

15+ years of battle

Posted by Ykv\_schwartz - 06 Feb 2009 09:31

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Hi I am new to this forum. I have been reading some of your posts in the past few weeks as I was trying to get acquainted with the site and I have been so inspired. I am so happy to finally have a social network to reach out to and share my problems with. For years I have yearned this. My first encounter with porn was at age 10, and I am now 31. It was at age 16 that I first set out to change my ways. I had no idea that the battle would take more than 15 years. Even as a bachur I had these fears that this problem would be with me as a married man. And I was certain that at least when I was married I would have no desire for porn. But as all of us know too well, an addiction is an addiction. I would love to share my story in full at a later time as I think it would give great chizuk to all of us. The more we share our stories, the more we realize that we are not alone and we could all fight this together. Over the years, i never gave up. I always knew that I could beat my Y"H. I had many tricks which I hope to share. Most worked for some time, but eventually the Y"H would overpower me and I would be lead into a downward spiral until I hit rock bottom and bring myself back up.

Well for now, I would like to share with you a very effective method that carried me for over six months. Last year, right after pesach (year 2008), I had a terrible 'attack' of the Y"H. I was constantly on my computer downloading all sorts of movies. I was so depressed. I am in kollel and so this is bein hazmanim. I had more time to my disposable. I wasted it all away together with my seed. Well, when the new zman started I decided (for the millionth time) that is it. No more of this Y"H. So, I stood in front of the mirror, looked at myself and began telling myself over and over and over again that this is it. No more. I gave myself intense Mussar. Well, for two weeks I felt great. However, one friday morning (may 16, 2008) I was doing work (I am a graphic designer by profession. I do my work on 'off' hours to maintain myself in kollel). I felt the urge. My body tightened up. What am I going to do. So I picked myself up and looked in the mirror. But this time I did not talk but yelled, "STOP IT! STOP IT! YOU ARE RUINING MY LIFE! MY WIFE! MY KIDS! GET OUT OF HERE." I gave myself a nasty look and continued yelling at myself. I was really angry with myself. Well sure enough, my Y"H was scared out of his wits and ran for his life. (This concept of using ones anger is brought down by the R. Yonah in shaarei avodah, a rare sefer to find. and in the gra on mishlei. They both point out that we need to use our Y'H for good. and both give the example of using Kaas to yell at your y"h. It is known that the Chafetz Chaim and the Rav Yisroel Salanter employed this method.) I then began a log. and recorded the fact that the Y'H came to visit me and I WON the battle. He decided to stay away for a while. But a few weeks later came again. And sure enough I did the same thing and beat him like wildfire. I was feeling so good. And all using this method of yelling and getting angry with myself and the Y"H. it was unbelievable. As Yom Kippur approached, i began to feel great joy and bit of nervousness. was I going to make it until Yom Kippur? Was I going to finally after 15 years be able to properly confess my ways? Say vidui and that I will never do again and be honest about it? Well, sure enough, Yom kippur came and I was clean now for all these months. And it was not just clean. I had intense battles with the Y"H. And not once did he win. My tears on Yom kippur were like none other. I thanked Hashem profusely for giving me the strength. I felt so victorious. after maariv, I came into my house and began telling my kids thatt "WE WON! WE WON". They all asked me what

happened. with tears in my eyes, I said Hashem has granted us 'mechila'. Nobody knew what I was talking about. But I was crying. Over this period of time, my relationship with my wife and kids was great. There was so much love in the air, you could feel it. I was happy man. My learning sky rocketed. My whole life was uplifted.

However, I hate to disappoint you, my dear readers. But a week after succos, as if I did not even notice what happened, the problem came back. and here I am once again back in the the battle zone. But through the past few months, I never felt like giving up. On the contrary, I knew that if i did it once, i could do it again. I am a positive person. externally, I did not let this problem get in the way of my life. I continued on acting as my bubbly self. Friendly and warm. People who know me would fall flat on their faces if they knew this part of me. I continued to fight. I do not have as much strength as I had then, but I working on building this strength. And I hope together, we could all garner the strength to destroy this Y"H from our midst.

The mefarshim tell us that if one person conquers his Y"H he can actually destroy its powers. But if a whole community together works on their Y"H and does teshuva they can actually have a lasting impact. We learn this from Purim (it is a medrash in Shir Hashirim. I can elaborate at a later time.)

