

My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 22 Apr 2020 15:33

Hi,

This is my first thread on GYE. I intend for this thread to be used as a log of my journey (to hold myself accountable and help others see what the process may look like) and a forum for conversations around the different obstacles and issues that will come up on this journey. I ask that if you're going through or have gone through something similar to please chime in and share your thoughts, advice and encouragement.

So here I am. I'm 29 years old and still struggling with shmiras einayim, shmiras habris and the weight of carrying my "secret" on my shoulders for some 18 years now. I've got a lot more to share but I will leave that for another post.

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by Singularity - 22 Apr 2020 15:59

[AnonyJew wrote on 22 Apr 2020 15:33:](#)

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So here I am. I'm 29 years old and still struggling with shmiras einayim, shmiras habris and the weight of carrying my "secret" on my shoulders for some 18 years now. I've got a lot more to share but I will leave that for another post.

Hey man! Me too! Turning 29 this year! Looking forward to hear your story.

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 22 Apr 2020 17:45

Hey everyone,

So I didn't really put any effort or thought into changing my behaviors until high school. In high school I realized that what I was doing was inappropriate but sadly it is so prevalent in the high schools that I didn't view myself as having a "problem" or and "addiction" that needed to be addressed. I thought of my struggle as normal behavior for a teenage boy. During this time I got deeper into my addiction to pornography and started to act out not only with masturbation but with relationships.

I would go through this roller coaster of ups and downs where I would go from excelling in my Torah studies and becoming *shomer negiah* and then these lows where I would be involving myself in activities that would pull me down and destroy my *kedusha*. It was at this stage in my life that I started to really struggle with the feeling of this developing "secret side of me" that nobody else would know about.

Fast forward to now for a moment. I've signed up to GYE (as can be seen) and I'm just starting out on my journey. I jumped right into a 90 day challenge and made it 5 days before stumbling. I didn't let the fall drag see down and just brushed myself off and restarted (today is day 1) but I realized that signing up to this website and saying "I'm going to be clean from now on" isn't going to cut it. This will take real work, planning, strategizing and commitment.

I just received my Quick Guide To Stopping from the GYE team. I read through it and the handbook and I'm committing to a new strategy "90 Minutes to 90 Days". I'm going to b'ezras Hashem spend 90 minutes a day for the first 90 days working on this. I'm not sure yet what those 90 minutes will look like but I need to spend some serious time working on this. Here's to the next 90 days clean!

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 29 Apr 2020 13:32

Hey everyone,

I wanted to give an update on my progress and situation. I'm on day 8 sober now and I've been doing a lot of learning about the addiction (if you consider it that) to pornography. I didn't realize how complex the situation was or how far reaching its implications can be in your life. I think probably one of the biggest barriers to my success in stopping in the past was a lack of understanding on the severity of the problem and how it works. I always thought that it was just like any other *yetzer harah* that if you were inspired/motivated you could just fight it and the struggle was not being inspired enough. I'm realizing now that it's something much deeper and more complex. It is an issue that you have to invest a lot into getting rid of and there is going to be a lot of pain, sacrifice and struggle to get through it.

I've been reading a lot about SMART recovery here on the forum and that has been helpful. I also watched the 12 Steps to Kabbalah discussion with Eli Nash and Rabbi Doniel Katz and then I watched Eli Nash's Ted Talk and listened to his interview. It was really eye opening and I really believe it helped me.

I'm really scared and nervous about some of the things that I anticipate I will have to do at some point in my recovery in order to have the breakthroughs I need but at the same time I'm feeling excited at the thought of one day being free and stepping out of the shadows. I realized now that one of the toughest parts of this for me is the shame and hiding that comes with this addiction. I'm not ready to speak about it yet but I heard Eli Nash say one thing that as much as I don't want it to be true I know is - if you're really serious about breaking this addiction I don't see how you can do it without telling your wife. That is by far the scariest thing in the world to me.

I'm scared of how much it will hurt her to find out that throughout our marriage together I'd been secretly watching pornography and looking at pictures and videos of other women in order to masturbate. I'm scared of the questions she's going to ask me and if I'll be honest or end up lying which could potentially make it much worse. I'm scared that she will never trust me again and it will cause irreparable damage to our marriage. I'm scared that she'll be disgusted with me and won't love me or accept me anymore. I'm scared that she might get angry and then tell other people in her anger and my secret will get out and ruin other parts of my life that are seemingly doing ok right now. I'm also partially scared that telling her would mean I've put all my cards on the table and would have no choice but to really fight to end the addiction. There

wouldn't be any hiding anymore because I'd stepped out into the light and faced who I really am. I'd have made my addiction real and would then have to really stop. I wouldn't be fighting internally anymore over whether or not to get a filter and how strong. I would have to do everything in my power to stop in order to save my marriage and my family. I'd have to get the best filters until I was really sober for a long time. I'd have to delete my social media. I'd have to create excuses for why I'm not on social media or why I couldn't access certain materials at work. I'd have to take my recovery seriously, possibly joining support groups and/or therapy. I'd have to read a lot about the subject to prepare myself to battle the urges when they come up. All of this is a scary pill to swallow. I know that I'm only 8 days in so I'm probably not going to face these fears any time soon but I thought it would be helpful to start getting some of this stuff out.

