

How porn saved my life

Posted by kosherman - 03 Oct 2022 03:14

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I know it sounds weird [especially on this type of forum] but I think it is true. Porn and masturbation saved my life. I know you'd expect that it would be ruined, but let me explain by telling you my story. Well before I begin let me tell you a little about me. I am an older single who went to yeshiva for many years and values learning though I am worldly. I wouldn't say I am yeshivish [mainly because I don't like that label] I watch movies and have the internet [including a smartphone]. I went to college and currently work, but I am still involved in yeshiva, trying to learn daily, daven with a minyan, and value the frum lifestyle.

When I was younger I was extremely depressed. I didn't recognize that at the time but I realize it now. I felt like I had no one; not parents, siblings or friends. I truly felt alone and that no one cared about me.

At home growing up, I faced what I see now as verbal abuse. (No real physical abuse though both my parents did hit me I never felt physically abused.) My father had/has an anger problem and there was always a fear of crossing him wrong. It was really easy to set him off and there was a fear that he would physically lash out [maybe a little physical abuse]. I really believe he hates me. (That is a long story for another time.) The put-downs were constant. I was never good enough and always did something wrong. [Also it didn't help that I was a rambunctious child.] My father would (and still does) react passively aggressively and overtly aggressively. [It's kind of funny because now my mother always asks why I don't come home more often like I should want to come home and also when I do come home I still face the same abuse. You would think it is obvious, but the human ability to blind ourselves is astounding.] My mother, though she was nice, also suffered from anger issues and was also overwhelmed dealing with her children as well as my father. There were times she would lash out and yell at me as well, though she was more caring [never felt like she hated me] but not healthy either. It took many years to come to terms with the abuse. I remember a rebbe telling me you're not going to change them and needing to remove myself from the relationship. [Sounds really harsh and it was, but it was correct.] It was/is really hard and painful giving up on the relationship with my parents. Yes sometimes they are nice and show care but I know that in the end, they will always put me down. [If you have children, realize that when they are young that is your time to build a relationship with them because when they are older they may not want the relationship anymore. Sorry, I just felt the need to insert some child rearing advice.]

My siblings would try to stay out of the splash zone (my father's wrath) and growing up I never was really close to them growing up, though as we have gotten older I have become closer with them. In my younger years unfortunately, they also contributed to some of my torment. I am second to youngest and my younger brother is quite a few years younger and was given different treatment than the rest of my siblings [okay yes a little bitter but who doesn't have a

little sibling rivalry?]. The sibling right above me had issues [Anger issue, wonder where he got that from?] and while at times we were close we also fought. None of my siblings were ever there emotionally for me to run to. At times they would gang up on me with my father to put me down. [Honestly, I don't really hold it against them. It was a good way to keep the heat off of them.] We never discussed what was going on, and even now it is taboo in the family to talk about our issues, especially the way we were raised. Some of us siblings have had some conversations around the anger and the putdowns, but never discussing the long-term consequences that the abuse has had on our psyches [and for sure never label it as the abuse it was/is].

At school, I was an outcast (I would rather not try to explain, also didn't help that I was extremely guarded and defensive) I faced bullying in my younger years in school and never really made close friends (even after the bullying stopped). I eventually went away to high school where I got help and started to overcome my issues. [Today I'm a much happier person with friends and am a decently well adjusted human.]

So what does my story have to do with porn and masturbation and how did it save my life? Well, porn and masturbation were my safe place while growing up. I began to use masturbation and porn before I was 13, I don't have the exact age [it was quite young]. I would get screamed at and put down then go masturbate and make things bearable. I would fantasize and escape from the hell I was in for a little bit. It made life almost bearable [usually sexual fantasies they were the best]. It is interesting I never blamed or questioned Hashem I had my outlet. (Chazal says for every sickness there is a cure well I had mine.) When I was younger I did not even understand what I was doing let alone that it was "wrong", which may explain why I never have suffered from real guilt around porn and masturbation. Looking back if I didn't have it I don't know if I'd be here. I might have turned to drugs, dangerous activities, or just ended things. (I know I wasn't healthy, I since went to therapy and dealt with many of my issues [or at least to an extent there are scars and at times these wounds do reopen.]) To illustrate how bad it was, the first thing I ever really davened for was to die. (I've been informed this is not something a healthy child should pray for.) Porn and masterbation looking back saved me. They were my safe place without it, I do not know where I would've ended up. It was the one thing I could really rely on and it didn't let me down [as opposed to everybody and everything else (at least that's how it felt)].

Sorry if you thought this was the end of the story. There is more.

Later in life as I got healthier I started to understand it was "wrong" and started to resist. While I was in yeshiva I was decently successful [extended streaks of no pornography and lesser but still streaks without masterbation] then I would go home and just immerse myself in porn and masturbate. It was a cycle. As I have gotten older and more technological [smartphone,

computer etc.] it has gotten harder, and I have had varying degrees of success.

