

**It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story**Posted by Avraham613 - 20 Jun 2012 03:39

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I have been on and off this site for around 3 years now. I have utilized many of the tools here but never really got involved in the forum. Over the last few weeks, I have posted for the first time asking for some help. I received some great feedback and was encouraged to come clean and introduce myself as honestly as possible. So here goes...

Unfortunately, my story sounds similar to many of those I have read on the forum. I am currently 25 years old and married with one child B"H. I have always considered myself to be a very sexual type of person. As far back as 11 or 12 years old, I remember myself being attracted to inappropriate pictures. The environment that I grew up in, never really emphasized any importance to "look away" so I enjoyed what I had available to me. My parents (both amazing people), never thought twice about giving me my own laptop when I was around 14 or 15 so I, like any other innocent teenager gladly accepted. At times I tried to blame my parents for allowing me this accessibility when my struggles increased but I know now that Hashem wanted me to grow up a certain way.

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Along with these nightly "adventures" came a total disregard for Shomer Negiah. Again, where I was in school (yes, a Yeshiva day school), the amount of girls one touched was an honor, not something to be ashamed of. I truly believe that these two factors, the internet and the constant physical contact with other girls were the main source of my future struggles.

Baruch Hashem I had a sincere desire to go to Eretz Yisroel for a year (or more) and become more serious about my Yiddishkeit. I went to Yeshiva in Israel for 2 years and almost completely cut out any form of inappropriate material. I loved (and still love) learning a lot, got very serious and made very drastic changes in my life over those years. I became Shomer Negiah from the day I stepped off the plane in Israel even though I had a girl friend at the time. She gladly agreed to my plan (although this was a major change for us both) and B"H neither of us ever slipped from that day onward.

I became known as a very serious learner and a real shtark kid. My parents had their reservations because this was not how I grew up but warmly accepted all of my changes. When I returned home from Israel (with the same girl friend), I placed myself in a great environment in order to succeed in my learning. As I got back to America, I continued learning very seriously. The problem was that when I went back home (for weekends etc.) I began to get that same feeling that I knew all too well. I remember the first time I slipped after all my work and changes. It was devastating and I promised myself it would never happen again. Unfortunately, that one slip turned into weekly slips. Every weekend it became routine to come home and go straight to my computer that I had not used all week in Yeshiva. It would kill me that I would spend my

weeks learning every spare second I had and just give it all up on the weekends. I felt this growing contradiction within me but could do nothing about it. The addiction began to grow even more than it was pre-Israel in some ways. Now, I had an image to maintain. Suddenly, I found myself searching desperately to form online discreet relationships with random girls just to relieve the inner stress I was feeling. On one hand, I longed for my previous High School lifestyle, but on the other, I loved being frum. More importantly, I loved the way others perceived me and was not willing to give that up. A secret life was the only solution. I tried what I could to avoid those weekly occurrences but to no avail. I continued learning shtark but was constantly nichshol.

I cried many time to Hkb"h to help me get over this issue so I could be completely engrossed in my learning and Avodas Hashem but I kept slipping. This continued for a few years until I was around 21. That girl friend I had since High School and I never split up. We continued to grow and learn together. She made the same types of changes I did. She was always supportive of my learning and growth while she continued to grow on her own. We decided to get married early (being shomer negiah with a girl friend can only last so long) and I was ecstatic to finally resolve this issue once and for all through marriage. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think the issue would continue once I was married.

I was right..... in the beginning. I had no desire to look or doing anything I shouldn't and was completely submerged in doing what I knew I was supposed to. Unfortunately, those initial feelings began to slowly go away while those old, unwanted desires crept back in. Now that I was not learning night seder in Yeshiva, I had plenty of time at home with my computer. I hated myself for "cheating" on my wife in that way. I felt so guilty for looking at other women but felt completely powerless. The thrill of meeting other women discreetly over the internet (even just to schmooze) was too powerful for me to stop on my own. All my wife ever did was smile and be that perfect Kallah any guy could ever ask for. I couldn't continue hurting her like this....even if she didn't know.

