

Where do I begin?

Posted by afreshstart39 - 12 Apr 2013 02:49

Hi

I don't know what I am supposed to do really,

I signed up to get the emails, and I am on the 90 day chart, and I requested a sponsor, and I read a ton of your stories, and...

My story goes like this, I got into inappropriate material when I was in high school, and back then the Internet just started, and I didn't have that much access, but with the advent of technology my struggle realized itself,

It's funny really, my addiction grew as technology advanced, and by the time I was out of high school I was full fledged addicted, and any chance I got I was online looking at kol Davar asur, not because I needed, but initially, because I was bored, and no one in my life ever spoke about it, all I knew was that was assur to be Motzei zera, but no one was giving me chizuk

Marriage obviously didn't help, it only relegated the addiction to when I was stressed out and needed the release, and when the triggers happened I couldn't get it out of my mind, no longer did I do it when I was bored,, but I was was getting stressed out more often, and after the fact, I felt terrible and I went on a clean streak, and then a few months later, the same thing again,

And then my wife caught me, and now I am here broken and looking for help, not sure where or how to begin, only that it all has to stop NOW!!!!!!

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by AlexEliezer - 12 Apr 2013 18:11

Welcome!

I feel like I just read my story. Except my wife didn't catch me, so I kept going for 18 years of marriage before I realized I was a sick addict.

Where to start? I say this a lot, hopefully because it's true: After admitting we have an addiction, the first step is to stop taking the substance -- sobriety. Our substance takes many forms, so it requires much self-honesty to know what is the stuff and what is not. We get our drug (Lust) in two basic ways: what we see with our eyes open, and what we see with our eyes closed. Making an ironclad commitment to shmiras eynayim in all settings is a good place to start, and the only thing over which we have some control. This includes live and in any form of media. It , etc.

Guarding my mind from fantasies and mental images was, and continues to be, the greater challenge. This would include the thought that I feel like masturbating or doing even worse. For this, I have found tefilla -- immediate, repetitive, and incessant tefillah, the only hope. I use the following nusach every time a lustful thought or images tries to take a seat in my mind:

Ribono Shel Olam, I am powerless over lust and my life has become unmanageable.

Only You can restore me to sanity.

I turn my life and my lust over to Your care and ask You to please heal me from this illness of lust. I don't want to lust. I only want You and a relationship with You and your Torah (and appropriate attraction and interaction with my aishes chayil). I surrender my lust to you. Please take my lust.

There, you've started!

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 12 Apr 2013 18:44

[AlexEliezer wrote:](#)

Welcome!

, etc...

...It also includes not checking out the wife while she's, uh, taking stuff out of the oven

AE, Were you looking into my kitchen window last night?

But then you must have notice that the kitchen is narrow and I just wanted to pass.

And I only looked for one second and then caught myself.

Anyhow, you're right and we need to remember all that.

Thanx

MT

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by afreshstart39 - 12 Apr 2013 19:52

I try and think about what sets me off, and the most I can come up with is a feeling of being stressed out and I need to escape, and once my head goes there, I can't get out of it

It's like I am possessed by some force and the only way to come out of it is to act out

But I can't pinpoint the moments which set it off untill its too late

It's not that a women who is unzniusdig sets me off, but if I a, set off, I will look at those women, but it is vague, maybe sometimes the image of a prutza will set me off and then I will make up

some fake ideas that I am stressed just so I can justify acting out

I am assuming you mean someone else's wife, not one's own wife, is it a problem to look at your own wife?

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by AlexEliezer - 12 Apr 2013 20:14

[afreshstart39 wrote:](#)

It's not that a women who is unznusdig sets me off, but if I am set off, I will look at those women, but it is vague, maybe sometimes the image of a prutza will set me off and then I will make up some fake ideas that I am stressed just so I can justify acting out

Now you're working! Honesty isn't easy, especially after years of telling rational lies to ourselves.

