

Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 06 Oct 2009 16:41

I think I need a thread where I can post about myself and organize my thoughts. I hope that the act of revealing my feelings can help me control them. I didn't think "I'm new" was a very good title, so here is the new one.

This morning I thought about my new entry on to this forum. How would it help me? I could simply lie my way out of my guilt, couldn't I?

I concluded that if I posted honestly, and got into the habit of doing so, I wouldn't lie. My entire purpose in joining this forum was to have a place where I could be honest, and finally reveal the bits of my life that I couldn't tell anyone.

Even as I write this, even the anticipation of finally telling the truth to real people, takes weight off my shoulders.

My first thread detailed how I joined the forum, and how I felt. This is my real physical story.

I was a very curious child. I'm still curious. I can't stand not knowing. When I hit 13, I became curious about biology. I knew that there were things I shouldn't know, but the concept of "shouldn't know" is even now a difficult one for me. If something was hidden I had to find it. I looked up what I wanted to know in dictionaries, textbooks, medical websites. Then, when my curiosity was satisfied, something else took over, posing as curiosity. None of these things had photos, just descriptions. Wouldn't I understand what I was looking for better if I had photos, or videos? I knew I shouldn't, that it was wrong, but... how could it be wrong?

Well, I understood it, then, intellectually. Naturally I wanted to understand it physically. Curiosity, right? It wasn't.

There were no longer any revelations, just sin; I had lost control. I began my fight a few months later, and accumulated a legacy of failed battles for 4 years.

I am now 17. I know I have to beat it now, or it will only get worse. I know it's time to make a real commitment to winning, and I know that I can't push it off.

My y"n tells me that I'm young, and that I can afford a few more years of foolishness. I tell him that I can't. If everyone's jumping off buildings, should I follow them? No. They can walk with broken legs their whole lives. I have to bandage what wounds I have and heal.

That's my story.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 02:43

It *is* scary just how talented the yetzer hora is, right?

But that's the advantage of being part of a framework like this - you remember that you're doing something, you get into the habit of doing the right thing, and hopefully, that stays with you!

And it worked!

That, my friend, is reason to be happy - to dance!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by sci1977 - 03 Jan 2010 05:00

[silentbattle wrote on 03 Jan 2010 02:43:](#)

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But that's the advantage of being part of a framework like this - you remember that you're doing something, you get into the habit of doing the right thing, and hopefully, that stays with you!

And it worked!

That, my friend, is reason to be happy - to dance!

I think thats dead on. Just keep positive!!!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 03 Jan 2010 05:08

Great battle you won there. I smell a chizuk email quote coming up....

-Yiddle

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 11 Jan 2010 00:14

Well, not much to write, but I've got to keep up momentum.

Had a tough Friday, Shabbos was nice and easy, and today's been pretty much okay till a few minutes ago... Well, this too shall pass (im"h)

As bardichev says:

"KEEP ON TRUCKIN"

P.S R' Guard, is there some way to move this thread to the WOH page? It probably should be there.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by silentbattle - 11 Jan 2010 00:41

You're awesome! Glad to hear from you, and even better, to hear that you're doing well!

I'll mention again something I realized today...It's nice when we have days when we aren't tempted. However, it's on the days when the yetzer hora/compulsion/addiction/whatever rears its ugly head that we discover how much work we've done. And you're doing great!

Rock on!

Remember, every second is another victory, for which we gain closeness to hashem!

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 12 Jan 2012 03:17

Hello everyone, I'm bumping my own thread.

It's been exactly 2 years since my last post... I grew tired of this site, feeling like it was just fueling my self-loathing, and perhaps it was, but I could not defeat my addiction alone either. Still, in the time that has passed, I've come to terms with myself and my imperfections, and now that I have accepted them, I believe that I can overcome them. With my new efforts I now have nearly 7 days on the chart now. Wish me hatzlochah!

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by gibbor120 - 12 Jan 2012 17:17

HATZLACHA! !?????

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by NotAlone - 15 Jan 2012 01:09

Thanks!

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Re: Coming out of my shell
Posted by emunah17 - 15 Jan 2012 04:37

I read alot of your posts and i love you man you are so expressive and thorough I would like to let you know that i started this sight when i was 17 hence my name im 18 now thank G-D and i recently restarted posting its doing wonders for me keep on trucking each day is special.And hatzlachah with many more days clean and free shalom brother

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 19 Jan 2012 17:38

Thank you so much! I'm glad you have gained something from what I wrote.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by NotAlone - 26 Jan 2012 02:37

So, I guess I should log what has been happening.

