

the journey requires effort

Posted by turning.point - 03 Jan 2023 01:51

Starting a new thread. I think this title better expresses my intent.

This thread about filters helped me:

<https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/1-Break-Free/379593-FREE-FILTERS-AND-ACCOUNTABILITY-SERVICES-THAT-WORK>

My experience with filters is as follows:

The notion that "I can always get around a filter, so why bother" is just the yetzer hara talking. I found a filter that works for me. I encourage you to find a combination of products that works for you, too.

There are many kinds of protection devices for the computer and smartphone. Here is a summary.

- **Content filters:** prevents certain images from being viewed on my computer. This includes Gentech and Techloq. There is also an easy way to block images on my computer, and that's simply by turning off the "display images" setting in my browser.

- **Website filters:** prevents me from accessing certain websites. Some filters do this with a "blacklist" - that is, I can view all websites EXCEPT the ones on an "exclusion" list, or a "whitelist" - that is, I can ONLY view websites on the "inclusion" list. "Whitelists" are stricter. NativUSA is a whitelist filter and advertises itself as "kosher Internet." I've also considered an advertisement blocker. The added benefit of a strong filter is that it can block advertisements. Some advertisements can be really triggering for me, so it's good to have them blocked.

- **Screen-time filters:** Microsoft Family Safety is a feature built into the operating system that lets parents set usage limits for the computers at home and can prevent certain applications from being installed. The Apple version of this for the iPhone is called Screen Time.

- **Monitoring services:** Someone outside of your household watches your content periodically to assess whether or not it is safe. This includes WebChaver (which is based on Covenant Eyes), Qustodio and NetFree. NetFree is run by a Vaad.

- **Installation services:** Techkosher.org provides "TAG" offices to help users install filters.

- **Accountability services:** Venishmartem.com can provide an anonymous partner to watch

my screen. This is especially useful if I feel embarrassed to talk about my problems.

I hope this can help you, too.

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Re: the journey requires effort

Posted by turning.point - 17 Jan 2023 01:31

I am not here for karma points.

I am here because I have a problem and I can't get over it by myself, no matter how hard I try, even though I have chosen to get better. **Willpower is not enough for me.**

I am here because I am asking HaShem for help, and I am hoping to connect with other Jewish people who think and feel the same way.

Believing that **HaShem can bridge the gap** between my choice and my strength, **and no one else can, *including myself***, is a central part of my recovery.

I might not be able to understand your struggle. You might not be able to understand mine. That's OK. HaShem understands my struggle - even if even I don't.

The Almighty is eternal, outside of time, the Creator of time itself. I am not. I might say or do things that hurt others, even though my intent is never to be cruel. My actions are insignificant in comparison to His Infinite Awesomeness. He can heal. I can't do that like He can.

If it is within my power to help myself and others, I want to and hopefully I will. If I do, it is only because my Creator bridged that gap between my actions and the helpful effect. Praise is to Him, not me.

We do live in a universe where actions meant to help sometimes hurt.

None of this in any way makes the evil impulse within me any less evil. **Don't steal a glance -- not even in my imagination!** Even though HaShem heals, even though I am nothing before Him, I must still fight for the good, for LIFE, with every ounce of strength and with every fiber of my being. That begins with myself. I do not want to be fooled by impulses. I am not my impulses. I do not want to be fooled by tricks of light or shadows in the dark. Reality is not determined by what my eyes see. Reality exists outside of my own narrow and limited perception of it. I have to remember that I am not alone, and not be fooled by the idea that loneliness justifies impropriety. The Creator fills all of His creation with His light and is always present, even though His presence is not always revealed. The truth will always be revealed in time.

Sometimes sacrifices are difficult. Sometimes words are harsh and punishment is painful. I wish that I could become grateful that my Shepherd bothers to correct me, and sometimes sooner rather than later. If I genuinely care about my recovery, I will take the feedback and accept it and built on it to improve.

I have to flip the script on my perceptions. The truth is independent of my acceptance of it. To put it another way, I intend to practice **radical acceptance: accepting life on HaShem's terms** -- not my own.

With compassion and kindness and mercy, may all our wounds be healed forever.

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Re: the journey requires effort
Posted by sleepy - 17 Jan 2023 06:05

[turning.point wrote on 17 Jan 2023 01:31:](#)

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Re: the journey requires effort
Posted by turning.point - 18 Jan 2023 01:04

[sleepy wrote on 17 Jan 2023 06:05:](#)

[turning.point wrote on 17 Jan 2023 01:31:](#)

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...v'gomer...

beautiful post ! btw whats karma ?