Then I entered shidduchim, well to be honest entering shidduchim wasn't the issue, it's that I have not left. At first it was okay, I got rejected [big deal been through worse did I mention my parents] but I was fine. As the years have gone by I am no longer fine. Most of my friends are married and many have multiple children. (Just side note: shidduchim have been unsuccessful not because of my childhood trauma or porn and masterbation it is more the intersection of my background and personality that creates issues [well some of the personality probably is an outgrowth of the trauma but I am a decently well adjusted human being.] I have spoken at length with rebbiem and friends about the dating issue [and they aren't like dude you need help]. If you would like to hear more about my dating, hopefully the book will come out when it's over.)

The loneliness has started to really get to me. I talk to people, learn, work, yet I am missing having a family [something I have never had]. As the years have passed and the loneliness has built up, I have started to really give up on getting married. Being lonely and nowhere to turn I have resorted back to old habits and restarted the defense mechanisms of using pron and masterbation to cope. I have stopped caring and fighting to resist watching porn and masterbating. When I am lonely and down they are still my safe place [and still work].

Well recently it has gotten even worse. The porn and masterbation are just not enough. I want more. [It has not helped that I have entered the "real world and been exposed to the things that occur there.] I have started to fantasize and plan ways to get more including begining to act on it [more means like actual sex or just not being shomer with a real girl.] I have started to explore different ways of getting to this goal. I have started chatting and speaking with women through various means [sorry for being vague it's intentional]. It is embarrassing to admit but I have gone so far to exchange explicit pictures with a lady I met online. Doing this has made me realize that having sex is very attainable and I am not sure I want to stop. I know it is "wrong" and will hurt my future [like if I ever found someone to marry]. I feel like this is a big boundary to break and that if I will break this boundary I am not sure where I will stop. Up until now there has never really been a person on the other side to bear witness and be involved. I am not sure if I will really remain frum if I continue down this path.

As I have started down this path it is almost yom kippur and the seriousness of what I am doing has started to hit me. There is a part of me that would like to continue, it is fun and it feels good, but I know at the end of the day this is not who I want to be. I value my relationship with Hashem. Right now I am in pain and it is hard to remember what is really important.

Porn and masturbation have never really negatively impacted my life. Yes, I have wasted time and have neglected things because of porn and masturbation, but I have been able to keep myself in check. I know it is "wrong" [an avaira] and would rather not do it, but to be honest I have stopped feeling guilty. Even the new found behavior hasn't really caused me guilt. So why am I writing this? Why am I looking to stop and give up the one "good" thing in my life? Well it is almost yom kippur and I decided I need to change. [Yearly yom kippur ritual tells me I'm going to do better in this area with various degrees of success.] Well this year just promising myself I won't continue watching porn and masturbating is not going to work, especially with my new found coping mechanism. I feel the only way to ultimately anchor myself is that I need to get married [yes I know it's risky with a porn and masturbation addiction, but that is a long conversation]. Until then I need a way to hold myself accountable so here I am telling my story. Hopefully using this site will help me be accountable to myself and motivate myself to overcome my challenges. Writing this confession of sorts is my way of trying to not give up. To tell my story and show Hashem I am still trying, despite everything I am still here fighting.

Thank you for reading. I am really humbled that you took your time to read my story [if you just skipped to the end I don't blame you it is kind of long.] There is more to my story and plenty got left out [some to preserve my anonymity (sorry a little guarded, daddy taught me well). If you have any questions or comments please feel free to reply and I will try to respond. Have a gmar chasima tova and a gut gebentsht yor. May we break free from our urges and our tefillos be answered this yom kippur.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by Vehkam - 03 Oct 2022 04:26

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thank you for opening up here and sharing your story. if you have not already listened to it, please google Eli Nash and Rabbi YY Jacobson, removing the shame of pornography. This podcast is over three hours long and discusses porn in the same context as you described.

regarding the current issues. you are correct that if you break the boundary it will probably lead to additional boundaries being broken. You are wise to seek solutions and accountability to ensure that you don't go down that route.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by Human being - 03 Oct 2022 04:41

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Wow wow wow!!!! You are incredible that's all I'm going to say. If what I'm understanding is correct, you have 2 parts of you that each want very different things in life and they don't really want much to do with each other. 1 part of you wants safety, connection and soothing, and one part of you wants to grow towards Hashem and move away from the exact thing that gives the other part of you the safety, connection and soothing you crave.

To step up to the plate share your story and start moving forward is not-normally-incredible. Btw I'm sorry for all the pain you have expressed (and not expressed.) No-one deserves to get bullied ,abused. Verbally or emotionally. Nobody. You deserve love, care, and connection.

So we want to wish you a warm welcome WELCOME!

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by iLoveHashem247 - 03 Oct 2022 04:48

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Dear Kosher Man,

First off, here is a virtual hug

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by ??? ???? ???? ??? - 03 Oct 2022 14:22

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Thank you for sharing. I see a lot of my own story in your story. I can so relate to "but to be honest I have stopped feeling guilty." GYE is a great resource and has helped me with my pornography and masturbation issues. Great hatzlachah!

