

same old story new twists

Posted by perfectnose - 17 May 2009 17:14

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Hi everyone,

I found this site last night believe it or not on JPost.com. They had an article about this website, and while at some points in the article it seemed sarcastic or skeptic (or probably they found another way religious jews are human) I was nodding my head thinking "I better check this site out."

I was exposed to a lot of porn also from a very young age (around 11 or 12), mostly through a neighbors and friends stash. While I was attracted to the stories and pictures I had no idea what to do with it until I went to a Mesifita out of town and a second bachur my age (no molestation going on) showed me how to mutually masturbate. I still remember that he told me to tell him when I was going to be done and I had no idea when to say when because it was all new to me. This went out for around two years until I went to a different Yeshiva. The guilt I felt during that time was indescribable. Probably worse than any guilt I have felt in subsequent years. I felt I was doing mishkav zachur and doing something that the torah clearly states as chayav meesah. I did not know that Mishkav zachar means full intercourse with another man, but then again which rebbe explains that to a 14 year old class. The guilt mainly stuck around with me because I was taught that you do not know if your teshuva is ever sincere unless you are tested with the same test. B"H when I was around 17 this bachur and I were roommates again, and one day when we both were looking at magazines he asked me to join him and I refused during the height of heat. I then felt vindicated and an indescribable joy. But I digress

I was so into porn and so full of shtus that when I was 14 I tried to get my sister my age involved. BH I did not and I did not do anything too stupid. After seeing a therapist I understand now that both of these incidents are in goyishe terms "completely normal" during early teenage years. The internet was still five years away.

Because I had not access to magazines or erotica I would do the next best thing. I would go to libraries or used book stores and read the sex scenes in the romance novels. I became an expert skimmer and could find a sex scene as if it was the first page in the book. That was until I was eighteen. I still remember the first magazine I bought. The lotok of the asian woman behind the counter and the rush to the closest public bathroom.

During this time I was masturbating probably a few times a day to four or five times a week.

Obviously as a number of authors here the guilt and self hatred for such an extended time can only cause a low self esteem and distrust of ones qualities and resolves. How can the son of a ruv stoop so low. I definitely had depression while I was in my teenage years early signs of what was to be.

There was one year in Yeshiva when I was 19 that I clearly remember try as hard as I can too stop. I would study day and night, be as vigilant as I can but to no avail. I think after that year I decided to accept it (with guilt but I was not going to kick myself) until I got married and maybe with a wife I would be able to kick the habit. As other posters know this is another foolish idea. For a couple years until my marriage I fell into pretty deep depressions and when I asked help from one rosh yeshiva he told me at my age I should be strong enough to deal with my own issues. Obviously porn was a three to four time a week incident. I chatted but I was ever one to really to be good at that type of stuff. I guess it was ironically too fake.

BH I was able to get out of my depression long enough to be a prospect for decent shidduchim. I got married and I was convinced my masturbating and porn days are over. Imagine my luck when my wife was diagnosed with a condition that did not allow us to have relations for a whole year after marriage. Looking back I probably was not able to have yichud with her because we never even consummated our marriage even once. During that year I had to deal with wifes emotions and had to act like this is not a big deal and we will get through this and BH we did. However, this obviously did not help my porn addiction and it got worse and worse until my wife caught me about two weeks before she was due with our first child. (By the way when we were dating I did tell my wife about my porn past but she did not think too much of it thinking it was a single guys problem and other reasons)

Like a lot of posters the relief is euphoric. The sense that you are on the road to recovery is strong but short lived. After my wife had the baby I fell into the deepest depression of my life, one that stopped me from working and I basically stayed in bed all day. Since my wife is such a aishes chayil about seven months into the depression she got my parents involved and I got help. However the therapist who was Jewish with a very good neshama felt that masturbation and porn was normal that my wife would just have to accept as long as it is not in too much excess. In her words "I have been around the block and for men to look at porn and masturbate is completely normal." That I am using it to self medicate for my depression (to feel something in that black void)

While she might be right with an average joe, an orthodox jew has higher standards. My wife knows I occasionally (once to three times a week depending on my moods and feeling) look at porn and gets upset about it here and there. She understands the yetzer harah and how hard it is to shake. Maybe one solace to her is that I do not usually look at pictures but read erotica so she is not competing against a picture(I always found that the exploitation of woman in the porn

industry a general turn off and how it is so fake)

Getting to the present, I still battle depression which affect my Parnasah and other aspects of my life. I still wonder how my porn and masturbation is tied to this depression. My therapist seems to feel my depression has to be treated but not the porn but I do not feel this way which brings me to this post. Sorry for the long bore but I feel I need help and this is the place for it. Any ideas where I move from here? I am thirtyish with a small family and a need for peace.

