

## Addiction

Posted by jw8 - 31 Oct 2008 19:34

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I have been looking at pornography since I was about 12 years old, and masturbating since I was about 13. I come from a frum home and went to modern orthodox schools where in High School doing these things were very common place and spoken about without shame. Guys would talk about sites they visited and girls they saw, and it not big deal. In my senior year, I was so enslaved to my yetser hara that I went to a strip club. After I went I felt so guilty it made me sick. I could not function for the next twenty four hours like a normal person, I just wanted to cry. I never went again, but the masturbation and pornography continued. I went to Israel for two years and I stopped doing it. What I thought was impossible wasn't. In high school it would be a big deal if I did not look at porn for a week, now I went almost two years. In Israel, the Rabbeim always warned us not to let our guard down, but I was so sure after getting into serious learning and avodas Hashem, I would never do it again. It got to a point that if I was reading a sports magazine and a picture of a girl would come up, it would be my natural reaction to turn away immediately and I was so proud of myself and my relationship with God. I was learning well and felt good about myself and things were running smoothly. When I got back to America in the Summer I was still very careful. I would rarely watch anything on TV but Sports. As time went on I became a little more lenient with myself and watched some tv shows, but nothing too bad. One night I watched my first movie in almost two years and it had an inappropriate scene., At first I turned away, then I just could not control myself any longer and watched. I then switched from that movie and watched pornography and masturbated. After I did so, I could not believe what I had done. I kept saying to myself "you idiot, you went so long, why did you give in." Once I gave in once though it was all downhill. I started doing it more gradually but still felt very guilty and I was still strict on myself in other areas of Judaism. I was still davening and learning well but I just could not beat this one test. However as time went on I started to feel less and less guilty about doing it. Once that happened I became more lazy about my learning, then eventually my davening. I have never told anyone about my addiction but everybody that I know sees that I'm less serious about my avodas Hashem. I sometimes make inappropriate jokes that I never made before and am less cautious about how people perceive my religious observance. I think in a way this is because some part of me wants to tell someone what happened but I just cannot do so. Now a few years removed from Israel, I am still an observant Jew but one who doesn't take it so seriously. I now masturbate around four times a week but think about it seven times a week, and even the internet is not enough for me now because I have been having thoughts about going back to a strip club. I have this insatiable desire that has destroyed most of my relationship with God including my learning and davening. While I no longer feel guilty about each time I do it, as a whole I feel very bad about myself as a person. I want to start dating soon but I feel that it is not fair to any girl that I date because of my addiction. I feel as if I am portraying myself to her as something that I am not and do not want to do that. I want to live a serious Torah life and learn seriously but I do not act like I think and just have a low self esteem because of it. What is even worse is I hide all my feelings and it is just bottled up and I just want to tell someone but I just cannot. I've seen a link to this site before but this is my first time ever posting. I just think that if I continue down this point too much further I won't be able to come back. I believe I am addicted like someone would be addicted to smoking. If I need to study for an exam (I am in College) I often cannot study until I masturbate and clear my mind. I know it sounds horrible and it makes me feel horrible. Last night I did not daven Maariv at all and spent about a half hour searching sites and then went to sleep feeling empty. I am posting this blog

because I need to tell someone but am too embarrassed to have people know who it is. I truly want help and want to get my religious life back on track. If you have any insights or suggestions or can relate to my experiences please reply to this post. You will really be helping me out. I actually have tears in my eyes as I finish this off and this really is all from the heart of a soul who is enslaved to absolutely disgusting things. Thank you for reading.

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Re: Addiction

Posted by jack - 31 Oct 2008 19:52

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dear jw8, you've come to the right place. EVERYONE here has gone through what you're going through, and i mean everyone. you are not alone. there is everything here to help you - phone support, tips, and posting. it's a difficult task you have ahead of you, but there are people here on this site who will pull you up the mountain. you have an addiction. it never goes away, there is no cure for an addiction. i'm not telling you this to make you depressed - it's just a fact. but with the people here, you will be able to control it. join the phone group - don't go it alone - you will not succeed. it's too powerful a pull - you need people, people like those on this forum who care about you because you are our brother. i am at almost 60 days without mas.... which is really unbelievable when you consider that i'm trying to break a 38 - year old habit. so don't give up, stick with the forum, and you WILL be helped!! jack

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Re: Addiction

Posted by Elya K - 31 Oct 2008 20:13

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What part of the country are you located in? The reason I'm asking is to help you get some counseling help. Browse through the entire GuardUReyes site and also look at

slaaws.org for more information. We have a group that meets by phone on Tuesday nights and talk about these issues with a religious counselor. It is NOT a replacement for therapy. There are also places you can go for a week or 2 to "dry out" and get some real healing and help. If you'd like information on any of this, let me or someone on the forum know.

