

Moving Forward

Posted by OneFootInFrontOf - 08 Dec 2015 02:48

Hi. And thanks for reading.

As someone who has known about GYE for a while, with varying degrees of involvement, it has been a long, long while, and I'm here to begin again.

Briefly, my story is that I'm in my mid-early 20's, single and have been struggling with this yetzer hara since I was ~15 (involved with GYE for a while then stopped). I didn't grow up so religious and still have a strong connection to my family and the secular world. Average streak: maybe 3 days. Longest streak: 1 month. That about sums things up.

You may be wondering why get involved again on the forums now? Well, for the longest time, I rationalized that continued use and exposure to porn only affected me and was a healthy sexual outlet (how's that for secular thinking). Since I wasn't hurting anyone but me (and I had felt that "hurting" myself was just Jewish guilt), I was ok taking whatever punishment comes after 120 because I genuinely felt there was no way to go 2, 3, 4 or 10 years in our hypersexualized society without some form of release before getting married. Once again, I thought I was my only victim and as long as I was ok with the decision that I was making, that's between me and Hashem. Notice how many I's are in that last sentence.

And then as dating approached, I felt and began to understand how having a hidden life from one's significant other can poison the relationship from the beginning. So I tried, and tried (and tried) to stop, based on the new thought that it was about more than just me. And yet there was no significant progress. But I know that the reason I'm here is because I have made the decision to not date until I can work through this yetzer hara.

I know there is no "end" to this struggle, but what I'm working towards is a sense of control and acceptance that this is a part of the human experience and avodas Hashem. It's something that, with enough work, growth, davening, helping others and belief that Hashem will help me through it, I (with Hashem's help and the help of others) can and will get through.

And just as a concrete step to keep me active here, I hope to have one post every day (in thread's other than this one) to give encouragement to others.

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Re: Moving Forward
Chevra, I thank you in advance for your help and chizuk.
Posted by markz - 08 Dec 2015 05:25

Welcome!!

On your travel it may help your journey to click on the GPS below

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Re: Moving Forward
Posted by BenTorah.BaalHabayis - 08 Dec 2015 05:29

Welcome! I'm a newbie to GYE but not to this struggle. I think my longest stretch to date has also been about 1 month, barring about 3 years from after my engagement (until a little over a year ago, which is why I'm here) that these issues magically dissipated. But I realize now that marriage isn't a solution for these problems. It's at most a temporary fix. I'm glad you're not approaching dating & marriage thinking that they're somehow a cure. The only real cure is hard work and dedication as part of this great chevra!

Hatzlacha!

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Re: Moving Forward
Posted by Bigmoish - 08 Dec 2015 15:51

Welcome.

Check out some of the links in my signature, if you wish.

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by gibbor120 - 08 Dec 2015 19:02

WELCOME! You have come to the right place. You say you were involved for a while, so you know the ropes I guess. Glad to have you back.

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by OneFootInFrontOf - 15 Dec 2015 00:58

Thanks everyone for the welcome and the greetings.

I know I haven't posted every day to give others chizuk, but I'm back.

The past week-ish was better than usual. Fell once, but I thought about why I fell and how I made choices to get me to such a place. I haven't come up with concrete steps to change my behaviors (excuses excuses) but the gears are beginning to turn. But there were also more than a few times where I thought about "looking around" or just giving in, but instead, I just thought. I thought about why I wanted to give in, I thought about the life I'm building, I thought about the absolute certainty I had that I'd feel mentally and physically worse if I gave in. I just let the tension build up in my chest and then dissolve. I've felt it before and it definitely sounded weird hearing other people describe it without knowing it firsthand. When you let a taavah wash over you and just think about it, without acting on it but just observing it, its not easy, but it's a really unique experience.

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by OneFootInFrontOf - 17 Dec 2015 05:10

Had a thought during maariv.