Well, my dear reader, please take my advice and use this method of talking to yourself and yelling at yourself. You are a real person. When we look at ourselves and how beautiful we can be, we realize how much we are destroying. Here is the log that I wrote on May 16, 2008 the first major battle I had with the Y"H when my six month journey began:

*Today the Yetzer Hara tried to capture me again. And this was the emotion and feeling that in the past I would normally get trapped by. I would usually not be able to have the self control and I would succumb to his powers. But this time I knew what I wanted. And I realized that I cannot just sit back idly and ignore him. He is no different than any other enemy from whom one is under attack. During attack one can certainly not just ignore the enemy. You either try to avoid the shooting until the attack simmers down or you fight back. But to sit and go about life as if nothing is happening, is obviously stupid. The ways of the Y"H are no different. When he begins to ignite and incite your nature to bring feelings of aveiros, you are under attack. The actual gun shot is the aveira. If you ignore him and keep moving along, you stand little chance. However, one of two options can be done. Either, you get yourself out of the situation where he cannot incite this in you. But often times that is impossible. The reason being is that by a real enemy, the threat is external. The threat is based on a place. You can always move to another location, if possible. However, the threat of the Y"H is internal. It is in your heart. It is true that it is stronger in certain places. But the bottom line is that it is internal. So to move doesn't*

*help. The other option is to confront the Y"H and attack him back. Today, I did not stand idly and let him get me. I got up from my seat, shook myself, as if I am shaking him out of my body. I then looked at myself in the mirror and began yelling at myself. I did this until the feeling dissipated. And B"H, it did. I did my part of revealing my real self, and Hashem did his part and wiped him out if me. As I hope this is the last incident of life of this kind of Y"H, I realize that I will up against many more tests. I can only pray to Hashem to give me that internal strength to always get up and fight. I should recall to myself the problems of sitting idly.*

I hope it gives you all chizuk.

May Hashem be with you

-ykv

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Re: 15+ years of battle

Posted by mevakesh - 06 Feb 2009 15:03

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Hi Ykv and thanks you for the inspiring post.

I am also in my early thirties and have been struggling w/ P addiction for years.

Is Jnet available in your area?

Having a filter, whether server side or client side or preferably both, can be a very powerful tool in fighting the Y"H.

Perhaps you should fill out the GUE forms requesting an accountability partner as well.

Your recent success of going 6 months clean is noble indeed. You need to build on those positive emotions and formulate strategies that will vanquish this *menuva* once and for all from your life.

This site is certainly a great resource, but IMHO it is not enough.

Having an open Internet connection is a great *sakana* for us. If you take the steps to help protect yourself from the dangers of the Internet, Hashem will help you succeed. *Im ain Hakadosh Baruch Hu ozro aino yachol lo.*

Thank you for sharing your inspiring story w/ us.

B'Hatzlcha Rabba

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Re: 15+ years of battle

Posted by the.guard - 07 Feb 2009 19:23

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Dear Yiddishe Neshama,

Thank you for posting your inspiring story and tips. Welcome home. This is the first time a frum Yid has where to turn to in these areas. So many people in even worse situations than you, have broken free.

The fact that you were able to stay clean for so long is very important for two reasons. 1) It shows you have great strengths and Kedusha in you, only now it's been covered up and needs to be revealed once again. 2) You will NEVER be able to live with yourself comfortably again once you have seen that you CAN be free.

There are two prerequisites to being helped.

- 1) You must truly believe you can be helped (reading the recovery stories on our site can help you with this)
- 2) you must truly want to be helped (your own suffering and distance from G-d, along with reading the stories of people suffering from [the other 3 stages](#) can help you with this).

The fact that you are seeking help means you already mainly have these two conditions - but they must be strong and finely tuned., Take heart. ***Haba Le'taher, Mesayin Lo***. Be ready to give your addiction and disease over to the care of G-d. Be ready to trust G-d that he will care for you, as you heal.

The first few weeks of sobriety are the hardest. Once you have put some distance between yourself and the addiction, it gets a lot easier. See [here](#) for more on this.