Karma is like a rubber band. It can only stretch so far before it comes back and smacks you in the face.

I have more to say but it will have to wait. Good night and although you might go to sleep with difficulty, I hope that you may yet wake up with optimism.

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Re: the journey requires effort

Posted by Teshuvahguy - 18 Jan 2023 02:23

[turning.point wrote on 17 Jan 2023 01:31:](#)

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I have to admit...though I was very upset by a previous post of yours and did not understand why you didn't respond to that, this post is beautiful and reveals you to be a very different person than I imagined. Thank you for these beautiful and powerful thoughts. TG.

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Re: the journey requires effort

Posted by turning.point - 23 Jan 2023 02:15

A few major tragedies happened to me around Adar of 5782 that made me hit "rock bottom." As I approach a year from then, I'm thinking about that right now. Part of the reason of having a personal "what works for me" thread is to remind myself. So, here's a link yet again to "Battle of the Generation" by Hillel S.:

guardyoureyes.com/ebooks?task=callelement&format=raw&item_id=5540&element=f85c494b-2b32-4109-b8c1-083cca2b7db6&method=download

I'm reading chapters 11 and 12. That "rock bottom" moment spurred me to go cold turkey, cold walks, cold shoulder to the *Satan*. Now, as the book reminds me, I have to get past that and set my goals for the future. It's not easy, but many worthwhile things are not easy.

By the way, if you prefer to access this book on your own instead of clicking on a link, do this: click on the "Library" link up at the top of the GYE website, then click on the "ebooks" menu tab up top just below the Dashboard bar. As of this post, the "Battle" book is on tab 3 at the bottom of the page. Also, as is probably clear from my other posts, I favor the 12-step method. A lot of the terminology in "Battle" is written from that perspective.

I want to build good things. I want to feel fulfilled. I want to be happy. Divine justice works without my intervention. **G-d doesn't need me at all.** That means that I can focus on myself and my *avodah*, rather than on trying to understand that unknowable aspect of Divine Justice. I want to feel good, and the only way to do that is through a lot of hard work. That work might not feel very rewarding along the road. There might be disappointments along that road. I can only feel re-assured that no matter what burdens I might face in this material world, I may yet have some portion in the World to Come as a reward for this effort in this world. Despite the difficulty, the only way to possibly succeed in this world is through that hard work. Perhaps, if my *teshuvah* is genuine and my intentions sincere, there might yet be an insight gifted upon me by the Divine Inspirer that makes traveling the road easier. I haven't given up on the possibility of being entrusted with that gift.

Whatever doesn't work, I will discard the ineffective parts and learn from the remainder.

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Re: the journey requires effort

Posted by sleepy - 23 Jan 2023 06:03

[turning.point wrote on 23 Jan 2023 02:15:](#)

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Whatever doesn't work, I will discard the ineffective parts and learn from the remainder.

All that effort might not work -- *but then again, it might!*

im sorry to hear about your major tradegies ,may Hashems midas harachamim shine on you and just like after a father gives a potch, he gives a treat. so too should Hashem treat you and give you consolation!

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Re: the journey requires effort

Posted by turning.point - 25 Jan 2023 02:11

What works for me is understanding that there are two aspects to my recovery: the understanding and the doing.

I could have understanding but not do anything about it.

I could do a lot of positive *mitzvoth* out of habit without really understanding the *kedushah*.

Really, the two work together: it is best for me to do good deeds and understand the merit of the deed, so as to be motivated to continue doing it.

That being said, delving into the understanding of the right path really helps me. It is important for me to understand the way of *kedushah* and seeing how different it is from the way of non-*kedushah*.

In my understanding of *chaim tovim*, there is the *yetzer hatov* which I understand as the act of creating in a good way . *Yetzer* isn't just intent. *Yetzer* is creation, and when I **create** I must do so with a purposeful **intent**. That **intent is an idea** of the desired attributes that the resulting product or effect is going to have. This is why I associate *yetzer* with my intentions as much as it is associated with the results of those intentions.

All this is by way of saying that the *Satan* is something else, something different from the

Yetzer. *Satan* for me is the * impulse *, that flash, that pang, that sudden yearning, that pull that leaps across all logic, all habits, all understanding and all planning. It cuts to the front of the line of all the activities of my mind. Now, notice, though, it might cut to the front of my mind, but the *Satan* cannot make my hands move. For it to cross over from desire to action, that requires the active engagement, involvement and participation from me. **THAT** is my *yetzer haRa*. It is the desire to create something with results that can only be the opposite of good. If I recognize the *Satan* and then do not act upon it, it has no power.

