

Personal recovery plan

Posted by obormottel - 12 Aug 2011 22:38

I was pressed for practical steps I'm taking on the path to recovery. So here goes:

By way of introduction:

I've been a compulsive masturbator since age 11 or 12. Started looking at internet porn when it became available in my house, after being married for a short time. Can't tell you when viewing this garbage became addictive, but it's been years since I realized I have a BIG problem. I would come to shul to mincha with fresh stains on my pants, and people would ask me to be shliach tzibbur! The depression and anxiety, and feelings of hypocrisy! I don't have to tell you... I couldn't stop no matter how much I agonized over this. I installed BSAFE filter, and set my own password (dumb!!!). I took on hachlotois. I gave tzdoko, and even created a knas for myself of \$180 for each occurrence (turns out it's a legit technique; I just did everything else wrong). All to no help. About a month ago I gave up on myself, and gave myself over to G-d's mercy. I wrote a tzetle to a Tzaddik and gave myself over to the Tzaddik. Within 1 week of the latter I saw a banner for this website on Arutz7. Ever since then:

1. I had my wife install K9 filter and hold the password. In addition, she restricted my internet access so that now when I finish work at 6pm, my internet shuts down, so I have no reason to aimlessly (or, rather, intentionally) browse the web after I am alone in the office. Even with filter, there is plenty room for mischief on the web for a sick mind, so I find this trick especially helpful.
2. I subscribed and now READ daily the Chizzuk emails (both lists)
3. I got myself on the 90 Day chart (day 9 as of today, YAY!)
4. I am half way through the Handbook and Attitude handbook. Found both of them extremely helpful and lucid.
5. I listened to Rav Reisman's shiur on Yirmiyohu. (Did it on 9 Av, thought it to be appropriate). BTW, R' Reisman is great; I've been listening to his MP3 shiurim for a long time now.
6. I am obsessing with this site now, reading what I can, taking part in the forum etc. I probably spend as much time doing this as I used to do the other stuff, which keeps me busy and I do it from home in the evenings, not from the privacy of my office, so it brings me back home...

On the spiritual side, I kept the fence I've already created for myself before: to go to the mikva after each occurrence, and in general to be particular ab. tvilas Ezra. I started learning a particular kuntreis on shmiras eynaim (and once I know you better, I'll tell you which one it is), and plan on doing more of such reading. I also decided to keep my mouth shut in shul, if an argument of any sort ensues (I am usually very vocal expressing my opinion), so that I learn to not have attention focused on me. Also, I promised (in that above-mentioned tzetle) to wear a hat every time I daven, bentch, say Birchas Hashachar, or Al Hamichyo. I think it should add to the additional yiras Shomaim I'm trying to instill on to myself.

What else? I apologized to my wife (for which I was ostracized by some on this forum); and I actively turn my head away if something comes into my line of sight that I know will bring me to hirhurim.

And finally, I am making this kabolo allehabo (Bli neder, it's not a vow just yet): before acting out the next time (should a time like this come, Hashem yishmerenu), I will put on my hat and jacket and say my kappitel tehilim. If I don't do it and act out, C"V, then I will pay 10 times the mikva fee the following morning (I've been pretty consistent with my mikva promise).

Your input is welcome. Please don't beat up on me too much, I'm still working out my sensitivity issues:)

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 13 Sep 2011 14:47

Your eyes are pointing right at her, but they are unfocused, so you are not seeing detail. It takes some practice. If you wear glasses try to concentrate on focusing on the surface of the lens.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by gibbor120 - 13 Sep 2011 14:49

I've heard of people looking over her shoulder, so it appears as if you are looking at her, but you are not. I read about a talmid chochom who'se wife taught girls and so they had them as shabbos guests. He trained himself to do this.

That said. Better to look down or away unless you have no choice.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by JackAbbey - 13 Sep 2011 14:50

when i used to work in the retail outlet, i used to imagine as if the "shem havayeh" in red firey

letters, are burning in front of my eyes

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by Dov - 13 Sep 2011 16:07

Have you tried imagining that she is a real person, is not interested in you in the least because she has a real life, and that Hashem loves her as much as He loves you?

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by obormottel - 13 Sep 2011 18:04

Thanks, all great advice, I don't know how practical....I ended up looking down and away and I think she was offended.

[dov wrote on 13 Sep 2011 16:07:](#)

Have you tried imagining that she is a real person, is not interested in you in the least because she has a real life, and that Hashem loves her as much as He loves you?

I did, I did...I went behind a corner and prayed that Hashem should bless this child of His, similar to what we've discussed before...

It's not so much the face, or that I get an idea that we may get it on....I am slightly more mature than to think a person shopping would look into my beautiful eyes and run into the back room with me for a nooner...It's what they are not wearing, and the general appearance that is a powerful trigger, the one that makes me run into a backroom by myself.... When Gevura shby is in shul and looking at people's faces it has a lesser effect I think than when he is in the mikve. Where I live, people's faces are secondary to their exposed bodies, and when they make a small talk, and a little posing, and slight flirtation is what gets me to loose my mind.

