

My Story - Help!Posted by TRAPPED - 08 Jul 2020 15:11

Hi to all the warriors out there! This is not my first time on GYE, but I have never written on the forum, so I am curious to see what it's like and to reach out for some much needed guidance and help.

My story could fill a thousand-page book (as I'm sure all of ours can), so I will be m'katzer.

My problems with sex/masturbation started at age four. Yes, you heard that right, and yes, that is possible. My position in the family as well as a sensitive nature created some natural stress - terribly bullying throughout my childhood years didn't help. By the time I got to high-school I was completely hooked on porn and acting out - sometimes ten plus times a day on whatever device I could get my hands on. This took place during the week as well as on Shabbos. In later high-school years (despite coming from a frum family and having attended a frum school), I was able to act out some of these fantasies with both boys and girl. Constant bickering with an overbearing dad only added to the stress.

Throughout high-school I had tried to stop - I was always ashamed of these behaviors. But post-high school the battle began in earnest, and I couldn't go more than a month. I deal well with failure and was always able to push past the self-loathing and shame to get back up and start again. I was (and am) always convinced that THIS TIME will be IT! How many tablets I destroyed, phones I cracked, strategies I made over the years... it's incalculable. This struggle consumes me.

After marriage I stopped for a while but then continued again. The realization that marriage wasn't going to save me destroyed me and the added necessity of hiding etc made it so much worse. At one point I tried to enter the SA program and stopped for 80 days. I eventually fell and literally wanted to kill myself I was so upset. I fell back into it until finally I had no choice and spoke to my wife about what I was going through. She was shocked and hurt and I really thought my marriage was over. I cried for two days straight. But my wife is amazing and she was supportive of me getting back up, this time with her help. I installed covenant eyes and she sees everything. That worked for a long period of time, a few months and I finally felt like I broke free. Then, last year tisha b'av I discovered a way to get around my phone filter and that was it. I was beyond shattered and went into a downward spiral. It has been a year since then and I haven't gone two weeks without the stuff in some form or another. My wife has caught me twice more. The first time I was ambivalent and told her that I really didn't feel that it was my fault. This is how Hashem created me, it has been a life-long struggle, I am trying my best, I can't be blamed for liking that which I am programmed to like, she will never understand etc. (even

though I know deep down that that's all garbage.)

The second time (two weeks ago), I was back to crying in despair. And now (yesterday and today) I have fallen yet again. I subconsciously hold it a bit against her because her body is no longer the same as it was when we got married (as if that helped then), that her periods are very frequent (as if when we are together it is any better) and because she doesn't filter her phone and make sure there is no way I can get access (she is just naïve and doesn't think the way I do.) Our relationship was always very close, but this has definitely driven some wedges between us, even though she is trying to be as supportive as she could.

Oh, and also on the outside no one would ever guess. On the outside I am the guy on fire with avodas Hashem and Torah - the exact opposite of all the stuff, (sincerely) trying to spread torah.

I am at the end. I don't know what to do. I feel like I have tried it all. Bottom line, I'll be honest - I just love sex! It is the only thing that ever made me feel alive. I know it is sheker etc. but I feel that I simply cannot live without this crutch. Sometimes I wonder whether all this pain is simply caused by our particular belief system which many non-Jews simply don't have and this isn't an issue (certainly not an issue to get divorced over etc.) But I am desperate to stop. I want to live a porn free life. I have battled with this my whole life. But I am at a complete loss as to how to accomplish this goal. I can't continue to live this way. I can't face my wife after another fall. I can't carry on living a double life. It is killing me. It has been killing me for years.

I go through different mindset cycles - sometimes I think I am the only crazy one, nobody has it as bad as me. Other times I think that if I have this problem, then EVERYONE can (and probably does) - rabbonim, roshei yeshiva, and mekubalim alike. Because of the nature of our community (which i understand), no one can ever talk about these issues (although, for some reason, the stigma on drug addiction seems to be lifting.) So it could be that EVERYONE is struggling and just assumes they are the only one. I guess we will never know. But if there's anyone out there who knows this feeling and can help, I am drowning. I have tried everything, I am at the end.

Help! Please help!

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Re: My Story - Help!

Posted by Snowflake - 08 Jul 2020 16:13

First of all, congratulations for coming here, I'm sure you will receive much needed help.

You said you were going to SA meetings and it was working. What went wrong and why did you stop? You said you were clean for 80 days and fell. Isn't it much better than falling everyday? Once every 80 days? That's gevaldig. Stop striving for perfection. Try being sober one day at a time and if you fell, you fell, pick yourself up and keep trucking. Of course review your plan and what not, but just keep moving. Rabbi Jacobson has a very good metaphor. If you get a flat tire, what do you do? Do you then poke all your tires so they're all flat? Lol of course not, you change the bad one and keep going.

From what I've heard and seen, filters are great and all the precautions are a must. But you can't just hope to never come across an unfiltered device or an immodestly dressed woman, or an ad or whatever. It could be your wife's phone but it could be a friend's, work, etc. There has to be internal change, and I think 12 steps is the best treatment for addiction. That being said perhaps you should talk to your wife about her phone being filtered, since you said she is supportive. Also you said you managed to bypass your filters. How about a kosher phone for you? Every fence helps, no doubt about it.

Finally you seem to have unresolved childhood issues. Have you spoken to a therapist? More often than not addiction has a cause. Therapy can help you heal your wounds and diminish your urges.

Wishing you all the best.

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