

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

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.

I quickly began to use my laptop for very easy access to p***. If I remember correctly, I looked forward to getting into bed at night knowing that I had my favorite part of the day awaiting me. There were no filters, no one watching and no one even using that computer except for me. I would look at pictures and videos for hours on a nightly basis which always ended with being Mz"l throughout those highly impressionable years of 14-18. The environment I grew up in and the Yeshiva I went to never really spoke much about the dangers of the internet at that point.

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 geshertzarmeod - 25 Jun 2012 08:24

wow! That's great news! Wishing you and your wife all the best!

B'sha'ah tovah u'mutzlachas!

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by alexeliezer - 25 Jun 2012 19:16

Thanks for sharing the news.

B'shaa Tova!

You have been given a great gift of motivation and momentum.

Lay out your plan for maintaining your sobriety and STICK WITH IT.

Consistency is key -- the day we ch"v step off the path is, well, the day we step off the path.

So stay on your good path. Take it one good decision at a time.

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Benzi - 25 Jun 2012 22:14

Reb Awroom...thank You for your post (the initial one)...I am having a hard time right now, and

your post helped a lot. mostly this part:

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.

You never know how you will inspire other people (i dont mean bedawka you,,,i mean nobody knows)
Shalom rav

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Avraham613 - 26 Jun 2012 00:51

Benzi -

I'm so glad you received chizuk from my post. That guilty feeling hits you hard. Hopefully its used as a strong deterrent from going back down that road in the future. Making my wife a partner (to an extent) in my struggles and recovery has been extremely helpful.

Let me know what you think.

Thanks,

Avraham

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Benzi - 26 Jun 2012 09:35

You post was actualy THAT, what made me make the decission not to fall the 3rd time on that day. . .

Let me know what you think.

Pardon, what I think about what exactly?

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Dov - 26 Jun 2012 12:37

I think he wants to know what you think about the idea of making your *wife* the one you dump all of your secret guilt onto so that you become too scared of causing her even more pain and confusion by acting out even more....

It is effective - not cuz of the *guilt* of course, but because of the *drips* of honesty that infect the sick mind with a taste of precious, mature, **reality**, for a change...

It is cruel - for she is not a guy (I hope!) and has no penis, so she has virtually *no* education in regular guys and how they lust, *and over and above all that*, she is not an addict so cannot **possibly** understand *why* her loved one is **dying** to look at and get to know other nude women having sex and pretending to offer themselves to him and he masturbates himself to them - **yet he still loves her and is devoted to her and wants Sholom Bayis with her??....torture...**

Hey - everything has pluses and minuses, babe!

As Rav Shalom Schwadron zt"l told me once in a vaguely similar matter I asked him years ago: "Oy vavoi to the man who's wife is his rebbi!" V'hameivin yosif lekach v'yovin...

Hatzlocha!

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

Posted by Benzi - 26 Jun 2012 12:47

Just a slight thought of telling my wife (which I dont have yet) about this things brings the voice inside me to scream ... I dont know if its such a good idea ... the whole matzav is not such a good idea ...

haShem , let me stop before marriage !!!!!!!

today.

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

Posted by obormottel - 26 Jun 2012 14:30

Stopping before the marriage would be a brocho. Give it all you got.

And if anyone out there still didn't tell their wife, please don't! They really don't get it, well-meaning though they try to be.

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

Posted by E-Tek - 26 Jun 2012 16:35

I'm not married, but I know someone who is divorced partially because he told his wife.

Rachmana Litzlan. Those wives out there who supported their husbands are very very very precious.

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

Posted by gibbor120 - 26 Jun 2012 16:52

[E-Tek wrote on 26 Jun 2012 16:35:](#)

Those wives out there who supported their husbands are very very very precious.

Amen! Thanks for the reminder!

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

Posted by Dov - 26 Jun 2012 16:56

I know plenty such wives - but even they would be very poor choices as 'sponsors' for addicts.

The guys who try to get away with using their wives for this purpose, are simply telling the one person who they know is a 'captive audience'! Another yid out there might tell on them - but *eishes cheikom?* Who could she tell, without *embarrassing herself* even further?!

It's pathetic. It's *misery loves company* rather than *freedom through honesty*.

Hashem yatzileinu.

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

Posted by E-Tek - 26 Jun 2012 17:09

NO no no. I mean it's a help that they know, not that you should burden them.

Oy...

They can't really understand! Why do that to them?

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

Posted by Dov - 26 Jun 2012 17:24

Of course it's a great help that they know!

My own wife knows **every detail** of my sexual acting out history and I share my recovery with her in any way she asks me to. If c"v I acted out, I'd tell her right after I told my sponsor...*because she **asked** me to tell her this stuff!*

When it all started, 20 years ago, I lied to her *constantly*, as most of us do. When I got caught by her (for the 5th time) about 17 years ago, I told her the roshei prakim....I finally got real help a year later when I hit bottom. I got sober and started recovering.

Two years ago I spoke at a shabbaton of about 200 frum sex addicts (mostly kollel and chassidishe yidden), telling my entire sexual acting out history, how I hit bottom, how I came to recovery, and life has been like since then, be"H. Many of the guys' wives were in attendance and heard the whole thing. At the time I was sober for 13 years.

When I got home that night, my wife told me she wanted to know as much as anyone esle there now knew about me, too. So I sat down and repeated the entire disgusting - and beautiful - thing, to her that night.

It was a catalyst for a much deeper marriage.

But that was 100% because **G-d** was in charge of the timing, *not me*.

My only point in the previous post is that the fantasy of using our wives as sponsors or gedarim against addictive behaviors is torture and does not usually work. It is not a real *solution*, besides being cruel.

But by all means - it's still true that telling her everything does help *at least in the **short** term!*

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

Posted by E-Tek - 26 Jun 2012 17:29

[dov wrote on 26 Jun 2012 17:24:](#)

...G-d in charge of the timing...

But by all means - it's still true that telling her everything does help *at least in the **short** term!*

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