

My Story

Posted by mevakesh - 03 Dec 2008 22:23

Post Modified:

I have modified the original post because I am concerned that I may have disclosed certain things that could jeopardize my privacy. As such, I have removed my background summary. I will, however, disclose some basic information.

I am in my mid-thirties, married with children and have been a porn addict for almost 20 years. I have made numerous attempts to quit, but as-of-yet have not been successful in achieving long term sobriety.

As of the date of the original post, I was on day 3 after a stretch of 27 days without porn.

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Re: My Story

Posted by the.guard - 03 Dec 2008 23:18

Dear Jew, Welcome home. Your username is the same as another user on this forum. He is a great warrior and has done a 180 degree Teshuvah in the past year. Read [his story here](#) and let it be a source of inspiration to you! The username you chose is beautiful. In physical matters, a goal isn't reached until the person achieves that which they set out to do. But in spiritual matters, being a "Mevakesh" is the goal itself! As the Pasuk says "*Yismach Lev Mivakshei Hashem*". It doesn't say "*Yismach lev Masigei Hashem*". Rather, the act of striving and wanting to get closer to Hashem, is already reason for great joy!

This website and forum are a "Teivah" (ark) in the Mabul of internet "Taivah". On this site and forum you will find people going through exactly the same thing as you, making great progress and giving each other support. Just yesterday, "Jack" hit his first 90 days of sobriety. Jack was heavily addicted for 38 years and didn't have one clean day in as long. He struggled with a difficult childhood, like you, and a host of other issues, such as low-self esteem, anxiety and depression. If jack can do it, we all can. Read Jack's inspiring time-line [over here](#).

The fact that you had a difficult childhood, and especially so much exposure to these things, are direct causes of your addiction. A sex-addiction therapist can help you work out the underlying issues. But my dear Jew, the fact that you were able to be clean for 1.5 years in yeshiva shows you have great inner strengths. I don't believe you will be able to ever again live comfortably with yourself until you have beaten that record!

There are two secrets to breaking free.

- 1) Never accept it. Always keep trying. Never give up. Believe that with enough work and the right tools, you can break free.
- 2) Never let a fall get you down. That is the trick of the yetzer hara and just leads to further falls.

In a sense, it seems that these two principles conflict with each other. Because if you never accept it and believe you can stop - so how do you not get down when falling? But we have to reconcile ourselves to this seeming conflict if we want to make progress.

Shmiras Habris is known in the Zohar as "Yesod". It is the foundation, the part that is underground, that no one sees. It is the real YOU. And if the foundation is weak, indeed the whole building is weak. That is why it is so important that you get control on this before the cracks in the foundation cause the building itself to start to crumble.

The bottom line is, it is essentially a sexual addiction, and as such, it needs to be dealt with in the right way. There are tried and proven methods for dealing with this addiction. The home-page of our website has a whole list of the tools on our network. Grab a hold of them and don't let go. Here are my initial suggestions.

- 1) A strong filter is a must. Having it all within hands reach will make it almost impossible to start healing. See [here](#) for all the options and info.
- 2) Join the [daily Chizuk e-mail list](#), if you haven't yet. You will learn approaches and tips every day!

3) Join Elya's FREE weekly phone groups on Sunday 3/4 PM. (Ask me for the number and PIN). It's fully anonymous, no one knows you are even listening in. It is run through a phone-conference company. You need group support, you need to hear others who are going through the same thing, even worse off than you - and yet making wonderful progress.

4) Make a log of your struggle in our Forum, in the "[Wall of Honor](#)" section. Aim for 90 days and post each day or two how you feel. You will get tons of Chizuk from what you will quickly come to consider your "spiritual family". Since you are already 3 days clean, i can put you up on our chart. You have passed Level 1. The chart is [here](#) and the rules are [here](#). Send me your info as detailed in the rules.

5) Read the stories of recovery on our site. You are not alone. People much worse off than you have done great feats of Teshuvah.

6) See a sex-addiction therapist. There are religious ones, but it doesn't have to be. See [this page](#) for a list. If you can't afford it, join the Tuesday night conference call for only \$10 a session, with a frum sex-addiction therapist on the line.

