

On pause for now...

Posted by Tomim2B - 13 Dec 2009 04:06

Since I'm dealing with an addiction to the internet and I see it interfering with my life, I'm going to have to limit my time on the internet, only using it when absolutely necessary. I've held off in dealing with this because I had wanted to first deal with lust addiction, feeling that takes priority. But now that I'm well into that journey, I feel that at this point this is a step I must take. I'm going to leave off with this post, and since it might be my last for a short while, I'll tell over part of my story, leaving it at a practical note:

About 9 months ago, in the throws of the addiction, I woke up one morning feeling that I no longer recognized myself. I don't know what it was, but a terrible sensation tore through me and hit me at the very core. "What happened to me?" I thought. "Where did the old me go? And who is this guy who's taken over? He scares me!". "This was never me!".

All my relationships were broken. It wasn't that people didn't try to lovingly reach out to me. It was me, throwing away my family and friends! I didn't let anyone in! I barricaded myself into my own life, my own mind, caring nothing about anything that had no relation to me. I was preoccupied in seeking out my own gratification that it didn't occur to me that there are other people. The vibes I gave off shouted out loud: "Get out of my way! This is all about ME!". That's exactly what people did. They gave me my own space!

Though I had always prided myself being very studious, I had found my interest in learning Torah to be deteriorating. I'd get up sometime late in the afternoon, switch on my computer and start my day. Within minutes I'd have dozens of porn sites open in front of me, to which I'd sit in front of for the remaining part of the day. Since I had effectively chased everyone away, my room became my own personal space where I could act out for hours undisturbed.

Acting out the entire day, I left no time in my day for G-d. Davening didn't happen! For an entire year, I didn't ever daven a full davening, let alone an entire Shmoine Esrei. I'd grab my tefillin minutes before sunset, quickly throw them on, and mumble bits and pieces of the Shema. My tefillin would be off before you could even say "Boo!", and so quick to get into the next porn video, I wouldn't even wrap my tefillin. I'd throw them on the side, where they'd wait till the next day. Sometimes, caught up in what I was doing, I'd look up at the time, and realize that it was already night and I hadn't even put on the tefillin. Sadly so, nothing meant anything to me anymore! To me, the Shulchan Aruch was nothing but a book! There was nothing left but the addiction! And it had robbed me of my life!

It's not that I saw this happen so suddenly. I mean, I did see the digression. But it didn't occur to me that it would be this way. I've always looked at it as something very external to the real me, and that with work, I'd be able to make it go away. I never had a problem representing utmost frumkeit when I was in public. But here I was, having gone through scores of Mussar and Chassidus seforim, and even self-help books, and I remain the same! I've made vows, kept a journal, wrote a 5yr. life plan as well as a mission statement, but nothing had ever helped.

In despair, I took out a pen and wrote a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe:

"In tremendous pain I write to you about my present state. I don't recall a time in my life where I have ever sunk to such great depths. In my present state I am completely absorbed in bad things - and in a constant way, growing and continuing by the day. The days of old are no longer!

I write to you in concern to matters pertaining to my learning, to my davening, in keeping Shulchan Aruch (- simply keeping halacha), in regard to my personal character, and in matters of which I relate to my fellow man.

Even if I do manage to pull myself out of this terrible state and to focus my energies in good things, I feel as if nothing is able to effect me in an internal way, and everything remains superficial.

Not too distant from the time of shidduchim - a new stage in my life, I am completely distraught and in search of guidance.". (Translated into English.)

Putting some action behind my words, I pulled out a deck of index cards and began jotting some notes for myself. You see, a few days earlier I had watched a movie (and I don't condone movies here) which had really struck home. In this very realistic movie portraying an inside peek at the life of a sex addict, I watched how his addiction was destroying his marriage. There he was, acting out, unable to stop himself even at the verge of divorce.

Somewhere in the movie, his father, feeling that there was a lot of tension in his son's marriage, attempts to help him. His father hands him a book with 90 pages - an exercise a day,

and tells him that if he applies himself to the what is written in the book, he will see a most rewarding marriage. For the remaining part of the movie I watched the progressive change take place. On the first day he brought his wife a bouquet of flowers (which she immediately tossed in the trash) following a card, a cooked meal, and a clean house. Eventually, and after many tests, the man reaches the last and final pages of the book where he is asked to remove anything from his house which blocks him in his relationship with his wife. He decides to take the computer (which his wife despises) out of his house, and smash it into bits. His wife, seeing his commitment to her over the last 90 days and finally with this, can't hold herself back from loving him again.

For me, this wasn't just a movie. It was a lesson, and a lesson the only way I'd understand. When I finished writing my letter to the Rebbe, I decided that I'd have to take the same kind of steps, doing selfless actions for those around me. That movie really made an impression on me!

This is when I pulled out these index cards and began listing out all sorts of selfless actions or approaches that I could adopt. In the cards that I'd incorporate into my life (one or two cards a day) I wrote the following:

- Don't be sarcastic.
- Compliment the cook.
- Surprise the family with a supper, and pickup food from a local restaurant.
- In the event that you may need to do so, put your reputation on the side and do the right thing.
- Compliment someone you normally wouldn't.
- Write a card and make someone feel loved.
- If asked to do something (big or small) for somebody do it, and don't make excuses.
- Be empathetic to someone. Show them that you care.
- Avoid arguments.
- Visit a Hospital.
- Take the positive approach when discussing a difficult subject with another.
- Make yourself of service, offering your skills.

