

New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 26 May 2009 17:22

First, let me explain the name.

I once read in some stupid magazine that if a guy says his favorite comic book hero is batman, then it means he is reserved, keeps his emotions to himself, but he has a strong sense of justice and it will take time to get him to open up in a relationship, if you can even get him into one to begin with. It'll become clearer later on.

Anyway, here's my story:

I am 22, male. I come from a broken home. I was first exposed to porn at a young age, around 10 or 11. Maybe even 9. I honestly don't remember. I remember once in seventh grade someone brought some pages from a magazine to school and we looked at them, but I wasn't like the other guys who could just look at them, enjoy them and then forget about them. I enjoyed them, obviously. That's normal. But I also wanted to keep them. I wanted the girl to come to life out of the page and be mine. In short, I was obsessed. I latched onto it very strongly. That was a pattern that would repeat itself for years. I couldn't really understand why the other guys didn't like it as much as I did. I thought maybe I had reached a later stage of puberty than they had or that they might even be gay! I didn't understand until much later that my obsession was a serious problem. It did not really manifest itself badly until relatively recently.

I remember in high school I would spend all day looking at porn if I stayed home sick. Once I came home in the middle of the day to get something for school and I told myself I'd just sneak in a quick peek. I did, for maybe 5-10 minutes, but I was surprised when I ran into my stepfather on the driveway as I was going to leave. Apparently, he had left something as well! That was close call, and that's the first time I can remember almost getting into some major trouble with this.

You have to realize that in those days (only 5-6 years ago) internet technology was not nearly what it is today. I looked mostly at pictures, and I tried like hell to find free video. Back then it was mostly stuff you had to pay for. But now there are plenty of sites with streaming, high quality videos of anything you can imagine. Like Youtube for porn. That wasn't around back then so it's much easier to access now. Plus I have my own computer now. All I can say is thank G-d that stuff wasn't around back in high school or I would be even more messed up.

Why am I so obsessed with porn? Truth is, I don't even like it anymore. I've become so desensitized, that I don't even get aroused unless I stay away from it for 3-4 weeks at least. At this point, I'm basically addicted in the physiological sense. Neurologically, I am chemically dependant on it the way a crack addict needs crack to keep functioning, if you can call it that. I want to stop but I feel like I can't. The longest I've gone free, that I've counted, not counting my 2 years in Israel where I went clean for nearly 10 months straight (mostly because I had no choice), is only 42 days. My high school coach used to say it takes 21 days to break a habit. I'm betting that's just an average...

So why the addiction? I have no idea. Obviously it's strange for a normal male to not like porn at all, but it's strange to be addicted too.

I think a lot of it has to do with the way I grew up. I live with my mother and stepfather when I'm home, which isn't much these days. Maybe, just maybe my addiction is more than just a corruption of the normal male sex drive. It is also a corruption of the need for love and to be loved. It is a fleeting attempt to plug the hole in my heart where love goes. You see, when you grow up without ever being in a home with both of your birthparents, and without seeing or feeling any hint of affection between your parent(s) and stepparent(s) in the way they look at each other or speak to each other, without ever receiving positive words, encouragement, and warmth, or any kind of clear direction in life, and instead seeing your parents fight and yell at each other like children and receiving negative criticism for everything you do, then you develop incompletely and awkwardly. You have no self esteem whatsoever. You hate the world. You hate yourself. Some people turn to drugs. Some just kill themselves. Others channel their rage into hard work towards breaking free of the chains of the home and eventually saying "look at me now, no thanks to you. I told you so.". And others turn to porn. I have chosen these last two.

Ever since I was old enough to understand how messed up my home was I wanted to break free from it. I am absolutely obsessed with being the best husband and father I can possibly be, because I know the pain and the suffering--the absolute hellish anguish--that comes with a broken marriage and a broken home. I don't want my kids to go through what I did. I don't want my wife to be unhappy the way my mother is. It's not her fault either. I want to be everything my stepfather isn't. I am mature enough for marriage, which has been on my mind lately, but there's at least one giant monkey wrench stopping the whole thing. First of all, I am absolutely terrified that this addiction will not be abated simply by getting married, and I'm sure it won't be. I fear that it will rise up again and challenge my marriage. But more fundamentally, living with this problem is living with a character duality. I appear to be a decent guy to most people. I'm not the frummetest guy ever, but I try my best to be a good person and to avoid making enemies. People like me. I learned in Israel for two years after high school. I am intelligent, and I suppose I am at least moderately good looking and I keep myself in shape. So, on the surface I would appear to be an all around good guy and a "good catch". But I have this dark side that no one knows about. And that, combined with the way I grew up, makes it very hard for me to have any kind of normal relationship with people. I just don't open up people. I guess partly because I am

