

i'm finally posting

Posted by Horizon - 30 Mar 2023 20:24

i wroth this up yesterday but for some reason it didn't post. sitting down to rewrite it now.

hi everyone! my name is horizon i'm a 23 yo yeshiva bochur. i created my account about a year ago, but haven't been active until about a week ago. in the little time i'm here iv'e met some wonderful chevra, and was encouraged to write about myself. i hope it will takeh help me, specifically w meeting and connecting with the chevra. although my 'story' is as cookie cutter typical as they get, i'm still sharing. partially to unload, but mainly to make connections with . here we go...

i grew up in a typical frum yeshivish home. my father is a respected rebbi, and my mother teaches in the local school. although my parents are good people, i never connected w them or felt understood. emotions were also pretty much nonexistent in our home. my father is very reserved and cold, and my mother was always a hard woker, and expected the same from us. (recently my siblings and i started discussing how this affected us. bh i have a pretty nice relationship w my siblings)

from quite a young age (probably like 10) i had a sexual rush. but i'd rather not elaborate on that. when i was 13 years old i went off to an out of town yeshiva ketana. although it was a nice yeshiva, and the chevra were nice, i had a hard time fitting in cuz i was a year younger then the class. i kinda felt like i don't belong and also had to prove myself. i was also embarrassed to share my age with orhers. it was a tough matzav.

others. so if you came for chidushim, i'm sorry to let you down. during the first year in yeshiva i started to become a very 'erlnste bochur'. taking davening seriously, waking up early to learn, i would get upset when guys were sitting around and chilling or talking loшон hara... you get the pic. it was kind of a distraction from social life which i wasn't very good at.

the next year i went the other direction. i started sleeping in, chavering zich with the more chilled guys in yeshiva, and being in beis medrash less.

one day i came across a store not far from yeshiva that sold (drumroll please) adult magazines. i took one. (i don't want to say stole). i was utterly shocked by what i saw. i was a naive sheltered boy, who didn't dream there was such a thing as women exposing themselves. i didn't either know about sex. that magazine really changed me (one of my rebbeim at the time pointed out that he sees i changed). it was at that point that a started to m* (i hate the word, so a * will

have to suffice). over the next two years i only took another two or three magazines, and occasionally when i'd be home i'd watch porn.

when i was 17 i went to eretz yisroel for the summer. seeing the attitude they have in israel towards the internet had a big effect on me, and it caused me to make strong gedarim for myself. i was clean from porn and m* for 3 years (!)

after that the YH creapt in in the most ingenious of ways. i decided to be a ka'nu'ee and check to make sure our family's computer was kosher. it was not.

about a year ago i came across gye, and was convinced it was the end of my struggles. i now had a place to keep myself in track by using the success tracker and i'll live happily ever after. i was clean for 8 days.

i recently gave up my access to porn, and now have a phone that is really restricted (no really). bh it was a HUGE gamechanger. iv'e wanted to do it for the longest time but it was very hard. and that first night without it was very, hard. but surprisingly in the days since i was very much ok and didn't feel like i'm missing much. (although i'll admit that it gets annoying sometimes heving restricted access).

i'm gonna try for the future to be more involved in this community, and hopefully i'll meet some nice chevra:)

wishing everyone continued hatzlacha in everything,

horizon

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by horizon - 15 Apr 2024 19:48

thank you all for your input.

HHM you are very right. the script can be changed.

Reb chaim, you are also right. its important to be self aware and understand what's going on:

what do i want? what's bothering me?

i think for me this last time, it was more of a feeling of yiush. i'm not in a good mood, and i'm not even looking to fix it. although w that being said, the script can still be changed. sometimes you need a kick in the pants.

anyway things are going better bh, and i'm being very proactive nowadays.

today is day 4, moving only upward w the help of the almighty.

hatzlacha!

