

I need help, please

Posted by some_guy - 13 May 2012 16:44

I have not done this before, both the posting and the opening up, but I will try to do my best. Please tell me if anything I post is inappropriate in any way. I am not married and a little younger than most GYE members. My family is not religious, but I have been trying to be for about a year now. Before that, I would masturbate whenever I was stressed. I did it almost every night. I've never even taken drugs or alcohol (except for kiddish) so masturbating was my only coping method. You have to understand that because I was secular I did not see anything wrong with it. Well, when I learned from my Rabbi that Jews should not do that, I said I would just stop. Lot easier said than done. Since trying to stop, I have been able to go only 2-3 days without falling again. And when I do fall, I get so depressed that I end up falling again and again. My Rabbi always tells me that it is natural to have these urges and I am better than everyone else for just trying to stop. Is it also natural to not be able to stop. Why do I lack the self control to just stop? I get so depressed after falling that I see a therapist to deal with my depression. I have never told him why I am always so depressed, partly because I don't feel comfortable with him. I just don't know what to do. Sometimes I feel that I should just give-up and trust that these feelings will disappear when I get older. Does that make sense, or is my evil inclination trying to trick me? Addiction is defined as not being able to stop a dangerous coping method because of the user's dependence on it. That describes me perfectly. Can I really be an addict when I am only 16 years old? I just don't know, I don't know. Please if anyone can help me in any way I would be forever grateful. I just don't understand. Please, I need help.

=====

=====

Re: I need help, please

Posted by some_guy - 01 Nov 2012 22:05

I feel like crap. The thoughts just don't go away. I just want it all to end.

=====

=====

Re: I need help, please

Posted by Dov - 21 Nov 2012 05:20

I guess not having your computer is not the salvation. Hey, at least you took a real step. That's worth something....now what else needs to go? So I ask you:

[some_guy wrote on 01 Nov 2012 22:05:](#)

I feel like crap. The thoughts just don't go away. I just want it all to end.

What to end? You are in a yeshivah, no? You are beloved to Hashem, your very own G-d, no? An you are trying to be good, no? You are in the upper crust of the human race - there is no reason to declare yourself crap. You are not crap. Your feelings are just *feelings*, not the reality.

So what exactly do you want to end?

I'd want *my attitude toward my matzav* to end, if I were you. That's first.

Then I'd want your isolation to end. That'll mean a few friends you meet and talk with about your mishega'asn (and ours) like feeling like we absolutely *need* to use our penises for things that make us miserable, like pretending that our brains that got us into this mess can get us out if we try hard enough, that we are lower than whale excrement, and other very goofy beliefs. Many of our mistakes are more subtle.

What actual steps are you taking to "make those thoughts go away" so far?

Thanks for sharing your journey here,

Dov

=====
=====

Re: I need help, please

Posted by some_guy - 21 Nov 2012 16:33

I want this struggle to end. The lesser way to do that is to just masterbater 4-5 times a day, like before. The "better" option is to kill myself.

=====
=====

Re: I need help, please

Posted by Kedusha - 21 Nov 2012 18:13

Dear SG,

The struggle is not some incidental part of life - it's why we're here. Every time you're successful gives you towering merit and is very precious to Hashem. If it seems like you have to fall 4-5 times per day, and you stop yourself just one of those times, you're doing fantastic. Of course,

that can't be the end of your progress, but it's a very important start. (See the end of this post, where tool #8 from the GYE Handbook - "Cutting Down" - is quoted verbatim).

Another tip: A great man once advised that a young man should briefly think about his aveiros when he says "Selach Lanu" in Shemonah Esrei, but the rest of the day he should be charging ahead with Torah and Mitzvos. That sounds like great advice - go for it!

Cutting Down

If you've tried the steps above and you still find that the addiction is controlling you and causing frequent falls, it could be helpful to apply the battle-tactic of conquering and securing one territory at a time, instead of trying to conquer everything at once.

As discussed in tool #1, our sages have said: "There is a small organ in a man, if one feeds it - it is hungry, if one starves it - it is satiated". This is a very important Yesod to keep in mind, and it shows how much our Sages understood the nature of this addiction. The more we cut down, and the more distance we put between ourselves and the addiction, the easier it gets.

