

Habit Fix

with Rabbi *Benji*

Coming off the trampoline

I don't know about you, but I often feel quite flat the day after Rosh Hashana.

It can be a bit of an anticlimax.

Like that feeling of trying to jump when you come off a trampoline.

I've spent the last two days visualizing and imagining the world I want to create — and now I have to make it happen!

I also get a bit anxious for the time ahead. We've just started the Ten Days of Repentance that lead into Yom Kippur.¹ I've got a lot of regrets from the past year and I'm just not sure where to start. How do I make sure I'm not debilitated from my anxiety and fear — that I channel just the right amount of regret to move forward and make some positive change as I head toward the big day?

We grow up with this perception that certain people have self-control and others don't. That it is the ideal we are all reaching for. The more self-control we have, the better lives we will live.



In *Atomic Habits*, Clear cites scientists that have proven that people with and without self-control are actually not so different from each other. There isn't the divide between 'the disciplined' and 'the not so disciplined' people that we imagine. People 'with self-control' structure their lives in a way 'that does not require heroic willpower and self-control'.

This is a fundamental shift for me. To move away from bad habits or *aveirot* (transgressions).

I have to try and prevent myself from being in a situation in which they even become relevant.

I have to cut them at the source. This is a lesson we can learn from Joseph. When Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him, he broke free of her grasp and fled, leaving his cloak in her hand. He risked her using it as evidence against him, which, in fact, she did. He didn't want to stay another moment in her presence for fear that he would fall to temptation.²



Many of the mitzvot that we are commanded to do ensure that we won't even come close to transgressing a Torah commandment — they are a proverbial fence around the Torah.³

The rabbis understood that our brains are hardwired to act a certain way when triggered — so they cut it at the source. They help us by making sure we don't come close to being in a situation in which we may defer to habit.

Until now we've spoken about habits or mitzvot that we want to take on. Today, I want to think about negative habits (or *aveirot*) that we may want to stop

★ One of the habits I want to move away from is being distracted when I'm at home with the family. What can I do to make sure I'm fully focused and present? What if I switched my phone to flight mode for certain hours of the day or left it in another room? That way my mind won't wonder when it pings because it won't. ★

Today let's identify some of the bad habits or aveirot that we want to move away from — as well as ways to make sure we cut them at the source — ensure we don't get close to being in a situation in which they arise.



Today lets...✓

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Email Rabbi Benji

¹ Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, *The Laws of Repentance* 3:4

² *Genesis* 39:10-23; Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, *Sichot Mussar*, *Sicha* 21

³ *Avot* 1:1



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