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by horizon - 28 Apr 2024 02:09

a gut moed tayere yiddin!

hope everyone is having a great yom tov. i haven't wrote here in a while, here it comes.

bh i had a very nice first days at home, some of my siblings came over w their families which i like and look forward to. we really enjoyed each others company, and had some of the nicest sedarim i can remember.

pre pesach was also l'fee erech very good this year, we all chipped in and helped, and the atmosphere was as stress free as possible.

chol hamoed could have been nicer, as in I could of gotten up at a decent hour and utilize the day (and if I'm being honest I didn't get up too early on y"t either), but overall i consider it a good yom tov bhh.

right now I'm feeling just a liiittle bit edgy... also, although i'm trying not to, some of the post yom tov life and stresses are getting to me. was thinking that I deserve to cut myself some slack, not to c"v look at porn, but maybe just look at some pretty women? I have two devices to choose from, one is more censored, it only allows some porn sites (50% kosher i guess) the other one is completely unrestricted! it even does that cute thing browsers do, where it suggests different searches, to make sure you make it to the tachlis.

i know how this goes, first I'll look at some women (it aint porn, and i have a cool enough streak to chill out a bit), then I'll move on to search for provocative stuff on a platform that doesn't allow adult material (safe there). from there I'll go on to a different platform that occasionally allows a slip or two (not my fault) my next step would be yet another platform that keeps the trash in a separate designated section, I'll start scrolling some and then I'll find a piece or two that somehow made it into the clean section, (now this is a shanda!! the audacity to expose children and innocents to this material! a chutzpah that I'm seeing this on a 'safe' platform!!) I'm gonna skip a couple steps here but next thing you know, I'm knees deep into porn, and by this point there's no reason to stop. I'll suddenly realize that I'm actually very tired and am not interested in this, but hey, when's gonna be my next chance? I'ts mamesh a brocho I'vatola to just close up in middle.

one lesson I'm learning from this, when I first began fighting this, I had the technicalities kinda figured out, but I still wouldn't succeed for long. w time and work i learned that there's something underlying the porn (for me it's mostly connection). I have to work on the yesod in order to kick this thing. now I feel like things have flipped: I put in a lot of work on the fundamentals, but kinda neglected the practical aspects. as in most of life, there's gotta be the right balance.

excuse my rambling friends,

wishing you all a wonderful yom tov, and a shleimusdike zman cheiruseinu!

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 28 Apr 2024 02:34

Excellently written buddy.

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by chaimoigen - 28 Apr 2024 14:30

Lot of good thoughts here, Tayereh Chaver.

Yeah, it takes honesty to realize that sometimes there is something that compels us to "go looking" - there are situations in which we have learned to use the porn as a solution, and those patterns need to be understood and changed... But staying away is also important.

I think that being honest means understanding that starting off "chilling out" online is at very least getting into the "posture of pornography" and more often a disguised Razton to go and find a fall. Realizing that makes it easier to say no to the beginning of the slippery slope than on the way down. (And an understanding **what's driving** that Razton... Connection, you say? Would you care to elaborate, maybe? No pressure)

It helps to take an honest look at the entire search history at the end of the night to see just how that slope developed, to see, realize, and learn for next time. It hurts, but yeah...

There's Chaim on the Horizon,

Hang on!

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by jewizard21 - 28 Apr 2024 14:43

Sometimes when my family gets together with their own families I get a sense of longing and loneliness bc were are alone.

I think sometimes looking at porn and masturbating is a way to compensate for that loneliness.

This is not the case for everyone of course.

If this is a factor though then we have to remind ourselves that looking at porn or masturbating doesn't come close to that feeling of companionship and it actually distances us from it by feeling regret and maybe even hopelessness of ever finding that companionship.

Stay strong and keep on going

Gut Moed

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by horizon - 28 Apr 2024 20:52

thanks guys for your responses and insights. i appreciate the compliments!

i'm gonna take the time iy"n after yom tov to get in deeper to the points you guys brought up.

wishing everyone a gut yom tov

davening to hashem to keep my oigen open to be able to see the chaim on the horizon

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by horizon - 01 May 2024 20:30

Here comes the post i bli neder'd y'all.

Reb chaim, you politely suggest that just 'chilling out', is essentially a disguise for porning (as is evident in the end of night search history). it should therefore be treated the same as the porn issue itself, namely to be boidek and find the source driving that ratzon, that need to get a fix.

I want to be ???? that While I agree this is the case many times, there is also another aspect. what HHM calls the open cookie jar syndrome. namely the regular human tayvah to be male. all the vayemaan stories about tannaim and amoraim who had nisyoins, although obviously we have no hasaga as to their madreigos and nisyoins, there is still the simple p'shat that ein mikra yoitze mipshuto. now do we assume that these tzadikim had underlying anxieties/attachment issues that lad them to the nisayon? not mistaber. the toirah warns every yid (regardless of their specific situations) ??? ????? ????? ????? ??????.

