The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 19 Oct 2020 14:49

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Hi this is supposed to be the first log describing what I'm going through and perhaps an outlet of my feelings and experience trying to fight the yetzer hora of hotzoas zera levatalah.

?Allow me to first introduce myself. I am a bochur of 24. Learnt in a yeshiva till the outbreak of corona. To be honest, I never fully understood what people meant when they said that masturbation is the nisoyon of the generation. Why would anyone from a logical perspective engage in such behaviour? It didn't make sense to me. That was till about two months ago.

In yeshiva I didn't have access to movies or unfiltered internet. When I came home I did. I also got my own computer for studies and although it was filtered, I was the one with the password. So I naively didn't think of it as a big threat. But one night my curiosity got the better of me and I checked out some pornography. That night I also gave in to masturbation and I realized all of a sudden that I've made a big mistake. A whole new pathway of what the brain might consider pleasure opened up before me.

Not much later I gave in a second time to masturbation (not porn which I have since tried to avoid). And as time went by the frequency of my giving in became more and more. I know I have to find a way to stop this and I am trying. It just is so hard sometimes when my whole body aches and screams and the anxiety is just not allowing me to think clearly.

Sometimes I can hold back for a day or two three even but then eventually I end up giving in. The thing by me is that I am usually okay throughout the day, but when I lie in bed and am trying to fall asleep I am having difficulties doing so without having the urge. And that is usually when I cave. So I have tried listening to a shiur to keep me distracted, which has helped maybe once or twice, but with my emotions being so powerful it is hard to concentrate. I also tried relaxing music and it has helped although I do need to experiment with that more. (I know that from a halachic perspective music is not the best thing to do before falling asleep, but I think it is permitted occasionally and it is also permitted if it is not leshem simcha. Also I am not sure if relaxing music fall under this stringency.) Another thing I do is that even when I do give in I stop in the middle and pause for a count of sixty. It gives me back a sense of control and I feel it can help overall. Another thing I do when I feel weak and I know I might likely give in is I try to postpone giving in for x amount of time. Sometimes I am so tired of the fight that just to get rid of it, I give in. I know it's wrong, but I still do it. I really need some technique here to overcome this.

I am currently going with the mindset that this is like building muscle and that slowly but surely I’ll get stronger and stronger. I just doesn’t always feel like this. It also pains me when I read some of the consequences this challenge has on both a ruchniyusdige and gashmiyusdige

sphere. As a bochur, I feel like I am tainted and that I might have a bad marriage or children of lesser quality because of this. I am sure that there is teshuva, but will I really be able to overcome this before getting married? I truly hope so.

My current goal is to go through a whole week without giving in.

For me this is a true lesson on another front. It's what I wrote in the beginning: I never thought that this nisoyon could be so hard and yet here I am. So perhaps when people are going through things, that to me seem trivial and perhaps I'll even judge them sometimes, I'll remind myself that it could happen to me and even if it doesn't I don't know where they are coming from so don't judge.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Grant400 - 19 Oct 2020 16:45

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Dear Millennial,

Welcome! May your stay here be a success!

First off, I want do disagree with one point. I know people here will probably disagree with me, but here's my opinion. This concept of it being like a muscle is true, but only if you don't give in. When you fight in the beginning it's mindblowingly tough but eventually as you wrote, the muscles get stronger and you get more confident in your ability to stave it off. In addition, it does get easier.

But as long as you continue to give in you won't get stronger. You will just be feeding a desire for pleasure which can lead to a physical and emotional addiction to it.

You must start off with getting a good filter for your computer. Even if it costs more now, it will cost less in the future.

Second, try to really understand your deepest emotions why you honestly don't want to indulge in this. Make it clear to yourself that the pleasure gained is really much more lost. This way it isn't a desire for pleasure vs. a "concept", but rather vs. an equivalent desire for happiness.

Also, you must identify your biggest triggers and try to stay away from them in addition to starting to compile a list of practical responses to urges that work for you. Browse the forum for ideas.

Most of all, you must work on yourself why you won't give in, why it's more important to you to remain clean, be it Hashem, marriage, etc. Because all the filters and all the tricks can help but the engine must come from the person himself.

Hatzlacha!

