

Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 22 Sep 2023 14:39

Hello to my fellow GYE warriors!

I figured I'd give it a shot at introducing myself a little bit, as I've read many threads here and value the growth and journey of all the amazing people over here!

My original goal when I got to this website a few months ago, was to deal with my addiction to porn and masturbation. It was getting way out of hand and it really disturbed my quality of life.

Thankfully, I have hit 90 days and I am shocked and amazed at how this was even possible, I had already written myself off to be a porn watcher and chronic masturbator for the rest of my life!

This is no doubt due to joining this website, reading the forums, chatting, and connecting via email/phone to some wonderfully amazing people here, and I want to finally say a **huge** public thank you to you all!!!

I owe my newfound life to this place, and I hope I can continue staying away from p & m.

Due to the fact that I have been clean from p & m for a while, I will leave that part of my life out of my story (for now) and perhaps revisit it in a later post.

What I would like to address, with as limited details as possible, is that I have been struggling mightily with cleaning up the rest of my act while also struggling with my religious identity.

For a good period of my life (not from birth) I was involved in an extremist, abusive and controlling group.

Thank Heaven (and I praise Hashem for this every day) I am done with that.

But it resulted in a massive religious identity crisis, which I am still struggling through.

I wanted nothing to do with religion, I am numbed by many aspects of it. The pain in some areas is almost visceral, like being scalded when getting too close to a hot fire.

Certain things about our way of life are too painful, and I just dissociate from it.

What does this have to do with GYE and addiction?

Well, the truth is, that although I am free of p & m for a nice while, there are other things I have experimented with as I have gone through my journey.

I started watching movies, and saw hundreds of them, and many were literally soft-core porn

films.

(I must say that thankfully, I don't remember when I've watched a movie last, probably a half a year, but it's not so much "b'sh*tah," I just haven't got the brain space to put myself into a good emotional movie)

I started finding meaning in non-Jewish music. What can I say? I enjoy it, and nothing really moves me like that, I identify with the lyrics and passion. I'm not talking about outright prust music, but certain genres appeal to me and I cannot go back to Yiddish music, I have tried to and didn't hold for more than a few days.

I also started browsing YouTube as a mindless escape, and very often a clip of inappropriately dressed women pops in and I just watch it without feeling too guilty about it.

From a religious point, I understand that this is against the Torah, but I have no strength to care. I am close to Hashem, I talk to Him every day, and I feel that Hashem understands my struggles, my exposure, the sexual abuse and religious abuse that I have been through, and that He loves me unconditionally.

But from an addiction standpoint, If I truly want to "clean up", I know I can't be staring at shikshas/tic toc dances etc.

And I'm not even *talking* about the frum woman aspect, which I'm sure many people can relate to, I fall a lot with peeking glances at hot frum women and of course I should not be doing that, it's feeding the beast!

I know that addiction to porn and masturbation is like addiction to a drug, dopamine. I know that if I continue "feeding the drug", even in small quantities, I will not achieve full recovery.

But I am just so mixed up with it all, it's so hard to kick, and religious ideas don't talk to me. I don't want to identify as an Ultra-Orthodox Jew, I wish I could leave it all behind.

As part of the backlash of what I've been through, I've delved into Jewish history and have read stuff from non-traditional (read: non censored) sources, and I'm scared to death of the path open before me...I see corruption, dysfunction, and abuse and a load of BS in our "system", and coupled with the experience I had been through, it makes me want to run away from it all!!

If not for my wonderful wife and children, whom I love so much, I probably would have long ago left it all behind for a new life.

I feel trapped in my religious identity, not sure how to find solace and clarity, how to find a steady voice in my head to see through all the BS and serve Hashem as a true servant as I'm sure He wants me to be.

I feel trapped in the loop of feeding the little monster in my brain and I sometimes feel so alone and sad because even ideas, insights, and encouragements make me crazy.

I am sorry for sounding negative and embittered, but I'm just pouring my heart out, and maybe just by writing about it, it will feel better.