My wife and I always had very open lines of communication and I felt that I could truly tell her anything, so I did. I told her about my struggles, what I used to do every night in High School (some of this stuff she already knew from previous conversations but not to this extent). I never told her that I tried to form dumb online relationships with random women because I felt it would hurt her too much. She was completely understanding, never judgmental and wanted to do anything she could to help me. Randomly, she would ask me if I looked at other girls because I didn't get enough satisfaction from her. I would cry deep down for giving her those insecurities after convincing her that it was just my "addiction" and had nothing to do with a Chisaron in her. I thank Hashem for giving me such an amazing wife.

Over those years, I decided I wanted to become a Rebbe. I wanted to devote my life to guiding kids growing up in a similar situation that I did, trying to prevent them from making certain choices that I might have made. My wife was all for it and we have been in this together for a few years now. Only because of GYE have I made the progress that I have. It brings tears to my eyes that I can count the number of times I was Mz"l this year on one hand. For me, this was unheard of. Recently, I saw a post on the forum about someone that struggled with going to inappropriate masseuses. I am not going to lie, I have been feeling those taivas lately myself. But when I saw the cycle he suddenly found himself in (and b"h is getting out of) I decided I cannot let myself fall into that world....who knows if I will be able to get out like him? I do go

through swings of taiva and am trying very hard to work on avoiding those vicious cycles. I have strict filters and accountability on all computers that surround me. I have acted out on occasion this year and felt horrible about it, especially when I am preaching to kids the opposite. But, I have come to realize that my clean streaks never go to waste and I just need to get back up and keep going. Any slip I ever had always ended in disgust and despair. If I can focus on the result without having to go through that torturous process, I know I can prevent many falls iy"h. I thank GYE and everyone here for all your help and support and look forward to many more years of Kedusha and Tahara.

All the best,  
Avraham

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by Newbi - 26 Jul 2012 13:04

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Mottel,

I get inspiration from your words. The love is very noticeable despite it being very sharp. Although u post them on other threads much of what u say applies to me as well. It's good to hear it the way it is. Hey, surgery opens the body up as well and exposes the insides-but that's what's needed to get better. Well many of ur words are like surgery. So I thank Hashem for sending the right shlucim!

Thank you, and continue inspiring us all!

Chaim

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by Avraham613 - 26 Jul 2012 16:29

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Mottel -

It did hurt a little to make that post. I enjoy the brutal honesty but something I have never done before out in the open.

I would love to hear your ha'aros on that post.

Thanks,

Avi

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by Dov - 27 Jul 2012 03:15

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[Avraham613 wrote on 20 Jun 2012 03:39:](#)

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All the best,  
Avraham

So You said much of this before, Avi. Exactly what are you asking for help with *now* vs then? That is all I am unclear on. Wanna clarify?

Thanks for your openness. It really is refreshing.

- Dov

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by Avraham613 - 27 Jul 2012 03:25

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I'm glad you asked. This is a very important question. Not even so much the "toichon" of it, as the fact that you had to ask.

Let me say it as I see it. You seem to have been taking my loving kindness in stride, as a grown man. Here comes:

From your initial and follow-up posts one would infer that the "problem" you're trying to battle here is watching porn and masturbating. That you have fantasies about sex-workers, but that you've never strayed from your family.

But when one says "couple of months ago I'd be out the door", to me it means two months ago he's been out the door. I'm not criticizing your choice of drug - G-d knows I've done some of it in one form or another - but I think that it's important for you to face "the exact nature of your wrongs" and admit that you are a user of a very powerful drug called lust. Now, some of us used this drug with prostitutes, while others were home-locked junkies of porn and images. But unless we were ready to honestly tell ourselves AND other safe people what exactly our issues were, we could not begin to recover.

Nobody knows who you are. Could you honestly tell us the true nature of your addiction?