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Re: Addiction

Posted by me - 01 Nov 2008 18:23

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Dear Yid,

B"H you have been led to this forum. You should know that you are in good hands. I do not have much to add to the 2 posts preceeding mine, but you should start to cheer up because you are well on your way. Also, you are still young and you have an entire long future ahead of you. A future of Torah, Tefillah, and all in Kedusha and Taharah.

You should be very happy and optimistic when you consider that many of us here didn't start to "clean up" until we have already married and raised grown children.

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Re: Addiction

Posted by the.guard - 01 Nov 2008 21:17

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Dear Yiddishe Neshama,

Welcome home. This is the first time a frum Yid has where to turn to in these areas. So many people in even worse situations than you, have broken free. I want you to read some of the recovery stories on our site [over here](#), and particularly [this story](#), which reminds me a bit of yours. The part of that story I want you to see mainly, is the "Update" he writes (scroll down on the page to see it).

The fact that you were able to stay clean for two full years is very important for two reasons. 1) It shows you have great strengths and Kedusha in you, only now it's been covered up and needs to be revealed once again. 2) You will NEVER be able to live with yourself comfortably again once you have seen that you CAN be free. That is why you feel terrible about this as a whole, and this is also what led you to post your heart-felt story on this forum.

There are two prerequisites to being helped.

1) You must truly believe you can be helped (reading the recovery stories on our site can help you with this)

2) you must truly want to be helped (your own suffering and distance from G-d, along with reading the stories of people suffering from [the other 3 stages](#) can help you with this).

The fact that you are seeking help means you already mainly have these two conditions - but they must be strong and finely tuned., Take heart. [Haba Le'taher, Mesayin Lo](#). Be ready to give your addiction and disease over to the care of G-d. Be ready to trust G-d that he will care for you, as you heal.

Know, that the first few weeks are the hardest. Once you have put some distance between yourself and the addiction, it gets a lot easier. See [here](#) for more on this.

For someone starting out on their journey, I highly suggest the following steps:

- 1) It's too hard to have all the garbage within a mouse-click's reach. Install a good reliable internet filter that you can't get around. Let someone you trust hold the password. If you must have open internet access for your work, at least install "Accountability Software". When you know that someone you respect will see every site you visited, it will help you control the urge to stray. See our [Filter Section](#) for tons of info and for over 20 filter options.
- 2) Join the [daily Chizuk e-mail list](#). Like drops of water on Rabbi Akiva's rock, over time, the e-mails can make a serious impression.
- 3) Read one or two of [the tips](#) on the website every day and try to implement them if possible. (Don't read too many at once; bite too much and you won't be able to swallow anything).
- 4) Join the [weekly phone group](#). Group support is very important, and this hotline is the first time that religious people can get the benefit of group support and trained therapists in an anonymous way! The counselor on the phone is trained, (religious) and really "gets it". And you can probably also find a "sponsor" in the group for accountability and help when you're feeling weak. You can also sign up for an accountability partner on the forum as well.
- 5) Keep posting on this forum. You will get tons of great support, advice and chizuk. Also, being honest with those who you will quickly come to consider your "family", will be a great incentive to stay clean and not let them down :-)

Rav Hutner wrote to a Talmid once that it's the dynamic struggle with the Yetzer Hara that makes a person truly great, not basking in the constant presence of the Yetzer Tov. That's what it means "Sheva Yipol Tzadik Ve'kam". Hashem had much Nachas Ruach from your spiritual successes once, but he wanted you to take it to the **next level** and therefore gave you these pitfalls, even though he knew you would fall. What makes a person great is his ability to get back up, despite all his falls. And I strongly believe, along with everyone here, that with some determination you will come out of this with a much closer Keshar to Hashem than you had, even back then when you were doing great.

I also believe that you should begin dating even if you are not fully healed, but rather as soon as you feel you are well on the way to recovery, say, after having been clean for 90 days IY"H ,with the help of this site and forum. (There's a recent study that showed that it takes 90 days to develop new mental patterns in the way the mind has come to think in addictive behaviors). Dating will boost your self-esteem and help you stay clean, especially since you know you are about to start your life in all seriousness, and you will want it to be the way you've always hoped.

And never stop davening. This is what Hashem has been waiting for all these years since you started to slip. He was waiting for you to finally admit defeat and ask for help. He was waiting for you to come here, to our site and forum. And he will give you his help.

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Re: Addiction

Posted by Mevakesh Hashem - 03 Nov 2008 15:32

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JW8,

What courage you have to post your story!

