

Hello, I'm new.

Posted by NotAlone - 05 Oct 2009 22:21

Hello everyone at GYE.

I have been reading these forums sporadically for the past few months, and they have been a great inspiration. I am an addict. I didn't realize it, or didn't wish to admit it, for the past few years. Saying it, or rather, writing it, is a great weight off my shoulders. I'm still young and single, and I hope I can get rid of this spectre that hovers over my every conscious moment before it takes me over completely, and destroys my life.

I had been trying to overthrow my addiction alone for some years, with a typical lack of success. At times, I would resign to my fate, and at times I would fight in feeble throes of self-loathing. I knew I must distance myself from my lust, and I did, but ultimately a test would come anyway, and I would fail. My life settled into a holy-unholy cycle, a sort of secret mental routine. The simple knowledge that I was doing something wrong was always enough to make me regret what I did, but not enough to cure my blindness in moments of weakness.

Eventually I found GYE a little over half a year ago. I don't remember how. I didn't pay it much attention at the time; I was at the top of a holy cycle. I had not watched anything in months, I had not done anything in weeks. What did I need it for? I could handle myself!

Eventually I collapsed again under the strain, and sunk so low that I no longer cared. Finally, I rose to float again, a corpse in a sea of sin and self-loathing. I cleansed myself of my sin and started again. This time I read the site. I was determined to find the cause of my weakness, to find a method to control myself for those few moments or hours on which weeks or months hinged. And then I understood what caused me to fail:

I was alone. There was never anyone to help, or encourage, or support. All I had was me. Whenever I finally had to confront my lust, and could no longer avoid it, whenever I felt weak and vulnerable, I could not hear the call of G-d urging me to control myself. I could only hear two voices: Mine and another.

"Do it."

"No."

"You like it."

"Maybe now, but not later."

"Later doesn't matter."

"Doesn't it?"

"It doesn't."

And it didn't. Not to me. The second voice always blocked my foresight. It blocked my connection with G-d. It is a powerful voice.

No one was there to help, to yell "Open your eyes! It's shut them!". There was no one I could look to for support. I knew no one who suffered like me!

But there is someone. There are many: all of you who I know at GYE, though you don't yet know me. All of you who have the same or larger tests, that conquer them, and who would look upon me with my shut eyes and yell at me to open them, to realize what I am doing. And, by remembering them, by reading this forum, I gained the strength to move on.

I distanced myself again from the lust. Yesterday it returned. No stimuli. No precursor. Just some biological cycle.

Today, I barely held it back. I barely won. I know that to win again, I must ask for help. I must throw away my foolish pride, and let people help me.

I am, I hope, NotAlone.

To those that have read this far, I thank you greatly.

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by sci1977 - 28 Dec 2009 20:12

Welcome to the forum. Everyone here will make sure you are notalone.

Good luck and put it all in G-d's hands.

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by Kedusha - 28 Dec 2009 20:21

[Koliel Guy wrote on 28 Dec 2009 18:39:](#)

Someone wrote something on the subject in a different thread. I wrote there that it was the scariest thing I ever heard.

I officially changed my mind.

This is.

This is beyond insane!

You mean to tell me that even after all the work and struggling to escape this hell it can just fester and build up inside, and then one day when your 70 just randomly blow up like the Chernobyl nuclear plant????!!

I'm sorry, but I refuse to believe this one.

No way man.

Not me.

Not this lifetime.

I got enough to deal with as it is.

If you guys want, YOU can do the festering thing, all by yourselves.

And if these are the facts - do me a favor and don't enlighten me.

I'd rather live a lie.

I'm with you, KG. This goes against what Duvid Chaim has told us about living the 12 steps.

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by bardichev - 28 Dec 2009 20:27

kg

chillax

sorry for being so blunt

FIRST GET TO 70..THEN WE WILL TALK!!

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by Kollel Guy - 28 Dec 2009 20:40

Bards has a good point - again.

I still stand by my rant though.