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by the.guard - 17 May 2009 19:54

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Dear Jew, you have come to the right place. Your therapist is clueless. He is not trained in addictions and so he does not understand at all the nature of addictions. Please, I beg you, download [The GuardYourEyes Handbook](#)

*This Handbook details 18 suggested tools and techniques, in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this addiction, and continuing down through increasingly earnest and powerful methods. For the first time, we can gauge our level of addiction and find the appropriate tools for our particular situation. And no matter what level our addiction may have advanced to, we will be able to find the right tools to break free in this handbook!*

Hashem has been waiting all these years for you to find us. Read through the handbook and your life will begin anew from today.

Welcome home.

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by gma316 - 18 May 2009 22:17

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I understandyou 100% as I know as one who has suffered from depression and has been on sevrsl diffrent medications for my derpression. I would relize that once i would give into my

temptations and fall and look at stuff I should not and masterbate I would become more depressed and even act out in anger at times baruch hashem never anything severe. I found a few small tricks helped when I was married (I am now divorced) first and foremost never take for granted what you have especially your wife, the more you treat your wife kodosh and realize what you have in her the more that will help with looking at stuff which you should not as well doing things you really do not want to do. the best thing so far I have found is this web site if you can talk to your wife when you have a temptation or start to look at things then try and remember us for chizuk and post to talk to us I have never felt that I had the ability to overcome as I do now with this web site and most of all with hashem's help

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by the.guard - 19 May 2009 06:01

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BTW, see Chizuk e-mail 428 on [this page](#) for some good ideas on dealing with depression.

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by perfectnose - 19 May 2009 15:05

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GUE, Thank you very much for this chizuk message and I really connected because I too am bankrupt at around that age because of depression. I will definitely get the book and watch the movie. I will probably listen to the shiur tomorrow.

Maybe I am wrong, I do not think I am addicted to porn like some others, I can go four five days sometimes a few weeks no problem. The problem is when I feel resentment to life, my wife, myself, or I am feeling down or depressed. In other words for me to say, I AM CLEAN FOR ONE DAY is not such an accomplishment for me as much as when I say day 20 or day 40. That means either I was not down enough or resentful to bring myself to porn, or when I was down or resentful I chose another avenue to cope with the feeling other than fixing it with porn. I think either of these options are a great improvement.

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by Efshar Letaken - 19 May 2009 23:25

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I'm not the one to give any advice of my own but I can tell you this much is true that your therapist obviously has no clue what He/She is talking about.

#1 - Don't you think you would be making any progress with you problems? (unfortunately some therapists focus on \$ & helping you will end the \$ flow so really helping you wont help them)

#2 - I really do think the porn addiction has a lot to do with getting over your depression.

It might be the same old story just not a new "twist". This site has real solid helpful tips for anyone that really wants to help themselves.

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Re: same old story new twists  
Posted by Dov - 20 May 2009 21:53

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Dear PFN -It was sweet reading your post, though the pain it brings up in my memory is horrible - at the same time. I also told some of my story on this site in an earlier post and went through the therapist and medication route. Before that, I went through the teshuva and frumkeit route. I was not yet able to use any of those tools to stay sober, until I started to work the 12 steps in SA. In my case, working the steps, going regularly to weekly SA meetings, getting a sponsor, and making many calls to other members helped my life get turned around. I'd be happy to give you all the details, but for now, suffice it to say that my entire consciousness and inner life (and as much of my outer life as was possible) were about lust and nothing more. I was in a constant state of either: excitement/anticipation of when I'd act on my lust again, or depressing/exhausting fear of when I'd screw up and act on my lust again! That went on for fifteen years (beside the adolescent phase of all that, which did appear more run-of-the-mill). But I digress...