So much of what you write reminds me of myself at your age. Please feel free to contact me privately anytime, and I will try and "compare notes" a little to help you.

Chazak V'Ematz!

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Re: Addiction

Posted by be holy - 18 Nov 2008 22:13

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i know how you feel jew8. i am 28 married with a kid and feeling all of what you feel. please hashem have mercy!

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Re: Addiction

Posted by Elya K - 19 Nov 2008 02:00

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Hashem will have mercy on all of us. First we have to be a pure vessel to receive his guidance and blessing. Just as in Teshuva, we have to admit, regret and even for this moment say we don't want to do this ever again.

Giving our lives over to Hashem is the key. This means accepting what happens to us and letting Hashem rule our lives instead of us trying to control the entire universe.

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Re: Addiction

Posted by battleworn - 20 Nov 2008 13:49

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Dear be holy and jw8,

I promise, you can indeed be very holy. There is so much help available here. Take the time to read through the threads on the forum.

Join all of us, in destroying the y'h and bringing Moshiach. Make the decision that from now on

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you are going to fight that despicable menuval, persistently, patiently and step by step. Make a kabala to never give up.

If you stick with the chevra over here, you will definitely succeed.

Hashem loves you infinitely, and He is waiting for you.

CHAZAK VEEMATZ!!!

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Re: Addiction

Posted by Ykv\_schwartz - 07 Feb 2009 21:06

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jw8,

So much of your story reminds me of my own and i am sure many others on this site. Except I am about ten years older than you. I am married with four kids and going on five. I too grew up in a modern orthodox environment, where porn and masturbation was commonplace and common speak. My first exposure to porn was at age 10. My first masturbation was age 12. Porn got real intense in H.S. It was in H.S., at age 16 that I first began fighting this Y"H. I started becoming more serious in my learning and religious life. But as much as I fought this Y"H, I could not get rid of it. I tried for two years until I went to a post H.S. Yeshiva. When I went to the post high school yeshiva, i too went cold turkey. But not as long as you. During Adar, I broke it by visiting a porn shop in Israel and... I harbor such resentment to my youth for bringing this on me. I have gone through major ups and downs, including contemplating suicide for more than five years. However, over the years, I have learned to not get so down and pick myself up and move on. I never let go of my "charata" but did not let it get me too depressed. The more you stick to this site and listen to the wise advice of all the people here, I am sure you will get off it.

Also, please give us an update

-ykv

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Re: Addiction

Posted by Dov - 29 Apr 2009 22:27

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Hi. It is sweet and painful to read the posts here, thank-you. Please read my post from 04/28, titled "11 years, etc." Something there may be helpful and get back to me if you have questions. I can't tech, only share, and everybody is different, of course.

It has been my experience that *saying* you have an addiction is one thing. Coming to terms with what that really means and *acting* like you really are ill and need help, is another. Whenever I feel like I am fine and strong, that I can make it if I only try harder, life gets difficult. When I hide things, life gets difficult. Your Email, "Addiction",

shows you are reaching out and coming to terms with what is wrong and that is a great thing. I, for one have had enough of silent suffering and talk to people in my program a few times per day, besides meetings twice weekly, and written step work as needed. The whole truth about me needs to be on the **outside**, with safe people.

You may benefit, as I do, from focusing a bit more on Hashem doing all the fighting for you and your part is just not feeding your addiction. For that (not feeding it) we will still need a lot of help besides davening short foxhole type prayers ("Hashem/Tatty/Father/Best Eternal Friend help me. I do that a lot.) Then try to get right back to whatever the heck you were doing for real life until you were distracted by whoever/whatever bad idea came along and maybe making a phone call to another program person to help you do that.

Maybe for normal people, there is a mitzva to struggle directly with the yetzer hora, but not for me (and many other sober addicts who I know). I have proven that I can't be entrusted with a job like that!

Struggling to live in reality and just doing your job whatever it is, is the ikkar - NOT fighting this giant malach known as the yetzer hora. See the aggados about the Tannaim who focused on fighting the yetzer hora near the end of Gemara Kiddushin and see what power the Sotton can wield if people try to compete with it directly. This is quite simple to me. I banged my head into that wall too many times. The fight is for **Hashem** to do for me, now - "*ilmalei ozro*" - my struggle is to do the steps and live with his help. Notice, by the way, that the steps do not have anything about drinking/acting out, just learning how to live right and think right so we do not get so uncomfortable that we may need to medicate Ch"v. I hope this was helpful! Love, from one precious, sweet yid with problems, to another one.

If seeing stuff is a problem, I have noticed a little trick, that closing them for a second and redirecting myself w/Hashems help is easier than turning my neck first! Funny, but true!

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