Grant

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 19 Oct 2020 18:13

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Thanks Grant400 for your comment. I really appreciate your input.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Dave M - 19 Oct 2020 19:28

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Welcome to GYE! I'H with hard work you will break free. It sounds like from your post that you only recently began to engage in these behavior. Consider yourself lucky (and be proud) that you weren't involved during your teenage years. It is clear that you have reached a certain level of maturity to recognized that you were going down a dangerous path and want to make the

necessary changes.

From your post, it sounds like you only looked at porn one time? So my first piece of advice is KEEP IT TO THAT ONE TIME! From an addiction standpoint, Porn is a lot more destructive than masturbation. Since you've only looked once, you haven't developed (hopefully) that craving yet. It is much easier to learn tools to fight the y'h for masturbation without having to fight the urge to look at porn. As Grant have noted, spend some time on the forum to learn from some of the other veteran GYE members. Also, make sure to read through the GYE handbook and to listen to a series from R' Shafier from the Shmuz called the Fight theshmuz.com/series/the-fight/. It is an absolute much listen.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 20 Oct 2020 16:43
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Thanks Dave for the advice and the link to Rabbi Shafier's shmuzen. They look very good.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 20 Oct 2020 19:33
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Okay, day 2 almost over.

Baruch Hashem still clean

I don't have anything special to add here but I am trying to make sure to write something here every day.

I do feel though, that when I am busy and am not focused on this constantly, I overall feel better. Writing here also makes me feel better. (Not just the writing, but also knowing that there is an amazing support group.)

Anyway good night to y'all and be well.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 21 Oct 2020 20:39

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Hi,

Day 3 here.

Baruch Hashem still clean.

I wanted to share an observation I had from one of my life experiences that I consider to be relevant in this struggle as well.

A couple of years back, during davening I had a panic attack. Anyone reading this who has ever gone through a panic attack can attest to the fact that it is an extremely scary and horribly painful experience. What basically happens is that you feel like you are in extreme danger and that you might go crazy and lose your mind or some other extreme fear. Your heart rate goes up. Your breathing becomes harder. I don't wish it upon anyone.

The worst part for me, though, was that it became increasingly harder to daven and just be in big crowded places as fear of going through another panic attack actually can trigger one.

You might be asking why I am sharing this. The reason is because one of the ways I learnt to deal with it (with help from a therapist and of course siyata dishmaya), was by understanding that as much as my brain is screaming that I am in danger and as much as the fear is apparent, it was only an emotion, it wasn't me. I was always in control. Nothing was going to happen to me. And through what is called exposure to the fear (and therapy) I was able to slowly lower my anxiety to much lower levels.

There were at least two (and there are probably more but I'll just share two tonight) lessons that

I took out of this relevant to our struggle: Just like the fears weren't me, they were only my emotions, so too my urges aren't me. I might feel them and it might feel like hell, but it's only an urge, it's not me. If I don't give in, eventually it'll get weaker and it'll pass. And if I do give in but I went down fighting, that also counts as something since I exercised my will-power for the good.

Another thing I learnt from this experience is that when I first started dealing with my fears, I thought that it would take a couple of weeks and then 'poof', I would be all better. And there probably are people out there that don't need long to recover from such an experience. But not me. I am still working on it and some times I am just tired and can't be bothered.

That taught me a valuable lesson: things take time. I had to allow myself that time and allow myself not to panic if it doesn't go straight away. I wish it would. And heck, I sometimes wish I wouldn't have to deal with these things to start with. But I know that at the end of the tunnel I will be a stronger person, a wiser person perhaps even a kinder and more understanding person. When I ask why Hashem gave me these struggles and I complain, sometimes (and I say sometimes) I stop complaining and say thank you because I know that if I don't give up and just continue going, it'll be worth it.

Anyway it's getting late here. Wishing y'all a great night.

(ps: If you are experiencing panic attacks and you are not seeing a professional, make sure to. As hard as it may be to reach out, it will be worth it without any doubt.)

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 22 Oct 2020 20:11

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Hi everyone,

I'm on day 4 here. Over halfway through my one week goal!

I should be excited, but truth be told, I am a bit scared. Every day I climb higher makes me feel like a fall will be that more painful.

