

Looking for direction

Posted by hunjy1 - 11 Nov 2013 10:56

I am new to GYE, but I wish I had found it much earlier. after just a few days of reading through some articles and posts I already feel like things are changing for the better.

I guess I'll start by telling my story (hopefully in short). I am a yungerman learning in kollel for a few years now and I doubt anyone who knows me suspects me of my dark secret. I grew up in a more modern family and was exposed to small amounts of inappropriate material on the internet when I was still young. I was good with computers and I guess I was curious. well, after that I got turned on to learning and went to yeshiva and really thrived there. but as much as I grew in my learning and in other areas, I would still somehow "fall" here and there. it really made me depressed to be living this sort of double life but I still convinced myself that each incident was isolated and I didn't realize how severe my problem was. my addictions are for websites with explicit pictures and videos (it's embarrassing to even write that but it's actually my first time ever openly admitting it in any way, so it also feels good to finally let it out).

I think the rest of my story is somewhat standard... got married thinking I would never relapse (and didn't for a while), "accidentally" ended up finding those old websites, and looking at them and being motzie z"l r"l.

I always wanted to seek guidance but was never brave enough. now that I have found GYE I believe I can really overcome this. my main problem with beginning the process is that I'm not sure how to classify my addiction. when I'm being pulled by my y"ch to lust, the temptations are so strong they are debilitating. I may find myself staying up until crazy hours, not being able to focus on my learning, not taking care of my responsibilities properly, and not treating those around me the right way. and of course looking at the websites and...

but the taavos aren't always there. in fact I sometimes go months at a time without an incident (although there are things I'm sure that I do subconsciously because of my addiction). so I don't think making these fences or shvuos will help me. I already have a pretty good filter set up and I desperately want to stop. of course there are cracks in the filter. and I've also found that I don't need all that much material to get my lusts going. the biggest issue is my smartphone which I had blocked all internet apps right away when getting it and my wife has password (she doesn't know anything about my addiction). but I "accidentally" found a way to get to internet through a different app and it's not so simple to block it.

sorry for not keeping short but when you're drowning it's hard to be precise. I can't face myself anymore and even though i'm not lusting right now I know the y"ch will sneak up on me eventually. please help me if you can. any thoughts on what to do next and chizuk would really help. thanks to all the members of this site and it's staff for being here for each other.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by Dov - 13 Nov 2013 01:23

There is a lot of value in the collective tradition of addicts who have and are successfully working the 12 steps in NA, AA, SA, etc. One of their basic discoveries - and the main surprise discovery of the writers of the AA big book that started it all - was that we are not alone.

Not that 'G-d is indeed with us', mind you - *that* was reported after a while, too, by most - but that **among fellow humans**, we are actually not alone. As long as we use strictly fake names (usernames) to hide from everyone, we are still alone. Until we open up to other real people who come to see us as we really are, we are alone.

And until we break that terminal uniqueness and loneliness, we will not find G-d. That may not sound frum, but it is very frum. Hashem did not put us into a relationship with Him...He put us into a family. The 1st half of the luchos is bein odom laMakom - and that is where kibud av v'eim is found. Meaning that relationships with other humans are the way Hashem teaches us we can have a relationship with Him. Not the parents, but *the relationship* a child has with his or her parents - forms the ability in a person to have true ahavas Hashem and yir'as Hashem (kibud and morah). That's just the way it is.

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai told his talmidim (who were fellow *tannoim*), that people are far more real to us than G-d is. That's just the way it is. It is not about being religious, but about being real. And real relationships are with people first, and with Hashem second.

If we have spent years messing around with the sweetness of porn and our sex with self (masturbation and all we do with our privates along with that game), we are well-learned in being very alone. The shame and ugliness of our behaviors *makes* us hide it, naturally. And we take up the bitter, heiligh struggle of 'fighting it' **all alone**, as well...often for years and decades. I did that for about 20 years. At times, I felt sure that Hashem was with me and I felt His presence. But based on my performance, it is clear that it was all a game. He was with me, but I was not with Him...and by that, I **do not** mean that I was 'bad'. I was just not *with* Him. I had no G-d of my very own, because - and this is always a shock especially to a good frum guy - I had another god of my very own in my fantasies, desperate porn searching, my privates that I thought about so highly of, and in my pay-off orgasms.

But opening up here can be the start for you! Even with a username!

If posting here together with other successssfully recovering men like you feels unnatural, scary, and really hard to do, then it is probably just what you need and may be enough for now. But as the terrible shame leaves, you may find it easier to open up more clearly about what you are doing that is a problem and about whats going on in your life...but the open forum may not be a safe place to do all that so you will find people who are safe to do that with, be"H.

