

Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by benporasyosef - 11 Mar 2025 18:09

It all started with a Lego rocketship. More specifically, the Lego rocketship my grandmother bought me for my seventh birthday. That's the earliest memory I have of playing with my private part. I would lay in bed with my hands under my body and fantasize about being that Lego rocketship. For some reason the flames always seemed to come out from my private area, and my hands mimicked the oscillating motion of the flames dancing from side to side.

In fourth grade my parents told me that my teacher had reported seeing me touching myself in my private area (on top of my clothes) under my desk. I knew then that what I was doing was weird, but had no clue of the activity it referenced and why it was so wrong. I didn't like the feeling of being caught, so I started to become more secretive and careful whenever playing "my rocketship game."

In sixth grade a well meaning friend asked me if I knew how babies were made. "Yeah," I immediately replied, "I always wondered how non Jews could think there's no G-d. Don't they know that Hashem miraculously makes only married women become pregnant?!" My friend laughed, and then made some motion with his finger and a loop made by the fingers of his other hand before walking away. I had the feeling that I was missing something, but was too shy to ask my parents. So I Googled it. What I read after that Google search was still confusing to me, so I turned to Google Images for extra clarity.

I don't remember exactly when I put the two together, but I do remember lying on my bed touching myself and suddenly being struck with the epiphany that the pleasure I felt from touching myself was what was being described by Google. I combined the two - touching myself and searching Google Images - and soon experienced my first time ejaculating.

For years I continued masturbating without giving it any thought other than avoiding getting caught. Eventually I got a smartphone. While it didn't have a browser it did have YouTube, and that only entrenched me further.

At some point early in High School I heard a couple shovavim shiurim and figured out

that it's assur to masturbate. By then the few times I'd gotten caught had trained me into a pathological liar. The restrictions on computers in my house trained me how to bypass filters. In other words, I was a skilled masturbater: skilled at finding content and skilled at hiding my actions. Now I had to stop all of that? Give up and forget about all those hard earned skills? What about the escape, the content, and the high that I got from masturbation?

Unfortunately I didn't have a Rebbe then who I could talk to about these issues. I began to feel a whole new, much deeper, kind of shame from struggling with these temptations. Around Elul and before Yom Kippur I'd make an annual pledge to quit, which was usually broken already before Sukkos. I just didn't care enough to seriously try to quit. All I had motivating me to stop were negative feelings like shame, guilt, and a little fear of divine retribution.

When I got to beis medrash I started giving a little more thought towards permanently quitting. What was once a bad habit or guilty pleasure became a struggle, a battle, and the source of a lot of self hate and depression. Second year is when things got serious.

I don't remember how it came up, but a friend of mine and I discovered each other's struggles. It was the first time I opened up to someone else about my secret past. Our Rebbe then was a very intimidating and intense person, and for some reason we decided to go talk to him about our problem. That conversation lasted over an hour, and answering his question of "why are you here" was one of the hardest things I've done.

My friend immediately quit, but for me it still didn't click. I flirted with week-long streaks until Chanukah when I decided to make a new push. I had found an incentive program offering \$500 for 100 days clean, and that was enough motivation to get me to stay clean for a long time. However, I still wasn't really into quitting.

I still watched inappropriate videos on YouTube, and even saw pornography for the first time when I was home for bein hazmanim. I knew where my line was that I could watch these things without technically breaking my streak.

After 185 days "technically clean" a promotional email for a reality TV series sent me back to day one. Years of shame and negative self talk caught up with me and I entered a dark depression. That night I called the suicidal hotline and some random lady reassured

me that Jesus would forgive me for my sins, so I stayed alive. I began to accept that I could never change. Why keep fighting a losing battle? Surely “Jesus” would forgive me when I eventually came around and did teshuva. I found myself researching prostitution options and outside clubs. My learning and self esteem were in shambles.

I switched Yeshivas for third year and was ready for a clean slate and a fresh attempt to change. I got rid of my smartphone, stopped listening to non Jewish music, and jumped into my learning. I discovered a talent and love for learning which I never knew I had. Things were looking up, until I realized my “kosher dumb phone” had an unfiltered browser on it. I immediately went to get it filtered, but the filter company said my phone model was the only type they couldn’t filter. How convenient. Pornography that night. Masturbation the night after.

All the high flying feelings and motivation disappeared, replaced by depression, insecurity, and overwhelming urges. When Rosh Hashana came around I cleaned up and even got rid of my “kosher” phone in place of my smartphone. At least I couldn’t watch porn on it. I got back into my learning and managed to proactively be clean through Yom Kippur and Sukkos.

On the last day of bein hazmanim I fell again. Coming back for winter zman I knew something had to change. My devices were well filtered, but the images and videos etched into my mind were more than enough for me to continue to act out. I was getting desperate and anxious about my continued struggle, but had nowhere to turn.

I heard about GYE through the Meaningful People Podcast and decided to check it out. I signed up for a mentor and started watching the videos to learn about the different tools. Admitting and opening up that I need help from someone else showed myself a commitment for real change, and that was a big motivation to try harder to break free. I made it 34 days clean - like really clean - and then found myself on a Motzei Shabbos outside a strip club.