?(similar to someone who has a nisayonm to talk loshon hara. we won't start to scramble and find him the right therapist to help him uncover the fundamental problem pushing him to speak

dvarim assurim)

The digging has to happen, when you have an ehrliche guy who's makpid on kalah kachamura, is matzliach in learning, and decided he wants to put this habit behind him, yet still can't get rid of his phone. and eventually when he does, he ultimately finds another and yet another device. This guy's ambivalence is tearing him apart: he passionately hates the device and what it brings him, yet he shudders to think of life without it. here we must ask, what is it that he's holding onto? What is he getting from porn that he can't find elsewhere?

In my case I think it is two things:

firstly a feeling of connection. see my parents are wonderful people. it would be so much more wonderful if i felt close to them. unfortunately i never really felt a connection with them. I attribute this largely to their personalities. To make matters worse, I had a fair amount of social anxiety and had a hard time making friendships. (bh nothing extreme, as i've heard from others who suffered immensely from social anxiety). The cherry on top was that my parents had me skip from seventh grade into ninth, going to mesivta a year early, and I felt inferior to the guys there.

I was explained a theory that porn gives the illusion of connection. cuz it uses an act that was intended as a means of the deepest connection possible.

Another underlying factor I had was that I felt unseen. like people don't know me. (heck i barely knew myself). In part I think it's because I had a big focus on conforming and fitting in. which resulted in my being inauthentic and people not really seeing me. in porn I found people being exposed and seen. This was also reflected in the type of porn I like(d) watching.

An interesting tzad hashave between those two, is that I always had a meshicha to porn, much less to masturbating. I take it as a brocho when I read guys who struggle so much w the latter. I wish them all hatzlacha.

thank you reb chaim for no pressuring me into thinking about this and writing it, you brought me clarity.

hatzlacha to all,

there is light on the horizon

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by chooseurname - 02 May 2024 14:50

[horizon wrote on 01 May 2024 20:30:](#)

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Wow, really insightful post.

Just thinking a little about the quote above. Why can't it that even this driven guy is just holding on to porn? Porn hits some of our deepest human drives, provides all the little chemical pleasures etc. So while perhaps sometimes someone has a porn issue because they are compensating for the love they never felt etc. But my gut feeling is that 90+% of the time it's just they ate from the cookie jar over and over until they wired their brain into that pleasure. And then every time they feel an emotional pain of any sort, they run to sooth it with their favorite pleasure. Without getting into the sugya if that person is then technically an "addict", porn is an addictive sort of pleasure.

This is my question. My ignorant ramblings on why I think it's a good question are below.

L'mai nafka mina? Major nafka mina. If pornography usage is a symptom/siman of an underlying lack in life then you can't fix the porn without fixing the ikar problem. But if porn is the

siba/root problem, and the emotional lack is just one type of tickle that porn uses to justify itself, then porn is the problem that needs to be addressed. Fixing the underlying emotional problem is also important, but wouldn't necessarily solve the porn problem, and also wouldn't be required to solve the porn problem.

Maybe this is me trying to convince myself I just have a porn problem, not deeper emotional problems. But I'm generally leery of navel-gazing about the "source" of pornography usage. Note that I 100% agree that it's important to identify your triggers so you can be on guard, and if that trigger is a feeling of emotional distance then it's very impressive self-awareness to catch that.

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by youknowwho - 02 May 2024 17:13

[chooseurname wrote on 02 May 2024 14:50:](#)

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I enjoyed the nuance of your question. I also appreciated the way you explained how many people can get stuck in the porn trap. Though I'm not sure if I'm understanding the nafka minah.

Afilu im timtzah loimar that there are no *dramatic* emotional issues, this person potentially has the same amount of painful work to do. He is **presently** wired to lust when tired/stressed/etc

Yes, there are the emotional triggers, and yes, we have unfortunately taught ourselves (sometimes beyond our control, i.e. earlier in life) that sweet porn is the answer, so even if there is no dramatic emotional issue, there's still a manifestation of a "problem", meaning, that just simply explaining how bad porn is etc. (or, whichever way you meant by "dealing just with the porn") or regular shmiras ainayim ruchnies talk, will not work for too long. It is still agonizingly difficult to *not* run back to that cozy haven when emotional stress builds.

