

Battling Against My Imagination

Posted by Kosherboy - 01 Oct 2020 19:54

Hi everybody,

I've been on a great track record lately thanks to the help from this site. I'm on my best streak yet, halfway to 90 days, with only one mild slip up for a few seconds before closing the tab.

However, I have been having some daydreams lately about things I used to look up. And then I start remembering more things and replaying them in my mind and get carried away with my imagination. And then obviously desires are much stronger the rest of the day.

Does anyone have any thoughts or tips on how to battle against that? It's weird because I'm not actually looking anything up online but it feels like I'm looking up porn in my mind. Besides that I've been going strong B"H.

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Re: Battling Against My Imagination

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 02 Oct 2020 05:37

Hey there, welcome, glad to hear about your success.

The issue that we all have is that there is no delete button on our brains. We can't just delete the images that are in our mind when we decide to break free.

There are two things to know, one is that eventually they will fade out, but the second one is more important and is that there is something thing that we can do and that is to not dwell on these thoughts.

That's right not dwelling on them is a true real possibility, it can be done and is how you will allow them to fade out.

So here is the thing , when you dwell on them they stick in your mind but when you focus on not dwelling on them , you are still focusing on them and most people have a hard time this way as well. It doesn't work to focus on not doing something, you are still focusing on it. Rather you

have to find something to distract yourself with, something you enjoy, something stimulating, exercise, music, talking to a friend, listening to an interesting shiur, etc.

The trick is not to fight it head on, instead, try to distract yourself and at the same time you can feel constructive too.

Everyone here will tell you the same thing, when they are bored these things creep into their mind, when they are they just don't have the time.

There are other factors as well mainly stress, but as far as wandering minds, I think it's mostly boredom.

I hope this helps.

Wilnevergiveup

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Re: Battling Against My Imagination

Posted by Looking_to_improve - 02 Oct 2020 06:23

Hi kosherboy,

Well done on reaching 45 days, keep it up!

Personally I sometimes have similar struggles, just when I lie to sleep, less so when daydreaming.

I think our minds are echo chambers, whatever you are thinking about often goes round and round, I know from when I'm feeling stressed the same thing happens, I worry about one thing, and then everything start compounding together and I think about the same things multiple times.

For me at least, it makes it quite hard to think I don't want to think about a certain topic, because whatever that certain topics is, whether these daydreams or otherwise, it's already started echoing in my mind. I find it useful to have something else as a replacement to start thinking about instead. You can use something different, but I find either thinking of driving to school, or going for a run around my block, works for me. They are things I've done many times, so I can think about lots of small minute details of what's going on, eg where I'm placing my foot, which house is next to me, or when I'm changing gears, my feet on the pedals, checking the mirrors.

I hope you find this useful and something that you can implement, I've found that early prevention helps quite a lot later on. I'm sure you will get other responses as well, there's more than one specific way to be successful.

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Re: Battling Against My Imagination
Posted by Captain - 02 Oct 2020 13:52

Hi! Congrats on making it to 45 days! Keep up the good work!

This is an area that causes great confusion. Either we get frustrated that we are having these thoughts, or we leave them going when they are actually increasing our levels of desire beneath the surface. There's a great chapter on this in The Battle of the Generation (<http://guardyoureyes.com/ebooks/item/the-battle-of-the-generation> ; <https://amzn.to/2YmMbOJ>). It's Chapter 43: Mastering our Thoughts:

One of the most misunderstood aspects of the battle against desire is the challenge of keeping our minds clear of inappropriate thoughts. The wrong approach is common and destructive. By learning the right way to control our thoughts, we can attain mastery in the battle against desire.

Before anything else, we must understand that having inappropriate desires and thoughts pop up in our heads is normal, no matter how weird or improper they are. We should not be frustrated. We have these impulses naturally and so does everyone else, even though we don't see it. As it is, all people have random thoughts on a wide range of topics constantly, and they don't mean anything. We shouldn't give too much significance to our stray thoughts and desires either.