I was going to a therapist because I got caught. He put me on meds and gave me talk therapy but I got progressively worse. *I* introduced **him** to the 12 steps in some literature I had come by in one of my many 'bad' searches. He did not consider it worthwhile. The question he asked me was: Look, do you want to beat this thing and get healed, or do you lust want help to learn how to live with it? Cuz that's all 12 steps will give you." Well, when I acted out 11 years ago this past February and saw how out of control I was (married with three children at the time) I had a gift from Hashem of clear recognition that there was nothing really stopping me from taking the very next step in acting out, which would require me to throw away my entire life - family, religion, community, and everything. I saw my death looming and felt, "I need to do something - anything - to stop and stay stopped, NOW." That's when I went to an addictions therapist who connected

me with SA and I have been working the program, doing service work, making friends, and staying sober ever since. My life and then life of my wife and children is immeasurable better now, and I have a best friend who is the answer to all my needs. It's not a picture of a woman, not is it any woman - not even my wife. It is the Almighty Friend I always had, who created the world, lust, all pleasure, all goodness, and me. He will take care of me, and as long as I do what is necessary to remain aware of him and be honest with myself I will live a life that is made beatiful with the awareness that Hashem is with me and everything will be OK. So far, with a lot of help, I have not needed to reach for my drug (like I did in the past) to live. Just being religious or davening was not enough for me, because I was very, very broken and very goofy in the head. Now I am a sick, or broken, person getting better/fixed up, not a bad person getting good. Hope something here was helpful, Dov

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by perfectnose - 20 May 2009 22:44

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Thank you dov for your inspiring words. However, I at this point do not think I was in as deep as you were. On the depression note, my therapist (who not perfect has helped me in leaps and bounds in other areas of my life) thinks it is just chemical and something that has be fixed just like diabetes needs constant insulin. What I do not understand is how can SA solve depression.

You brough in religion, at this point, I am not at my optimal level that I used to be. I do not daven (I put on tefillin) and just keep kosher and shabbos but I do not feel religious and I do not feel any connection to g-d). Its unfortunate but just like my porn and depression, I always had ups and downs with religion. I never really became completely not frum (in respect to "core" mitzvos) but I have sometimes strayed pretty far from my roots.

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by Efshar Letaken - 21 May 2009 00:01

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Reb Perfect,

Its painful to hear how far your problems whatever they may be have gotten you.

I hope Hashem helps you recover so that you can get back on the right track very soon for that's what you really want and need.

Efshar Letaken

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by perfectnose - 22 May 2009 02:35

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I am so embarrassed today when I noticed that I left this site opened on my wifes computer. She read my postings, but she said she was very happy to read it because she never really realized what I was going through. Her and I don't really speak about this issue so often and when we did she usually brought it up in a bitter but matter of fact way.

Another issue I am dealing with is why I am so cold to yiddishkeit right now. I read the chizuk emails and the blog and while they help me with porn etc, I feel no connection to the part about davening to hashem or surrendering to Hashem like Dov and so many others write. I always thought this filth had a direct correlation to my religious connection, but while I am being so good with keeping away from the dirt, I feel nothing with regards to yiddishkeit.

Not that I am trying to make differences, but not like some others here, I never felt like a hit rock bottom. I wasn't actively (obviously my neshama was screaming out in pain wanting to stop being dragged in the pile of pig dung) looking for a solution before I read about it on Jpost.com. Am I deluding myself? I don't know why I feel so out of touch with some others on this forum. just writing out my honest thoughts of a cold fish

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by Ano Nymous - 22 May 2009 02:56

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You must have an amazing wife perfectnose. Most women would flip out if they saw that, not commend their husband for his honesty. As to the yiddishkeit issue, there could be something else causing the issue aside from the porn, but I have no way to know. Maybe someone else

has some more helpful advice for you. I have the same issue to some degree, but I have no answers.

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by Elya K - 22 May 2009 03:51

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Dear Jewish nose,

This is a spiritual malady so if you're still looking at porn even occasionally, you automatically separate your neshama from G-d. Otherwise, HE would allow us to look at it and masturbate, etc.

You can still be an alcoholic and only drink occasionally. I don't know if you're addicted or not but you can find out. Go to [slaafws.org](http://slaafws.org) and take the 40 question test.

this is a disease of connection. We isolate ourselves because we have a hole in our souls we are trying to fill. From your experiences you've experienced trauma, shame, guilt since childhood

and these are the areas you need to work on with a CERTIFIED SEXUAL ADDICTION COUNSELOR.

Others are Clueless. I accomplished more in 2 years with mine than 25 years going from Psychologist

to Psychiatrist, Social workers, etc. You wouldn't go to a dermatologist to do brain surgery, would

you? I hope not.

You should be thrilled your wife found you trying to get some help instead of finding you looking at porn. She sounds very understanding and for that you are blessed with an



Eishes Chayil. But that is no excuse to rationalize looking at stuff occasionally. this is an insidious disease that gets worse if you don't stop. Soon one thing will not be thrilling enough and we look for new, more dangerous ways to act out.