It's about progress, not perfection. Keep on posting, man.

Love,

Dov

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by gibbor120 - 13 Nov 2013 01:27

[hunjy1 wrote:](#)

I think I will start working on the 12 steps, just reaching out for more chizuk, it helps.

How do you plan to work the 12 steps? There is some torah shebal peh involved, so it is not as easy as picking up the book and following directions.

Also, some of the recovery comes from confronting the problem, which is hard to do if you cannot say to another human being the exact nature of your problem. We are in denial (to some degree)until we can say what it is we are doing.

You can click the dov quotes link in my signature and read the first post about "captain kirk".

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by Pidaini - 13 Nov 2013 03:06

Dear hunjy1,

I relate very much with what you wrote. There are times when we feel we have finally done it, it's gone, only for it to be stuffed down our throats once again.

Did Dov really write something nice about usernames?!

It seems as if you have the right attitude and are not being fooled by it. Use the time to prepare for the next battle that is bound to come.

KOT!!!

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by hunjy1 - 13 Nov 2013 11:15

[gibbor120 wrote:](#)

Also, some of the recovery comes from confronting the problem, which is hard to do if you cannot say to another human being the exact nature of your problem. We are in denial (to some degree)until we can say what it is we are doing.

You can click the dov quotes link in my signature and read the first post about "captain kirk".

Dov's message makes a lot of sense. If I'm still hiding behind my secret fake identity, I can't be completely honest with my real one. Ouch. That hurts. But I'm still too afraid, and I think I'm not ready for that step.

Please help me, I feel myself slipping. Starting to think thoughts like, "these people are making sense but maybe I don't really need all that" or "don't do anything drastic like blow your cover, you can probably figure it out another way."

I think it would be smarter to start small, but not sure what's a good small step for me. If I would feel weak now I would try 90 days, but I need something else right now.

Maybe I'll try to share more about my problems... I discovered provocative pictures on the internet in 7th grade. Nothing too crazy, not even pornography, just stuff that got me excited. Slowly my ability to find things increased and so did my needs.

I soon discovered free pornography, pictures and videos. "But I was always such a good kid" I thought, I even had a hard time lying when clicking the "Above 18" button. There was no filter on our computer and it was way down in the basement in a room with a door. How I wish I had never been put in that situation... too bad that's not up to me.

My activities basically stayed in that area (obviously escalating in content and time) along with much masturbation. But there's one thing that is really hard for me to share, so I'll do just that... When I couldn't access that awful stuff, or if it just wasn't enough, I would utilize my artistic talent to draw my fantasies. After, I finished using my drawing (usually to masturbate) I would look at what I had drawn, the work I had put into it, the talent that it possessed and I would cry inside... what a waste.

In a way, parts of my life feels like that, like a waste. A waste of time, talent, potential... I'll never get it back either. I would say here that I want it to end and from now on, I won't waste my gift of life, but I realize now that's fake. I don't need to be a faker here. I'm a person who has lived a sick lifestyle and I'm not afraid anymore to admit it (anonymously on a forum).

Please Hashem help me and others like me.

Thank you all for your support and direction.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by Pidaini - 13 Nov 2013 18:13

Wow!!!

It's amazing how open and sincere you are!!!

As for those those voices inside, what do they answer to these questions?

What can go wrong to talk to someone safe here from GYE, who will not look at you wrongly, and who understands you completely? Why take the chance to not do enough, and find yourself back to square one?

I've been there, done that.

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KUTGW!!!!

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by gibbor120 - 13 Nov 2013 19:57

Hi hunjy1,

I hear you about taking small steps... Maybe I don't need xyz... We all hear those voices.

If the step you are taking is too comfortable, it is probably not really a step. Many of us try to take care of our "problem" every which way **except** for the ways that really work. Most of us are not ready to take **real** steps until life is so uncomfortable that we are willing to try cuz we have no choice any more.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by AlexEliezer - 13 Nov 2013 22:42

I can relate to drawing my fantasies on occasion.

I'm not much of an artist, but I would find myself drawing women anyway.

I definitely misused my imagination, because with masturbation, I could visualize whatever I wanted.

I "worked" the steps for several years on my own. I didn't do such a great job on the later steps, the ones where the real character work is. But I found the first 3 steps helpful in staying sober. I built my sobriety on staying far from all lustful stimuli.