In any case, I hope to continue documenting these little ups and downs, and I look forward to continuing to be part of this amazing forum!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by true_self - 05 Jan 2024 11:19

I can relate to what you are going through and I'm actually parallel to you on the rollercoaster. The days I feel that I'm not really capable of ever stopping to objectify and fantasize about the beautiful piece of art God created, that we call a 'woman', I'm a big fan of beauty in all areas, it's just who I am. But I have the beauty I looking for inside my house and I don't appreciate it because I let my eyes wander (actually purposely lurk) to the huge variety there's out there, I don't know why I'm rambling now when it's erev shabbos and I don't know if what I wrote makes any sense, but anyway... Let's hold on tight together! We can do this!

#Skirts&WigsorBikini

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 07 Jan 2024 03:03

[true_self wrote on 05 Jan 2024 11:19:](#)

#Skirts&WigsorBikini?

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by true_self - 11 Jan 2024 12:32

Oooof! I'm always late

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 01 Feb 2024 18:35

Storms, ice, hail and thunder

Form high in the clouds, they tear me asunder

Emotions raging, like a rapid river

Always taking from me, seldom a giver

For decades, the path was to numb and ignore

Those feelings grew cold and frozen in store

My pacifier was porn and masturbation

Ogling at girls, to my consternation,

It killed me inside, little by little,

Felt like a zombie, drooling with spittle

G-d opened His treasure trove, found GYE

Found Hope in the Dark, start to break free,

But those emotions, oh how they stay,

Take me on journeys, so far away,

Feel them more than ever, crashing
Like lions in a cage, violently thrashing
Friends! You all here can relate,
The loneliness of existence, sometimes you alleviate,
Yet something deep within my soul, yearning
Cries out for something deeper, its burning,
A connection to a Higher Being, G-D Almighty,
Plumb the depths of His Torah, soaring and flighty,
Soothe the ache, I know it will,
Twill calm the storm of Life, a healing Pill.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by eerie - 01 Feb 2024 21:09

[youknowwho wrote on 01 Feb 2024 18:35:](#)

Friends! You all here can relate,
The loneliness of existence, sometimes you alleviate,
Yet something deep within my soul, yearning
Cries out for something deeper, its burning,
A connection to a Higher Being, G-D Almighty,
Plumb the depths of His Torah, soaring and flighty,
Soothe the ache, I know it will,

Twill calm the storm of Life, a healing Pill.

Totally relate 1000000%. We each have our own storms, our own stories, and the friendships we have really help. But there's a yearning for something more, something that stabilizes life, something that gives that constant infusion of contentment. And BH we have the same answer: Learn Torah. I recently started a new program of learning. It improved my life, BH

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chaimoigen - 05 Feb 2024 16:29

It hurts to feel

the ache of discontent and disconnect

like a sick infected tooth, rotting.

It hurts to feel

the sting of loss and past regrets

like a hollow empty tightness in the bottom of you stomach

It hurts to feel

the press of might-have-beens

as a sand-grain in the eye and with a gritty mouth

it hurts to feel

the lonely shadows creep...

a soul entrapped in darkness, standing at the window.

But herein lies the feeling of the itch of growth
of healing as the sinews start to stretch.
Just as seeds rot in the depth of verdant earth
and leave their form behind
to send a shoot
UP.

So shall you, my friend discover
 rising tendrils
of green shoots
 in the tangled verdant garden
of your blessed heart and mind
searching
UP.

climb the ladder, find the rung

There's daylight up there , climb!

quickenings up until the sunlight dapples

And you will find the Fire

White on Black

and write it on the soulscape of your mind

my friend.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 15 Mar 2024 15:18

"What a man knows isn't important. It's what he is that counts" -Joe Starret

Kind of a loner, he was.

Wrapped up in his past. Quiet and soft spoken, but with a subtle sense of power and purpose you just couldn't miss. Rode on his horse through a quaint little town in the middle of nowhere and made a friend or two. Did some good, kind things, too. Stuff that needed to be done because no one else would. Taught a kid his morbid life's philosophy.