?If anyone has felt anything like this or gone through some of this please post a reply or reach out directly. I'm on day 8 trying to get to day 9 right now and every bit of encouragement helps.

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by Singularity - 29 Apr 2020 15:19

Yes, the fears are real man. For some, they get pushed on you in a split second without knowing what to do about it. I had to disclose to my wife at a point.

If you're lucky enough, you can invest in recovery, get some good clean time and then come to your wife with leverage and she'll see you're a serious guy. So start today!

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnsheiZusha - 29 Apr 2020 20:21

Let's go!!!

You got this!

One day at a time, brother. One day at a time.

I believe in you will all of my heart, chevra.

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 30 Apr 2020 13:23

Hey, thanks for sharing that and for the encouragement. I'm on day 9 now so I feel like it's still too early to break it to her. I'm trying to get to 90 days clean before even evaluating if it's worth bringing up to her at that point or if I need longer but in the mean time I'm trying to practice being more open and honest with her about my feelings and past on other issues so I can get used to opening up.

Are you comfortable sharing the story of how you told her?

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 30 Apr 2020 13:25

Thanks for the chizuk Reb Zusha!

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 30 Apr 2020 13:46

Hey everyone,

Today is day 9 clean. I'm finding that fighting the urges are getting harder but that now the urges are starting to be a bit different or at least my interaction with them is. I used to have urged because I saw a trigger and that was it. Now I find myself experiencing anxiety, depression and

general negative emotions and then turning to things like social media, video games or getting the urge to look at pornography or triggering material as a way of escaping those negative feelings.

I knew always that I would play video games as a way of coping with anxiety because when I'm in a virtual world none of the problems or fears I have in the real world exist. For a period of time I don't have to think about them, worry about them or agonize over them. I believe the same is true about social media and pornography. I think that while sometimes its purely just I saw something triggering in a movie or at the grocery store it also stems from my having trained myself over the years to turn to it as a means of escape.

?Obviously that isn't a healthy way to deal with problems or anxiety but when I not only made that realization but also experienced it in real time consciously it has been a big *mechazek*. I was able to trace my urge back to a point in the day where I was feeling anxiety about something and I then went looking for ways to disconnect. At that point I started battling the urge to use pornography and masturbation as an escape. Being conscious of that development was eye-opening for me and having that self-awareness has made it easier for me to fight the urges.

Now when I experience the urge not only do I use the 20 minutes delay but as I'm on my way to a distraction I can have a conversation with myself of "wait a minute" "you don't really want to act out. You want to avoid feelings of anxiety or your problems." "What can you do instead to deal with these issues in a healthier way".

Anyways, while that has been a huge breakthrough for me I am now facing a new issue where I having a lot more trouble relating to my wife. She hasn't had any sexual interest in me lately anyways so it hasn't been a huge issue but (not to bee too graphic) I found myself trying to get her interested and then stopped myself. I am worried that I'm trying to just use her as a means of satisfying that urge and I don't believe that's healthy either. I don't feel connected to her emotionally as I once did and I'm afraid to connect with her physically if I'm not emotionally there because that is mentally the same to me as watching pornography and masturbating. It isn't for the sake of connecting with her but simply to satisfy lust and that just feeds my problem.

Has anyone else experienced or thought about these issues?

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 30 Apr 2020 14:04

There are multiple threads on the Balei Battim's forum that discuss this (the last thing). There are lots of good ones, check it out.

guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 01 May 2020 04:29

Thanks! I've browsed a few of the threads but it is very hard to navigate there. If you know of a particular thread that would be useful would you mind sharing?

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by starting - 01 May 2020 05:31

Having a good connection with the wife or with anyone comes through giving and getting not through both taking from each other.

Although I'm not actually addressing your point, you may want to read through the thread called 'things you can do for the wife' where you get ideas of little things you can do which will bring a closer connection and more love and appreciation.

One extremely inspiring thread (at least for me) is called 'mikvah night' where R' Cordnoy describes his journey towards purity and ends up with a better and healthier (my choice of words) relationship with his wife.

If anyone has a mareh makom to a thread which addresses the question at hand, please refer us to it, it's an important point.

Hatzlocha

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 01 May 2020 06:32

I didn't have time to go through them but if memory serves me correctly these are some of the good ones. Please feel free to suggest any others.

<https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum/344026-Lust-for-Wife>

<https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum/203829-Pnimius-HaZivvug>

<https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum/249680-Working-on-really-loving-my-wife%21>

<https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum/347434-Sex-with-wife>

<https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum/210070-Mikvah-Night---Edition--29>

<https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum/340996-CATCH-22%21>

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 01 May 2020 14:51

Hey,

I appreciate that point. I do need to work on giving more.

I haven't read mikvah night yet but I'll check it out.

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Re: My Journey Starts Today

Posted by AnonyJew - 01 May 2020 14:52

Thanks I'm going to check them out!

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