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by Ybird - 03 Oct 2022 14:37

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Wow. am i the only one here who is just sitting and crying for you.

man, I feel your pain between the lines,

?and I really wish you a speedy recovery

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by Ki Sorisa - 03 Oct 2022 16:11

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Wow! my heart is shattered into a million pieces and tearing up as I read this; you've endured so much pain and suffering and are so hurting and yet able to come here and open up in hope to help you along with your struggle wow!! The beauty of your neshama! Im so inspired!

I really dont have much advice as im not qualified but you must know you are not alone in your pain and suffering dear brother, without going into details, I can tell you that I also remeber davening as a child to die and the pain is undscribeable, I feel your pain dear brother but know you came to the right place as there are many qualified and loving yidden here that can be of assistance.

Kudos to you again for being able to come here and share! wishing you much hatzlacha!!

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 Oct 2022 16:52

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Welcome. Such a brave post. Wow. Thank you for your honesty and courage. Unfortunately, there are many guys here that can relate to your perspective on pornography/masturbation being your safe secret pain reliever. May Hashem help you in all your inyonim ASAP.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by kosherman - 03 Oct 2022 20:04

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Thank you for the suggestion of the podcast I started to listen. Yes, I've discovered once boundaries are crossed it is hard near impossible to uncross them.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by kosherman - 03 Oct 2022 20:25

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[Human being wrote on 03 Oct 2022 04:41:](#)

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To step up to the plate share your story and start moving forward is not-normally-incredible. Btw I'm sorry for all the pain you have expressed (and not expressed.) No-one deserves to get bullied ,abused. Verbally or emotionally. Nobody. You deserve love, care, and connection.

So we want to wish you a warm welcome WELCOME!

Thank you for your reply (as well as everyone else's replies that I've received). Yes, there are the two sides the part of me that would like to grow and the part that really wants the comfort. I like your insightful simplified way of viewing my struggle of a complex issue. Sometimes as I struggle it seems so complicated and difficult as just seeing two sides pulling in opposite directions.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by Steelers94 - 04 Oct 2022 00:58

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thanks for posting, very insparational.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by ILAHC FM - 04 Oct 2022 10:45

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WOW!

Kosherman, I related big time! I haven't been on GYE website in a long time and just checked out the forum today and saw this post and I couldn't believe that I could relate alot to what you wrote.

You are so so brave to write your story, i have a somewhat similar story which hopefully I will post in the near future.

Without Porn i would be on drugs or not alive, porn saved my life as well. I am also an older single, although I am not well enough to start shiduchim yet - lots of emotional issues/baggage that need healing before I'm ready, and although I believe that one day I will be well enough to get married, I don't know if I ever will get married.

I'm no expert, just speaking from having had a somewhat similar life and using porn as "life saving device", I use the Taphsic method to help me not watch porn.

Also, you mention parts of you wanting different things, as "Human Being" explained really well:

*you have 2 parts of you that each want very different things in life and they don't really want much to do with each other. 1 part of you wants safety, connection and soothing, and one part of you wants to grow towards Hashem and move away from the exact thing that gives the other part of you the safety, connection and soothing you crave*

Have you looked into a therapy called IFS (Internal Family Systems)? It's a therapy that is all about working with your parts. (It was also featured in Mishpacha Family First last week.)

Eli Nash's YouTube vidoes are amazing. (Besides the one with Rabbi YY, he has another 3hr



video on shame/porn with the Amazing Rabbi Shais Taub [youtu.be/r8cYXG4kWQc](https://youtu.be/r8cYXG4kWQc) )

Any questions on what i wrote, just reply or PM me

Wishing you the all the best

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 04 Oct 2022 16:48

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@Kosherman, I haven't posted in a long time but your thread caught my eye. I read through every word of your long post and relate to a lot of it.

I think that on some level, most people here can relate to what you wrote about pushing the boundaries. Of course, everyone's boundaries are different but I think the "crossing the line" feeling is still similar. This is especially true for those who use porn to "save their lives".

I am not a fan (at the moment) of doing things any different Erev Yom Kippur or Erev Tu B'Av. Instead, I try to focus on what direction I want to lead my life, what kind of person I want to be when I am finished in this world, and what are the things I need to do to get there. If you are managing the way things are, it's one conversation, if you are not managing, however, it's an entirely different question.

It sounds like you have a lot of stuff to process through, only you can decide what life you want to live, what things are manageable, and what things make life unmanageable.

It sounds like you have lots of sorting out to do.

Hatzlacha,

Wilnevergiveup

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by kosherman - 06 Oct 2022 04:39

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@wilnevergiveup Thank you for your reply. I agree with not trying to change because of erev yom kippur and Tisha bav. I guess where I possibly differ in opinion is sometimes there are sparks of inspiration during these times and I guess in this case I'm am trying to use the inspiration to motivate me to do something I feel I should be (that I've been trying on and off unsuccessfully) doing not changing myself based on the time of year.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by Human being - 07 Oct 2022 20:30

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Btw feel free to email or private message me as well. (Anyone else as well) Btw I've been to therapy using IFS/ACT/EMDR a very potent mix of therapy. If you want details and would like to ask me anything feel free.

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