I've passed day 20 now, and while my general desire is diminished I have that nagging "curious" itch to find out what's been going on in the underworld while I've been gone. I know from experience that this slight irritation can be a larger factor in influencing a fall than any other, even physical arousal. Hopefully I have learned from experience how to combat it.

In the spirit of openness and honesty of this forum I feel that I must reveal some facts which partly explain why I do not feel quite comfortable here at GYE.

Firstly, I do not have filter software installed, even though it is necessary. Unfortunately, with my technical skills, it is simply a small hindrance to me, and not at all a barrier. I tried using filter software in my absence from GUE (or GYE as it is now known, I suppose) but it posed no problem to me when I "decided" to fall (I quote the word decided because it wasn't so much a decision on my part as a forfeit, or perhaps a sort of addiction inspired insanity.) . I realized then that the filter itself was counterproductive to my efforts, presenting little protection against the actual material while often getting in my way with false positives and a false sense of security. The filter, by the fact of it's presence, gave me an "enemy", something preventing me from reaching what "I" (what my Y"H likes to call himself) wanted. I have no mercy on my enemies, and thus I was played into the Y"H's hands.

On the other hand, I believe I have done better in controlling myself without a filter, as I am forced to constantly think about what I am doing, typing, and clicking online, and thus I am more aware of my decision, and do not allow myself to stagnate into the indifference that I have often felt at the end of long streaks during which I had a filter. Without a filter, I am constantly aware of the ever-present fact that only I am in control of my actions and my fate. Unfortunately, I am

faulty, and sometimes I fail, but like any human I get better with practice. A filter, for me, is a sort of cop-out, a statement that I no longer have faith in myself and am incapable of giving myself to Hashem to protect me, that I am trusting my well being to some thin sheet of foil that I can poke holes through with my pinky whenever I wish.

I'm not perfect. I'm not sure that I'm even right in what I am doing, and I am certain that hardly anyone would be right to forgo a filter.

A testament to my imperfection: I rediscovered a stash of material on my computer, but I could not bring myself to delete it. Instead I hid it. This echo of my former tendencies disturbed me immediately, but until now I put it out of my mind. My Y"H is creating insurance of a sort. Well, I don't like that at all and have deleted it...now. There, it is gone.

Ultimately, I think that part of our effort on this world is to constantly overcome our imperfections. I fear self-satisfaction and indolence, the reliance on momentum and automatic holds. I think that in the end the only person who can determine my actions and my level of service to Hashem is myself.

This brings me to my second point.

I do not feel comfortable with "giving myself up to Hashem". I understand that this is theoretically ideal and helpful, but in my experience on this forum and throughout my journey, this attitude has had a negative effect. When I do so, when I put myself and my actions completely into Hashem's hands, I fall. I don't completely know why, but somehow, giving up to Hashem to me is simply equivalent to giving. Saying "Hashem, I no longer have the strength to control myself, I leave myself to you" feels to me like saying "Hashem, I'm lazy." I am a person who is by nature hard-working, focused, and logical. I am not usually emotionally moved, except by hormonal imbalances. My self-control and self-discipline are the cores of my personality and being. I can accept failure, I can get up and try again, but I cannot accept giving up fighting. When I do so, my entire life fails. Not only my self-control regarding the habits I come here to heal, but my self-control regarding everything: my productivity, my clarity of thought, my empathy. When I accept myself as an addict, someone who does not have self-control, my entire reality falls apart. GYE has helped recognize my problem, but presents a solution that does not quite work.

Perhaps I do not quite understand the mechanics of what is desired, or I have misinterpreted

the text that I read. I hope that you all can clarify thing for me, but it is possible that I will not be able to digest them as others do.

On a theological level, I think I am someone who is still striving for Yiras Hashem, fear of G-d, a sort of structured, systematic, or perhaps legalistic way of serving Hashem. I am not on the level of Ahavas Hashem, loving G-d, and acting correctly by the very virtue of being close to him on an emotional level. In very plebian and perhaps inaccurate and prejudiced terms, I'm much more of a Litvak than a Chasid.