The next step is, of course, to find a similar looking person on a video doing something I want to do, and then it's just matter of seconds till I fall.

So NOT looking at all is where it's at for me. I cannot have a person like this anywhere in my line of sight. Not focused, not out of focus, not looking at their shoulder, or above it, because I take in an entire image and then my poor head runs with it.

I did OK yesterday - as soon as I saw a silhouette I went in the back, and davened, and posted on this thread, and then avoided looking in her general direction even as she stood right in front of me.

But I was shaking in my boots (and above) because I knew what I was missing out on seeing, and it was very hard. I was afraid I would look and set myself up for a fall.

I can't function like this, I can't do business like this, I can't live this. A vision like this would be a welcome break from the routine and a great fantasy to pleasure myself to later in the day or immediately afterwards, depending on circumstances. That's not how I want to live.

I read today that "kin'a koshe k'sh'oil" which I loosely translated as "lust is living hell".

I've been living in hell for too long, now I want to get out, but I'm still in hell. I am a dry drunk. I don't act out (41 days today, I think I'm at my all time high or close to it) but I completely melt down when faced with a challenging sight.

I pray that Hashem takes away this battle....but He is taking His sweet time.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by heuni memass - 13 Sep 2011 18:15

mottel- GEVALDIKKK...

Dont think long term- you did it yesterday and you can do it today again with hashems help.

I hope it will get easier as you get further away from the old routine.

You are correct SHmiras einayim is the key because once you cross that its a matter of time.

Hold strong, you did it once you can do it once more.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 13 Sep 2011 18:36

mottel, we are in the same boat truck. It's not just shul, it's not just faces.....It's everywhere, for me it's both genders (one much stronger than the other though). It can be a face , just the smile or the eyes or the hair, it could be the clothes and the way they fit, or just the general shape....I think clothed is actually worse than not sometimes, because it's all fantasy, and we can imagine perfection even when it's not really there. And then it's a really short jump to want to BE him, to want to have his youth, his vitality, his good looks, his easygoing friendship with his peers, all the things I never had and still long for. And then it's all downhill from there.....

The only solution is to not look, when I have to see I have to tell myself that the past is gone and I have to be happy with what I am and not try to connect to impossible dreams. But sometimes it's so hard.....

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by JackAbbey - 13 Sep 2011 21:27

sometimes the customer stands just 6 inches from your eyes, its not shiyech not to see, then i used to look on the floor, and, THE HACK, if i loose that customer, zol zein a kaporo, my neshomo is far more important.

its tough, bitter, hard, because i knew her, she was all i imagined

then i had a customer who purposly did movements to attract, then i fell and fell and fell, into p***

i ask hashem to please not to test me

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by obormottel - 13 Sep 2011 21:31

[Shmeichel wrote on 13 Sep 2011 21:27:](#)

i had a customer who purposely did movements to attract, then i fell and fell and fell, into p***

i ask hashem to please not to test me

that's what I'm afraid off, of falling, falling, falling. PLEASE DON'T TEST ME LIKE THIS,
RIBAYNEI SHEL EYLOM!

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by Dov - 14 Sep 2011 23:00

Who says that shmiras eynayim is the key? Ok, it's necessary, yeah, and it is one of the only ways to actually walk the walk and not just talk the talk....and there are many ways to do that, as well.

But to me it seems poshut that the problem is lusting, not shmiras eynayim.

I know what it is like to go nuts over a perfect-looking woman that walks by. I know what seeing porn does to me and how it makes my entire mind change into a sick one, where porn and sex seem truly to be in my very best, best interest - and Hashem seems awfully crazy to suggest (demand) otherwise.

I know all that from the inside, like you.

And yet it still boils down to **lust**. If I am wanting it, wishing for it, and often ready to fantasize over it, then I am going to flop practically whenever I see a triggering thing, as you describe. If I am still lusting, then I do not truly believe that orgasm (and sex) is *optional*. I believe I deserve it, that it is natural, and that I must do it. That it is ultimately my *right*, as a man with hormones and the right body parts.

If there is not a backdrop of readiness produced by lust, then what else praytell is the answer to your riddle?

So shmiras einayim is a great tool - to help us live without lusting. We are dry drunks if we are still lusting. And what you describe sounds to me just like that. Lust and fantasy alive and well, behind a scenery filled with shmiras einayim and sincerely good, decent behavior. In the end, it will not work.