We can make ourselves red lines at first, and try to cut down as much as possible. If we would act out every day until now, we can try - for starters - to cut it down to only once every two days. If it used to be twice a week, we can try cutting it down to once a week. Or we can try making a strong resolution for a period of time, that besides for - say, one particular day of the week, we will not even consider acting out, no matter what. As we do this and learn to cut down more and more, we will find that "the less we feed it, the less we need it".

This tactic also teaches us not to use the addiction as an "escape mechanism" anymore. Very often, the subconscious reason that we became addicted in the first place was that we began to use the addiction as a kind of "escape" from the harsh - or difficult-to-deal-with realities of life.

We

used the addiction to sooth ourselves and medicate our feelings. But once we start to draw red lines and cut down on these behaviors with hard work and determination, we force ourselves to no longer instinctively use the behaviors to "escape" into ourselves. This causes a gradual change in our thinking that ultimately makes it much easier to break free completely.

Also, as we work on progressively cutting down, we build up our virtues. In the merit of saying "no" to ourselves thousands of times, Hashem will give us special divine assistance to ultimately find real freedom from the addiction.

The Gemara says: "Habah letaher misaayen lo - He who comes to be purified, they help him", and Chazal also say: "Biderech she'adom rotzeh leilech molichin osoh - in the way a person wants to go, they lead him". Why does the Gemara speak always in plural form: "they help him", and "they lead him"? The Maharsha explains that every effort a person makes creates

an angel. And when the army of angels gets large enough, it has the power to help one overcome

all the obstacles and lead him to where he wants to go!

Every time we say "no" to the addiction, a priceless coin is added to our spiritual bank. Even if

and when we do end up falling, we do not lose what we had previously gained. When we have enough "spiritual coins" in our account, Hashem helps us to completely break free. (See Part 2 of this handbook for more on these important principles).

However, it is important to emphasize that these tactics will only be effective if our goal is to stop completely over time, by progressively cutting down more and more. But if we allow ourselves to become complacent by simply keeping our addiction "under control", we will remain addicted to these behaviors. And as we often end up learning later the hard way, addiction is a progressive disease. It doesn't get better, only worse.

=====

=====

Re: I need help, please
Posted by some_guy - 21 Nov 2012 18:22

I tried cutting down. Every time I made a red line, I crossed it when I got stressed. I just want it to stop.

=====

=====

Re: I need help, please
Posted by Kedusha - 21 Nov 2012 20:25

Red lines by definition may not be crossed. If you keep crossing them, try starting off with some easier red lines.

=====

=====

Re: I need help, please
Posted by some_guy - 21 Nov 2012 20:32

What would be some easier red lines than, "I won't look at porn when I masterbate." If I cannot even stop using my family's computer to look at sick disgusting stuff what can I do?

=====

=====

Re: I need help, please

Posted by Kedusha - 21 Nov 2012 20:42

You might have some success with the Taphsic method, which is discussed on this site and in the GYE Handbook. See below (copied from the GYE Handbook):

Tool #10

Extra Strong Fences: The TaPhSiC Method

The farther we have fallen into this addiction, the more extreme measures we will need to take to

break free of its clutches. TaPHSiC stands for "The Physical & Spiritual Combo" Method. ("Tafsik"

also means "Stop!" in Hebrew). This tool has worked well with many Frum addicts in helping them

stop these destructive behaviors completely. It may not work for high-level addicts or for people with no Yiras Shamayim, but for most frum addicts this method has worked wonders, and it has freed many people from the obsession.

We often feel like two different people. After each fall we ask ourselves, what repercussions will it

take to finally stop me? Do I have any hope? How can it be that I am a frum Yid in all other areas

besides for this? Do I have Yiras Shamayim - or don't I?

Part 1: What Doesn't Stop Us?

The first thing we need to do is to face the truth about ourselves.