Our rabbis teach that we are not responsible for thoughts that we don't consciously choose

to think about. Such thoughts are not sins; they are challenges from the yetzer hara. Our job is to address these thoughts effectively when we notice them instead of continuing to think about them.

These thoughts don't show anything bad about us. It's just the opposite: they are our opportunity to reach great heights! Because they can occur frequently, it gives us the chance to achieve countless victories. This challenge is a huge gift.

Properly addressing our thoughts and impulses when they start is important for another reason. One of the yetzer hara's favorite strategies is to keep repeating his sales pitch for desire. He makes us feel one surge after another of how much we want the desirable activity. Sometimes, even small stray thoughts that seem crazy — thoughts that don't cause us to experience real desire — add up and ignite into something real. But if we get worked up about them, it just makes things worse. We need to address these thoughts, but we must do so effectively.

Our rabbis teach that getting frustrated with ourselves for having these thoughts is ineffective and damaging. Angrily demanding, "Don't think about that!" or "I shouldn't be having these thoughts!" makes them stronger. This attitude also hurts us by making us feel weird or bad, which saps our strength. Rather, the secret to dealing with stray thoughts and most budding desires is to think about something else without getting worked up. These thoughts shouldn't bother us, because they come from the yetzer hara. They are not our fault and we have no reason to be dissatisfied with ourselves for having them.

The Shulchan Aruch (Even Ha'ezer 23:3) rules that when inappropriate thoughts pop into our minds, we should change the topic by thinking about Torah. But if we can't or don't want to, we should think about activities we enjoy or topics we like talking about. Most important, we must not become upset with ourselves. The more agitated we become, the more these desires affect us, and the worse we do.

Most of the time, the best response to stray thoughts is indifference. If consciously thinking about something else will add emphasis to whatever crossed our mind, we should respond with even less effort. We should just think to ourselves "whatever" or "oh, well" or "next" and move on. By not giving these thoughts any significance, we show ourselves that we are not responsible and don't care about them. We effortlessly disregard them and aren't affected.

But sometimes, we must do more to get rid of unwanted thoughts. When we are bombarded with a barrage of annoying inappropriate thoughts that are similar, perhaps relating to something we experienced, we need to flush out our subconscious mind. This will stop the thoughts from recurring.

One way to do this is to close your eyes and view a short prepared mental video. For example, envision yourself hitting a game-winning shot in a big game of basketball. Pick something pleasant. Try to use an event that actually happened, because this will help you see the mental video with real details. The more details that occupy your mind, the more it is cleared from everything else.

These methods neutralize random annoying thoughts and even some minor temptations. But

when you experience real desire, the yetzer hara keeps repeating his sales pitch, making you feel “I want it!” again and again. You will need to calmly address the urge so he doesn’t overpower you. Before your impulses erupt, use your favorite material from Chapters 3, 9, 34, and 35 to recall without fighting yourself that what you desire is not as great as it seems.

This will remind you that although you want this pleasure, you don’t need it. You will remember that physical pleasures can’t give you what you seek emotionally — that they promise happiness and give you misery. It will stop your desires’ growth.

When we are surprised by desire, it is hard to do this. We don’t get the chance to calmly execute our plan; we can only hang in there and fight. But for a desire that starts small, we can stop it in its tracks by remembering that it is overrated and isn’t worth it.

Of course, we must also revive our excitement to accomplish through conquering our desires. That enthusiasm is the key to success. Every time we fight, we come closer to fulfilling our dreams of greatness. And we also must have our willpower on call in case our desires do increase and we need it.

The more we grow, the fewer desires and unwanted thoughts we will have. Nevertheless, they will still happen from time to time. These thoughts don’t come from us or show anything bad about us. They are a part of life, and they still come even after we reach phenomenal levels. Knowing this will stop us from getting worked up. We will handle them properly and show how much we have grown in the battle against desire.

Mastering our thoughts is the crowning achievement in our battle against desire. May we merit to reach this level and achieve the pinnacle of self-mastery in the battle of the generation.

Quick Recap:

- We are not responsible for thoughts that we didn’t choose to think about.
- The best way to handle these thoughts is to deal with them calmly. We should not give them significance or get frustrated.

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