I saw something today totally unintentionally and not very explicit but it was still not great and I hope it doesn't affect me tonight.

I also feel scared when I almost don't feel the urge at all because it might just be at that point that I will be least on guard when it does come and I won't be prepared for it.

Not much more to add.

Good night folks and take care.

Oh, just one more thing. All in all, I really find the writing very helpful because it keeps me accountable when I know that people are reading these posts. I therefore want to thank you, the reader, for being there with me on my journey.

Have a great one.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 23 Oct 2020 14:02

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Day 5

Still clean but fearing the worst.

Woke up last night 5 am. With medium level urge. Tossed and turned and managed to fall back asleep (or may I say semi-asleep). Had wet dream somewhere this night, not sure when. (I still consider myself clean because I didn't actively engage in any activity.)

But as of this night I feel the anxiety of the urge being stronger than usual. It's this level of urge that is likely to make me give in. Going to sleep with it at this level is dangerous. It won't let me think clearly and it takes up much of my attention. Shabbos is extra dangerous because there are no distractions like music etc. I hope that I won't give in tonight. I will try doing some exercise so that I'll be tired tonight and not need to toss and turn, but I know that nothing is guaranteed.

Any advice, chizzuk, .. would be much appreciated.

It's been a week, and I truly hope I will be able to share good news after Shabbos.

Either way, wishing you all a great Shabbos.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Grant400 - 23 Oct 2020 14:26

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What is happening is classic. A person gets a hisorerus to improve and the first few days are exciting and easy.

What comes next is the real part. How will he react and respond when the excitement wanes? When the memory of the horrific feeling after last fall fades?

You are heading into that territory. The real test on your new resolution. What you must do is remind yourself why you want to be clean. Remember the level of non enjoyment you had after last time.

Obviously you are happier being clean for whatever reason. That's why you are here. Try to reinternalize the emotional part of why you don't want to fall.

Also, remember no one ever died from having an urge or high level of anxiety. Is it unpleasant and painful? Absolutely. But the alternative is worse. It's okay to feel an incredible urge and continue with your life without responding. It's okay to ignore the neighborhood bully. An urge is just a thought. Nothing more.

I hope pray that your shabbos and conscience will remain as pristine as the past few days and as clear as your resolution was just a few short days ago.

Grant

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 24 Oct 2020 19:14

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A gutte voch.

Day 6 ...

Baruch Hashem I made it through. Tons of seyata dishmaya.

I also wanted to thank you Grant. The chizzuk really made a big difference.

I realized that even on Shabbos I can distract myself in bed.

With a kosherlamp and something to read I was well on my way

(Although usually I have a harder time falling asleep with the light on.)

So the journey continues...

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 24 Oct 2020 19:28

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“Know thy enemy” goes the famous saying. When fighting this battle I find that we need to be aware of the potential things the yetzer hora could tell us. Just being aware that it’s the yetzer hora even without a correct response can sometimes be enough to be able to fight his attack. I wanted to compile a list of some of the things the yetzer hora might tell us and some possible responses. Please feel free to add to this list as this list is in no way exhaustive. Also, if you have a better response to anything in this list, don’t hesitate to make mention of it. I always appreciate your comments.

So here goes:

10 things the yetzer hora tells you in order to give in and some possible responses:

1. This is part of you, embrace it, don’t fight it.

Why fight? Because you know that giving in is so not good for you in so many ways. Both from a ruchniyusdike and gashmiyusdike perspective.

2. Give in today and you’ll start fighting tomorrow.

And what will you say tomorrow?

Procrastination won’t get you anywhere.

(Unless you’re procrastinating to give in.)

3. It’s been a tough day, life is not fair and I really need it now.

I agree, life can be tough and sometimes we need something to soothe us, but this is really not the way to deal with life.

4. Don’t give in completely, just a little, to satisfy the need.

A yetzer hora classic! Slowly pushes you to do something. You know for yourself that once you give in a little, the urge gets stronger not weaker and you risk giving in completely.