"Abstract" spiritual repercussions don't generally stop me, even though I believe that:

- This is one of the most serious aveiros.
- I am destroying my soul.
- I am creating other destructive souls.
- I am losing Siyyata Di'shmaya in all of my life (as the pasuk says, "ki yireh becha ervas davar veshav me'acharecha").
- I am cutting off my connection with Hashem.
- I am desensitizing myself to spirituality.
- I am making it ever harder to do Teshuvah.
- It is making me feel like a hypocrite in all other Mitzvos I do.
- I am destroying the "Yesod – foundation", of my entire spiritual structure.
- My kids and wife can likely 'sense' that I am not sincere in my Yiddishkeit, overall.
- These behaviors may likely spiral into worse aveiros.
- I am/will likely end up cutting myself off from the World to Come.
- Moshiach is coming soon; how will I face him?

In spite of the above, my Yiras Shamayim will generally NOT stop me from:

- Looking at shmutz
- Being Motzi Zera Livatala
- Even if I would make a shvuah to stop/avoid it, I'll end up breaking it sooner or later; the desires are just too powerful.

Don't feel bad that your Yiras Shamayim is not strong enough to stop you. It doesn't mean you don't have any. When Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai blessed his students before he died he said, "May your fear of heaven be equal to your fear of man". And his students asked him: "Rebbi, is that all?". And he answered: "Halevai!". And even Rabbi Akiva wasn't able to stop himself when faced head-on with a powerful lust. See Kidushin 81/a where the Gemara tells how Rabbi Akiva started climbing up a tree to sin – until the Satan himself had to stop him from sinning. Imagine! This is the same Rabbi Akiva who cried 'Shma Yisrael' with joy as they combed his flesh with iron

combs! (See principle 2 of part 2 of this handbook for more on this idea).

The non-spiritual "SHORT TERM" repercussions don't stop me either, even though:

- It makes me depressed.
- I lose time from work.
- I lose sleep.
- I lose money.
- I lose a close connection with my wife.
- I feel distant from my children.
- I don't have time for anyone but "me".
- My whole life revolves around my next "fix".
- I feel like a slave to my desires.

The non-spiritual "LONG TERM" repercussions don't stop me, even though:

- My behaviors may be found out.
- I can lose my good name.
- I can lose my job.
- I can lose my marriage.
- I can lose my children.
- My children may have a hard time with shidduchim as a result.
- My children may need therapy one day for the trauma they may go through.
- My behaviors will likely get worse.
- I can end up in jail.
- I can catch diseases.
- I can end up suicidal or dead.

Part 2: What Would Stop Us?

Now that we have faced the truth about ourselves, we need to ask: What spiritual and nonspiritual

repercussions WOULD stop us?

Spiritually speaking, what WOULD stop me?

- I would not be Mechalel Shabbos to view shmutz, no matter how bad I wanted it. I would be able to wait 24 hours.
- If the only way to get my fix in the coming 24 hours was by eating a Ham sandwich first, I probably would hold out and not do it for 24 hours.
- After I finish fully giving in to my desires, I don't want to throw the rest of my Yiddishkeit away. I feel bad about it and I really do want to "come back" to Hashem. If I had a choice to push a "Stop These Aveiros Forever" button, I would press it then.

What does this all show me? That I still do have a holy spark within me, and that my Yiras Shamayim is still existent. It may not be enough to stop me in general, but it is strong enough to make me want to get rid of these behaviors AFTER the act. And even before the act, it is strong enough to enable me to hold out for a while - when the spiritual repercussions are BIG (like

Chillul

Shabbos or eating Treif). What we can see from this is that there ARE spiritual repercussions that would stop us, if they were only BIG enough, and especially when we're not under the spell of lust.

Now let's look at the non-spiritual side of the coin. What WOULD stop me?

- If I was about to act out and someone walked into the room, would I continue?
- If every time I acted out, I would become racked with pain, would I continue?
- If there was an electronic eye following me, and every time I acted out, my wife or Rebbe would see me doing it, would I continue?
- If every time I acted out I would feel sick and I would have to take a bus to the hospital, stay there for 2 hours, and get a shot to return me to normal, would I continue?

What does this all show me? It shows that there ARE repercussions that would stop me, if only they were BIG enough.

To sum up: Although the "normal" repercussions, both short term and long term, are not enough

to stop me, there still do exist both spiritual and non-spiritual repercussions that WOULD stop me,

if they were big enough and immediate enough.

Part 3: Finding the Perfect Formula

So all we have to do now is find the perfect formula; a combination of spiritual and non-spiritual repercussions that ARE big enough to stop us.