inherently distrusting of them (upbringing) and partly because if I let people into my little world they may see me for what I really am. Of course, you can't live that way forever and eventually I'm going to crack. Secondly, **how can I marry someone with all those images burned into my eyes and my brain?** Won't it seriously detract from my relationship? It's like I will have an emotional relationship with one woman but a sexual relationship with hundreds (actually probably closer to thousands). How will I do it? I have never even kissed a girl nor had a girlfriend but at the same time it is as if I have been with thousands of them. What do I do?????!!! Would it be hypocritical to want to marry a virgin after all I've done? Wouldn't it be unfair to her in some ways?! There are many other issues that I need to address before I can even think about marriage, but this addiction is one that has broad repercussions, with regards to marriage and many other aspects of my life. It is perhaps the most fundamental of them all. If I fix this, then it might be easier to fix the other problems. Maybe. But I won't talk about them here (if I do, people might find out who I am).

So after rambling like a madman (I am usually very terse), it comes this: I must stop this behavior. Rationally, I know it must be done. But there is a part of me that says no. And there is a part of me that wants to push me down that road, that ends with being on the other side of the camera (at least with regard to the general behavior, not necessarily literally). But I know that is wrong and I know it won't do anything positive for me.

So, how do I start stopping?

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 26 May 2009 19:47

Hey Batman - you've come to the right place. Stay here and read the numerous helpful resources that are available.

You are absolutely correct that marriage will not solve this problem in the least. You want to

have this well under control before you even start dating. And, no you are not a hypocrite for wanting to marry a woman who waited until marriage for a sexual relationship, but get this fully under control first (and work on the other issues that you refer to). You and you future wife will then be able to build a beautiful Jewish home, IY"H. You'll be a great pair - the Dynamic Duo, if you will.

The \$64,000 question is: Do you have an Internet filter? It is essential to have one - where you do not have access to the password (someone else must choose the password, and the e-mail address where the password gets sent if the password is lost must be an address that you have no access to). A filter does not solve the problem, but it buys you time if you experience a moment (or more) of weakness.

Hatzlacha! Why not keep us all posted of your progress? Doing so will make you feel accountable.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 26 May 2009 20:55

Where do I get a filter?

Hopefully it's a good one that only blocks the relevant material.

Also, I can't think of anyone that I'm willing to give this password to, except *maybe* one guy. If not him, then who?

As for the whole marriage bit---it's just something that's on my mind these days (I'm 22, so...). It's not the main issue, but it's a side issue that is complicated by this problem. Of course, it's an emotional subject which is why I talked about it I guess. Even though it's a side issue it's close to the top in terms of my current "issues" that are the most frustrating. It's frustrating for everyone I guess, but the frustration is magnified by this problem, especially because I have made the switch--starting a couple years ago--from wanting wpmen in an animalistic, hedonistic sense to wanting an actual *relationship*, which of course requires respect. So to then go on the computer to objectify and use women completely contradicts that idea, and it's frustrating because that is not me. It's my chemical dependence.

One important thing I've noticed is that my productivity has declined and depressive symptoms have increased as the problem has gotten worse. Of course, depressive symptoms just send me right back to the computer for a fix. It's a vicious cycle. Also, I've almsot been caught a bunch of times, but nothing seems to deter me. I've even gone online at night with my roommates sleeping in the room. I just had the screen facing me wiht the back of it to them so they wouldn't see if they woke up, but still--that's just crazy. I've got to stop this before my life spirals out of control....

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 26 May 2009 21:17

Check out the various filter options at www.guardureyes.com/GUE/Filters/filters.asp.

Keep in mind that a filter is just there to help you buy time when you're feeling weak. It does not solve the problem. You need to keep working on yourself. Read the numerous resources on this site for helpful suggestions.

As I believe I suggested in a previous post, why not keep us posted of your progress, one day at a time? Be honest about it - it will make you feel accountable. Also, remember the expression - nothing succeeds like success (or something like that). You need some sobriety under your belt to give you strength. First, try for one hour, then try for another hour. When you have one day, try to turn it into two. It will get easier over time, although you will always need to be careful.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 26 May 2009 21:18

As a follow-up to my previous post: Does anyone have a suggestion as to who can help Brucewayne with a password?

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 26 May 2009 21:25

Hi Bruce,

Welcome to our community. I am the admin of this forum. You have come to the right place. There are two prerequisites to beginning to heal from this addiction. One is admitting you have a problem, and two is wanting to get help. You have already done both of those. Now comes step three, actually getting the help!

If you've read a little bit through this forum, I'm sure you'll quickly realize that you are not alone and that we get cries for help like yours many times a day, both by e-mail and on the forum.

Basically, it seems you've been going through this cycle of addiction for a number of years already... We could offer you lots of great Chizuk and advice, but it would last only a few days and then wear off. Instead, we want to help you in a way that will be much more effective and systematic.