5. You’ll anyway give in to it, why go through the anguish, just give in now.

First of all, you don’t know that you’ll give in at the end. But let’s say you do. By not giving in you will be building your resistance muscles. And even more, every second you hold back from giving in, Hashem will reward you with unimaginable rewards. If I would tell you that by not giving in, you’ll get a million dollars, would you give in? Well, Hashem’s rewards are not a million, they're infinite.

6. Hashem knows what I am going through and he doesn’t mind.

It’s true, Hashem knows what you are going through. Hashem is cheering you on and really hoping that you don’t give in. But that is not a reason to give in.

7. You’ve fought and won before, so you can allow yourself to give in because you’ll be able to handle it as you’ve proven to yourself.

Yeah, but do you remember the pain and anguish it took to win before. Is it really worth it for a fleeting moment of pleasure? I didn’t think so.

8. Just give in. Can’t you feel it burning inside of you?

It’s true, I can really feel it burning and honestly it’s hell on earth. But I have two options: either give in now and continue to repeat this process over and over.

Or: yeah, it’s hell and I’ll have to live through it right now and perhaps I’ll have to go through this for a couple of days or even some weeks. And I am reminding myself that this hell is not going to harm me, it’s just a terrible inconvenience. But give it some time and its strength and potency will slowly start to fade. Yes, you might still have the urge sometimes, but you’ll have the power and strength to face it (and sometimes even smile and wave.)

9. I don’t care anymore. It’s just too much for me.

I understand it’s hard. I really do. Heck, at times it can be so draining in every sense of the word. But underneath it all you know you do care. So don’t give up. Keep going. You know it will be worth it in the end.

10. After a fall: just give in again you’ve lost already.

Falling happens. Even to the best of us. When learning how to walk didn’t you fall? Yes, that’s how we learn and grow. Does that mean I'm a rasha? No, of course not! What it means is that I have challenges that I need to face and those challenges have the potential to make me a tzadik. So just continue going. You’re doing great. And never give up.

11. If you push yourself now, you will be repressing your desires and they will crop up in ugly ways that will make feel anxious and you will end up giving in to this much more than you thought you would. So it is better to give in to it now and fight it slowly, rather than take on the big fight.

(I didn’t have a good response for #11. Please post in comments.)

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Re: The struggles of a human

Posted by Grant400 - 25 Oct 2020 00:01

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anonymousmillenial wrote on 24 Oct 2020 19:28**:**

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will be building your resistance muscles. And even more, every second you hold back from giving in, Hashem will reward you with unimaginable rewards. If I would tell you that by not giving in, you'll get a million dollars, would you give in? Well, Hashem's rewards are not a million, they're infinite.

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11. If you push yourself now, you will be repressing your desires and they will crop up in ugly ways that will make feel anxious and you will end up giving in to this much more than you thought you would. So it is better to give in to it now and fight it slowly, rather than take on the big fight.

(I didn't have a good response for #11. Please post in comments.)

Answer to #11(IMHO):

1) In number 5 you wrote " First of all, you don’t know that you’ll give in at the end."

2) Reality is the exact opposite. Like chaz"al say: " Man has a small organ, attempt to satisfy it; it will starve, starve it; it will be satisfied. "

When one feeds his lust it will only increase. It will beg for more. By definition lust is something that will never feel satiated. But if, on the contrary, you fight it completely and don't surrender an inch, only then is there a chance of victory.

So to answer the yetzer harah, if you give in a little now- tomorrow you will give in more, and eventually you will definitely "end up giving in more than you thought you would." But if you remain steadfast and don't feed Mr. Lust even a tiny morsel, then and only then will there be a chance of defeating him for good.

Grant

P.S. Although it's necessary to use brains in this battle too, attempting to have every answer at hand is too hard. We both know that no matter what we prepare he will always come up with something we didn't think of. Try to fight it with emotion too. You won't give in because YOU don't want too! No matter what!

Even if someone will give you all the logical reasons in the world why you should hit your parent, you still won't. Not because you outmaneuvered him intellectually but because you just won't. You just won't.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by Captain - 25 Oct 2020 00:16

Wow! This list is amazing! I hope they put it in the next GYE Boost email! (Sign up: www.gyeboost.org) Thanks so much for sharing.

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Re: The struggles of a human
Posted by anonymousmillenial - 25 Oct 2020 13:42

Thanks Captain. I really appreciate that.

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