

## Fooling Myself

Posted by Levi - 04 Aug 2010 23:17

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### Introductions

Im in my mid forties, married with a large family, kein yirbu.

I grew up in a secular, second marriage "blended" family, with much constant resentment in the air, both to me and my father from my mother and my half siblings from a prior marriage. Essentially, I was simultaneously adored and hated by my mother, leading to years of constant confusion (that continue today).

In that environment of the late 1960s and 1970s, there was a lot of crazy stuff going on, like hippies living in our house and a goyish family invited to share our house when I was 2 years old.

It turns out that the father in that dysfunctional goyish family was a molestor , and in turn , his teenage boys molested me at a very early age. I also discovered porn in the house when I was six years old. Later those boys got me interested in pot and much porn. Culminating in mutual masturbation and other activities.

As I grew, I got very addicted to pot and porn. My entire life focus was to find a girl to have sex with (at age 12)

Finally at 15, I scored so to speak and began a sex relationship with a girl of 14 that lasted a few months.

Later in college I was involved with several girls. I never went more than 24hrs without one or more orgasms for almost 10 years.

In the mid 1980s, I started becoming frum in Eretz Yisrael. It was a progression through different steps and yeshivas. Way too much detail for this post.

But eventually I made a commitment to be a solid yeshivish Yid, the seriousness and intellectual honesty appealed to me. But, I couldnt stop masturbation. The conflict in me caused me to abandon professional plans, and seek a deeper yeshiva experience, cause obviously, I was not yet on the right madreiga.

I went to gedolei hador. They told me to get married, although in all honesty, I did not understand nor reveal the depth of my prior issues (it took years for me to connect the fact that I got molested to my mind frame)

They told me, "when you werent frum, you at at Mcdonalds, now you can eat at Kosher Bite. But, with sex, you used to be active, and now there is no outlet."

Although it was difficult, HaShem was with me and I got married as soon as possible, to a great wife and we have a great marriage . When I got married, I felt like the gemarra in Kiddushin where the amora says "An arrow in your eye, Yetzer Hara..." I felt protected and like I had grown past my prior life, which I shut completely out of mind, much like a Holocaust survivor, not wanting to talk about the past.

That lasted around 6 years, total sobriety from masturbation. I pushed myself very very hard in learning to compensate from my late start.

Around 1996, I was exposed to some porn links on Compuserve, the predecessor of the internet.

I would read the links, with out clicking them. I then linked to some other sites and saw other material, but stopped myself. I stopped getting internet connectivity and tried other ways to protect myself, but a gradual slide back an forth had begun, teasing myself and stopping thousands of times. It never materialized into masturbation until several years later, when under enormous pressure at work I looked at some inappropriate things.

After each fall, I would make kaballahs, daven intensely , but always to fall again, sometimes years later.

Because of my long sober period, I was fixated on what recent thing I must have done to cause a moral weakness.

I would push myself even harder, to the point of collapse many times but this was just a frum way to avoid the RID that was deep in my system. After getting broken again and again by more and more self defeats and difficult job situations, my optimism has dissapeared , and my learning and mussar have weakened.

The frequency of the falls has increased, although compared to many, I havent viewed much porn, since I keep my internet out of the house and am on a monitored pc at work .

I now am finding myself tempted by other strong desires that I dont want to elaborate on. I decided enough is enough, I have heard too many tragedies and dont want to join the list. I have begun participating in the daily call and have found much chizuk in it, although the cravings are still strong and present.

I am hopeful that continued involvement will help and very thankful for the groups that I wished existed 20yrs ago.

What I have found is that I have been fooling myself regarding how much this disease has affected me and my life, although the symptoms have not been as extreme as others, the mental toll is there.

Thats my intro for now.

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by cantdoitmyself - 05 Aug 2010 00:21

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Welcome to the GYE community. I'm a new member to this site as well, but I can honestly say the caring and love that you feel from everyone here is unbelievable. It's nice to have you in the

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by workingmyprogram - 05 Aug 2010 00:27

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Your story is the story of us all. Resolutions, fighting, falling, followed by more resolutions, more falling. Eitzas from gedolim, hoping that marriage will save us. Problems with parnossah (the seforim tell us that guardign our bris and parnossah are very much linked). But the good news is that you don't have to live like that anymore. Commit yourself to recovery and your life will change. It's great that you're doing the phone meetings, and you should know that there are also face to face meetings. I have been a member of a group called SA for 4 years. It is in indesepensible tool in my recovery. I am happy that Hashem brought you this far, I would love to see you commit yourself to recovery and change your life. It 's amazing what can happen with Hashem's help. If you ever need anything, message me.

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by ur-a-jew - 05 Aug 2010 00:52

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Welcome. Thank you for that amazing share I have to say I admire you tremendously given how far you've come under such difficult and trying circumstances, I have no doubt you with Hashem's help you will succeed in recovery. That you've joined the meetings is great. Don't miss out in the other many wonderful opportunities offered by the site including the daily chizuk emails, the GYE handbooks and the ability to really bare your soul and get chizuk on the forum. Hatzlacha Rabbah.