The tachlis of *my shiras einayim* **needs** to be only to *help* me live real life today and that means free of the tyranny of lust today, and not chas veshilom as an end in and of itself: "I am shomer my eyes!" Big deal. Between the lines: "But I still see many women as sweet (withheld) sex candy; that their greatest value is in being 'hot'; that their body parts are above all, pleasure sources; and the temptations are crawling all over me, nebach." No. This is not going to work, and will not allow simcha even when it does work for a while. Many here and elsewhere seem to feel like "guarding your eyes" is what it is all about. Gevalt, gevalt. Lo sereid b'ni imochem.

Sorry for going on and on again.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by obormottel - 15 Sep 2011 00:57

[obormottel wrote on 13 Sep 2011 18:04:](#)

I can't function like this, I can't do business like this, I can't live this.

That's not how I want to live.

I read today that "kin'a koshe k'sh'oil" which I loosely translated as "**lust is living hell**".

I've been **living in hell** for too long, now I want to get out, but I'm still in hell. **I am a dry drunk**. I don't act out (41 days today, I think I'm at my all time high or close to it) but I completely melt down when faced with a challenging sight.

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So you reiterated my point. Now what?

The battle I pray to Hashem to take away is not shmiras ayinaim battle, is the lusting battle.

Seriously. I don't wanna come off as disagreeable, and I know you have a lot of posts to read and reply, but I am crying out for a personalized dose of Dov.

Instead of repeating what I said in different words and berating me in the process, is there no way you can actually offer help?

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Re: Personal recovery plan

Posted by Dov - 15 Sep 2011 02:45

I was not "talking to you" and certainly not *berating* you. You do not know me at all, if you think I am like a crusty old headmaster with a ruler somewhere up where the sun don't shine.

OK, so I may have been too emphatic and surely wrote too much, sorry. But hey, what's new?

So you ask for help on the forum and do a good bit of disclosure here. If we all did that, this world would be a better place for us guys. You may indeed be walking the path of the answer you seek right this very second (and I think you are) though you are unaware of it. *Awareness* of our success is not me'akeiv, at all. And sometimes, our being aware of our 'method' or progress ruins everything! The only thing that really matters in the end is that we take the right steps. The right thinking and feelings will follow, eventually.

You asked me for something. All I can really offer you is what is working for me so far. And that's the steps, in the fellowship of other successfully recovering perverts. Early on, being in the presence of other frummies was of no help whatsoever. Honesty about my inability to win and admitting my obvious need for Supernatural assistance has nothing to do with Yiddishkeit. It's just honesty. Goyim and Jews Share the need for honesty. And as I have seen, frum addicts have no more honesty than do goy addicts. And honesty is the real 'schoirah', here.

So it seems plain to me that being in GYE would not have been a real advantage to me early on. The fact that what I was doing was assur was actually irrelevant to **stopping**. And it is irrelevant to staying stopped. In fact, an emphasis on Torah and Teshuvah would *certainly* have distracted me so much that I doubt I could have made any real progress. Over the past few years, close friendship with other Torah-yidden who are recovering perverts like me has been a great help in my avodas Hashem and even in my recovery.

So if you are vexed by your chronic messing up, then all I can do is share what I have with you. That is all I have really got.

As far as "melting down when faced with this sight" is concerned, the answer to that is *shimush talmidei chachomim*. By that, I mean getting familiar with and spending time with other guys who are getting freer and freer from lust. Hearing or reading wisdom just does not do the trick, typically. We tend not to 'get it' cuz 'it' doesn't fit with our inner mentality, and often enough, we cannot see our own sick thinking! The only way I know to 'get it' in a way that really works, is by hanging around with recovering addicts, watching them talk, and hearing their struggles and pain, watching them fail and succeed, and sharing that stuff with them, too. Not to hear their wisdom - but to be together with them. The sanity has a way of 'rubbing off' on us.

So what am I saying? I am not advising you what is right for you. Just saying that what is helping me is

1- opening up with other recovering addicts in person (I go to the same SA meetings regularly and have a home group) and being open to follow in their footsteps;

2- working these 12 steps even though I will not and do not do that perfectly; and

3- staying sober at all costs.

If you have read Chapter 5 of AA, then all this will make perfect sense to you. If there is anything in there that seems ludicrous, then you are certainly entitled to your opinion. But I go with simple faith in the personal experience - *not* in the wisdom or opinions, but in the personal experience - of successfully recovering addicts, of any stripe. And I follow their footsteps. If it does not work for me, I blame it immediately on my mistaken use of these steps, and ask questions or observe until I get it right, be"H. If it works for them, it must work for me, I figure.

So far, so good.

Is that personal enough?

Love, for a fellow suffering person.

Dov

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by obormottel - 15 Sep 2011 07:07

thank you. i was nodding in agreement most of the time.

it was personal enough.

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Re: Personal recovery plan
Posted by Dov - 15 Sep 2011 12:38

Now we have some work to do, thankfully it's only in bite-size pieces. Let's roll up our sleeves (I am right now)..... OK. There. Onward. Never backward (cuz there is no such thing as backwards whether we'd like to imagine that or not).

Seeya.

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