We are here for you dear Jew. Grab on to this website and forum, and don't let go. It's your ETERNITY we are talking about here. Write on the forum when you feel weak, you will get a lot of answers and chizuk!

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Re: My Story

Posted by mevakesh - 04 Dec 2008 21:47

Day 4 ... doing well, keeping busy, being koveah eitim.

Before the previous slip, I was clean for 27 days. That was a very long time for me as I usually do not make it past the third week. I have been mechazek myself in learning to a large degree over the past month and a half and have abandoned most of my idle surfing habits and secular media exposure.

Chazal say that barasi yetzer h'rah u'barasi torah tavlin (I created the yetzer harah and I created to Torah as a remedy). Chazal also say that Torah is the only remedy for the yetzer harah.

My plan is to strengthen myself in Torah as well as connect with people through this group to bezras Hashem recovery from the machala.

Thanks for listening ...

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Re: My Story

Posted by the.guard - 04 Dec 2008 23:01

Mevakesh, I put you up on our 90 Day chart [over here](#). Keep posting and I'll update it every few days!

Read [this thread](#) on the forum. I'm sure you will be very inspired. (It was just posted today!)

Between you and him and the rest of the powerful warriors on this forum, Moshiach is going to have to come! Hashem just won't be able to hold back his love for his people anymore.

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Re: My Story

Posted by mevakesh - 05 Dec 2008 15:50

Thanks for the link. That young mans story was very inspirational.

Today is day 5 ...

As I mentioned, I have made a conscious decision close to 2 months ago to give up secular media almost completely.

As I require Internet access for my line of work, I have fallen into harmful patterns of not only porn usage, but also secular media and culture exposure. My rationalization for this was that I needed "something" to distract me from the travails and troubles of life. B"H there is nothing glaringly wrong, but everyone has their pechel. My method of relieving stress was to mevatel zman on the Internet and specifically to watch movies. Weekends were generally the worst and I would tell my wife that I had work to do and would stay up until all hours of the night watching browsing the web, watching video clips on youtube and watching movies. These activities would often escalate into full scale incidents and for a long stretch of time, I was slipping virtually every weekend.

I knew that I needed to do something to break my dependence on the secular media, so I decided that over sukkos I would be mechazek myself in Torah and bezras hashem break my dependence on the media. Over sukkos, I decided to take the mesechta that I was learning the previously (I did not know gemara well at all and was not really koveah itim properly) and really put in time. As a result of this commitment, I was able to spend most of the Yom Tov learning and had committed to myself to keep it going after the Yom Tov.

Following Yom Tov, I got sick, but at the same time had to do some work late at night. I was physically and weak and emotionally unprepared for having to go back to my regular weekly patterns which included long periods of exposure to the Internet for work. I ended up slipping that night. To my surprise, however, I had little desire to listen to the radio or watch movies or follow sports, and was able to get back into my learning.

There was another incident about 2 weeks after that where something happened that bothered me very much and I slipped. After this slip, I was also able to get back into my learning relatively quick. The last period of 27 days was an exceptionally long time for me and the last slip hurt a lot, because in my mind there was really no need for it. The longer I go without porn, the stronger my desire is to look at it. It is this pattern that I need to break.

Baruch Hashem, I have found a new tam in my limud and turn to the Gemara instead of the Internet when I am bothered or frustrated. I no longer go online Saturday nights, but rather learn instead.

I need, however, to make a clean break and get away from this shmutz once and for all.

That is why I am here ...

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Re: My Story

Posted by the.guard - 06 Dec 2008 23:56

You are truly an inspiration! Finding a Ta'am in Torah instead of filth and garbage. Halevei all Yidden would take an example from you. This is the highest level of teshuvah!

And what you write is so true about the secular Media. Check out Chizuk e-mail #323 on [this page](#).

If you need open internet for your work, we highly suggest accountability software. See [here](#) for a few options.

You write that the longer you don't look at porn, the more you want to look at it. But you should know that this stage doesn't last for long. After about 90 days, the desire to look at porn becomes weaker, and as you put more distance between you and the addiction, it will get easier. You are doing great. May hashem give you the strength to continue to be an inspiration to us all!