We put a lot of effort into writing up handbooks that contain all the tools to breaking free of this addiction, in progressive order. These are tools that we in the GYE community have gathered together - through hundreds of people's experiences over the years. These tools can help anyone, **no matter what stage of addiction they might be at**. Whether someone is just struggling a little, or whether they have tried countless times to break free with all types of advice and tricks, these handbook will be able to guide them on the right path. (See below for links to the handbooks).

By reading the handbooks and exploring what tools you've tried and which you haven't - we can work together and discuss a battle plan for you (along with the others on the forum) step by step, tool by tool. This will give us a clear "Framework" to work in, and will help you make progress, slowly but surely **for the long term** - and not just some advice that will quickly fade away...

We are here for you and we will do our very best to offer chizuk and advice and help you along

for as long as it takes, but let's do it within a systematic framework so that the progress can be outlined and mapped, and you will finally be able to break free of this endless cycle of addiction...

Please right click on the links below and select "Save Link/Target As" to download the handbooks to your computer.

1) [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!

2) [The GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)

The Attitude Handbook details 30 basic principles to help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle. Here are some examples: Understanding what we are up against, what it is that Hashem wants from us, how we can use this struggle for tremendous growth, how we can deal with bad thoughts, discovering how to redirect the power of our souls, understanding that every little bit counts, learning how to bounce back up after a fall, and so on and so forth...

Also Bruce, when reading your story, I right away thought of this particular PDF file, which contains translations from a Hebrew book called "The first day of the rest of my life". I have a feeling that it would be particularly appropriate for your situation. Please download it [here](#). In those chapters, you will come to understand perhaps why it is that particularly YOU suffer from this addiction more than others. It has to do with particular powers of the soul that are unique to you. You can also learn more about this in the "Attitude Handbook" above...

I'm sorry I'm giving you so much reading to do, but to recover from this illness, we have to be ready to put in at least as much time as we spent acting out... Rabbi Twerski always says that this illness is like a spiritual cancer. And what will a person not do to get better from cancer? Nothing should stand in his way!

So if you spent an hour a day acting out, replace that now with an hour a day of reading the three PDF files I linked to you above. I believe that within a week or so, you will have finished all three of them and you will find the courage and the tools to change your entire life around!

Yes, it is essential that you take care of this before marriage. Otherwise it has the potential to ruin two people's lives instead of one. And if not taken care of, this addiction only gets worse. But you have come to the right place, so do the reading and take heart, because you are no longer alone in your struggle.

P.S. As Kedusha wrote, a good filter is a **very** important first step. Please see [this page](#) for many great filter options. And I can hold the password for you. See [this page](#) for how to do it!

May Hashem be with you!

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Lechayim - 26 May 2009 21:35

There is way of being in control a little with your filter even if your in charge. Make a password that is combined of many letters and numbers but nothing really any meaning to it. Its just like a serial number or similiar. This way you'll never remember it only on paper. You should also have a email address which needs your password to get in (different Password). Some filters will ask you if they can mail the password to your email address but if you can't get your mail. Then you can't alter your filter level or whatever changes you would like to make. I leave my passwords hidden some where else like home but not at work. At least if i get chas vesholem the urge to do no good. I can't because i don't have the passwords at that time. It helps but is not complete. I have it so my internet doesn't even work after a certain hour. Do you think i should put my internet off even earlier cause its at end of day that i get urges to do no good.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 26 May 2009 21:39

Do you think i should put my internet off even earlier, cause its at end of day that i get urges to do no good?

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Dov - 26 May 2009 22:31

Dear Bruce - Your post hit on major points it takes years for many to come by. You seem to feel I think you know the answer to that one. LOYNATA
there is no way to really hide from the truth so get it over and deal with it. You are not explaining your sickness away with any wacky convolutions. You seem to see the monolithic, predictable nature of life in addiction and realize that real life is so much more interesting (and actually useful). You admit the porn isn't fun any more - just *needed*, that marriage will not solve your problem with living at all, and you believe you are neurochemically dependent, not essentially "bad". You also seem to say that the **using** is only a symptom - the actual problem is **living** (w/o medicating). "a fleeting attempt to plug the hole..." What a gem! You'd be suprised at how many bazillions (that's a lot) of people get lost in the never-ending and prideful struggle to understand **why** they lust/act out, thinking that if they would only just stop, then all their problems would be solved! Oy, what a suprise when it just gets more painful...

SA's first step reads: We admitted we were powerless over lust and that our lives had become unmanagable.

You are apparently ready to take a few more steps out of the Kayak and have quit trying to ride the wild rapids. You are thinking about marriage and starting to take life very seriously, etc.