It is possible to have an impulse that is not necessarily bad: the sudden realization that I am hungry after a long morning of work, the sudden drowsiness in the evening around bedtime, or seeing a spider and suddenly being frightened. The reaction to it determines the outcome. Flailing and swatting the web might not work, because the spider might jump on me and bite me before I can react. Instead, seeing the web and then avoiding both the web and the spider will improve my chances of being saved from injury. My impulses have a purpose to alert me to my surroundings, but my impulses don't dictate a response.

I'm talking about *yetzer* and the *Satan* but I will talk about psychology for a moment to make a point.

When it comes to my recovery, Torah Judaism is the core component of my recovery and is extremely important to me. I was also able to benefit from the help of medical and psychological professionals. I thought that a doctor, clinician or psychologist might be able to help me because I would have privacy and confidentiality, and I would have someone who was trained to listen and help me set goals, and not interrupt or be dismissive or judgmental. Then I was encouraged to seek one out. If I did not feel comfortable with a rabbi then I would speak with a therapist. I would recommend getting a therapist with a sensitivity to Torah Judaism. I would consider: <https://www.reliefhelp.org/>

Psychology can be difficult for me from a Torah perspective, because sometimes neither myself nor the psychologist know how to resolve a spiritual dilemma, and for this I seek out a rabbi. This audio shiur recording at the link speaks to that. This was posted in another thread and so I repeat it here, with many thanks to the original poster: <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/914698/rabbi-moshe-weinberger/kedusha-is-it-within-our-reach/>

I favor the *cognitive-behavioral therapy* (CBT) approach, which is modifying the problematic behavior while also understanding the thoughts that lead to behavior. Here are some lessons that have helped me from that approach.

From what I've learned in CBT, the conscious mind has two parts to it: the problem-solving part that tries to make sense of new and unusual information, and the automatic part that follows routines, procedures and patterns. It surprised me to learn that most of my thinking is done with the automatic part, up to 95% of the time. Most of the time, I do things without thinking. This is because **thinking is hard**. It requires a lot of time and energy, and might not protect me if I need an immediate or reflexive response. This is why good habits are so important, because so much of life is habit and trained responses. If you look at the physical structure of the brain, the impulses come naturally from the medulla, the brain stem. Our thoughts, however, are seated in the cerebellum which wraps around the brain stem. The cerebellum is always ready to think hard and overcome those automatic impulses.

Now I put the two concepts together, the *yetzer* and the mind in the brain. If I get an impulse, it might be a part of my mind trying to rescue me, or it might be *Satan* trying to trick me. That might not be clear in the very first moment. That is why I use my **problem-solving** skills to assess what I am seeing, before I act. Then I can focus my intent.

Today our generation is constantly faced with the threat of something flashy on a screen somewhere that will **provoke an impulse**. I can't help but notice because the distraction is bright and loud! The distraction is designed and crafted to get my attention. How can I feel ashamed when an instinctive part of my mind suddenly notices? But **I always get to decide what I do about it**. If I don't want to follow, I don't follow. If the distraction tricks me for a fraction of a second into thinking that it is somebody I can trust or that it is something good and that something valuable is there, **but it actually is worthless**, then I have no problem walking away. Even worse, if the distraction tries to prey on my insecurities, then **I put my trust in HaShem** and do not cave in. I'm not curious to know exactly how it tricks me. I simply acknowledge that it did and then **move on past it**.

To summarize: *Satan* uses and abuses natural impulses to trick me into deciding to destroy myself -- which seems silly now but doesn't seem obvious in the heat of the moment. To prevent this, I focus my intent, my *Yetzer haTov*. **I trust G-d to be my guide in truth and for life**, and then I take action to create something good in this world, and leave the bad behind.

Take care.

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Re: the journey requires effort
Posted by nk20 - 25 Jan 2023 13:31

I don't know if anyone else has experienced my challenge... out of the window of one of my rooms I can see a woman from next door getting undressed. When my wife is not clean I go to that window and look at her. My fall comes after watching her. This is not porn, but the original problem of shemiras eynaim. Has anyone got any tips or ideas of how to keep myself safe?

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Re: the journey requires effort
Posted by DavidT - 25 Jan 2023 14:05

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Wow, that's a real tough nisayon! Seems that Hashem trusts you that you have what it takes to overcome this BE"H.

Let's think together.

1- On a practical level, what can you do to make it more difficult to look out of that window? Cover the glass with contact paper? Lock the window with a screw?

2- The "nuclear" option would be to tell your wife about this (if it's at all an option). Like Rav Amram did.

