

Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Newleaf354 - 25 Aug 2016 15:04

Hello. I'm here. I've had a long haul, gotten confused by too much exposure to too many ways of recovery in too many 12-step programs and discovering too many things that are "really" the issue. I've had long-term sobriety from serious "acting out," a couple of spells that lasted about a year-and-a-half each. But I've fallen again, and then a second time less than two months later.

One thing that has never gone away is my compulsive looking at women on the streets, on the busses, and out my kitchen window. So, it doesn't seem as harmful as looking at p*rn or m*sturbating, but I've never really gotten an honest desire to give this up, and it's feeding my lust, building up like doses of cyanide, but it's hard to really appreciate this.

I want to turn over a new leaf and keep it simple. I want to remember that GUARDING MY EYES really is where it all begins, and it really is what everything depends on.

--NL354

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by serenity - 07 Sep 2016 16:08

You may not have to do any of that, it's just what worked for me. There is plenty on this site to for starters that may well do the trick. See below.

To the Newcomer:

Make sure to see the 12 suggestions on the [First Time Here page](#).

Also, check out your [Personal Home-page](#). It will guide you through each tool/task that we suggest, one by one, and help you track your progress in recovery.

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by gibbor120 - 07 Sep 2016 16:22

Mine was ingrained for over 20 years. I tried to make gedarim, but I found that if I opened the door just a little bit for lust, lust would get his ugly little fingers in the door, and he ~~was~~ is much stronger than me. He'd just pry the door all the way open. There must be a zero tolerance policy (read some of AlexEliezer's posts). Just allowing x, or just once a week, etc. doesn't work. I've been on GYE about 5 years now, and I've never seen anyone report that it works. I'm not saying one can't slip and recover. But, having a policy of allowing certain things just doesn't work.

It's really hard in the beginning. It's important to be "in recovery" and not "white knuckling". White knuckling is like holding your breath. At some point, you must come up for air. Recovery is like having a snorkel or air tank. You can breathe easily, and it doesn't feel like a burden (at least not most of the time). Sometimes, your tank will run out of air. You will have to hold your breath, but you must change tanks quickly because you can only hold your breath for so long.

I can't tell you specifics. There is a handbook, forum, dov quotes link in my signature which I recommend. Some need therapy. Soom need 12 steps. Some need a good friend. Some need a hobby. Some need all or some of the above.

It's all part of the puzzle. Commit to do whatever it takes. There is ample material here to get started. Keep posting.

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Newleaf354 - 08 Sep 2016 12:39

Thanks for all the replies!

I've been thinking that it's not enough to WANT to change and ponder the idea. I have to DO SOMETHING. I started reading through the GYE handbook little-by-little. The first tool, STOP, struck me, especially the quote from the Stypler--that when we give up forbidden pleasures, Hashem will provide us with a replacement in a permitted way.

It's sort of the flip-side of the Gemara (I think it's a Gemara) that says that when we take something that's not ours, besides that we don't gain what we are trying to get, we also lose the good things we already have. I think it involves a *mashal* of a dog with a bone in its mouth who sees his reflection in the water. In an attempt to ALSO get the bone from THAT OTHER dog's mouth, he drops the bone he is holding into the water and ends up with nothing. So, it's sort of like there's a whole bunch of pleasure that has been coming my way and I don't even know what it was because, before it gets here, I keep exchanging it for these illusions (the yeitzer hara's specialty, illusion).

I've used this program prayer before, "G-d, please help me find in You what I'm looking for in this woman." But it's kind of abstract for me. I would say it over and over and over until I got sick of it and then just quit and just started looking again with abandon. Besides, I started thinking that it was sort of partly my job to try and figure out exactly what pleasure it was or what I felt I was lacking that I was trying to fill by staring at yet another woman. I felt that I was supposed to get some idea of what the specific replacement was supposed to be, and then be able to attain it.

But now I'm taking it more on faith. Here is some pleasure that I definitely feel by looking at these women, though imaginary it may be it doesn't feel imaginary. And, I can trust that if I give it up, Hashem will provide a replacement. I can be curious and open-minded and patient and wait and see what Hashem has in store for me, and I can trust that it will be worthwhile.

So I'm trying to think that way now, which I am finding helpful and I hope it continues to be helpful.

