

Speaking to rebbeim/mentors

Posted by ezraw - 14 Jan 2025 05:18

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Hey!

I hope everyone out there is having an awesome day!

For those of you that don't know me from my previous posts....

I'm a 21 year old bocher, currently learning in yeshiva in ey. I was first introduced to the world of erotica when I was about 9. When I was twelve and a half, my parents caught me (not for the last time), and thus started my nearly ten year journey towards recovery.

Along the way, I confided in 4 rebbeim of mine in three different schools (elementary/high school/bais medrash). Everytime I admitted my difficulties with them, I got only love and support. Everytime I spoke with them about it, they would say how much they admired me for coming forward. How much they appreciated me trusting them and opening up to them.

Each one had advice for me (one of which included GYE), and was there to support me.

Backstory time (cause who doesn't love a good backstory). Having someone who knew me, who I could speak to about these things and get support against it, who admired me for fighting, was an incredible relief from having to constantly be afraid of what I say, lest someone find out and look down upon me.

Fast-forward to the present day:

Throughout my nearly ten year journey, I have had the pleasure of being in contact with dozens (not exaggerating) of people from nearly every background you can think of, who are/where struggling in regards to internet/porn/masterbation. And through our conversations, I have found that most people fall into one of the following two categories.

- 1)those who opened up to a Rebbe/mentor.
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What I am looking for in this thread, is for people's opinions.

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I want everyone who has an opinion on this, whether good or bad, to speak up.

I want everything. No holds barred.

I'm hoping that through this thread, we can hopefully clear the air for people who are on the fence about opening up.

It's not necessarily the right thing for everyone, but hopefully this thread can clarify it at least a little for each individual who reads it.

Have an awesome 24, and may you all be able to feel the love and brachos that Hashem is sending your way.

Wishing you all the best,

With lots of (brotherly) love,

?Ezra W

**Warning: Spoiler!**

Looking forward to hearing back from everyone

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors

Posted by youknowwho - 14 Jan 2025 20:29

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[ezraw wrote on 14 Jan 2025 05:18:](#)

I want everything. No holds barred.

No holds barred, eh?

Disclaimer 1: The following opinion is just based on my life's experience. Although I am probably projecting, it may perhaps be some food for thought.

Disclaimer 2: I am by no means seeking to throw cold water on **any** mentor here on GYE. I have spoken to several of them and there are some wonderful, truly selfless people here. I am addressing the general topic without specific people in mind.

There's a very high-frequency chorus of "get a mentor now" philosophy on this site, and for good reason.

On one hand, it is tremendously helpful to get out of your isolation and share the details of your struggles with someone who cares.

The very act of honesty is extremely helpful for addicts, there is actual science that supports this. Honesty can act as a form of "rewiring" in an addict's brain by strengthening the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision-making and impulse control.

And you can get accountability, advice, empathy and support.

That being said, a Rabbi/mentor for this sort of thing is not always the bed of roses it's made out to be. There are potential downsides to the Rabbi/mentor approach for *some* people in *some* instances.

- The mentor could *potentially* be a closet creep. This includes getting off at the gory details, etc.
- The mentor could *potentially* cross certain boundaries.
- The mentor could *potentially* betray your privacy, even inadvertently.
- The mentor could *potentially* invade your bedroom dynamics with his own projections about how "ideal sex" should look.

Does that mean that one should not confide in a person to help with his struggles? Of course not.

Reaching out is one of the most important tools for achieving sobriety.

I guess if you're a person who may be bothered by any of the points mentioned above, it's incumbent on you to do your due diligence, maintain privacy and boundaries where appropriate, and exercise caution so that you won't end up regretting it.

I wanna reiterate that this is just me saying this based on a very bad experience. The concept of a mentor for these inyanim is probably something that one should be hollering off the rooftops.

It's like anything else that's good - go for it, just be aware of the potential pitfalls.

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors

Posted by dreamyunicorn28 - 14 Jan 2025 22:29

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[ezraw wrote on 14 Jan 2025 05:18:](#)

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This is a painful subject to me. I kept everything a secret until I went for therapy, after 12 years

of struggling and living with tremendous shame. My Kedusha struggles wasn't the only secret I kept, I was generally very reserved and wouldn't open up to anyone about any issue I had.

During my days in Yeshiva I wished I had whom to talk to but I couldn't imagine anyone being nice to me about it. I was also struggling with learning and one Rebbe, a real Tzadik, once asked me up front if I was struggling with Kedusha. Unfortunately I dismissed it and didn't take the opportunity. I was too embarrassed to open up.