"With us he spoke freely enough. We were, in some subtle way, his folks. Though we had taken him in, you had the feeling that he had adopted us. But with others he was reserved; courteous and soft-spoken, yet withdrawn beyond a line of his own making."

"There are some things you don't ask a man. Not if you respect him. He's entitled to stake his claim to what he considers private to himself alone."

Deep down, he knows a sad song. He was a singer who already blew his shot. He stands up on that station, all alone.

"A man is what he is, Bob, and there's no breaking the mold. I tried that and I've lost." -Shane

He tried making peace with his demons, but they wanted no peace. Tried breaking the mold, but can he run away from the past?

The time had come. It was time to face what he already always knew. It was time to leave the little town and those that inhabited it. Its hard to leave, yes. But it was even harder to stay. His

soul would know no rest...

...“Shane! Shane! Come Back Shane!” ...little Joey called out to the lone man on a horse, silhouetted in the darkness.

Shane did not look back, but rode off, through the old cemetery, and up towards the Grand Tetons Mountains.

He was the man who ride into our little valley out of the heart of the great glowing West and when his work was done rode back whence he had come and he was Shane.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chaimoigen - 17 Mar 2024 04:53

The Dude Abides.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 09 Apr 2024 17:18

Dearest YouTube,

You are so amazing!

What can I say?

You present endless opportunities. Limitless passive entertainment. A mindless escape into the realm of Nowhere, nestled somewhere between Nothingness and Emptiness.

You wink at me, seductively luring me into your clutches. I can still think I'm being "good", because, hey, it's not a romance movie or porn.

I enter your comfortable, cozy lair, for hours a week, forgetting everything as I press further and further into the fog.

But you are fooling me. And I've been had.

You present me with enough material to feed my “high”, enough material to feed my lust.

You are wasting my time. My days, my weeks, my months and my years.

You are wasting my life away. I only have one, do I really wish to squander it?

You are nothing but a hoax.

I stumble away from my encounter with you, drained and empty.

Never fulfilled, never satisfied or exhilarated.

Others here have spoken of hating you, a white-hot hatred.

I couldn’t relate, it even rubbed me the wrong way... I was still so into you!

But today is different. Today is day one of me working on that mindset, the mindset of hating you.

I don’t think it happens overnight, but it will come.

I will hate you, my dear YouTube. Oh yes, and *how* I will hate you!

You’ve brought me nothing but trouble. And so, you will be discarded, a toxic influence, thrown away with the rest of them. You will go the way of porn, masturbation, ya know...all those wonderful, beautiful things that promise so much happiness yet deliver a load of miserable, empty window-dressing.

I wish you much continued success! May you continue consuming the minds of billions of human beings from all corners of the earth...just not mine!

-YKW

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by eerie - 09 Apr 2024 17:30

And friends stand in the bleachers, listening with bated breath, as their dear friend makes his discoveries, and firmly puts his foot down. As he finishes his fantastic short speech, they erupt in cheering! We are all different now! We watch the transformation of a dedicated individual, and it affects us all! WOW! We have another win for the team, another inspiration to help us all forward....

*On high the angels watch, as mere mortals not only win over the angel who seeks to destroy them, **they celebrate their win!** Those angels, envious, turn to the Great Almighty G-d, and declare ?? ????? ????? ??? ??? ?????!!! And the Almighty smiles, having known all along what His special children are capable of!*

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 18 Apr 2024 03:36

There's a question that's been slowly growing in the dark crevices of my mind. Gnawing at me and slowly but surely chiseling away at my resolve.

I've shared this question with some dear friends offline, yet would like to share it here, with some thoughts.

Question: Life as it was in the past, being addicted to porn and masturbation, was miserable.

Now that I don't watch porn or masturbate...surprise! Life can still feel miserable, sometimes. **It's not utopia**...Can I say with confidence that now my life is so rosy? No, I don't see how everything else got so much better. Some days are hard, I feel powerless and want to succumb. I am left to deal with those emotions that drove me to porn in the first place, yet now there's no escape!

Isn't that even worse?

What's the point of not falling?