And then, once we realize it is an addiction, we can start by taking necessary steps so that we don't nurture the thought of going (back) to the strip joint all day from shacharis, and with all that tension come home, run for shower, phone, computer, because the only thought on our minds is acting out. And then G-d needs to step in to the rink and send us an angry pimp and a feeling of insecurity.

One fence I would suggest is to call someone first thing in the morning every day to renew your commitment to sobriety for the next twenty four hours. It does wonders for me.

Ok.

Your turn.

Love,

Mottel

It was in response to Mottel's suggestion about describing in more detail the nature of my struggles.

So I did.

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story

Posted by obormottel - 27 Jul 2012 04:11

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Sorry it took me a bit to find the time to write you.

So, off the bat, kudos on your honesty.

Of course it hurts. "A little" is probably an understatement, but no pain no gain, and this particular pain is liberating, won't you agree?

It really doesn't matter whether we act out by ourselves to images, or with other people, or whether our "high" comes from "mere" interacting with loose girls and sex workers.

The disease is progressive and eventually fatal. Nobody with this addiction finds himself in the same place ten years later. We all get worse, our acting out becomes more risky and more destructive.

So as long as we are honest as to what it is exactly our "bottom" behavior, and we are honest in admitting that it is a disease, and we honestly work to put the disease into remission, we stand the chance to look 15 years back (like Dov) and say: "wow, I have not acted out my compulsions in 15 years. Thank G-d!"

Because the compulsions will always be there, I understand, and it will almost always will seem like a good idea to go to a strip club or to hook up with someone online. But what diligent recovery work offers us is an ability to surrender the obsession and take it out of our heads, and let it hang dry, and surely not to take it into the shower with us, or to the computer and telephone. Which is why I found it very important that you wrote this:

[Avraham613 wrote on 26 Jul 2012 03:16:](#)

To sum it up, it hasn't necessarily been masturbation that kills me (although admittedly, I have slipped a few times), but this desire to speak to other girls. **There is no filter or accountability when going to a strip club** which makes it very easy. It is only because of Hashem that I have only gone twice (the last time being December 2011).

So, I guess that gives everyone a better picture of the nature of my addiction.

The filter needs to be installed between your ears. And G-d as well as other recovering people need to become your accountability partner.

Otherwise, you will **again** go to a place of ill repute, and you will end up enjoying more each time, until one day you will look back 15 years (like me) and say: "wow, I have been acting out my compulsions for 15 years! How dumb!"

This is because while I may disagree with Dov, or MT may have a different opinion of Dov, or the "black jelly bean guy" may outright fight with Dov, the truth of the matter is Dov has been sober all these years while I was masturbating, watching porn, ordering hookers, going to showrooms, being absent from my family and unavailable for productive activity.

So I'm choosing to do what Dov's done, so that going forward I also stay sober one day at a time.

If you think you can install that filter we talked about, on your own, my black Borsalino is off to you. I hope you reconsider sooner than 15 years from now (I'm about that much older than you). In case you're ready to admit that you lost the manual to this complex machine called "you", and can't run it on your own,

then I believe you should consider an accountability group, such as a live regular meeting with people who fight the same fight as you and they gain tremendously in the process.

That would be an act of surrender, if you came to ask for help from strangers, wouldn't it?

But that's exactly what we're prompted to admit: that anyone can manage my life better than I could. Because if I flag down a car, and ask a driver whether I should go to a strip club while my wife and son are sleeping at home, even if they said: "Yeah, great idea! 'Atta boy!" they still didn't come up with anything worse than what I wanted to do.

Chances are, however, they would say "that is a nutty idea, son, why don't you sleep on it?" Instead of asking "just someone", a room full of people who understand and go through the same temptations it allows for a very easy exchange.

So I am happy to see you're starting to admit the truth about yourself in the anonymous forum. I believe if you keep at working on this diligently, you will have peace and happiness.