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Re: My Story

Posted by mevakesh - 08 Dec 2008 15:34

I was learning the Michtav M'Eliyahu volume 3 recently pertaining to the strategies of the yetzer harah. There was one point Rabbi Dessler zt"l made that really stuck in my mind. As I do not have the sefer in front of me now, I will try and summarize the basic point in my own words.

The yetzer harah is the constant enemy, advisor and confidant of a person. Every decision and every action that a person makes (whether conscious or sub-conscious) will be influenced by the evil designs of the yetzer harah. Rabbi Dessler explains that the only way to effectively fight the yetzer harah is through Torah and mussar to the effect of "miat min haor doche harber min hachoshech" (A little bit of light has the ability to to illuminate much darkness). Rabbi Dessler goes on to explain the approach a person should take to fight the yetzer.

The point that really stuck out in my mind, however, was a particular statement Rabbi Dessler makes in this essay. Rabbi Dessler explains that as a person achieves higher and higher madregos, the yetzer will use completely different strategies in an attempt to to ensnare them. Rabbi Dessler continues to describe that as a person is successful in defeating the yetzer in a particular way, that person will gain a "tam" in overcoming that nessayon and it will eventually become easy for them over time.

For a long period, I had been unable to control my weekend surfing habits and have gone online Saturday nights and Sundays not necessarily for porn, but for "entertainment". It became readily apparent, however, that this form of entertainment alone was not only harmful in its own right, but would often result in nichsholim (slips). The underlying problem, however, was that I was "hooked" on the "entertainment" factor of the Internet (news, tv shows, movies sports, entertainment) as much as I was the porn.

This past motzei Shabbos, I was not tempted to look at porn, but rather to watch a particular tv show that I had been following. My wife went out that night and I could have easily gone online and watched the show for an hour. This particular nisayon was one that had repeated itself over that past few weeks and I B"H was able to stay offline. I would not be truthful with myself if I were to say that it was not a nisayon for me. It certainly was! But it was not as difficult as it was the first few weeks.

There was a personal issue that occurred on Sunday as well that was bothering me. I was very tempted to turn on the radio and listen to the weekend sports activity. I decided, however, to use sho Chad (bribery) for the yetzer horah and bought myself a pastrami eggroll and listened to a Torah tape in the car instead of sports. I did have to go online briefly again on Sunday and was tempted to click on an inappropriate auto-suggestion from a basic Google search I was doing, but came to my senses right away and did not allow my curiosity to get the better of me.

Today is day 8 ...

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Re: My Story

Posted by the.guard - 08 Dec 2008 16:30

Holy Jew, you are shaking the heavens with your Avodah! And I am sure many Yidden will be inspired by your wonderful posts!

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Re: My Story

Posted by battleworn - 09 Dec 2008 12:08

Thank you so much for sharing all this with us.

We can all learn a whole lot from you, about how to effectively fight that sly treacherous cunning menuval!!!!

You didn't tell us how fast you got back up after your last slip. That may be more signifacant than anything else. One of the great tzadikim rendered the pasuk "Velo sosuru acharei levavchem ve'acharei eineichem" as follows. Don't untie your kesher with Hashem after(acharei) you went after your eyes and after your heart. The greatest nachas ruach for Hashem is when we keep fighting even after we've been beaten.

CHAZAK VEEMATZ!!!

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Re: My Story

Posted by the.guard - 09 Dec 2008 12:41

Thank you for changing your name to "shomer". ("Mevakesh" was confusing :-)

Congrats on reaching Level 2 (7 days). I updated your chart and changed your name as well to "shomer".

Keep posting, you're an inspiration to us all!

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Re: My Story

Posted by mevakesh - 09 Dec 2008 16:03

Hi battleworm,

Before this past Succos when I made a firm commitment to learning, recovering from a slip took a long time and would often segway right into the next slip.

In general it takes me about 4 days after a slip to start to feel "normal" again. Previously when I had slips, for roughly 4 days I would feel very shvach and neglect my davening and learning to a large degree. I would often wake up late for davening for a week straight and daven at home. I would also frequently miss the little time of the day that I was kovayah itim. My exposure to the secular media would reinforce my position of remaining in a state of "nefilah".