- Expect nothing in return for what you've done for someone.
- If an opportunity arises and you are asked to do something, do it right away.
- Make a person feel good when he thanks you, and respond with "you're welcome!".
- Understand that accepting is very important to the one giving, so make it a point to accept a compliment or a kind gesture. It will make them feel good!
- Accept a "hard word" directed towards you, with love!
- Admit when you are wrong.
- Remind yourself of the gratitude you owe towards others.
- Greet everyone with a smile and some nice words.
- Before going to sleep, say "good night" to those who are still up.
- Be honest.
- Call a sibling on the phone and make the conversation all about them.
- Express interest in other people's work and investment, and allow them to take pride.
- While shopping, have someone else in mind, and purchase for them something you think they might like.
- Cook supper.
- Give tzedaka at the first opportunity, not counting out bills before you give.
- Offer help if you see a situation which might require it.
- Don't be abrasive.
- Cheer someone up.
- Don't interject while people are speaking. Wait till they are entirely finished with what they have to say before saying your piece.
- Don't mix into other people's quarrels.
- Clean up - even if it isn't your mess.
- Phone up a relative and make it their conversation.
- Apologize if applicable.

- Buy a baby toy for one of your nieces or nephews.
- Randomly buy someone a gift out of appreciation.
- Call someone you haven't spoken to in a while.
- Call a friend and ask about his well-being. Make it his conversation.
- Remember to always say "please".
- Remember to always say "thank you".
- Add another 15 cards to the deck.

Since then I started to see a change in myself. My world suddenly wasn't so dark anymore! Each morning, just after getting out of bed, I'd shuffle the deck and select a card. That card, together with yesterday's card would be my mission for the day! Slowly but surely, people began relating to me in a whole different way. This was my first step on the road towards improvement! It was shortly after that I was led with Hashem's guidance to GYE!

I encourage you to apply this into your own life. I guarantee that if you apply this - one or two cards at a time, together with the guidance of the program, you will see a very very powerful recovery!

G'luck to all,

2B

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Re: On pause for now...

Posted by habib613 - 13 Dec 2009 04:17

Tomim,

1. i'm really sad you're leaving. but i accept that it may be the best thing for you

2. i realized recently that you've been doing a lot for other people here. and you really helped a lot of people.

3. you're list is amazing.

hatzlocho, tomim. i really hope everything works out for you.

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Re: On pause for now...

Posted by bardichev - 13 Dec 2009 04:58

Kshem shekibalta schar al hadrisha

Kabel schar al haprishe

Tomim I will miss u like crazy

Please don't leave us "ingantzen"

Before you leave I want to say 1 thought

This site is kibbutz goliyos

I the REAL wold

We have all these names labels preconceived notions

And inhibitions

On this site theabel falls of

Tomim the next time you see a Yeshivsh/chassidish guy just say

Hi bards

In the mean time I will listen to benny freidman and I will think of you!

Tzayschem lishalom

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Re: On pause for now...

Posted by Momo - 13 Dec 2009 06:53

Tomim,

Thanks for your incredible post here and your guidance. I remember months ago we paired up. Even though I'll miss you, I'm also happy to see you've grown up enough to fly on your own and and are leaving the mother's nest.

All the best.

Whenever you want to visit, drop us a line to let us know you're OK.

Momo

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Re: On pause for now...

Posted by silentbattle - 13 Dec 2009 07:40

I barely knew you, but I thank you for all the inspiration you've given me. I wish you the best on your continued journey.

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Re: On pause for now...

Posted by imtrying25 - 13 Dec 2009 08:24

Wow Tomim. What am i supposed to say?? That im getting goosebumps reading your post? That im starting to tear from the fact that your leaving us?? That i just had my first real conversation with you on friday and here you are leaving?? That i think that everything you write is so profound?? That it is all so heartfelt?? That everyone on this site had a place in their gye heart especially for you?? That your words scream your care and love that you have for all of us??

I guess all i can say is; Hatzlacha in everything. May you be zoche to find your right zivug in the right time. And may that time be soon. And we at gye will always miss you terribly. And please come back once in awhile and drop up some love.

THANK YOU!! :(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(:(

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Re: On pause for now...

Posted by BecomeHoly - 13 Dec 2009 09:13

wow tomim - you're the first one who reached out to me when I started just last week. You're index card idea is quite profound. I wish you much success in everything and may you be an example to us all (and us your "quasi-talmidim"). :-)

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Re: On pause for now...

Posted by the.guard - 13 Dec 2009 12:27

Wow, Tomim, thank you for leaving us with one of your most beautiful & profound posts EVER - as a goodbye present. I will share parts of it in today's chizuk e-mail bl"n.

We will miss you a lot on the forum, and I hope that you're too addicted to GYE to be able to

stay away for long!

Since I'm dealing with an addiction to the internet and I see it interfering with my life, I'm going to have to limit my time on the internet, only using it when absolutely necessary.

Isn't your *job* online? How can you get away from the internet?

Or is that called "absolutely necessary"?

What, and GYE isn't??

And since, as evident in your beautiful post, you are trying to live for OTHERS, it must be absolutely necessary for you too! :D

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Re: On pause for now...

Posted by Tomim2B - 31 Dec 2009 08:12

Generally speaking, I haven't been participating in the forum lately. So if anyone addresses a post to me; if I don't respond, you can almost be sure I didn't even read it.

I'll still be available at my email address: Tomim2B@gmail.com, which I check daily. And if anyone would like to get in touch with me at any point in time, I can be contacted there.

Best of wishes,

2B

Well, for us, it **is** absolutely necessary that YOU post here!

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