The Gemara in Kidushin 81a brings the following story of Rav Amram Raban Shel Chassidim:

Some women who had been taken captive were redeemed and brought to Nehardai. They were kept in the attic of Rav Amram the Chasid and the ladder was removed. At night, a beam of light reflected off one of the women, revealing her beauty. Rav Amram was seized with lust and he moved the ladder (which normally needed 10 people to move it) and began to ascend. As he was halfway up, he screamed "Nura Bei Amram - There is a fire in Rav Amram's house!" and the Rabanan flocked to his house. After they saw that there was no fire they said to him "You embarrassed us (with your behavior)!". Answered Rav Amram: "It is better to suffer embarrassment in this world than in the next".

Please see tool #9 of the [GuardYourEyes handbook](#) where we use this story as one of the strongest demonstrations in Chazal of the power of "human accountability", and how we should not to rely on "Fear of Heaven" alone when dealing with lust. After all, even the biggest Tzadik and Chasid like Rav Amram, was forced to use human accountability when faced head-on with lust. (And a lust addict is faced head-on with lust many times a day!)

3- There is another lesson to take from this story. When Rav Amram broke through and regained control, he didn't just go down the ladder or even just leave his house. Rather, he did something that ended his test, even though it brought him great embarrassment. Why? Why didn't he just leave?

The answer is that Rav Amram realized that a real part of him desperately wanted to sin. He had been overwhelmed and barely managed to break free. He knew this sudden resurgence of determination would not last long. The desires raged within him, and it was only a matter of time before his willpower would crack. If the situation was not over by then, no matter how far away he would be, he would just return and sin. Realizing he would only win if his test concluded right away, Rav Amram did what it took to end it.

This is a hard lesson to put into practice. When part of us wants to give in and we are barely hanging on with our fading willpower, we don't want to end the test. We don't want to give up our "great opportunity" to get what we desire, because *we want it*. At that point, we want to fulfill the desire; we don't want it to go away. We surely don't want to create a situation where we will long to give in but be unable to, and certainly don't want to embarrass ourselves or sacrifice something important to make it end. To pull this off, we must go against our nature. We will have to get past this discomfort — whether it is evident or subconscious — to make the right choice. It definitely isn't easy.

Sometimes, we can even stop an entire series of challenges with just one action. One such example is Internet-related challenges. As long as we haven't been sucked in too far, we can permanently end the challenge by eliminating our ability to give in. And even if we have stumbled and awakened our desires, and they won't completely go away just by removing what tempts us, we still benefit greatly. We lose a major trigger for our desires as well as much of our ability to give in.

If we can muster the strength to end such challenges despite the overwhelming difficulty, the

payoff is enormous. We will be rewarded for having won every battle we avoided. Removing our ability to succumb is a phenomenal achievement.

This method can help you win the most difficult challenges. First, figure out what your weak spot is. Then, determine whether there is a way to avoid the trigger or to eliminate your ability to sin. It is so hard, but gather your strength and do what needs to be done. You will bask in your incredible accomplishment forever.

We must realize that whenever we need to use willpower to stop ourselves, we can only hold on for so long. As the battle goes on, we weaken and our desires increase. We can hang on for a while — longer than we think — but it is a matter of time until we are overpowered. We will only win if the situation ends or our desires calm down. But we avoid all this when we remove our ability to sin.

Ending the challenge guarantees success. It is the only way to ensure that we won't eventually succumb. Therefore, if it is possible, *it must be done!* We might regret it right after, as our desires desperately lash out, but it will be too late — we will no longer be able to sin. Eventually, our desires will calm down and we will realize what we just accomplished. We will be so proud of what we pulled off in the face of great difficulty, and we will see that we didn't miss out on anything.

To attain self-control, we need both desire to win and strong willpower. Using both in tandem will help us reach unfathomable heights

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Re: the journey requires effort

Posted by turning.point - 26 Jan 2023 00:09

[DavidT wrote on 25 Jan 2023 14:05:](#)

[nk20 wrote on 25 Jan 2023 13:31:](#)

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Thank you, DavidT. Very sympathetic introduction, especially. Please forgive my edits in the quote. I just wanted to highlight what I most appreciated.

I might add that a little bit of healthy ambition goes a long way. If I have free time, I learn. Whether it is studying for a certification to open new pathways for a *bracha* of *parnassa*, or learning a new *sefer* to improve my *avodah*, I learn something. I dedicate my studies to some *zechut*, so that I set a proper intent. I give *tzedakah* at the outset so that the studies should be to benefit others, not just myself, and so be successful. Not that anyone should go around making oaths, but if I earn more *parnassah* from my studies then *bli neder* I intend to give a portion back to the community and so sustain the merit for increasing.

