

How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by tttzyk - 11 Sep 2013 22:23

I (like many people here) have a problem with internet porn and being motzi zera. I want to stop so badly. It's wrong, I'm ruining my spirituality and my relationship with G-d, and the guilt is overwhelming are among the reasons why I want to stop. But at the same time, at the risk of being blunt, it is really enjoyable. I enjoy watching that stuff... which is probably why I have such a ta'avah to do it. I'm not ready to stop cold turkey because I enjoy it too much.

I recently started the 90 day chart and I hope to go clean for 30 days. I have not done that in a while. I hope this is a first step towards recovery. But, I'll be completely honest, when (if) I hit the 30 day mark, I plan to celebrate by "falling." And not only that, but I probably won't feel so guilty about it because it's going to be coming after what I consider to be a major spiritual accomplishment. And then I hope to go another 30 days (or longer if I think I can handle it), and celebrate in the same way. I'm not gonna lie, there is a bit of a sinister motivation here as well... going clean for 30 days will also allow me to "fall" without feeling the guilt.

Which brings me back to my original question... how can I do teshuvah? One of the essential components of teshuvah is azivas hacheit- abandoning the sin... making a genuine commitment to stop doing the sin. I'm not doing that! I plan (hope) to tone it down this year (especially with all of your help), but I don't plan on stopping. In fact, I am really looking forward to day 30! How can I do teshuvah??? Is it even possible for me yet???

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by gibbor120 - 11 Sep 2013 22:35

I'm not quite sure how to answer your question. You will stop for 30 days, binge on day 31, stop another 30 days, binge again... over and over???

I highly doubt that it will work. You might get a big urge on day 15.

As the Big Book says "half measures availed us nothing". Halfsies doesn't work so well with the Y"H.

It sounds like you are afraid to give it up. I don't blame you, but giving it up half way doesn't usually (maybe ever) work.

So are you ready to let go? What are you afraid of?

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by tttzyk - 11 Sep 2013 22:44

First, I hope to give it up, I hope to extend my period of abstinence longer and longer. But, at the same time, I'm nervous about that. Can I really go 50, 60, 100 days clean? And I know my plan isn't good, because binging will probably make me want it more. But at the same time, I've tried to stop cold turkey and it hasn't worked. I have an uncontrollable urge, and the fact that I never plan on doing it again makes me want to do it more. Then I feel terrible guilt and I fall again. And it's a cycle that goes on for a few days, usually until Shabbos when I have a spiritual revival, I make a new commitment, only to fall again soon after.

When you ask what am I afraid of? First of all, I enjoy doing and I'm not ready to give it up. But, I think you're right, there is real fear there. The fear is that if I try to genuinely stop, I won't believe myself, as has happened in the past. I will fall and I will have crippling guilt. Stopping halvesies (if I can even do it) will reduce the amount I do it, and will reduce the guilt I feel when I do it.

You asked, what happens if you have an urge on day 15? In the past, I gave in. Because I had an urge. And there was no light at the end of the tunnel. Only fear and guilt. But now, if I get the same urge, I hope I can tell myself, "only 2 weeks... you can do it... and if you wait 2 weeks, you can get the same result without the guilt." My hope is that this can be a successful motivator.

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by gibbor120 - 11 Sep 2013 22:50

You are describing the "holding your breath" method perfectly. Most of us have tried it and failed

at it.

For many of us, acting out is the solution, and the problem is some dissatisfaction with life. When we stop acting out, life becomes unbearable. When it does, we turn to our favorite solution - acting out. Is there something in your life that is stressful that triggers you to act out?

The answer is often learning how to live so we do not **need** to act out. "The more you feed it, the more you need it" is a fact. Weaning doesn't work for anyone I know of. Addressing life issues can alleviate the need to act out.

Have you read the handbook? What tools have you used to try and stay sober?

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by tttzyk - 11 Sep 2013 22:56

I have not read the handbook, I just skimmed through the site. I have not tried any tools yet, but I guess I should read up on them. Personally, I do have stressors in my life, and I do act out in response to those stressors. But, I don't know, I don't think that's it. I've thought about this for a while now. I act out even without the stressors. I do it because I enjoy it. In fact, I usually use stressors as an excuse and rationalization to act out... I don't think it's the cause. Granted the stress makes it more difficult to fight back, but I feel like my problem is the act itself, how much I enjoy it, and how I'm (or at least I think I'm) addicted to it.

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by skeptical - 11 Sep 2013 23:03

As long as it is an option in your mind (for whatever reason), you are telling yourself it's really not so bad. In fact, you're still viewing it as a good thing, a method to celebrate success. As long as it's not SO bad in your mind, you will most likely have a really difficult time stopping.

You can try it and let us know how it works for you, but from my personal experiences, I don't see it as an effective solution.

Hatzlacha!

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by Dr.Watson - 11 Sep 2013 23:05

tttzyk, You describe where my mind is at now and has been at for the last year and a half. I wrote recently in my thread about how i want to watch porn sometimes just cos i enjoy it and it's hard to stop myself doing something I enjoy. But Gibbor's right, I can't go on just fighting urges all day every day forever. The thing is, I'm not at all unhappy with my life. B"H things are great, Hashem has been very kind to me, so I guess I'm asking you Gibbor, what do you think may have started my addiction? what do I need to fix in order to "alleviate the need to act out"? Is it about the aspects of yiddishkeit that I feel have gone downhill (see recent posts in my thread), is that what you mean by "learning how to live"

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by gibbor120 - 11 Sep 2013 23:07

Of course once we act out habitually, it doesn't take much for us to keep doing it, stress or no stress. But what happens when you try to stop? I bet more often than not, stress, loneliness, etc.