Something that helped me, was actually following that train of thought, from start to finish. I won't get too graphic here, but I started to **picture** it all in my mind.

The hunt for the prefect clip, hours upon hours of relentless pursuit. The sheer desperation, the complete haze and numbness as I stumble, shake and gasp to the finish line. Finally, hours later, spent and weak kneed, I turn up to face myself in the mirror. I *hate* myself. Why? Just *why*? What the heck have I done? So *now* I'm happy?!

But that was only good for a little while, before long it was rinse and repeat.

And so, for me the answer is clear...yes, there are days that are really challenging. Days that bring along difficult emotions. Days where I even stumble into lust, I see a pretty girl and it drives me bonkers. Fine. It's still a lot better that going through hell again, and I won't trade it for anything in the world.

Sometimes, we forget what it was like. Its normal to forget. But we can use our imagination, talk it through with a friend, but don't let yourself truly forget what a Gehinnom it really is to be ensnared in porn and masturbation without a hope of ever seeing a way out.

Okay, that feels a whole lot better, maybe life *is* rosy after all...

-YKW

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chaimoigen - 18 Apr 2024 13:06

A very sharp arrow of painful truth, directly between the eyes,

as young Tom Riddle, he looks in the mirror, to see what he doesn't despise,

For the bang-ups and scrapes in a day full of feeling, can fill a man with pain and strife.

Yet in throbbing of heartbeats and heartbreak, unnumbed: is the rhythm of living a life.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously

Posted by Heeling - 18 Apr 2024 14:14

I can relate to your question, I think it's more of a feeling of uncertainty, no direction, and simply blah-ness. Some days I feel like a shaken champagne bottle that's about to explode and I'm like why is my filter too tight? Why can't I look at this one thing? Big deal, I'm anyway not in a good mood.

But as you wrote the fact is that we will go for that tingling ich within us, we will feel even more blah than we did before. Also, when we're feeling blah about something but we don't give in to our urges, we ultimately have that feeling of victory vs giving in will make us feel much worse.

Another point that helps me is that there is a bigger picture here – we are focusing on our ultimate goal. Yes, when have a urge we have to focus on the moment to overcome it but ultimately we are working on achieving our ultimate goal of breaking free. So even if you are feeling so blah about something that you don't even have the energy to feel the victory of not giving in, but you are working on your end goal, everything you are doing is helping you get close to that. Even if you push off the urge and maybe at the end of the day you have a semi-fall, that's still a win, 1. Because it was semi and 2. You put in a lot of effort in pushing off the urge and that makes you stronger.

Ad Kan Omrim Shabbos Hagadol,

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chooseurname - 18 Apr 2024 16:52

[youknowwho wrote on 18 Apr 2024 03:36:](#)

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-YKW

I identify with this post. Thank you.

I don't know if it works so well with to remember how miserable I was (am?) when I watch porn. The misery is far away and the porn is close. For me, this approach is helpful when times are good to focus on how much happier I am clean. When times are bad it's hard to remember that.

A slightly different approach I'm working on (from the easy-peasy method) is to drill into my

head that I'm not a porn-watching-person anymore. I'm a different person now. This person still has urges, but porn is not part of this person's weltanschauung. So what if life is miserable? Why does that relate to porn? My misery needs a solution, but porn is not a solution in this person's toolbox.

I don't want to get distracted from this powerful post. But it's interesting how we get so wrapped up in the struggle and shame and the whole negative parsha that we think "if only if I could fix this life would be great." But that's not true. There's always gonna be another mountain. Just hypothesizing here, but it could be there's two explanations for this phenomena. First, that's just how people are wired that whatever problem we are faced with we think everything would be great if not for this problem. Second, and more likely, porn is a major, life affecting problem. our lives are better without this problem. But we get used to the freedom and start focusing on our other problems. Meaning, if with porn we have 100 problem units. Without porn we have don't have 99 problem units, we are down to 55. But now we focus in on the 55 and forget to be happy about the 45 we're no longer staring down the barrel of.

Probably the solution is something cheesy like gratitude.

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