For a long time I viewed shemiras habris issue as: Hashem doesn't want me to do this thing but I want to do it (and never the tween shall meet, or something like that). But I've really been trying to focus on how the results of relationships are based on what is invested in them. To reframe my side of this issue as "i know that I may want to do this but I also care about my relationship with the Other," I'm placing more meaning in the relationship than my own selfishness. To be honest, regardless of what Hashem brings to the table (as if our relationship is ever even), I'm not concerned with the rewards or punishments. I know that I genuinely care about the relationship, and am willing to make changes, no matter how difficult, to improve that relationship.

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by gibbor120 - 17 Dec 2015 20:39

[OneFootInFrontOf wrote:](#)

For a long time I viewed shemiras habris issue as: Hashem doesn't want me to do this thing but I want to do it (and never the tween shall meet, or something like that).

Me too. But realize, Hashem doesn't want you to do it because he cares about you and doesn't want you to do something harmful to yourself, He loves you too much for that. (that's the part I was missing).

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by OneFootInFrontOf - 29 Dec 2015 02:31

question for the forums:

when so much emphasis is placed on creating a "network" of support and connections, how does this relate to overcoming this yetzer hara? Aka by having support around us, are they there to reach out to when tempted? Or by having others, is the hope that we will be better at

managing taavos?

I'll preface my comments by saying that I haven't told any close friends, family or rabbeim of my struggles with these issues.

Despite all of the psych studies showing the importance of group support, it seems like its just another external factor aimed at controlling behavior and not inducing real change in the individual. (After typing that last sentence out, my logic does seem off, but I'd love for someone to discuss how a non-SA support system helps with this..)

I know how powerful others can be in helping someone get over an addiction but I think the fact that GUE is so anonymous makes the tool less powerful, at least for me...I do want to change and have really been working at it. For me, opening up to a close friend or rav seems like searching for an answer outside of myself which, to me, makes it cheating (aka not real teshuvah). Even if it works, it feels cheapened by the fact that someone else was the determining factor in beating a yetzer hara, as if whatever growth I was supposed to go through was dependent on someone else...

(these thoughts are probably just trying to protect my pride and save me from making myself vulnerable to another person...but I've logic-ed myself into a box..)

thanks!

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by cordnoy - 29 Dec 2015 04:11

I wish I could help you but it's a bit too deep for me.

However, I will say this: there are many of us experiencing some level of recovery because we are open and honest with each other, and that includes first and last names, telephone numbers and addresses, and even meeting up with each other.

There are many that use gye as a pajama basement hacker will do, but they probably could gain much more by opening up.....safely of course.

B'hatzlachah

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by Shlomo24 - 29 Dec 2015 14:53

My take is that if it helps then do it. Would you rather be sober or not? If it's a helpful tool in sobriety, which I have found it to be, then why not try it out? I personally don't care for the whole "teshuvah" part. I'm not here and in SA to do teshuvah, I'm here so I could have a functional life.

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by gibbor120 - 29 Dec 2015 16:28

[OneFootInFrontOf](#) wrote:

question for the forums:

when so much emphasis is placed on creating a "network" of support and connections, how does this relate to overcoming this yetzer hara? Aka by having support around us, are they there to reach out to when tempted? Or by having others, is the hope that we will be better at managing taavos?

Let's say you can't get an answer to "how" it works, but you know it does work. Would you still do it? You don't understand how medicines work, but I assume you would still take one for a headache.

(Just a couple of ideas about talking to a friend or mentor. It helps us to be real and honest. It

helps keep us out of isolation which is a big factor in acting out.)

[OneFootInFrontOf wrote:](#)

I'll preface my comments by saying that I haven't told any close friends, family or rabbeim of my struggles with these issues.

Despite all of the psych studies showing the importance of group support, it seems like its just another external factor aimed at controlling behavior and not inducing real change in the individual. (After typing that last sentence out, my logic does seem off, but I'd love for someone to discuss how a non-SA support system helps with this..)

If it helps why wouldn't you do it? Why do you assume it is "another external factor"? What if sharing with another is the catalyst for "real internal" change?