My point is that these things don't have to "set me off" to be a problem. The issue is they're the drug I'm trying to avoid. Think about an alcoholic. His problem is that he gets drunk all the time. Now he wants to get into recovery. Do do so, he must stop drinking *entirely*. He can't take even a sip of Cream Red Concorde. Not even alcohol-based cough syrup. Because once he does, it's a sure and quick slide all the way down to the bar room floor.

Same with lust. Even if peeking and entertaining fantasies doesn't set us off immediately, they're still feeding the addiction. To get sober me must starve it. Starve it.

[afreshstart39 wrote:](#)

I am assuming you mean someone else's wife, not one's own wife, is it a problem to look at your own wife?

I am most certainly referring to my own wife. As an addict, lusting after her willy nilly is also the drug. Have as much fun as you please b'shaas maaseh. Outside the bedroom, her body is eye candy that feeds the addiction. So keep your eyes on her face. Sorry friend. We're sick. This is what we need to get better. I'm not saying it's ossur, just that if you're an addict, it's going to mess you up.

Try living clean for a day. It's amazing!

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by skeptical - 12 Apr 2013 20:29

alexeliezer

I am most certainly referring to my own wife. As an addict, lusting after her willy nilly is also the drug. Have as much fun as you please b'shaas maaseh. Outside the bedroom, her body is eye candy that feeds the addiction.

Perhaps we need to stop looking at women as eye candy. They do not exist for our pleasure. They are people like us who deserve to be treated with the same respect we wish for ourselves. Looking at women to talk to them when you need to as you would any other guy would not trigger us. It's the checking them out and soaking in the way they look (for our satisfaction/pleasure) that is the problem.

PS. afreshstart39, Your story mirrors mine pretty closely. I have also been caught by my wife a few years ago. You can succeed in changing if you work on yourself. Hatzlacha!

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by Pidaini - 12 Apr 2013 20:32

Welcome to the Forum!!

this place in itself is an awesome tool! you can open up and get chizzuk, ideas, and laughs! just stick around and find out for yourself.

Hatzlacha rabbah!!

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by gibbor120 - 12 Apr 2013 21:10

Welcome AFS39!

I'm part of the "I got caught by my wife" club. It was gehenom at first, but slowly things got better. I'm "sober" B"H for close to 4 years now. I was addicted for over 20 years and married for 12 when my wife caught me.

Things CAN get better.

Stick around. You will grow!

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by ur-a-jew - 12 Apr 2013 21:16

[afreshstart39 wrote:](#)

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stressed out and I need to escape, and once my head goes there, I can't get out of it

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I am assuming you mean someone else's wife, not one's own wife, is it a problem to look at your own wife?

I can relate very much to what you wrote. When you get that stressed feeling, what form does your acting out take? I found that for me it was that I would start browsing for things that were borderline but in my mind hoping that I would get to something ossur but not something that I went directly for. When I came to the realization that acting out was not an option, I realized that I can't simply stop looking at porn, I have to stop doing the things that led me to and built up the momentum for it. Facebook was out, just browsing for no particular reason was out. I also installed a filter and get webchaver. Not because I can't get around it, but because it would be a reminder that said, "hey, you are about to go somewhere that you probably shouldn't be going, and remember acting out is not an option." At which point I had to stop. Because if I went further, I would be going to the point of no return.

Also helpful to me is the ability to use the site to build relationships with people who undergo the same struggles you are experiencing. Now if I have a frustrating day and I am feeling stressed, I am not on my own. I can speak, email or chat with someone who knows exactly where I am coming from. Just talking it out is sometimes all it takes to realize: what am I nuts? why would I want to ruin my life for something that is not going to satisfy me and in the long run will make me more miserable?

Finally, start davening for others on the website. You will see it will make a difference in your own life.

Hope these ideas are helpful. Wishing you much hatzlacha and a wonderful shabbos.

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 12 Apr 2013 22:10

[quote="AlexEliezer" post=205040][afreshstart39 wrote](#):

I am most certainly referring to my own wife. As an addict, lusting after her willy nilly is also the drug. Have as much fun as you please b'shaas maaseh. Outside the bedroom, her body is eye candy that feeds the addiction..