After Succos, although I have unfortunately slipped 3 times since then, I was able to pick myself up with regard to my learning and my davening almost immediately. Even though I still felt unsettled for close to a week after the previous slip, I got up for the early minyan every day, learned for close to an hour before work, learned after work, learned at night etc. It is interesting to note that during the immediate days following the previous slip, learning was probably the only activity that "settled" me and gave me a feeling of yishuv hadas.

Despite my recent shortcomings, I cannot overstate the impact that a firm commitment to learning has made in my life. Aside from the "leshma" aspect of learning, I feel more fulfilled, happy, content and I have actually seen a boost in both personal and work productivity.

I am still struggling and I am only on day 9, but I was B"H able to get back up almost immediately after my previous slips, an accomplishment that I have no doubt is due directly to my recent commitment to learning.

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Re: My Story

Posted by mevakesh - 10 Dec 2008 18:04

Was up half the night for a work related emergency and feel completely drained today. As I was up for work, I did not need to come into the office until later. Tried to learn a little bit in the morning, but my head promptly fell upon the gemara. To compound things, my wife was out of the house in the morning so it was just me and the computer. I felt the itch deep within my stomach growing stronger and stronger. I knew it was going to be a battle ...

Usually I do not need to bring on the heavy artillery, but in this instance I felt it was necessary. I had to make a choice and in the end, I opted for the lesser of 2 evils.

The path to a slip is a relatively defined one within my circle of addiction. My conscious will not allow me to go straight for the porn sites, so my yetzer needs to warm me up a little. Usually it starts with Youtube or some other "parve" sites and gradually progresses into much much more. Once I have been touched off, however, it is all downhill from there. I knew that I could not let myself make that first move.

Instead of going for you Youtube or one of my other traditional starting points, I began reading the morning news articles. Illinois Gov. arrested, auto bailout, stocks set to rise etc. etc. Read a few articles, watched a few news clips and was satisfied that I was up on the daily events sufficiently. When my wife left the house, I knew that I was going to need something to "kill" some time or else I would fall right into the porn. I felt that I had to make a spot call and opted to watch a movie instead.

I am not proud of the fact that I watched a movie, but at least it was not porn. Perhaps I was wrong and perhaps I could have been stronger, but I felt that the porn was "right there" and I needed to do something fast. I do not know if this was the right decision, but I do know what the "wrong" decision would have been.

Today is day 10 and I intend to keep it that way bezras Hashem Yisbarach Shemo.

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Re: My Story

Posted by me - 10 Dec 2008 18:29

You did make the "right" choice! Sometimes to fight him you need to throw the dog a little piece of meat to leave you alone. The movie was the right thing at "that" right time.

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Re: My Story

Posted by the.guard - 10 Dec 2008 21:32

Holy Shomer! That was a hard test you passed!

I love you so much, so imagine how much Hashem must love you!!

Check out our [Kosher Isle](#) section for many great ideas, and many good "kosher" bones to throw the dog next time this type of problem comes up. We even have lists of "kosher movies" (although it's not very long - for good reason :-)

Here's just two examples of fun and entertaining kosher "time-wasters" from the kosher isle:

1) www.inn.co.il/More/Tovs.aspx

2) www.aish.com/jewlariouJtube/jewlariouJtubeDefault/default.asp

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Re: My Story

Posted by battleworn - 11 Dec 2008 14:34

Dear Shomer,

The other day you posted that you're "only" on day 9. The only is totally inappropriate, 9 days is 777600 seconds and each one of them is a tremendous tikun and is bringing Moshiach. And for each second you will merit a reward that is unfathomable even to a malach. The progress you have made in the last few months is mind-boggling. If you begin to appreciate how far you've come, you can achieve simcha and then that despicable menuval will hardly have a chance against you.

The chizuk one can get from reading your posts is huge. And that, of course, entitles you to extra siyata dishmaya.

The way to know if you made the right decision yesterday, is by looking at the outcome. Mitzva goreres mitzva, aveira goreres aveira.

As long as you're following up with the longer term solution (which you know very well how to do) it is nisbarer that you did the right thing. Do make sure to prepare a "lechatchila" strategy in case you're in such a situation again.

CHAZAK VEEMATZ!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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