Also, having appropriate ways to relax are important. Whether it be a walk outside, a paperback brain-game or sudoku book, listening to tasteful music, playing a musical instrument, a hobby craft like electronics soldering -- there are many options and I keep them around handy. I once saw a chemistry set in a museum gift store. That would have been fun, but I already have too many gadgets! (How many careers in chemistry were launched with an inexpensive chemistry set?) Point being, this is a tool recommended in the "Flight to Freedom" program on GYE: **"Distract."**

Anyway...

This all reminds me of a **joke**:

A man goes to a doctor. He says, "doctor, please help me. I'm depressed. All I do is hang around all day. I feel like a pair of curtains! What do I do?"

The doctor thinks for a moment. *Do I analyze? Do I diagnose? Do I prescribe...?*

Finally, he decides. He says to his patient...

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"Pull yourself together, man!"

Re: the journey requires effort

Posted by turning.point - 26 Jan 2023 03:00

PS: Thank you, nk20, for trusting the GYE community and sharing your story.

If my advice seems like a confusing mix of chizuk and secular encouragement, please forgive me. Being Jewish for me since my childhood was a strongly cultural and philosophical endeavor as well as a religious and spiritual one. That means that all of those ideas get really mixed up, and it can be confusing for people who are expecting only spiritual guidance from me.

I also apologize to you or anyone if the advice seems selfish and insensitive. This is a "What

I wish I was, though. So, I stick to writing about what works for me, and if it helps you too then very good.

Finally, I will say that a very healthy activity for my psyche is ***cleaning house***. Sometimes just removing actual physical garbage or scrubbing a commode helps remove some spiritual garbage as well.

OK, it is waaaaaay past my bedtime. Good night...

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Re: the journey requires effort

Posted by turning.point - 27 Jan 2023 01:32

What's nice about an anonymous forum is that I can share the nice things that HaShem does for me without being afraid that someone will think that I am making it up just to get attention. Sharing this story for sure won't help me in this world one bit, and sometimes I think that staying up late writing on GYE is hurting me and wasting my time.

You must know that what I don't consider fallen, others might. I don't judge you and I wish you blessings and all the best sincerely.

What works for me is cultivating the right attitude of *Yiras HaShamaim*, seeking always to improve my *avodah* every day. You won't believe this beautiful thing that *HaShem* did for me today.

So last night I was writing about staying busy. OK! I was leaving work and I was rushing to get home and prepare for Shabbat. I was fumbling with the car audio and I had a ziploc bag of fresh fruit and I was driving down the road.

And I caught myself, the way I catch myself falling in more dire situations. And I said, "I don't need to rush this. It is dangerous." I pull over near a tree. It's winter here, no leaves on the tree. Full of birds, must have been a hundred, all chirping. It was picturesque, and a super uplifting and calming melding of the tinny melodies. I opened a window and ate. Such a soothing respite in a hectic life, something in G-d's creation of nature that not a million bucks, crypto or otherwise, could ever acquire. Better to wait than to hasten in vain and invite peril. As I ate, I noticed one of the fruits was not perfect. I thought to myself, for fruit to be kosher it must be free from blemish. Then I thought, "ah, so what. This isn't the beis hamikdash. I'll eat it..."

At that *VERY MOMENT* even as I put the fruit in my mouth, **ALL THE BIRDS STOPPED** chirping and left the tree. Silence. Some street sounds of cars passing, maybe a worker hammering something in the distance. Sunny afternoon scenery, sure, but the birds had really made the moment relaxing. And now they were gone... And so there with my thoughts, I thought: *G-d cares and He wants me to care, too.*

I don't know if I have the correct interpretation. I'm not saying buy a stock that I recommend, hahaha. I'm saying this is what happened. I care and I want to continue caring. I care about myself and I care about you, too, dear *chaverim*. Keep up the fight! And, stop and smell the roses.

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Re: the journey requires effort
Posted by turning.point - 27 Jan 2023 11:20

A big difference between what 12-step outside of Torah Judaism is and 12-step INSIDE of Torah Judaism: our faith does tell us what is and isn't a fall.

Thank G-d for that. Otherwise it would all be relative.

Shabbat Shalom!

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Re: the journey requires effort
Posted by turning.point - 29 Jan 2023 22:24

Sometimes I need to put GYE down and go achieve something, whether it is a *daf* or a *sefer*, or something in my career.

I have so much to write, so many struggles. But sometimes I just need to focus on ... something

else.

PS: I draw the line at "dignity" and not at "consent."

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