AE, I think you would agree, and you have said so in earlier posts, that even b'shaas maaseh we need to avoid 'lust'. Correct?

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by AlexEliezer - 12 Apr 2013 22:32

Yes. It's a fine art. One I'm still working on, and the discussion is probably best left for the married section. But anyway, taking on too much at once might also not be a good idea.

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by israel613120 - 14 Apr 2013 05:05

Can I just do a bit of thinking aloud, as I'm a bit fuzzy here.

What, I can't look at my own wife?!? What ever happened to Mekadesh Atzmo Be' Muter loch?

True, for sure look at your wife, but not "checking her out when she um .."

But why not she's muter,, (or will be soon) If I can't look at my own wife, what can I do.

Depends how you are looking, if it's to treat her with respect, as a person fine, if it's for your pleasure, as eye candy, as your own personal sex toy, that fuels the problem.

Coz, she not your sex toy, never was, never will be. She'll never be like those images you've seen or want to see. It's that checking her out, that is letting your imagination run away with itself, and is ruinous for your relationship.

Have I got that right???

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by Dov - 14 Apr 2013 07:50

Please take this the way it is intended, afreshstart39:

I do not see how much of this is relevant to the issue that afreshstart39 brought up.

Yes, getting caught by a person who really knows us and sees how big the lie really was....but it is no guarantee. So, to me, the biggest issue he will probably need to face and deal with over the next few days, weeks, months and years is the fact that there may no evidence at all - not to him, nor to his wife - that he is really ready to stop. perhaps all this regret stemmed from the fact that he got caught. It is not nice to face that, I know. We here assume every Jew longs to stop doing aveiros. But if his problem was chronic and repeated, there is plenty evidence that - as with many of us - he really likes this stuff. It's precious. Deep in our hearts we wonder, "Really? Why give it up?" So we hide better next time...

Sure, nobody wants to get *caught* looking at porn ever, ever again, and the only way to really allow that to *happen* is by never ever *using* porn again...*but that is no change in any way inside a person yet - only in external circumstances.*

And sure, we (conveniently **after** we are caught) sincerely wish we never used the porn in the first place...but that is still just a temporary thing. It will all be gone till the next time we are caught again. (*Getting caught* is just another 'nuclear reset-button' that brings us 'clarity' again, only for a little while.)

I certainly do not mean to be harsh, and I love all new addicts. And I also have not forgotten what it feels like to get caught, my wife and I can still look into each other's eyes and remember the pain that drove her to kick me in the groin with tears in her eyes 17 1/2 years ago, and we can both remember the lies and the nearly-suicidal pain we both had then and for the next year or so....*and we both know that **none of that would have really stopped me for the past 16 years that I have been clean!***

And we both smile, for today. (BTW, I let my wife read this part of my post cuz it was about her.)

So afreshstart39, **I am not doubting you personally** - just asking you: what evidence do you have that you are ready to do whatever is necessary to stop just because you were caught?

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by afreshstart39 - 14 Apr 2013 18:46

@dov

I am not sure what you mean by evidence

Every time I would fall, I would go into a pit of depression, then resolve never to do it again, and pray my heart out that Hashem should help me, and when Hashem didn't answer, it would hit me again,

Now I know Hashem was answering me, but I refused to listen, because my heart was stuffed up, but I knew that there was a genuine desire to stop and fix, I could never just get up and confess it because I was terrified of what might happen, if I did, and I stupidly believed that I can get out of it myself

I bought seforim about tikun and learned Chassidus, which really did help initially, because it gave me a framework of what is really going on in my soul, but I now know that I was just fooling myself.

The people around that I have always heard talk about addiction, like rabbis or whoever was giving some talk on these issues, all said that you need professional help to deal with addiction, and no one is able to just fix themselves on their own.

I spoke to Elya, and he told me to start joining groups, and start the process of real recovery,

as far as anymore evidence, I am not sure what I need to be looking for

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Re: Where do I begin?

Posted by AlexEliezer - 14 Apr 2013 21:50

[israel613120 wrote:](#)

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Have I got that right???

Sounds right to me!

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