We have seen that AFTER the fact (when the desires have been quieted), we are much more willing to do what it takes to stop the NEXT occurrence. And we have also seen that we are able to hold out better when the spiritual repercussions are BIGGER.

So let's try this:

If we made a shvuah in the name of Hashem (and actually pronounce Hashem's name) that AFTER we act out (on our bottom line behaviors) we will do x,y or z – would we keep this shvuah? Most frum addicts would. After all, it is AFTER the acting out. The desires have already been silenced and we feel bad. We don't want to throw away the rest of our Yiddishkeit. So would

we not keep a shvuah that we made in the name of Hashem? Will we transgress one of the 10 commandments "Lo sisah es Shem Hashem Elokecha lashav – Do not swear in G-d's name in vain" (and as the pasuk continues, "for Hashem will never cleanse he who swears in His name in vain")?

We have to make the shvuah to do something hard and painful. Not too hard that we might come

to even break the shvuah in Hashem's name c"v, but hard enough to make us not want to act out

next time. Something we know will hurt, but something we know we can keep.

For example, one guy wrote that he vowed to give \$200 to tzedaka after every fall. Within 4 falls,

he was free of his addiction. Another person (in Israel) wrote that he succeeded breaking free by

making a vow for one year that every time he fell, he would have to take a trip by bus to the Kotel

and stay there for 90 minutes. This ultimately helped him to stop completely, because each time he felt that he was about to give in, he would remember what he would have to do and be deterred.

Some other examples might be: "I swear in the name of Ado-nai – for one week, that if I am motzi zerva livatala, then within the following 24 hours, I will:

tell my Rebbe

tell a close friend

fast the following day from "alos hashachar" until nightfall. (If it's Shabbos or Yom Tov, I will fast the day after.)

At first, these Shvuos should be for short periods of time, as in the example above. If we see that

this is working well for us, we can extend the shvuah for longer periods of time. If we see that the

deterrent turns out not to be strong enough for us, we might need to find something a little more painful. (See Tool #7 - "Making Fences" above, for an example shvuah that we helped someone

set up. If we make that same shvuah in the name of Hashem, we are taking this fence to a higher level).

Part 4: The Double-Fence TaPHSiC Method

An even more powerful form of the TaPHSiC method is to make it into a double fence by using it for both before and after the fall.

For example: Make a list of things to do before falling, such as taking a half hour walk, reaching out by phone to a friend from GYE for help, etc. Then, make the shvuah that if you act out before

doing the things on your list, you will have to do something very painful (say, give \$500 to Tzedaka). But if you act out AFTER doing the things on your list, you will only have to give \$50 to

Tzedaka. In this way, you will feel obligated to do the things on your list before giving in, because

you know that once you give in and the lust has past, you won't be able to ignore the shvuah. The

genius of this is, that by the time you are finished doing the things on the list, the lust attack will usually have dissipated. And often before giving in, even thinking of the things you will have to do

will make you drop the whole idea in the first place. This double-fence TaPHSiC method has been shown to be one of the most powerful ways for frum addicts to break the addiction for the long term.

A member shared on our forum how the double-fence TaPHSiC method works for him:

I made a commitment that if I wanted to look at shmutz online I would first do one of 4 things, (1) talk through how I'm feeling with my wife, (2) go for a 30 min run or exercise, or (3) learn Torah for 30 min, or (4) read about the holocaust for 30 min. Then I made a shvuah that if I did anyone of these 4 actions before looking, then I would only have to give \$75 to Tzedakah. But if I did not do any of these 4 actions but just went right ahead and looked, I would have to give \$750 to Tzedaka. I am unemployed now (so a lot of time on my hands), and so taking a \$750 hit is just not possible for me right now. When the Yetzer Hara gets us in the moment, he makes us forget all consequences. With this method, it's

just much harder to forget the consequences. B"H I haven't looked at any shmutz online since I made this commitment. It helps me a lot and I hope it can help you too.

Here's an example of the 'Double-Fence TaPHSiC method' that someone in Jerusalem set up for himself: (The parts in parentheses are not spoken)

I swear in the name of Hashem that for one week;

(Part 1) ...if I act-out, which means either being motzei z"l - or intentionally seek out and/or gaze at erotic images for more than 2 minutes within any given half hour's time, then I will go to Kever

Rochel (which is not so far from Jerusalem) within 72 hours.