I have tried to follow GYE's way as I understood it, but it has not worked for me. It has been, in my cold, calculating world, too "nuts". Too emotional, teary and dramatic. I like my letters and numbers and records and ice. I don't know if this is a flaw in my personality or a feature of it. Time will tell.

The very point of this site is to be open with something that we cannot usually talk about, to discuss it and gain emotional support. I have enough warmth in my heart to require this. Still, my attitude, tendencies, and worldview have kept me from truly connecting to people on this site and in real life, especially the issue we deal with here. I don't know if I can ever open up enough to do so. I had trouble writing this, fearing rejection, or misunderstanding, or insult, or shame. The same fears that I had about revealing my problem. I decided that honesty is the best policy, especially here, and hope that I have not caused and have not destined myself for any of the above.

I want to keep fighting this fight my way, and I hope that this community can support me in that. Despite the differences and distance that I feel, I love you all and this site as well, and hope that we can help each other in our journeys.

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by gibbor120 - 26 Jan 2012 17:30

Thanks for sharing all that! I have a few comments.

Firstly, you say **"I have tried to follow GYE's way as I understood it, but it has not worked**

for me". There is no GYE way. It's an open forum where anyone can post as long as they follow some simple rules of etiquette. There are many derochim here. It may seem 12 step heavy, probably because that is what is working for *many* of us. GYE makes no claim that anyone should use any particular method.

Secondly, the filter issue is relatively minor. It certainly doesn't qualify as something that makes you **"not feel quite comfortable here at GYE"**. Yes, you need to make gedarim of some sort, but each person on GYE has varying levels and types of gedarim.

Thirdly, I think you do misunderstand the concept of "giving it up to Hashem". I don't quite understand it myself, but if it doesn't work for you, don't use it.

What is more important to understand is that you are a loser (to lust that is). We all are, that's why we're here. Admitting that is difficult, but you seem to have done that - partially. You seem to be still hanging on to the notion that if you just exercise more self-control, you'll be ok. Well, how many years of losing does it take to burst that bubble?

I did the 1st step inventory for the 1st step of the 12 steps a few months ago. The point of it, as I understand is to document your sexual history in A VERY SIMPLE WAY. Just the facts. What did you do, how often, etc. It allows a person to look back and say - I have been losing for years, I am powerless.

Now this seems to be a concept that you are having trouble with. Powerless DOES NOT MEAN I give up and throw in the towel. If it did, it would be kinda pointless - no? The point of it is to see that we have a track record and all of our best efforts haven't worked until now. We need a new derech.

Powerless simply means that we can't *use* lust like a non-addict. A non-addict can look at porn and then walk away. It doesn't take him over. An addict *struggles* with lust and it consumes him... sooner or later. So we need to move away from the cliff. We have power, not over lust, but to choose to keep FAR away from it. It's still a nisayon, but the battle lines are drawn back.

I think your final lines are the most telling:

Still, my attitude, tendencies, and worldview have kept me from truly connecting to people on this site and in real life, especially the issue we deal with here. I don't know if I can ever open up enough to do so. **I had trouble writing this, fearing rejection, or misunderstanding, or insult, or shame. The same fears that I had about revealing my problem.** I decided that honesty is the best policy, especially here, and hope that I have not caused and have not destined myself for any of the above.

I want to keep fighting this fight my way, and I hope that this community can support me in that. Despite the differences and distance that I feel, I love you all and this site as well, and hope that we can help each other in our journeys.

You say it is your **"attitude, tendencies, and worldview"** that keep you from opening up to real people, yet a couple lines later you say **"I had trouble writing this, fearing rejection, or misunderstanding, or insult, or shame. The same fears that I had about revealing my problem.**

I think the latter is probably more true than the former. We all have the same fears. That's why it took us so long to open up. It's only once we realize that we are losers to lust and have no other option - that we take that critical step of reaching out and stop trying to do things **"my way"**. I lost for 22 years including 12 years married. You are much younger. You have taken steps towards recovery way earlier in life than I did. Are you ready to take the next step?

You can PM me if you want my number. I would be more than happy to talk on the phone.

I hope you did not take any of my words as "rejection, or misunderstanding, or insult, or shame".

We're in this together - brother. Opening up on the phone isn't as hard as you think it is. Just ask your fellow GYers.

WATLITW,

Gibbor

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Re: Coming out of my shell

Posted by gibbor120 - 26 Jan 2012 18:59

You may want to check out this post from dov as well

www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=4695.msg131829#msg131829 .

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