The urges were too strong. I figured I'd at least make it "worth it" and was looking to hire a prostitute. I was back at the club the next night and this time went in and got a quick look around before I was kicked out for being under 21. I drove to a different club and a dancer happened to be outside taking a smoking break. I actually got out of my car and walked towards her, only to find she had already gone back inside. I was sitting in the parking lot waiting to hire a sex worker when I got a call from my GYE mentor. He got me out of there fast. We had a long conversation and he convinced me against sexual

interactions with other people. But those urges just kept getting stronger.

I realized that my strongest response against acting out was the argument that it just wasn't worth it. The counter argument though was all my fantasies and the drive to take my sexual activity to the next level. So I decided to make a compromise with my yetzer harah (don't try this at home). My red line was physically touching a woman sexually. I had done everything up to that level and could therefore argue that those actions weren't worth it. Well... almost everything.

A week after visiting the strip club I used my new credit card for a sex talk-line and had "one last go." That was the deal: I gave in to that fantasy but had now done everything imaginable short of physically interacting with another person, and so "now I could stop myself" by saying it just isn't worth it.

After I hung up I spent two hours in my car filling out the entire GYE Three Circles program. I remember the desperation in her voice to keep me (paying) on the phone as I was hanging up, and I actually internalized for the first time what I always knew intellectually: that the porn actresses, prostitutes, and phone sex workers only wanted my money. The fantasies were all based on an illusion.

That following Sunday was the first day of shovavim. The images and sounds from the strip clubs and the talk-line made that next week very hard, but I persevered. The next 30 days were a lot of "white knuckling" and wishing I was allowed to give in.

Eventually I got around to reading The Battle of The Generation by Hillel S, and it was a big help. However, as he himself writes in the book, old habits which are decades old don't die from reading a couple pages. The images and urges kept coming at me and at times I felt like I would explode.

The past 57 days have been a rollercoaster, and I'm trying my best to keep holding on. Sometimes I feel clean internally with no desire to pursue my urges. Other days all I can think about are my fantasies and how to realize them. It's been a long journey, but I'm slowly seeing positive change within me.

I don't know what the fight has in store tomorrow, but I know that it's worth it to keep fighting.

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by benporasyosef - 11 Apr 2025 17:19

I have a disappointing update. After doing well those first three days I had a fall last night (day five). After writing my post on Wednesday I was exposed to an external trigger and then another one soon after - neither of which were really in my control. I tried using STAR, talking to a family member, and calling a friend. The distraction helped mitigate the urge, but it kept coming back.

I white knuckled through to yesterday morning but when I woke up the urge was back. I immediately sent a message to a GYE mentor. Throughout the day I kept trying different things: speaking with a mentor, physical activity, running errands, GYE SOS thing, etc. They all helped, but it kept coming back.

As the hours piled on I started to slip more and more and eventually late last night I had a fall. Even when I fell I did it in a way to minimize the *zera l'vatala*.

- I don't want to fall. I don't even get so much physical pleasure when I do.
- I have all the ideas and strategies in my head. I know it's wrong, not worth it, and the urge will pass.

It just didn't pass this time. I really didn't want to, I'm disappointed that I did, and I wish it could have been different. I really tried but it didn't work. Once the urge hit every girl I saw became another trigger. It felt consuming.

Nothing sobers me up or removes an urge as well as giving in does. When the next urge hits, what else should I try? Theoretically I could try to just white knuckle as long as I can, but I don't want to live like that. I want to find a way to make the urge go away.

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by lamaazavtuni - 11 Apr 2025 18:46

Believe me my friend it gets easier and the urges get weaker!!! Trust the system it works !!!
Hatzlacha chag kosher vetahor!!

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by frank.lee - 16 Apr 2025 21:00

Maybe start reading the Battle Of The Generation again? Try singing and thanking Hashem for the great challenges you have. White knuckling is hard, much easier to look at it TBOTG way, excited, as a gift..

Much hatzlacha! It does get much easier over time, from my experience...

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by chancyhk - 14 May 2025 20:36

BenPorasYosef,

Welcome to GYE. YOU made a life saving decision by coming here. I think you understand im not being overly dramatic.

Lust if left unchecked can literally ruin the your life and lives of your family. Its a VERY potent drug, BH it doesnt kill teh body as fast as Cocaine or we would all be somewhere else already.....

Seriously speaking, you seem to have what it takes to win this thing. You just need time and you need to build up the NO muscles. After saying YES for so long, the NO muscles have atrophied and they need to be rebuilt, its not easy, but there is no other option if you want to continue living as a Yid, or living at all.

Its possible that you will need SA or 12 steps or therapy. But if you are ready to fight, and it looks like you are, than you can be sure that you will win eventually! The only thing to do meanwhile is to stop losing.....

I wish I can be of more help.

I'm here if you want more unasked-for advice....

Chancy Hakoten

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