--NL 354

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Markz - 08 Sep 2016 13:11

Great going

Keep on Posting

Keep on reading the Handbook

KEEP ON TRUCKING!!!

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Newleaf354 - 09 Sep 2016 06:06

I like simplifying things. So, that idea I wrote about in my last post can be summed up like this:

When I don't look at women...

I'm not GIVING UP pleasure; I'm just TRADING it in!

--NL 354

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Newleaf354 - 11 Sep 2016 12:16

In a funny way I am thankful for my most recent fall. It got me back here to GYE, and I am finding it refreshing to start from scratch with a new identity.

Also, it's getting me to look back and really re-examine my beliefs about recovery.

I think one idea I had picked up was to keep recovery and religious separate, to focus on "pure" 12-step recovery. Now I see the value in that to keep people from bringing all sorts of foreign ideas into the 12-step recovery rooms. I also see the value in that as far as putting one's focus on recovery instead of getting stuck on whether or not recovery is "kosher." That is one excuse I had for staying away from GYE, because I had grown tired of such debates. I don't know if it's the same anymore, but a while back there was a lot of debating going on about this issue.

Another thing I appreciate is to realize that that MY own warped version of Torah and Hashem -- this vicious G-d who is holding me up to an impossible standard and Who is out to get me for every slight infraction -- also has no place in recovery. (And should have no place in my Yiddishkeit, either!)

What I missed, though, is that there is tons of Torah material that applies to recovery and is very encouraging and very powerful and very helpful. I have been depriving myself of all this in the name of "pure" recovery. I'm glad that now I am re-reading the GYE tools and attitudes, now with appreciation for it and with an open mind.

--NL 354

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Newleaf354 - 12 Sep 2016 12:05

This idea, that I am trading in pleasure, is starting to lose its potency so I keep trying to boost it.

I left early for Shacharis today and nobody was outside except for one other person--while I'm having all this chizzuk in guarding my eyes, this attractive woman who lives across the street happened to be walking along the path directly towards me. So, I caught sight of her but didn't keep staring and looking back at her, which I guess is progress.

Thinking, "I can live without acting out for one more day," well -- this thought seems *nebuch*; I'm going to suffer and deprive myself, and I can hold out and keep doing it for another day, one day at a time. But, there's that other thought--I'm not giving up pleasure, I'm trading it in. Can I wait another day to get that pleasure? It's coming and I'll enjoy it--can I wait one more day?

So, that helps.

I wanted to also share one more thought, which I think will be my last reflection (*b'li neder*) on my years of recovery and the problems I've felt with the official programs of recovery. One thing is that, the mainstay of recovery is supposed to be one's service to other people, in particular, sponsoring them. I get this impression that there's this elite group of old-timers with hundreds of years of sobriety, and these are the people everyone flocks to in search of sponsors. Also, there are these hot-shots who got into the program and have been clean ever since--maybe a year or two at least--and they speaketh nothing besides Big Book quotes and program talk because they're good program people, so people are impressed with them, too, in a way, and wouldn't mind having them as a second-choice being that the gurus are too busy.

But then there are the people (like me) who have been in the program for years, and even with a year or two of sobriety, it's like "well, what's wrong with you! If you've been here for 7 years, how come you don't have 7 years of sobriety!" It's like being second-class and nobody really wants your help and so you feel useless.

That is one issue in particular that I am struggling with.

--NL 354

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Newleaf354 - 14 Sep 2016 11:57

This place is really quiet.

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Markz - 14 Sep 2016 12:33

It's your thread brother. Many others update their story thread regularly.

Question is why do they do that. What are you trying to achieve through the forum?

Also as mentioned re: ODAAT above - you have a program of sobriety that Serenity mentioned?

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Newleaf354 - 09 Oct 2016 12:58

I've started to notice just as this background noise in my head, an echo in my head looking for something to look at even when the streets are empty.

I don't remember being so acutely aware of this echo. I used a therapy technique I had learned (which has been very weird but very helpful a lot of times) to view this feeling as something outside myself and to explore it, as if having a conversation with it. I was really surprised because all sorts of scenes of betrayal throughout my life came out; it seemed to be coming from something else, something deeper, and I could make up some explanation for the connection between them but, like all of Pharoah's dream interpreters, no explanation has come to mind that really feels right.