We are constantly yearning for someone or something to fill this hole. So if my wife is not available I will look elsewhere. That's not exactly a great formula for a marriage. The Torah dictates these laws to us so we can form an intimate relationship with our wife, EVEN WHEN she is a Niddah, and that is by talking, sharing, etc. without sex. Because sex is indeed optional, and should not be the center of our universe, even though we think it is. So using our wives for sex because we're lusting instead of because we love them and MUTUALLY want to be together, is tantamount to manipulating our own wives for sex. Not a good idea.

Once you're sober for awhile, at least 90 days, your spirituality will come back and you'll begin to feel closer. Hashem only shines HIS goodness upon us when we're a clean vessel worthy of acceptance of HIS goodness. But when we're stuck in the mud, it covers up our holy soul. Pardon the pun. "soul" "hole" ....

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by perfectnose - 22 May 2009 04:49

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Thank you very much Elya and Ano for your posts. First my wife is a true aishes chayil. She has knows about the porn for four and a half years already and accepted it in a cold and "thats life" way. It obviously hurt her very deeply but she figured she was powerless and if she wanted a intact home she should better just look past it and do the best possible. I even told her i found this site I just didn't expect her to actually read my posts. Because I knew it hurt her so much I tried to keep it out her sight as much as I can thinking "out of sight out of mind."

Its Ironic, that when I was first trying to iron out issues with my marriage, porn, depression, etc, I went to a close family friend, my rabbi, and my psychologist, and they all seemed to think that porn is not the worst thing in the world.

The Family friend, who is very modern orthodox, was like I always agreed with my wife "you can look but you can't touch."

My rabbi and my psychologist both said its normal drives and its a hard thing to overcome. Well my Rabbi said more specifically that Chatas ne'arim is very common and most prevalent. It is a major nisayon we all have and need to overcome. My psychologist said, if you talk to me not as a frum jew but as a human being "all people do it and it is completely normal." first you need to accept this and not feel guilty all the time. Once you get there, and you want to raise yourself above normal and act like a frum jew, that is your choice. But, you need to understand that you will be going beyond what is normal and what generally all people do.

I think more and more you guys are right. They all three were completely unqualified to deal with this issue. But on the other hand I think they all three were right, that I have to stop beating myself up because I had this issue. Its completely normal for a person to get very farshmutzed in this type of stuff.

With regards to addiction. Elya, you bring a great point regarding an alchoholic is still an alchoholic even when they take an occasional drink and I read the 40 questions. My only issue is how do I know my answers are real. I feel like the guy that reads webmd.com online and thinks he has every ailment because he identifies with the symptoms. At this point I do not want to think I am truly addicted, so I trying to say to myself when I was reading the questions, nope I don't have that symptom etc. I hope I am making sense.

I guess I can speak only facts at this point.... Four days ago I came across this website after reading some erotica etc, and I was about to go to bed. I literally stayed up from midnight to five in the morning looking at this sight amazed at the genius of it and how hashem gave the koach for someone to start it. Since then, I only had some small urges on the third day. Let me ask you this Elya, If I am clean from four days ago and on for life does that mean I was not addicted?

sorry If I do not make any sense.....

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by perfectnose - 22 May 2009 05:05

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Re: same old story new twists

Posted by Elya K - 24 May 2009 05:00

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I'm glad to see you have a sense of humor. Sometimes we need one around this forum.

Also Elya I called myself Perfect nose because I don't have a Jewish nose

I would say if you've been clean for 4 days and from now on until your life is over 120 years, you were not addicted. Some people can drink alcohol normally and do not become alcoholics.

Some people can look at porn or masturbate normally (not according to Halacha). It is normal up to a certain age, although not halachically permissible. when this "normal" behavior becomes

obsessive and compulsive where you can't stop and it begins to affect your work, marriage, social

situations, tardiness, money, etc. then you become addicted.

so if you can stop from now on you're fine. Labels don't mean much, don't label yourself one way

or the other. Just try and live a clean, healthy and spiritual life. Educating yourself and your wife

about this is the best thing you can do for each other. The more she understands that this is a disease and not just some thing, the better you'll be. (if you have it altogether).

We all don't want to believe we are not addicted and we are in total control. We all swear we'll never do it again, but somehow we do. We all love our wives and don't want to hurt them but somehow we do. Your wife should understand that this is not about her and not meant to hurt her. it's about you, your past, your loneliness, fear, anger, resentment and abandonment. These

are the things you should be discussing with a professional. The end action (alcohol, work, sex, drugs, gambling, etc. ) is just the way we soothe the hole in our souls. It's up to you to stop and up to your wife to support you. and when you work together to heal, your marriage and life will improve tenfold.

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