

Sporadic failures

Posted by Levtahor - 31 Oct 2008 01:54

I'm really excited to have discovered this site - wish something like this had been around five years ago! (I'm sure both of those are common sentiments.)

The short version of my story is that I've been struggling with the problem since around my Bar Mitzvah (about 10 years ago). Being the computer expert in my house I was able to have free reign of the computer, and I took some pretty horrible advantage of it. I went through phases of staying 'clean' (when I was about 16 I started a daily diary-style log, and created a program that counted weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds, of staying clean, which was an effective tool for a while.), and then failing multiple times in a row. As a good hard working, and disciplined student (B"H) my double life tore me apart, but it took a long time until I finally felt I had it under control to a significant degree. I found other 'softer' time-wasters, like relatively innocuous films and tv shows to download and watch - although that too was at odds with my sterling reputation in school. In my final year of high school I got involved with an early Frum blogging-style group (before there was even such a word), and formed a number of online friendships including some girls, which I think helped keep me clean, and very much helped me stop objectifying women. I certainly wasn't very good at limiting my online time then (often staying up to inordinately crazy hours of the night), but I barely had any Ta'avah to seek out p.

About five years ago I left home for Yeshiva, where I again had no problem (much more limited computer access). Coming home for Bein haZmanim, I was fine - my online friends were still around and I often stayed up to ridiculous hours, but I was clean (Quote from my log: "Seconds: 58,594,770 (Do I still need these for any reason? Life has certainly moved on, and I certainly think up... "). However at some point, I slipped - not the first time I was home, but I think the next one (there's a strong correlation to the fact my other online outlets - my IM acquaintances - had for the most part moved on in life to other things), and since then *every* time I've been home for Bein haZmanim I've failed - sometimes earlier, sometimes later. (This Sukkos, it was really only on my last day home that I ended up staying up past 5am browsing everywhere I shouldn't - it was during that session that I first stumbled across this site, though at that point I was too far gone to pull out). The problem isn't directly related to the availability of a computer either, because for the past year I've had a laptop in Yeshiva, and whilst in Yeshiva itself, I haven't really had a problem. (With some minor exceptions - I'm actually on my guard right now, that I might be prone to acting out, as a kind of residual from my Bein haZmanim failure.)

I think this issue has wrecked my self-esteem and confidence in multiple areas - something I'm especially noticing as I begin Shidduchim. My main problem though, is how to tackle it during the time when it's not a direct danger. The after-effects are definitely around for at least a few weeks or more after falling (with terrible images popping into my mind during Davening, learning, etc.), but generally BH I don't feel any real Ta'avah to go where I shouldn't when I'm

online (though I do recognise a problem I have with staying online for longer than I should). At one point I went so far as to reveal the problem to my parents (over the phone, one Elul Zman), but I don't think they realised the gravity or the depth of the issue - they understood it more as a problem haunting me from my past (which I suppose I keep hoping it is), then as something I need help with now. Any advice would be much appreciated. I would be happy to be an accountability partner, and could probably do with one myself, although again, as mentioned my main challenging times are during Bein haZmanim, (or other times that I am in a more isolated out-of-Yeshiva setting for more than a weekend or so).

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Re: Sporadic failures
Posted by battleworn - 13 Nov 2008 15:41

I'd like to make two points.

- 1) Personally, I'm sure that anyone that is seriously working on recovery should definitely not put off getting married.
- 2) The struggles that I experienced after getting married did not cause trouble to my marriage. (They are actually very much a result of trouble with my marriage, and I believe my situation is somewhat unique)

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Re: Sporadic failures
Posted by the.guard - 13 Nov 2008 16:49

Speaking of good marriages... Here's a nice piece from
www.vosizneias.com/22478/2008/11/13/new-york-first-aid-kit-for-jewish-marriages/

As a young yeshiva student, I learned a lesson about true happiness when I spent one of the most rewarding Shabboses in my life volunteering in an old-age home in Sanhedria Murchevet, a small ultra-Orthodox community in Jerusalem. My predicament that weekend was that I wanted to spend Shabbos visiting the old-age home, but I didn't have a place to stay. Thinking out of the box, and knowing I was in an ultra-Orthodox community that was famous for its chesed and hachnasas orchim, I decided to take a chance by asking some elderly chassidim who frequented a small shopping mall in the neighborhood if they would be kind enough to take me in as their guest for Shabbos. After I waited for about five minutes in front of the mall, an elderly chassid from the Viznitz community walked by with his child. In my broken and heavily

American-accented Hebrew, I tried to explain to him where I volunteered and what I needed. Without blinking, the man said that he would be delighted to have me as his guest.

The elderly chassid met me just before sunset at the local shul and brought me home to meet his wife and family. At first, when I walked into his home, I felt like I was entering one of Roman Vizniak's scenes from pre-war Poland. Despite my initial discomfort at feeling out of place, my fears were quickly relieved when I was warmly welcomed and asked to bring my suitcase into the room I would be sleeping in. After arranging my clothes, I was served a pre-Shabbos treat: a hot cup of coffee and some chocolate rugelach. Just as I finished my last bite, the Shabbos siren blew and I ran off to daven Kabbalas Shabbos at the old-age home.

After davening, I returned to my host's apartment to sleep in a very comfortable bedroom. The next morning I awoke and realized that, despite the fact that they had seven children, there were only two bedrooms—and I was sleeping in one of them! It turned out that they had set up their children's beds in the living room and the parents had slept in the one remaining bedroom! Embarrassed and overwhelmed by their generosity, I walked out of the living room to wish a good Shabbos and, once again, my hosts insisted I sit down for another cup of coffee. That Shabbos, we spent hours eating, drinking tea, and talking about our lives. They were devoted members of the Viznitz community. The father worked as an accountant for the local chevrah kadishah and his wife was an assistant in the community kindergarten. They were married during the War of Independence and for many years lived in Meah Shearim. About ten years ago they had bought this apartment, and one of their dreams was to have special guests over for Shabbos. I happened to be one of the lucky individuals that would benefit from their kindness and hospitality.

What amazed me the most about this couple was their tremendous sense of happiness and camaraderie. Love seemed to permeate their home and their relationships with the people who happened to enter into their lives.

That Shabbos, I was given a present far greater than a bed to sleep in: a glimpse at the secret of what makes and sustains good marriages. That secret is **a commitment to building meaningful relationships and an overriding desire to do chesed for one another.**

I also came away from the experience realizing that people tend to confuse real happiness with temporary pleasure. The line of reasoning is that happiness is dependent upon our ability to purchase comfort. Yet, human experience teaches us that pleasure and happiness are two different things. You can have all the pleasure you desire, yet still not be happy.

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