It's weird and I'm not sure what to make of it.

At any rate, I've been clean now since August 24, which gives me one month and 15 days.

Rambling a little, on Shabbos I heard this amazing drasha from a Rav who was a guest speaker in my shul, and every time I hear this Rav speak I get this eerie feeling like, "this sound so much like recovery, only infinitely more profound." He's one of those speakers who is really deep yet really practical at the same time. I get the feeling that if I could get some personal hadracha from him, I wouldn't need 12-step meetings or books.

--NL354

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by unanumun - 09 Oct 2016 16:27

[Newleaf354 wrote on 09 Oct 2016 12:58:](#)

I've started to notice lust as this background noise in my head, an echo in my head looking for something to look at even when the streets are empty.

If I am understanding you correctly, in my experience I think it comes from a desire to lust. I remember that at a point where I wouldn't allow myself to purposely look for lusting material, I would still have times where i experinced the symptoms that previously would have me lusting. During those times, being that i wouldn't allow myself to pursue it purposefully i would hope that "accidently" without me taking action I would have an exuse to lust. That was why i would look around the street hoping to see "interesting" sights.

As i type this a particular post that I once wrote comes to mind:

[unanumun wrote on 02 Jun 2014 20:32:](#)

bear with me - long post ahead:::::

I got what pideini meant about underlying issues coming back up after a while (I think I got what he meant at least)

I had an interesting experience since motzaei Shabbos until this morning.

I got into this depressed feeling that I get every so often. (It's a complicated issue, although I don't think I need medicine or a psychologist, and my assures me that is a normal thing consider what is going on in my life) they come and go every so often.

So i got into thinking that this is the exact feeling that I need an escape from. Well since porn is off limits now, and even stam sitting and watching youtube videos, has been stopped as they were a sure trigger to bad news, I was stuck. I didn't know what to do with myself. I was miserable.

I realized that that for the last few years (probably about seven or so) I was using the computer for an escape. I went through several stages of escape:

computer games: eventually I was able to pull myself away because it became too much of a waste of time

reading the news, all of them: eventually I had stopped because it occupied my whole mind and very often the goyishe news sites ended up triggering lust attacks.

porn: stopped about 60 days ago

All that was left was kosher (in terms of shmiras eynayim) news sites and yeshivishe politcs blogs. well last week I started learning shmiras halashon (that really deserves a seperate post, I forgot that I wanted to post it). I came to the realization that I had a real problem with the news sites since the most interesting things to me are the loshon hara and rechilos of politics. so I decided that I will stop that. I quit cold turkey last week for a while and even when i relapsed I did so with a guilty concience.

SO.....that leaves me really messed up. There are times when I need an escape and now I don't know what to do with myself. I was going nuts. I previously would have just gone to my office to escape into the world of the computer screen and now I had no reason to go to the office and couldn't think of anything to do to escape.

My mind went through crazy thoughts. (I even had a split minute where I was able to understand how people in an extended period of depression could be brought to suicide, rachmana litzlan) and of course i went through the whole porn issue in my mind again. maybe once in a while won't be such a crazy thing. It would keep me sane. I would go get my fix and then - back to life. so I reminded myself of what brought me to GYE and why I decided to stop. that calmed me down.

Then sunday night I traveled to a different city for a wedding. on the way my mind was all

screwed up and i started lusting. I was looking around for those pritzos i always see and indeed i couldn't find any. I thought that I should stop this maybe do the give over the thoughts to Hashem thing. but i didn't want to. i wasn't in the mood to stop.

I ended up davening maariv and at the end of shemone esray i davened for hashem to help me get through this and stop lusting. sure enough after maariv i felt better for a while. eventually i made it to the chasuna and sure enough even though it was a pretty frum wedding, part of the mechitza was moved and you could see all the girls dancing. (of all times for that to happen) i moved to a different spot. (probably because i was afraid someone would see me looking)

well baruch hashem, He sent me a yeshua. some guy asked me for a ride home and he kept me busy in conversation and by the time i got home i was so exhausted i fell right to sleep.

In the morning i finally put myself back together and today was fine.

there i got it all off my chest and if anybody else can benefit at the same time all the merrier.

so the bottom line is, what the heck am i going to do to escape when the need comes up? i gotta find something real soon.

it is also harder because just going to my quiet office was a way to get away but now that is not an option - too risky for me, and also there is nothing to do there.

maybe books but i can never keep enough books in the house without reading them and then they are not interesting once i need them to escape. well the hunt goes on and i better find something soon. or else.....