A few years ago I felt like I wanted to confide in my Rav, but I regret doing that. It took so much strength of me to mumble out a few words and he wasn't showing interest in trying to ask me out and learn the seriousness of my struggle. He right away started shooting back Chizzuk words and advise. He made me feel like this OCD who's just overly concerned with his Kedusha but really I'm doing okay. Nuh uh!

That was my experience talking to a Rav. I don't know why I still wish I can find a Rav to talk to on top of friends and mentors.

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors  
Posted by doingtshuva - 15 Jan 2025 01:10

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[ezraw wrote on 14 Jan 2025 05:18:](#)

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With lots of (brotherly) love,

?Ezra W

**Warning: Spoiler!**

I read your post with tears

I am double your age and I was never yet able to open up and share my struggle with a real living person

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors  
Posted by ezraw - 17 Jan 2025 14:57

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[youknowwho wrote on 14 Jan 2025 20:29:](#)

[ezraw wrote on 14 Jan 2025 05:18:](#)

I want everything. No holds barred.

No holds barred, eh?

I meant what I said.

I want to hear both sides, I know there are negative aspects as well as positive, and I want both sides open to discussion.

As I mentioned towards the bottom of my original message, it's not necessarily for everyone, but I just want to get it out in the open and dissect it a bit so that people can make a slightly more informed decision.

On that note, I appreciate you pointing out the dangers involved. Since b"H I never experienced them, I didn't know all of them.

And thank you as well rabbi/Dr/Mr Unicorn (Dunno which one you are, so I just decided to go for all of them. Let me know if I missed any

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors

Posted by ezraw - 17 Jan 2025 14:59

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Also, I'm getting out numbered here on the pro side...

WHERE ARE ALL THE PEOPLE TO BACK ME UP!!!! HELLO????

But keep the other side coming as well

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors

Posted by yitzchokm - 17 Jan 2025 15:20

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I am for mentors when needed but you have to find the right person. Aside for having experience and knowing what is the right thing to say a mentor has to be a good match for you. Of course there are healthy boundaries and it is both side's job to make sure that they are kept. I never went to a mentor on GYE except for speaking once with HHM but I did speak to my Rav who was my chosson teacher, my menahel in Mesivta and the Rebbe of my chassidus. All three are very respectable people who have dealt with many people but the problem was that neither of them had professional training the likes of which we get on GYE or the likes of which exist in other venues so they didn't have the means to help me.

I have heard of other people in these capacities that were able to help and I think that the number of such people is growing in today's generation so all this means is that you have to find the right person. There will always be people who had a good experience and people who had a bad experience. It probably all depends on how good the mentor was, whether it was a good match and whether the person in need was ready to break free.

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors

Posted by chaimoigen - 17 Jan 2025 15:37

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Hey, here's a warm hand.

Thanks for starting off with your personal experience, always good to hear where a person is coming from when he asks a question.

Generally speaking, the stories that I have heard in which a person was hurt or damaged by speaking to a person/mentor have taken place off of GYE, when someone opened up to a Rav or Rebbe who didn't have the knowledge, experience, temperament, or empathy to help him. There are also stories about terribly manipulative people who control vulnerable people who reach out to them.

In my personal experience, I haven't really encountered anyone who opened up to friends or mentors on GYE who regretted it.

There are some guys who found that it didn't really help them in their personal struggles in the ways that it has helped others, but I haven't really heard them report a harmful experience (though a couple have reported perhaps feeling very frustrated that everyone is loudly trumpeting the success of things that don't work for them). There are tremendous benefits to connecting with and even meeting friends and mentors that have been discussed at great length.

That said, I do think the Voldemort has mentioned a number of extremely valuable qualifiers. You need to be comfortable. There are some creeps out there (not any of the well-documented mentors here. But some randomly appearing guys have turned out to have less-than-pure intent). The mentor, even if he is a Tzaddik and deeply experienced person, doesn't always know exactly what's best for **you** and **your wife**, especially because, even though there's are common principles, application isn't always the same for everyone. So you should be careful, wait until you're comfortable, and continue to use your Sechel and intuition to feel what's right for you, while having the courage and intelligence to be able to listen to someone who has experience and understanding and good advice.

So I'm highly pro, but suggest always using your brains and heart to tread carefully.