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by the.guard - 29 Dec 2009 00:31

As far as what Yosef wrote about it getting worse, I want to clarify what he means. This is something Dov explained to me once. It's not that it gets worse, just we get much more SENSITIVE as we recover. While we were in active addiction, only the hard-core stuff would turn us on, but as we recover, even a billboard or a silly picture of a face can make us go to pieces.... This is a sign of **recovery**, and is very understandable. Since we are addicts, we will always be affected by triggers, and the more we recover, the less it takes to get us nuts. This is actually a Bracha from Hashem in disguise, because it forces us, as we make more and more progress, to cut down our access to stimulation more and more. For example, while we may have been able to watch movies when we began to recover, we will find that as we get more sober and put more distance between us and the addiction, we can't even watch innocent movies... The slightest thing can trigger us and send us into a deep spiral. The up-side to all this, is that we slowly become holier people, more and more cut off from lust. We really have no choice if we want to stay sober - and **alive!** :-\

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by the.guard - 29 Dec 2009 00:33

To Yosef, I just want to offer some Chizuk on your recent fall:

One of the most meaningful things that we can take out of a fall (particularly after a long clean streak) **besides** for brushing up on our defenses and strengthening our barriers, is simply the humility that we get when we realize that in spite of how well we were doing, we were able to fall - just like that.

This humility renews our connection with Hashem. The more we feel how much we NEED Hashem's constant mercy and help each day, the more connected and dependant we are on Him. And this keshet is so precious to Hashem, that sometimes He brings a Tzadik to fall for that reason alone.

Similarly, we quoted Dov recently in a Chizuk e-mail:

I cannot accept that Hashem brought you through this problem just to get you out of it so you could just move on from here as though nothing happened. He could have protected you from getting into the problem in the first place, no? To quote Rav Noach Weinberg, "He found a way to get your attention", probably because he was missing you a whole lot. This IS your trip, not just an accident He "saved" you from.

And that is perhaps why Hashem sometimes brings us to fall, even when we are doing so well. Hashem gave us this disease because He wanted our attention. And like you said, maybe we start to get too complacent and self-confident after a while, and we begin to lose this precious *keshet* with Hashem... So He starts missing us again and wants to get our attention back - and BAM! - we fall and cry out to Him for help once again. After doing so well, we are shocked back into the reality of how dependant we really are on Him every moment. And this realization causes us to need Him more, which causes us to connect to Him on a deeper level.

And that is **HUGE**.

Keep up the great work!

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by Kollel Guy - 29 Dec 2009 05:39

[guardureyes wrote on 29 Dec 2009 00:31:](#)

The slightest thing can trigger us and send us into a deep spiral. The up-side to all this, is that we slowly become holier people, more and more cut off from lust.

R' Ychezkel Levenstien said that when he goes to Tel Aviv, even if it's in a cab with curtains covering the windows, it takes him 2 weeks of work to get back to normal.

The Gr"a said, that even hearing the sound of a ladies shoe would damage him.

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by Yosef - 29 Dec 2009 21:31

Dear Guard,

Thank you for your Chizuk on my recent fall. It certainly *is* humbling.

As to those who were in any way upset by the wording of my post - please accept my sincere apology. As it says in the Big Book, pg.103, "...we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. **We have to!**

Yosef

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Re: hello, i'm new

Posted by loi-misyaeish - 29 Dec 2009 22:43

Oh yeah, kolel guy. The sounds of horseshoes coming down the street has a big effect on me. Once i thought i heard a horse coming down the road, i just saw two un-tzniyusdik ladies walking in perfect rythm. The world's gone crazy today!!!

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by Dov - 29 Dec 2009 23:15

Wow! To share my guts once more on this: (no airbag needed)

"Kol hagadol meichaveiro - yitzro godol mimenu" has been darshened to pieces by everyone who asks, "does that mean that Rav _____, a gadol hador, is just **platzing** to watch far worse schmutz than any of us?! If *that's* what this gets me, who *needs* it?!" (to paraphrase KG)

And of course, it's absurd.