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by Brother - 11 Sep 2013 23:24

Hi tttzyk

I think the first thing you need to tell yourself is like this, you say don't want to give up the porn because it is soo sweet ok but think of it what if one day you'll want to give it up do you think you'll be able to? or maybe (just maybe) you won't be able to and what one you'll won't to stop badly really badly you'll do whatever is in your power to stop. What if at that time you'll find that whatever you do you just can't stop even if at that time porn does NOT sound so swwet anymore?

ttzyk I'm not going to tell you if you're addicted to this stuff or not but if you're then the day WILL come that you'll want to stop more than anything in the world to no avail you're hooked chained. Addiction is progressive and powerful if I were you I would look at PORN as my enemy.

one more small note you describe bieng nervous about not being able to get to 50,60 etc... ttzyk we all are thats we take 1 day at a time.

Wishing you lots of luck

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by gibbor120 - 11 Sep 2013 23:34

Hi Dr.,

I'm not sure what to say. My experience is that porn fills a hole in my life (lonliness, feelings of low self-worth). Someone on this forum once said that they never had any emotional issues and don't have any now. I didn't know what to tell him. I guess it's possible. Or it's possible that he just didn't realize he did have some issues. It seems that 99% of addicts have other issues, and porn fills some hole in their lives.

You may just have a bad habbit. I guess break the habbit the same way you'd break a habbit of biting your nails.

I'm just trying to share my experience. I don't have experience with what you are describing.

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by inastruggle - 12 Sep 2013 02:15

tttzyk,

When I joined the site I also felt the way you did. I wasn't as honest as you and tried to lie to myself by pretending that I wouldn't fall after 30. But in my mind I knew I wasn't ready to give it up and "somehow" after a little clean while I kept "losing control" and acting out.

I think the thing that made me actually decide to give it up was a realization I had been trying to not think about. I try to think of myself as someone who does logical things, not someone controlled by irrational emotions. So if I truly believed that Hashem existed, and Judaism is true (something I believe because of logic) then it's simply not worth it to act out.

The reason is obvious, if I knew that someone would give me a little burn each time I acted out then I wouldn't do it, so if I'll go to gehinnom which is a lot worse, then I for sure shouldn't do it.

I still am not on the madreiga that I feel like it's that way, nor am I on the madreiga that I feel that Hashem is watching everything I do. But since logically that's what I know, then I must act on that thought or I'm being illogical.

What I started doing was making fences and making it not as fun and easy to act out by taking on various kabbalos and taphsics. I still felt like I wanted to act out, and sometimes I still feel that way. But I know that logically I'm doing the right thing.

So the choice is yours, logically it definitely makes sense to stop. By that I mean to never do it again. Not to take away guilt, but to simply not go to gehinnom. There are other benefits as well, it makes you live a better life, if you're an addict then it makes you live life for the first time, but the main thing is that it just makes sense logically to stop.

If you want to do the logical thing then decide to stop and make it so that you will stop even though "you" want to continue. If you want to go with your feelings then I'm sorry to tell you that what everyone else is saying is true. Most people don't manage to cut down, it seems to be all or nothing, at least for the guys here that are actually successful.

Just one more thing, I know the uncontrollable urge, it doesn't stay that way all the time. It's easier to stop than you think.

Either way, I wish you a gmar chasimah tova and a gut gebensht yuhr.

Hatzlacha!

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by Ki Anu Amecha - 16 Sep 2013 14:23

I just recently read a very inspiring line in a publication for Yom Kippur; Question: How do I repent? Answer: How did you sin? you didn't need to figure out, you just did, same with teshuva, you just start, and g-d will help you with the rest.

Chag Sameach!

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by tttzyk - 17 Sep 2013 00:46

I don't know. From a halachic perspective, it seems that there is more to teshuvah than simply wanting to do it. At the very least, there are three fundamental requirements: 1) Charatah-regret, 2) Azivas Hacheit- abandoning the sin or making a sincere commitment to stop (never do it again?), and 3) vidui- verbal confession.

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 17 Sep 2013 01:37

On the other hand, the Gemara (Kidushin 49b) says that even if one is a Rosho Gomur and he has a hirhur teshuva, he instantly is considered a tzadik. So there are different levels of teshuva. We need to start with step 1 - a hirhur teshuva - a sincere commitment to quit the insanity.

Hatzlacha

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Re: How do I do teshuvah?

Posted by SIB101854 - 22 Sep 2013 05:42

Previously, I would also go "cold turkey" during Elul from porn and masturbation. I was only successful in maintaining such a streak until the end of Yom Kippur in most years.

Take it from someone who just realized and confronted his addiction, and fights every day, and has been matzliach since an amazing discussion and confrontation with my Tzadekes of an Eshes Chayil-unless and untill you realize that porn, masturbation and all of the societal influences that we are bombarded with on a daily basis are a substitute for emotional and physical intimacy with your Eshe Chayil-you have not yet begun to realize the depths of your addiction.

What a difference being on this site was during Elul and the Yamim Noraim. Slichos, the davening on the Yamim Noraim especially Musaf on Rosh HaShanah, Tefilas Zakah, the piyutim and Neilah really hit me like a ton of bricks.

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