My personal experience: I opened up to one of my Rabbeim in Mesivta. I knew he loved me and he gave me a lot of chizzuk but not so much practical help. Then it was a lonely, harsh, difficult road alone for many, many, years. Then I came to GYE and found experience, wisdom, empathy, guidance and friendship. And I'm trying to give some of it back, best as I can.

love,

chaimoigen

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors

Posted by chosemyshem - 17 Jan 2025 16:43

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What's the shaila?

You ain't gonna find anyone on here who's gonna say burying your dirty little secrets further inside is helpful. You ain't gonna find someone who will say that wise advice is not helpful. You ain't gonna find someone who will say trumpet your struggles from the rooftop and forget about any personal safety.

My personal experience?

I was far too ashamed to open up to anyone during my bochur years and after marriage. I also didn't get anywhere in this struggle until I started hammering away at the prison of shame by opening up to people here on GYE. Eventually opening up to my Rav was very helpful. Not because he knew how to help me (he had some ideas). But because getting honest with someone who really knew me was dynamite to the fortress of lies and shame I had erected around myself. Of course, I was confident that he wouldn't be disgusted with me - which would have been extremely harmful.

At the end of the day, getting honest with other people is *the* most powerful tool out there for anyone who struggles significantly. Opening up to any Rav or Rebbe whom you know to be safe is therefore an extremely helpful thing. Advice and guidance from someone wise is also extraordinarily helpful. Your average Rav or Rebbe might not have alot of experience in this area, so results may vary.

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors  
Posted by icanbreakfree - 19 Jan 2025 02:23

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I am definitely FOR MENTORS!!

For a number of years I was trying to break free ALONE.

and sometimes I would be quite successful. But It always kept coming back!

and went through an intense "Kaff HaKelah" (sling-shot-like- experience) moving from EXTREME guilt to EXTREME "CHARATA" and accepting NEVER to do those Aveiros again!!

and it was SOOO unhealthy!!

It is shattering experience.

ETC ETC ETC!!!

But that all changed when my wife caught me....

it become clear that I needed someones help.

BH I asked a question on the forum (cant remember what Q was)

I got a few response from GYE members to reach out to a certain GYE mentor.

I am beyond thankful that I took the plunge!

I still struggled after, but this mentor really saved my life, my wife, my marriage!!!

btw our marriage was VERY rocky for MANY months!

NOW, I marriage is WAY better than it ever was before!!

I am currently a Rebbe and I would not feel worthy to stand in front of my class and teach them Hashem's Torah if it had not been for this mentor!!

He built me up from the bottom up!!

I am now almost 800 days clean!!

and my whole view on women is changing (its a process, I have come a LOOONG way!!)

I did open up to my high school Rebbe many years ago...

Although, he didn't have tools that could help me,

It did feel good to open up to him, and feel like he still holds of me even after what I shared.

I also opened up to my Rosh Kollel/Rav after I met my mentor.

I was not looking for him to mentor me, but I felt like I wanted him to understand what I was dealing with.

especially my friction with my wife at that time.

Those are my thoughts about having a mentor Al Regel Achas

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors  
Posted by 5678 - 19 Jan 2025 06:41

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Hi, a git voch. My personal experience, I started here on GYE did some progress but i felt that I'm barley holding up and if I don't to anything I'll fall so I reached out to HHM and B"H he mentored me through it, and I also contacted a few other ppl here from GYE but I'll call them friends not mentors, and talking to ppl gave me the courage to open up to my ruv, and my ruv really understood me and mchazik me and gave me some good advice, So my opinion is that opening up to someone and speaking to a human being is the most powerful tool to brake free, it can be a mentor or a friend that really understands the struggle and can hold your hands and share some advice, just speak to someone it takes so much off you chest, .and gives you some breathing space so you can recover

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Re: Speaking to rebbeim/mentors  
Posted by livingagain - 22 Jan 2025 19:53

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IMPORTANT REMINDER!!!!

YOU ARE AWESOME!!!!!!

DON'T EVER TELL YOURSELF OTHERWISE

SERIOUSLY. I MEAN IT.

In my yeshiva, the older bachurim learn with the younger bachurim mussar Seder chavrusas. Luckily I had a very bright chavrusa that I felt comfortable with. I discussed my issues including in the area of kedusha. It was very helpful as he was able to guide me based on his own personal experience. Having a mentor helped me navigate these taavos which are part of a bachur's normal development.

At the present time as an older bachur I don't have that luxury. I don't feel comfortable discussing it with a Rebbe.

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