few minutes late, but that's about it. You're not a bad driver, you just made a mistake. What if you get so upset about your wrong turn, that you pull over to the side, turn off the car and give up? In that case, you'd really arrive late. But no one in their right mind would do that.

In the same way, if your plan doesn't work the first time, it's not a catastrophe. It doesn't mean you're a bad person. It doesn't mean you can't quit. How many times did you fall off your bike until you learned to ride it smoothly? Learning a new skill or changing a behavior takes practice. Hardly anyone is able to change a behavior on their first attempt. See if there's anything you can learn from the fall that might help you improve your plan. The sooner you get back on the road, the sooner you'll reach freedom.

If you get back on track really fast, you'll even keep most of the *momentum* that you've been building up and the fall will barely cause a dent to your overall progress. This point is so important that I'll repeat it again: Psychologically, the faster you get back on track, the more natural it will feel to continue exactly where you left off.

To be continued...

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