(Part 2) ...if I did this without having spoken to a person about my desire to act-out within the previous 2 hours, then I will travel to Meron (which is much further and harder to go to from Jerusalem) within 72 hours and stay there for at least 5 hours, and I will tell my wife why I am going.

(Additional clauses, as needed)

(Clause 1) ...If I am unable to travel to Kever Rochel or to Meron because of an oness, then I will go within 72 hours of being able to.

(Clause 2) ...If I travel to Meron, then I will not have to travel to Kever Rochel as well.

(Clause 3) ...If I act-out without remembering this shvuah (at least in general), I will not have to travel anywhere.

We can keep making minor adjustments as we go along. That is why it's best to make the vow only for a week at a time at first, and then maybe a month... (We must make sure to renew the shvuah BEFORE it expires. Often the addiction convinces us that we're doing OK, only to catch us off guard when we suddenly realize that the shvuah has expired!). Once we are confident and

comfortable with the vow and see that it really works for us, we may need to make this vow only once a year!

It's a delicate balance, but with careful thought and siyatta dishmaya, most Frum addicts can find

a formula that really works for them, over time. And once we have found it, we will know. There will be a sudden feeling of joy – a tremendous new freedom in our lives. We will feel like we have

literally been freed from the self-imposed "prison" that we have been living in for so many years!

Cautionary Notes:

Although the TaPHSiC method is very powerful, finding the perfect formula is delicate and DANGEROUS business. If we vow to do something too painful, we run the risk that we'll break our vow, which besides for the serious sin, can lead to deterioration since the person can chas veshalom feel that if he has transgressed this sin, there's no hope for him anyway! On the other hand, if it's not painful enough, there's always the risk of continued falls. Feel free to send your shvuah ideas to us before making them, for advice.

It is important to write up a list of the vows for our records, and also to enable us to review them carefully before making them each time. In addition, having a list of the vows will help us refine them as we discover the ones that worked for better or for worse, and we can then use this refined list to make the vows again for progressively longer periods of time.

It is also important to understand that the TaPHSiC method is like putting an electrified fence at the edge of a cliff. If you come close to the edge, you will be "shocked" and back away.

However,

it goes without saying that if someone continues to walk alongside the edge of the cliff, the repeated shocks will start becoming very painful. At some point, he may just turn the electricity in

the wires off, which will lead to a fall soon after. Or at some point, even the electricity won't help and he'll stumble and fall through the fence.

Therefore, in conjunction with this method, it is vital to put up other fences as well; fences that will

keep us far away from the "edge of the cliff". This means installing a good filter, as discussed in previous tools. And on top of that filter, we need to install an "Accountability system" as well, such

as eBlaster or Webchaver which sends reports of our internet usage to someone we would be ashamed to disappoint. This makes the repercussions all the more real, and keeps us far from even trying to find loop-holes in our filter.

The bottom line is, that although this method is like putting a strong electric fence at the edge of the cliff to stop us when all else fails, we need to continue to use the many tools of the GYE handbook to keep ourselves safely away from the edge.

=====

Re: I need help, please

Posted by dont give up - 22 Nov 2012 00:31

only a thought...

if we want this struggle to end, the only option is: to end it!

meaning, the more we feed it - the stronger it becomes, and the less we feed it (the more we get used to being able to over come it) - the weaker it becomes.

so if we continue feeding it - it will never end.

but,

its soooo hard to end it, and we cant just stop...

but, although we cant control it completely and just stop, we can control **part** of it, and the more we train ourselves to control it - the more of it we can control.

e.g. every time we get this burning desire to look at something or touch ourselves etc., we make sure that for the next 10 minutes we won't!