Mottel



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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by obormottel - 30 Jul 2012 06:16

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So nu?

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by Avraham613 - 30 Jul 2012 13:22

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So, I hear your point and I will not try to belittle it. I do feel however, that sometimes we tend to think that what worked for me, may be the only path and the path for all to take as well. After thinking about your comments as objectively as possible (granted, there might be some bias thinking), I think a live accountability group might be a little intense for me in my current situation. We don't get Chemo to treat a common cold. Now granted, my situation might be a little more serious than a common cold, but I believe that I broke down many of the walls of anonymity already. I text/speak to at least 2 people daily using my real name. I post here much more often than I ever did and these steps seem to be really working so far. I am hesitant to take the route you suggested, not only because of my own reservations but also because it might be jumping to an extreme level when it might not be necessary yet. In the GYE handbook, it is very clear that we don't take certain steps until it is clear we need it. Trust me, I need a lot of work and help, but what I have been doing lately seems to be effective thus far. So why jump to an extreme form of recovery so quick?

Your response is always appreciated.  
Thanks for taking your time.

Avi

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by alexeliezer - 30 Jul 2012 14:31

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I agree with you Avi. The guys here who need groups to stay sober will tell you that you need a group to stay sober. Those who have managed to use the tools and steps on their own, will tell

you that it can be done that way.

The important thing to remember is that if what you're doing isn't working, then you do need to move toward using more tools, including live groups.

Sobriety is our number one priority, whatever it takes.

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by obormottel - 30 Jul 2012 17:07

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[obormottel wrote on 27 Jul 2012 04:11:](#)

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Mottel

I didn't recommend a live group for you, I just shared what worked for me. Texting/calling real people (which is what you're doing, you said) is what I refered to when I said you need live accountability. So far you made no mention that this is what you've been doing (for how long now?). No need to jump on the 12-step bashing wagon, nor call it extreme. Chemotherapy for common cold is my line, anyways.

Keep doing what you're doing honestly and dilligently, and I'm sure it'll turn out ok. And if it doesn't, ani es sheli osisi v'es nafshi hitzalti.

Hatzlocho,  
Mottel

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by Avraham613 - 31 Jul 2012 00:24

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o..sorry for the confusion.  
I thought i mentioned that I have been speaking to people regularly now.  
Anyway, thanks again.

Avi

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by mifatfait - 31 Jul 2012 13:00

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P.S - i knew i heard that line from somewhere  
You guys are awesome!!!!!!

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by JustKeepGoing - 31 Jul 2012 23:59

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I second the motion!

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by Avraham613 - 01 Aug 2012 01:13

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Thanks guys!

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story  
Posted by Avraham613 - 01 Aug 2012 13:57

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Its really unbelievable.

Everyday as I am getting home from work, I say to myself "uh oh, tonight is gunna be rough. Its after Tisha B'av, I wanna do something crazy and I know I can get away with it. I know I'm gunna feel like garbage afterwards but theres nothing I am going to be able to do about it". Each and every day I usually have more or less the same conversation in my head.

But, over the last few weeks, I repeat that same conversation in the middle of Shmoneh Esrei at Maariv together with Hashem. I say very plainly, "Hashem, I'm not gunna lie, when I get home in about 5 minutes, I truly want to be nichshol. I want to do something inappropriate. I am asking You to do whatever it takes to make sure I don't do something extremely stupid that I know I am going to regret....because we both know that I can't hold myself back on my own".

Somehow someway, each and every night, the results have been consistent bli ayan hara. I can't even say how or why, but I end up getting involved and absorbed in healthy, mutar inyanim (shmoozing with friends, preparing for upcoming year, learning etc.) and by the time I look up, I am wiped out and ready to hit the sack (with a smile).

This has been a tremendous chizuk in my Tefilla and Emunah, seeing the Yad Hashem so clearly and so consistently.

Side note - this has been coupled with texting/speaking to other guys as well.

Have an awesome day!

See you at the siyum iy"h!

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