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by trysohard - 09 Oct 2016 20:28

[gibbor120 wrote on 29 Dec 2011 20:54:](#)

Why I Daven for the Lady I Lusted For (from daily dose)

Dov often talks about a technique he uses when he sees someone who triggers lust; he prays for them! (after turning away of course). Here, Dov describes why this works for him and others in SA.

Ok. It does a few things. First and strangest, I owe something to the person I am lusting after because lusting is always an act of "taking". I am using their image for selfish ends. (And saying that "They are obviously begging for it cuz look at how they are dressed!" is BS. I am reasonably certain that the average slutty female out there intends to be lusted after by who they want to be lusted after, not by some compulsive, perverted Jew boy like me.) So how better to show my gratitude?

Second, lusting is the single most powerful, portable, and dependable way I exercise my MEEEEEE muscle (the one in my head, not somewhere else). It is my drug of choice for entertaining myself, for covering up stress, fear, and boredom, for controlling my inner environment - in short, it is my most trusted Power source. Otherwise, why would I use it so much? So how do I sacrifice it? By just saying "no"? Nu. OK. That's what I always tried to do.... it didn't get me very far away from it. If you know anything about operand conditioning or habits, then you know that I choose to go a step further and use my lust as a guide and tool for giving power to others. To helping me learn to care about helping others. What better way to weaken the MEEEEEE muscle than to do what little I can to care about the very people I naturally worship as my (false) Power Source? I turn the tables as much as I can.

Finally, it gives me something to focus on rather than on lusting. And that itself is worth everything, even if my prayers for her are of no benefit to her. Treating a lust object like the real, live person they are is one of the most powerful tools to help me to stop looking at them like pieces of meat (with skin on them). We need to be reoriented. The entertainment and porn industries have succeeded in getting so many of us to believe deep in our hearts that pretty women are all dolls; that above all else they are libidos desperate to be used by us; and that they don't have real lives with obligations, pains, joys, sadness, and dreams of real people... and that perspective entitles us in our hearts to treat them as objects. Is it any wonder then, that most lust addicts grow to expect (no, demand) sexual bliss from their wives as though their feelings are just an obstacle? I looked into the shulchan aruch to see what I could demand of my wife, rather than looking into her heart... now what kind of BS is that? No wonder we were so miserable back then! She was an object, in some respect.

We need exercises to change, it will not happen just because we wish it to. And it takes a long, long time. But it works and it is worth it.

A caveat: I was once walking with an SA beginner who was staring at the rear end of a lady out in front of us, and mumbling. I asked him what the heck he was doing. He told me that he was praying for her.... I reminded him that he might be praying for her butt, but not for her. Ha. We both had a laugh went on our way. So the praying can't be done as an excuse to keep staring! A sweet dufus, he was.

Newleaf, it seems like you know a lot more than me, so I won't share my own knowledge, just what I learned from Dov (thanks to Gibbor!)

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by gibbor120 - 14 Oct 2016 20:03

Thanks for bringing this back up. I would show this post to the fellow who was going to

don't have time to find him now, but I hope he reads this.

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Re: Newleaf354 intro

Posted by Newleaf354 - 18 Oct 2016 08:04

It's really easy to get dragged down with the holiday. Everyone bouncing off the walls together in the succah with no schedule and no real plans and trying to visit friends or invite friends and realizing that I don't really have any close friends, which is a bit depressing.

Also, my youngest two are really hyperactive and talkative which can get really annoying being in an enclosed space together.

I got close to acting out recently, and I think part of it for now was that I was thinking too much about these underlying emotions that tend to drive me to act out. I over-did it, and sometimes it's best to just live in the moment and try to enjoy life.

massage parlors and saying his wife didn't satisfy him. (I know there are a lot of them here

Still, I do have a lot to be thankful for. I am glad that we expanded our Succah this year which made it more convenient and more comfortable. There's enough room that we can leave the table and all the beds out, and we don't have to keep moving everything around every time we decide to switch modes. I can also be thankful that my older kids really helped out with the preparations and I believe they will have positive holiday memories.

--NL354

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