[OneFootInFrontOf wrote:](#)

I know how powerful others can be in helping someone get over an addiction but I think the fact that GUE is so anonymous makes the tool less powerful, at least for me...

Yes, the GYE forum has the advantage of being anonymous. This allows people who would not normally open up, to open up. But, as you noted, it is a big disadvantage as far as "getting real". The less anonymous and more real the help, the better.

[OneFootInFrontOf wrote:](#)

I do want to change and have really been working at it. For me, opening up to a close friend or rav seems like searching for an answer outside of myself which, to me, makes it cheating (aka not real teshuvah). Even if it works, it feels cheapened by the fact that someone else was the determining factor in beating a yetzer hara, as if whatever growth I was supposed to go through was dependent on someone else...

Why do you assume that all your growth is supposed to come solely from within? How did you get to where you are today? On your own?

If you were drowning, and someone threw you a life vest, would you refuse it because it's "cheating" and you want to swim to shore yourself?

Why do you want to do it yourself? For the benefit of whom?

When chazzal say that if your Y"H gets to you, you should take him to the beis medrash, isn't that cheating? You are using something external (Torah) to beat him. Shouldn't you do it "yourself"?

[OneFootInFrontOf wrote:](#)

(these thoughts are probably just trying to protect my pride and save me from making myself vulnerable to another person...but I've logic-ed myself into a box..)

I can relate very much. Let go. Don't be afraid. Let others help you. Swallow your pride. It may hurt a bit, but it hurts more not to. I consider it the single most important thing I did for my recovery. My 2 pennies.

Check out the dov quotes link in my signature. He addresses a lot of the points you raised.

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by OneFootInFrontOf - 08 Jan 2016 16:23

gibbor120, thanks for your post. i know I didn't formally respond but I've definitely been chewing over what you wrote (there's a lot of really thought provoking stuff).

without going into too much detail, the reason I feel like relying on someone else to help with this is because of how I became frum. I didn't really grow up frum but when I started becoming more frum, it was largely independent. no rebbeim, no frum role model that i was trying to impress or emulate, no big life problems that only God/religion could handle. my path towards a frum lifestyle was independently driven. since I've gotten to where I am due to my own motivation (of course with the help, support and resources of the 21st century Jewish world), thats why i feel strongly about getting over this as independently as possible, since thats how my middos work/growth has been in every other area. that doesn't mean i reject what you've said at all (or the psychology/science of habit and behavioral changes that speak of how powerful social interaction can be). just trying to explain my background.

but really gibbor120, thanks for challenging me on this.

in other news (and i'm always hesitant to post about good progress for some reason), today is day 9. which i think is the longest set of day one's (read: streak) that i've had in a few years. just as a note, staying active and being actively positive/optimistic have been my biggest pushes, though they've been present for a while.

gut shabbos.

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by gibbor120 - 08 Jan 2016 18:30

Thanks for the update. I'm glad to hear from you. I am a "do it yourself" kind of guy too. I had to let go of that attitude in this instance (although it was scary), and it has yeilded great results for me.

I wish you continued hatzlacha!

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Re: Moving Forward

Posted by Workingguy - 08 Jan 2016 20:22

[gibbor120 wrote:](#)

Thanks for the update. I'm glad to hear from you. I am a "do it yourself" kind of guy too. I had to let go of that attitude in this instance (although it was scary), and it has yeilded great results for me.

I wish you continued hatzlacha!

Ditto both of you on being a do it yourself guy. Trying to let go of that, but I will tell you one thing. Opening up to another person does a few things.

1) When you hear yourself telling the story you realize how absurd it is, and you realize on your own that you need help.

2) You are being honest, and it is the hiding and dishonesty that adds a lot of shame. Paradoxically, it is hiding that creates more shame than being honest.

3) Even if you're a do it yourself guy, you find things that you yourself can put into practice from discussing with others.

Regardless, hatzlacha and have a great Shabbos!

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