So, whether a dude is thinking he's tzad one, two, **or somewhere in between**, there is still all that painful emotional work of dealing with these emotional triggers, in other words, learning how to live like a balanced, normal, healthy person.

I may not have understood your point, feel free to correct me if you feel I am wrong.

Keep churning out those great nuggets of wisdom, I am really appreciating it!

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by chooseurname - 02 May 2024 20:04

[youknowwho wrote on 02 May 2024 17:13:](#)

[chooseurname wrote on 02 May 2024 14:50:](#)

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Good point and a very well articulated post.

Let me clarify what's bothering me (picture the thumb in the air for this one). IIIIf the problem can be resolved regardless by learning better responses to urges then fine - my chakira has no nafka mina. But it seems like looking for the emotional reasons behind watching porn is sometimes saying this emotional issue is the problem, I cannot respond better to urges that come from this trigger, and the **only** cure is for me to remove the trigger by resolving my emotional pain that's driving me to porn. And then a whole emotional journey is required before I can stop watching porn.

But if porn is the problem, and emotional pain is just one trigger among every other trigger. Then just like I can urge surf, reach out, or whatever tool, when I'm hungry or angry I can do the same when I'm feeling unloved.

I agree emotionally triggered urges are harder to fight as they are strong and attack motivation too. And I agree that removing triggers is very helpful - unfiltered devices are a trigger for me and having everything around filtered makes me have less urges (in addition to making the urges harder to follow through on). If someone is often triggered by feelings of ex. abandonment or inadequacy, then working through previous trauma may resolve that trigger completely and make their fight much easier.

But @horizon's original, very thoughtful, post posited that there are two groups of people: 1) people who like cake, and 2) people who have emotional lack driving them to porn. And he hypothesized that people who can't give up this porn they hate may be in group #2. The danger with this categorization is it opens up the door to saying, "It's not my fault, I just have this pain." If someone avoids this trap then I have no problem with the categorization.

Just some thoughts. It could be I'm just viewing things through my journey, where any excuse for porn was gleefully embraced.

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Re: i'm finally posting
Posted by youknowwho - 02 May 2024 20:48

[chooseurname wrote on 02 May 2024 20:04:](#)

[youknowwho wrote on 02 May 2024 17:13:](#)

[chooseurname wrote on 02 May 2024 14:50:](#)

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Just some thoughts. It could be I'm just viewing things through my journey, where any excuse for porn was gleefully embraced.

but now, reading this paragraph, the bolded part in particular, yes, I now understand what you are trying to say.

It definitely is counterproductive and dangerous for one to say, hey, I'm a "wounded, tortured soul", so therefore I can justifiably do whatever I want.

I would still imagine though, that this danger of rationalizing exists whether one initially got into it through dramatic emotional trauma, or developed a flavor for it and it is now triggered into it by emotional triggers, or whether he is addicted to it, or just a bad habit etc.

And, it may or may not be very challenging, in *any* of these categories, to break out of this unhealthy pattern of thinking and living.

I appreciate your point, now I'd better get back to work!

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by horizon - 02 May 2024 21:38

i'm watching this conversation unfold, and i thing it may be above my pay grade. i'm gonna sit back and listen to the ideas being discussed (for the most part).

But @horizon's original, very thoughtful, post posited that there are two groups of people: 1) people who like cake, and 2) people who have emotional lack driving them to porn. And he hypothesized that people who can't give up this porn they hate may be in group #2. The danger with this categorization is it opens up the door to saying, "It's not my fault, I just have this pain." If someone avoids this trap then I have no problem with the categorization.

now i understand what you're saying.

a couple thoughts:

1. playing victim isn't really a good life strategy. you might even be right, but you're not getting anywhere.

2. do we want people to be thinking "it's my fault"? (my responsibility, yes. fault? idk.)

k i guess its just two thoughts:)

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Re: i'm finally posting

Posted by chaimoigen - 02 May 2024 21:59

Terrific conversation. Kol HaKavod to Horizon for bring out such good stuff (and for being vulnerable, that must have hurt a lot to write. Here's a hug, friend.)