Fantasies and mental images were particularly challenging and they would intrude at the most inopportune times. I found this tefilla, based on the steps, helpful for these situations. I would repeat it sometimes dozens of times a day, whenever the images came. I stubbornly refused to let the thoughts take a seat in my mind, and at the same time davened for help with it. This includes not just fantasies, but also the thought that I want to look at something or do something I shouldn't.

"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. I

surrender my lust to you. Please take my lust."

Hatlocha and welcome!

Alex

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by hunjy1 - 14 Nov 2013 00:36

[Pidaini wrote:](#)

What can go wrong to talk to someone safe here from GYE, who will not look at you wrongly, and who understands you completely? Why take the chance to not do enough, and find yourself back to square one?

I'm actually warming up to the idea of an anonymous phone call. Not really sure what to expect but that would def be going way out of my comfort zone. And it would help me face my enemy... who I now realize wasn't my computer, or the internet, or my wife, and not even my yetzer hora... but it was me. And not even the dark ugly me who stared with bloodshot eyes at the glowing screen until 3AM. It was the "good" me, who learned with hasmoda, and davened with kavana (although that gets harder)... that was my worst enemy. Because I could always hide behind him and convince myself that everything was ok.

But before I face off with "captain kirk" I wanted to throw out to the forum some questions about myself.

-Am I a total faker, or was I sincere when I thought I could be?

-Do I have to throw out my old self completely to change, or are there parts of me that I can still hold on to?

-Is everything I have worked on until now worthless? Were all my tfillos just a masquerade? Were my mitzvot without any thought of l'sheim shamayim? Will my torah still protect me when I'm sober enough to connect to it, or do I need to start from scratch?

Dov says we must bring together both identities in order to become real. But how can I first become real now, I'm already in the middle of a life... even if it's messed up in a lot of ways, some things are good. I am petrified of the thought of how my wife would think of me if she knew. According to Dov it seems, that those very thoughts are holding me back from being real. But if that's the case I don't know if I want that kind of real life, where other things like my marriage will get messed up in the process.

I know others have said that telling their wives was the best move, but for me I don't think that's true.

Telling my wife I use as an example but I am really referring to the whole concept of becoming real. A fake life of fantasies and self gratification is the worst life imaginable, but some things are best left as is. No?

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by AlexEliezer - 14 Nov 2013 00:52

Firstly, don't worry about telling your wife any time soon.

I relate very much to your questions.

Many here have asked similar questions.

One of the biggest mistakes we make is *letting our aveiros define us*. I do this, so it must be "me." And with this stuff we do, it *must* be the real me because I love it so much, I come alive when I'm doing it. It's actually my only true happiness.

Our aveiros don't define us. Our aspirations do.

Now stop analyzing so much and get sober.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by gibbor120 - 14 Nov 2013 00:54

Re: "am I a faker" etc.

I don't think it's healthy to worry about it. That is for Hashem to decide. It doesn't help recovery in any way.

(I tend to think we are not fakers, we truly want to be good, BUT, we are not being totally real either. We are able to hide from some ugly truths about ourselves which are just as true.)

Re: Telling the wife.

For now, definitely not. The general advice I have heard is not to tell unless there is some real sobriety first. Even then it is difficult and if/when you want to, seek guidance. It is very tricky.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by Pidaini - 14 Nov 2013 02:13

About the first three questions, I think there is only one way to find out, see what happens after you come out. You'll be surprised, that much I can tell you.

As for telling your wife, even though you said that it is only an example, I asked my rebbe, he told me absolutely not. That was at a point where I really wanted to. I think actually that most people here do not agree that it is wise to tell one's wife and certainly not until we have a substantial amount of sobriety (I think that would be a few years for me)

KOP(osting)!!!!

KUTGW!!!

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by dd - 14 Nov 2013 03:27

hi hunjy1 i really feel like in im reading my own post here as u explain your story and problems i now exactly what your going thru same situation at my end (i hope in past) kollel, not telling anyone, double life, feeling at times its gone and so on . but after years i opened to one person and started with gye and feel like im on the way to recovery i tried hundreds of times some times worked for a while and then ... getting help from others is step one in my opinion and this site is the best place for that . keep up the good work

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by SIB101854 - 14 Nov 2013 07:23

You are at the best place in the Torah observant section of the web to discuss these issues. I also used to write my own porn as a complete escape with absolutely nothing left to the imagination. Once I realized that reading , watching, downloading and writing porn was no subsitute for reality and discovered this great site, I have been and hope to remain clean.

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by sirclean - 14 Nov 2013 08:20

Your story sounds so similar to mine it's scary. Also in Kollel feeling like I'm living a double life. I know how hard it is to do THAT and then shtell a savara the next morning. Chazak and we'll be in touch.

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