- because even after those 10 min. we go ahead with it, we still controlled ourself for those 10 min. and that IS a victory! (much more then if we would have gone ahead straight away!)

and once we get used to controlling ourself for 10min. we can up it to 20min. etc.

and ultimately we will get used to... controlling ourselves.

but this will only help if we really think that we cant continue with this stuff for the rest of our lives

- cause it drives us crazy, - it has full control over us, and we just cant stop!

so realizing that we really want to stop, and although we can't, this is a step in that direction - and be"H we will ultimately be able to control ourselves completely - will give us the power to actually take the step, and taking the first step will in turn help us take the next step until - be"H - you will be able to control yourself completely!

we need to stop ourselves (at least for the first 10 min) as soon as we have the desire - as soon as we realize what we're doing, we say: hold it! I need to control myself - cause that's the only way its going to stop!
(once we take that first tiny peek or that small touch etc. then its almost for sure that we're going to fall..)

also, for those 10min it would be best to get involved in something totally off the subject, ride your bike, go jogging, etc. - and best would be if you can do with a friend!

)

(but ultimately Dov knows what he's talking about)

=====
=====

Re: I need help, please
Posted by some_guy - 22 Nov 2012 03:48

I talked to my therapist today. He said I should go to a SA meeting next week. I hope SA will help.

=====
=====

Re: I need help, please
really which much success, and waiting again for that "3rd day" post (and many more
Posted by Dov - 22 Nov 2012 08:13

It will only help if you work it and use it...but just showing up is a great start, too. Nothing to sneeze at. I pray you don't stop there.

If you want a suggestion for what to read that might help you *work it* when you get there, or if you would just like to talk on the phone a bit about it for support with another addict, I volunteer to volunteer. (to volunteer)

=====
=====

Re: I need help, please
Posted by some_guy - 22 Nov 2012 13:51

Thank you, Dov.

=====
=====

Re: I need help, please
Posted by some_guy - 25 Nov 2012 19:29

I feel weak lately. I am a little nervous about what happens in a SA meeting. I am worried that I will be the youngest personm there by many years so noone will take me sincerly. Does anyone have any advice?

=====
=====

Re: I need help, please
Posted by Dov - 25 Nov 2012 21:08

Is this stuff better talked about over the phone? Let me know if u want to.

The meetings are in discreet rooms. You will not be publicised as a pervert or anything. Everyone there is a person who feels as you do and is sympathetic to *your* powerful wish of safety and secrecy, for they have the exact same wish. In fact, your secret is far more safe with *them*, than it is with **you**! You will compromise yourself - but I have never seen an SA compromise another SA member's anonymity.

And there is no shame in the room - please try to leave as much of your ego, pride, and shame at the door as you can. The people there may have a little sobriety, or a lot, sometimes none. But if they have a lot, you will have a good time, laugh a bit, and hopefully you will go ahead and say why you are there clearly and honestly when your opportunity to say something comes.

And that's a great thing to do.

You may be the youngest person in the room, but so? Look around at the people and hear what they say - if it is from the heart or showing off weird stuff, you will be able to tell. Over the course of two or three meetings, learn who is sober for a while there, working the steps in their lives, and who has got stuff you want, and I suggest you speak with them after the meetings. Make recovery friendships there and if you feel weird being so young there, admit it freely! We lead with our weakness in recovery, so that we can get freed from them by putting light on them. Then they shrink up.

You will need to introduce yourself by first name when they go around the room doing introductions.....there is no need to suddenly use an English name your friends really do not call you - this is a place to be yourself. Any place where I can say "I masturbate to porn" has got to be safe enough for me to use my real name! And please don't say "some_guy", OK, or I will
(just kidding)

If you are going to a meeting in a specific neighborhood and have the guts/want to tell me or another SA guy beforehand (we do not bite), we may be able to get you in touch with a guy who goes to that meeting who will be glad to meet with you in the parking lot there a few minutes before they start just so you have a familiar face there. The guy could be a Jew, or not. Whatever you want.

In case you were wondering, we do keep our clothes **on** in the meetings.... :o So...Wear your yarmulka, for the *chillul Hashem* is in a Torah Jew masturbating himself to porn gods or goddesses - **not** in a Torah Jew who is admitting the truth about himself and taking brave steps to actually get well. That self-commitment is rare, even here on GYE. Besides, the only people who will see you as you really are, are the other sexaholics in the room!

Finally, I suggest going to about 5-6 meetings before you decide whether SA is for you or not.

It is a safe place - actually probably the safest place you will ever be.
personally eat my yarmulka.

Hatzlocha!

- Dov

=====
=====