The poshut p'shat that sits best with me is that the Y"H of a gadol is "greater" in terms of it's currency - it's job is to distract him from his true avodas Hashem with a false (for him, or perhaps lesser) avodas Hashem. It plays to a higher standard. It's gotta be K'negdo.

Another simple way that resonates with me today though it's a bit drushy, is that if one *thinks* of himself as greater than his friend (shemachazik atzmo legodol meichaveiro) he will have a much more deadly YH. The self-adoration (or belief in the 'positive press' of others) will open him up to worse nisyonos and/or less siyata diShmaya in them, for he chooses a path from which recovery is possible only through humiliation. (B"H there is a way out for everyone! As for me, I hope I have been humiliated enough...but there's probably always room for more gayvo, like dessert, right?)

Now, *I* see the above chazal as all about the YH, and **not** necessarily about the chronic, progressive and fatal disease of addiction. *But especially for those of you who see them as one and the same: why the hard time about the addiction actually **progressing** in some respect as we get better? Chazal tell us that our YH does, too!*

Afraid? No need. We've got our Best Eternal Friend on our side 100%.

Per the first derech above, lust **can** dress itself in the garb of a greater respectability **because we never did it to be bad in the first place!** I accept that AA/12&12 are correct when they write that we are *misguided* in our pursuit of lust, sex, alcohol, heroin, the excitement of chronic gambling, crime, raging etc. It's a sickness and we are not evil because **we are each ultimately looking for what Hashem, and Hashem alone, can provide us: Wholeness through connection to Him.** And that goes for the 'lowest' prusteh goy addict, as well, for I've seen them get better, too.

Karl Jung - perhaps the true father of AA for he sent the first drunk on record (Roland) to find a spiritual answer for his alcoholism - wrote this exact idea to Bill W., years later.

L'havdil, the RMB"N and many others explain the cheit of odom haRishon as being so close to l'Sheim Shomayim that tzaddikim have said that for us it'd been an act with higher kavonoh l'Shem Shomayim than we will probably *ever* be able to acheive in this lifetime! Sounds to me like he did something that felt quite natural: self interest - but was dead wrong. It was destructive for him. Like us, when we act out on our lust.

But what do I know?

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by imtrying25 - 29 Dec 2009 23:22

[illegible]

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by Yosef - 31 Dec 2009 03:31

There are so many issues being raised here; I've needed some time to collect my thoughts before responding. Although I haven't yet told my story here, and I will - I think that I should leave that for another time. The point now is whether you want to think of sex addiction as Dov calls it, a "progressive" illness or as Guard calls it, an illness that renders us increasingly "sensitive" albeit vulnerable to sexual stimuli - **the phenomena exists** and needs to be dealt

with. If I can't accept, as Dov says, that this is a progressive and (potentially) fatal disease, then what am I to think when saying: "G-d grant me the serenity to accept what I cannot change..."

Although I fell about a month ago it would be more accurate to say that I fell four months ago because that's when I started conveniently "misinterpreting" conversations that I was having with my sponsor. I ended up convincing myself that he was encouraging me to take a risk that I was in no way ready to take. By doing that, I re-opened what seemed like a tiny pesach and it was through that "tiny" hole that I ultimately fell into a drunken binge.

When I fell 36 days ago, it wasn't only that smaller amounts of the same stuff made me crazy, it was also that I thought nothing of venturing into far riskier territory - in fact I felt compelled to. Afterwards, I thought, "oh this is just me again...my unique craziness - until I shared my experience with other addicts who are clearly greater than I am in chochmah. Sharing at a face-to-face SA group and over the phone with people was *tremendously comforting* and healing for me. It wasn't **scary** to have my experience validated and corroborated, on the contrary it was **normalizing and reassuring**. I *need* to know the reality of my illness, because that is my greatest protection against this happening again. **My greatest weapon against a "nuclear meltdown" "at 70" is ACCEPTANCE and SURRENDER to the reality of my illness now - as opposed to denying it.** My illness just gets fat on nutrients like denial, rationalization, dishonesty, and self-will, anger and all my other defects.