For someone starting out on their journey, I highly suggest the following steps:

- 1) It's too hard to have all the garbage within a mouse-click's reach. Install a good reliable internet filter that you can't get around. Let someone you trust hold the password. If you must have open internet access for your work, at least install "Accountability Software". When you know that someone you respect will see every site you visited, it will help you control the urge to stray. See our [Filter Section](#) for tons of info and for over 20 filter options.
- 2) Join the [daily Chizuk e-mail list](#). Like drops of water on Rabbi Akiva's rock, over time, the e-mails can make a serious impression.
- 3) Read one or two of [the tips](#) on the website every day and try to implement them if possible. (Don't read too many at once; bite too much and you won't be able to swallow anything).
- 4) Join the [weekly phone group](#). Group support is very important, and this hotline is the first time that religious people can get the benefit of group support and trained therapists in an anonymous way! We will be starting a hot-line in Israel as well very soon IY"H.

5) Keep posting on this forum. You will get tons of great support, advice and chizuk. Also, being honest with those who you will quickly come to consider your "family", will be a great incentive to stay clean and not let them down :-)

Rav Hutner wrote to a Talmid once that it's the dynamic struggle with the Yetzer Hara that makes a person truly great, not basking in the constant presence of the Yetzer Tov. That's what it means "Sheva Yipol Tzadik Ve'kam". Hashem had much Nachas Ruach from your spiritual successes once, but he wanted you to take it to the **next level** and therefore gave you these pitfalls, even though he knew you would fall. What makes a person great is his ability to get back up, despite all his falls. And I strongly believe, along with everyone here, that with some determination you will come out of this with a much closer Keshar to Hashem than you had, even back then when you were doing great.

There's a recent study that showed that it takes 90 days to develop new mental patterns in the way the mind has come to think in addictive behaviors. Post a log of your journey to 90 days on the "Wall of honor" section of our forum. You will get tons of Chizuk from fellow strugglers, and you will also get stronger by strengthening others.

And never stop davening. This is what Hashem has been waiting for all these years since you started to slip. He was waiting for you to finally admit defeat and ask for help. He was waiting for you to come here, to our site and forum. We are all here for you. Hashem is at your side.

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Re: 15+ years of battle

Posted by Ykv\_schwartz - 07 Feb 2009 19:58

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Hi Shomer,

Thanks for your inspiring response. Regarding your suggestion for a partner, I already sent out the form last week. I am actually looking forward to having this partner. If you are looking for a partner, **we** could be partners. What do you think? One thing that I have not implemented yet is the "Accountability Software". I will need a partner for that. Perhaps you could be that person.

I appreciate your advice for getting a filter as well; but the truth is that I already have a filter. A

fairly good one. It is thefilternet. What I like about it is that it has certain categories permanently blocked. So there is no way to get a porn site. There is no way to get it unblocked.

So you ask then how can I possibly fail? The answer is that these filters are not perfect and there are many sites that may not be officially porn, but display tons of porn like forums and file-sharing sites. I bought this filter two years ago when I was going through a tough time. Just buying the filter made me feel cured. I went for a streak of over a month with little urges. It was amazing. I thought I was cured. But then one day I got this irresistible urge. I did not know what to do with myself. I tried getting onto sites that in the past I frequented, but no avail. I was happy and frustrated at the same time. Happy because deep down I did not want to be doing this. Frustrated, well, because the urge would not stop. And part of me pushed forward to keep doing searches in google using keywords that are not officially blocked (my filter blocks google searches with sensitive keywords as well). Eventually, a site came up that was not blocked. I quickly learned to find certain sites that satisfied my desires all circumventing the filter. It seems kinda silly to have this filter and to still be viewing these sites. But the truth is, it at least restrains me.

Now when I began my six month journey last year, one thing that I did at the beginning was that I sent thefilternet a list of all the sites that I was frequenting and asked them to block them. They happily complied. Well, I think just the act alone of actively trying to eradicate this from my midst mitigated the strength of the Y"H. In fact, I already wrote to the filternet with a new list of sites to block. These of course are the sites that I picked up in the past few months.

Tonight during maariv I realized a line of davening that I never paid much attention to. We insert the extra tefilla regarding havdala to mark the new week, *ata chonantanu*. At the end of this short piece we say that we hope this will be week restrained of sin and clean of avairos. I began to cry and said that line over again with extra kavana. Lets hope that this will be not only a week, not only a month, not only a year, but the rest of a lifetime clean of avairos.

guardureyes,

As I writing my post, your response came in, so I will respond to you here. All I can say is thanks! thanks! thanks! Your words are so moving and the advice is encouraging. I hope to take the necessary steps as you and shomer encouraged to go not only six months but this time a lifetime. I am truly optimistic and like you said I have proven to myself already that I can do it.

-ykv

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