Many guys opt out at the cusp of recovery and "hope for the best". You are a cut above where you came from and I hope you continue to rise above addiction humbly accepting Hashem's help **at all times**. There are 11 more beautiful and simple steps waiting for you to take with a little help and guidance from a sponsor, if you choose. Calling people, a filter, etc., help us learn how to live w/o getting distracted by the lust. That's all the using is, a distraction from the real thing. The steps help a lot of people learn how to live (a fantastic life) as an addict in remission. Love, Dov

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 26 May 2009 22:59

Bruce, I want you to know that "Dov", who just posted to you above, is **the wisest guy who ever posted on our forum**. He is referring to the famous "12-Steps" that are used around the world to help people break free of addictions. See [this page](#). He has joined these [SA 12-Step groups](#) and is sober for 11 years already. You can see Dov's story [here](#).

I want you to read, and re-read, and re-read again, what Dov just wrote you above. It is beyond amazing. It is pure and simple truth, smack on target, nail on the head (and whatever other sayings like that you can think of!!) :D

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 27 May 2009 04:53

Thanks for the help guys. I've been getting the emails for a couple of months now but it's so easy to just delete them...

Unfortunately the link to Dov's story didn't work. I'd really like to read it.

Watch for me to play devil's advocate on here. Not right now because it's late and I need to go to sleep, but there are a lot of things I need to clarify, and I hope you can offer the solutions.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Ilan - 27 May 2009 08:51

Hi BruceWayne

I empathise with you very much. I also come from a broken home. My parents just got divorced

after a thirty year marriage and they hated each other all of those thirty years. I hate to say it but my oldest brother was the Guinea pig of the marriage and he suffered terribly both at school and afterwards. My father is addicted to medicine such as anti depressants and headache tablets and whatever will calm his slight feelings of sickness. I wish I could be proud of him but I still love him. I feel that I will be a good father and husband because I have seen all my father's mistakes and the dangers of a bad marriage and you have also seen that. So you have had a hard experience but you also have a determination not to repeat the mistakes of your parents. Some people who come from good homes don't always turn out to be good spouses because they were pampered in their youth and lack maturity. Life was never difficult and then when they are married they cannot manage without mommy and daddy. Your experience has made you more mature and aware of the dangers of unhealthy relationships. Hashem gave us the parents we got because they were necessary in helping us achieve our mission on this earth. I believe that you will be a good husband if you internalise your youth and remain determined to walk a new path.

As for the porn, I struggle with it as well. I fell on Sunday, you can read my post. This is just a thought but perhaps think about what you want to become and instil a sense of purpose into your life. Maybe stop concentrating about the gutter and how deeply you are in it because otherwise you will never get out of it. I'm talking to myself now. Have you met someone who always answers "I'm sick" or "I'm not fine" or "I'm surviving" or "Its hard" - that also creates negative paths in your brain. Life will always be hard if you say that your are sick all the time. The challenge for us is to rise above our youth and use it to our advantage. I don't drink whisky but the Jonny Walker slogan is quite appropriate for here "Keep Walking".

Reb Gue Please feel free to disagree with me

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Re: New Guy

Posted by chl - 27 May 2009 18:01

bs"d

Dear Bruce, and Ilan,

i relate to what both f you have to say about broken homes. My parents had for many years a love-hate relationship. My father is an alcoholic (doesn't drink anymore for some years now

b"H). I can't count how often my mother ran away from home in her pain. I remember tending my father when he was hungover (that when i was only a child).

I agree with both of you that these experiences create the opportunity for us to do better than our parents. But in my experience (i am married and have a child b"H) my parents and their behaviors are much more present in myself then i'd like them to be. I'll take their good midos . But just to think that i don't want to be like that did not work for me. I had to accept that both their good and bad traits/behaviors are inside of me.

I think that today there are so many tools to be better parents than they had a their disposition. Psychology made a lot of progress and is much more accessible then 20,30 years ago when i was a kid. There are forums, there are self-esteem books (like R'Twersky's) etc...

So you're right: we want to be better parents and spare our kids. But (talking just about myself, anytime (they do have a lot of good) but please leave out the garbage maybe it's different for you): beware the patterns inherited from our parents. It takes work and awareness not to repeat their mistakes.

Hag Sameah!

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Re: New Guy

Posted by chl - 27 May 2009 18:17

bs"d

BTW: i found that the following book on parenting was very helpful:

"Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child" by John Gottman. It also helped me in understanding myself and my parents, as well as myself as HaShem's child.

behatzlacha!

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 27 May 2009 18:32

Ilan, you always think that I will disagree with you when you post. Why would I? Your posts are always great!!

Maybe you write that because you have low self esteem - that could be something that needs work, and it could be related to the addiction. Rabbi Twerski wrote 50 books. Someone once asked him how he managed it all and he replied that he had really only written one book, only in 50 different ways. All his books have one underlying theme - low self esteem. So many of us suffer from this without even realizing it. Rabbi Twerski himself suffered from it all his life. Listen to [this Shiur](#) of his!

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