The fall was B"H very good for me. I have had, as Guard and Dov both mentioned a re-connection with Hashem. But what I think is helping me even more right now (not wanting to sound irreligious) is a new appreciation for why people who have been sober much longer than myself are more frightened that I am to act out. I doubt that even people with a lot of sobriety would have taken the risk that I did because they've already been through this learning experience and they understand the stakes better than I do. I guess Hashem knew that my bottom needed to be lowered a bit for me to take this more seriously.

Halavei, I should redo the sixth step where we ask ourselves if we are "**entirely** ready for Hashem to remove these defects of character". I certainly was not entirely ready, and I'm still not entirely ready - but I am more ready than before. I have the chance now for a more solid sobriety not just in days but in essence. I know a little better, hopefully what powerlessness really means. I have no weapons of my own to fight this. I can only merit to be mekabel the light of Chochmah and Sechal through restriction and contraction of my "intelligence, will, strength and power". The negation of these illusions are what gives me the Ultimate power. I'm only something when I realize that I'm nothing. Isn't that the good old Jewish way? Becharvi Ubekashti says Onkelos and Rashi don't mean with my sword and bow, they mean with Tefilla!

The same idea is expressed in Telhillim: "For I trust not in my bow, nor shall my sword save me, but rather in those who praise the Lord all day long"

Thank you for letting me share

Yosef

A gratefully recovering sexaholic

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by habaletaher - 31 Dec 2009 04:57

Hi Reb Yosef,

I can't imagine the pain of falling after so long, and I respect you so much for getting back up here, and getting back on the road for recovery.

There is a gemara that I think gets to the root of your point with the Y"H getting stronger and stronger the longer you abstain. The gemara (End of Succah, and this is a paraphrase not verbatim) says that in the times of Mashiach, the Y"H will be slaughtered, and everyone will see it and cry. The tzadikim will see it as a huge mountain, and will cry in joy, wondering "How could have we conquered so high a mountain?" The reshaim will see it as a small piece of string and cry in shame and pain, saying "How could we not conquer such a tiny piece of string"

So which one is it? Is the YH a huge moutain or a tiny piece of string?

The answer is it depends on the person. If every time the YH puts out the smallest stumbling block, a little piece of string, the person falls, then the YH never needs to grow, never needs to become more challenging, more sophisticated. But if the person climbs over each stumbling block, the YH must get bigger, strong, taller, more tricky to try to trap the tzaddik and eventually he becomes a huge mountain.

In this way, for the regular sex addict, all the YH needs to put out is a computer with no filter and bam! he ensnares him...

But the person who has been working on himself for a long time, can walk by one of those with ease, so the YH needs to be much trickier. He needs to be patient till that person is out of their daled amos, perhaps in a different city, perhaps jet lagged, perhaps feeling lonely etc.. and only then can the YH even try to get that person.

So the YH does grow as the person stays away more and more, but in a subtle way...

In any case your strength really impresses me, and one day at a time, but you should soon be well on your way to reclaiming that incredible accomplishment you had. Kol Hakavod!!!

Haba

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Re: Hello, I'm new.

Posted by the.guard - 31 Dec 2009 13:42

Reb Yosef, I am so impressed with the wisdom and beauty in your posts. We need guys like you on GYE. Perhaps you'd even be willing to moderate an anonymous phone conference along the lines of what Duvid Chaim is doing? See [this page](#)...

After all, as we see in the Big Book, the addicts of AA often found that if they did not make the purpose of their recovery to help others as well, they could do everything else in the 12-Step program, but sooner or later they would lose sobriety. And the reasoning behind this is that if our whole recovery is only self-serving, we can easily get confused with doing what we **feel** like doing, which is also self-serving. However, if we are continuously thinking of others, it keeps us on the right track as well.

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