Lot of great points and food for thought. I would like to drop my two-cents into the mix, starting with addressing Horizon's original point and then the spin-off discussion between YKW and Chooseurname.

1. To Horizon's question - I agree. But to clarify - I think there's a big difference between a person who falls **when he finds himself in a situation of Tayva** and a person who **"Goes Looking To Fall"**. A person who falls when confronted with the YH is first and foremost a healthy male. We don't need to bring proof that the YH for Arayos can be overwhelmingly powerful within the situation. The stories about Rav Amram Chasida and so many other Taanaim and Amoraim that showcase the fact that everyone is potentially vulnerable typically relate stories about a person who finds himself in a compromising situation and either fails or doesn't. That's why pretty much everyone needs a filter, period. Chazal legislated Yichud and taught us that if you're alone with a woman there's a good chance you'll fall, regardless of who you are. A phone can be the same.

But, as Horizon said, a guy who hates the habit and can't bring himself to get rid of the phone; or the guy who goes looking late at night because he feels a deep unsettledness that is driving him in a way he doesn't necessarily quite understand to "go looking" - and he starts on an innocuous website and "somehow" always seems to find himself hours later in the dark and hazy pit of lust - it seems to me that in the latter case usually there's something there that worth digging to uncover.

I want to emphasize - it doesn't have to be a psychosis and the guy doesn't necessarily need therapy. But there is often some kind of pain or discomfort that he has that he has learned to use porn or masturbation or lust to numb, distract or comfort. And therein lies an obstacle to breaking free, beyond the desire to give up the delicious yet unsavory pleasures thereof. [To share - This work helped me a lot, over years. And I never went to therapy.]

2. Chooseurnames points are extremely well taken and qualify this point.

Firstly - in the society we live in, a guy who got used to finding porn on devices can get to the point **that he is almost perpetually** in a state of Nisayon. It's like always being in a state of Yichud because there's always a device down the hall, waiting.... Someone in that state doesn't necessarily fit the description above. But honestly, a lot of guys here **think** that's what it is all

about initially. But it's not the whole story... There are often just too many times when one goes looking when he wasn't initially in a state of lusting, to legitimately explain it that way....

3. His second point is equally important. But I want to qualify it and mix in some of what YKW pointed out.

Yes, of course, sticking your hand deep into the sticky, sweet and smutty cookie jar of the pink hazy lusting has a deep and profound effect, and you can get hooked (habit, addictive behavior, whatever). All true. But this experience and habit can **then also become wired into** and **connected** to whatever other stuff you have going on inside.

You see, I don't believe that a guy who feels disconnected and lonely will necessarily seek out porn and lust ?????? to fill up the hole in his center **if he had never been exposed**. But if he was exposed, and he got somewhat hooked on the stuff, it can then go and **fill a NEED, too**, and then he will start developing patterns in which he **uses** the lust to fill a hole and need, not just because it's delicious. So the points are not contradictory - rather they are both true.

4. You Know Who is very right, in his real and pragmatic (and slightly dark) way (of course you are dark, Tom).

Once we have twisted thinking in place, and have broken boundaries and tasted how the sickly sweetness of lust not only tastes good but also can help ease whatever emotional pain we carry, we have a bigger problem than lust itself. But to use this to **absolve** us of the responsibility (or **ability**!) to break free, is further twisted thinking. Because we have to break free if we want to live, among other reasons.

So i agree that it's healthier, probably, to call them "triggers", when trying to work to understand the patterns. But I also think it's important to identify the **vulnerabilities** and **needs we have** to be able to honestly address them.

And yeah, to break the patterns some guys could use therapy. And some people should use The Program, which has saved so many when nothing else could. And some guys can manage with a conversation with a loving sledgehammer, or with a good friend who understands and can empathize and has some experience. Or can maybe figure it out on a long walk and introspection, or a little Hisbodedus. Or Davening and whispering and pouring his heart out. Whatever works for you.

It takes work to dig. Friends can help. It hurts, too. One of my Rabbeim used to say that understanding a problem is halfway to solving it. The other half aint easy, through.

Thanks for listening.

I am,

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Re: i'm finally posting
Posted by horizon - 02 May 2024 22:36

thank you for taking the time to clarify these dakusdike nekudos. i'm gonna read this another few times iy"h.

and thanks for the hug:)

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