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by onedayatatime - 09 Aug 2010 22:44

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Welcome. I am also very new to the GYE. I checked it out a few years back but I was not ready for it. Now thank GD I am a grateful recovering sexaholic (and GD has kept me sober one day at a time since the end of Oct 2009 ) I go to SA groups and am working the 12 steps to recovery. without the steps and SA I would be finished. My marriage was on the rocks and I was at risk of losing my kids. I know that I am coming from a different perspective than others in this forum but can only say what has worked for me. In SA I am able to meet others (plenty of frum and non-jewish) and I can share my deepest secrets and struggles and discover that my story is not unique there are others just like me! I guess my point is that it is really important for my recovery that the outside (I'm a frum yid) and the inside (sexaholic) match and I can only do that by being honest.

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by silentbattle - 10 Aug 2010 06:58

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Wow. That's incredible. You've been through so much, and you're still standing, still moving forward. Hashem must be incredibly happy when he looks at you! It sounds like you've already done a lot of real work, and certainly joining here is a huge step forward.

For me, posting about what I was going through, was a tremendous help. Realizing that I could be accepted, and my struggles shared, made a big difference.

Scientific studies have shown that it takes 90 days to change a neural thought pattern that was ingrained in the brain through addictive behaviors. Did you join the [90 day chart](#) on-line? Sign up [over here](#)...

Make sure to install a strong filter. It will be almost impossible to break free of this while having all the garbage within a mouse click away. See [this page](#) for one good filter option, along with instructions on how to install it best - and give away the password to our "filter Gabai"... See

[this page](#) for another 20 (or so) filter ideas and information...

And that is why we created the GYE handbooks (links below). If you read them well, from beginning to end, slowly, and try to implement what you read, you will find the answers within them to enable you to completely turn your life around. **You're worth it.**

Also, join the [daily Chizuk e-mail lists](#) to get fresh chizuk every day, and post away on this forum. You will get tons of daily Chizuk and support. This disease can't be beat alone. It works best when you get out of isolation! *We get cries for help every day, by e-mail and on the forum. Tzuras Rabim Chatzi Nechama*

GuardYourEyes also offers various free anonymous phone conferences, where you can join a group of other frum Yidden, along with an experienced sponsor. See [this page](#) for four different options. Our conferences are taking place daily, throughout the week... This would be a tremendous step in the right direction for you and help you learn freedom from this addiction. Not only will you learn the secret of the 12-Steps - which is known to be the world's most powerful program for beating addiction having helped millions world wide, but joining the group will be another way of GETTING OUT OF ISOLATION and connecting with others who are going through what you are.

Let me tell you a little about the two GuardYourEyes handbooks. They lay down the cornerstone and foundation of our work, and they make our network much more effective and helpful for people.

Before the handbook people would often get "lost" when coming to our website, not knowing what tips and techniques to try. For example, someone with a low level addiction wouldn't jump straight into therapy or 12-Step groups, while someone whose addiction was more advanced wouldn't be helped by the standard tips of "making fences", putting in "filters" etc... For the first time ever, this handbook details all the techniques and tools dealing with this addiction in progressive order. Now, anyone can read it through and see what steps they've tried already, and if those steps haven't worked, they can continue on through the handbook to the next tools, as the suggestions become progressively more "addiction-oriented".

And the second handbook, called the "Attitude" handbook, can also help anyone, no matter what level of addiction they may have. Often people write in to us saying that had they only known the proper outlook & attitude that we try and share on the GuardYourEyes network when

they were younger, they would have never fallen into an addiction in the first place! So we hope that through this handbook, many addictions will be prevented.

The handbooks are PDF files, set up as eBooks, and they have bookmarks and hyper-links in the Index, to make them easy to navigate.

*Note: You might want to print them out to read away from the computer. Keep in mind though, that if you do this, you won't be able to click on the many web links in the articles. But you can always come back to them later. The truth is, it's anyway good to go through the whole handbook once without clicking on links, just to get an overview of all the tools available. Once you did that, you can start again from tool #1 and read each tool through more carefully, click the links and study each technique and assess whether you have tried it fully yet or not...*

**Right click on the links below and select "Save Link/Target As" to download the handbooks to your computer.**

**1) [The GuardYourEyes Handbook](#)**

*This Handbook details 18 suggested tools and techniques, in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this addiction, and continuing down through increasingly earnest and powerful methods. For the first time, we can gauge our level of addiction and find the appropriate tools for our particular situation. And no matter what level our addiction may have advanced to, we will be able to find the right tools to break free in this handbook!*

**2) [The GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)**

*The Attitude Handbook details 30 basic principles to help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle. Here are some examples: Understanding what we are up against, what it is that Hashem wants from us, how we can use this struggle for tremendous growth, how we can deal with bad thoughts, discovering how to redirect the power of our souls, understanding that every little bit counts, learning how to bounce back up after a fall, and so on and so forth...*

**May Hashem be with you!**

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by Jooboy - 11 Aug 2010 01:08

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Fooling,

WOW! I really love reading the stories of newcomers. It reminds me of the sense of hopelessness and desperation I felt at many points and that I could easily go back to if I make the choice of lust.

I have, thank God, not suffered the difficult life beginnings that you have but my addiction never the less is a 20+ year ordeal that I am just now addressing in a substantial way, primarily through SA groups.

Keep looking for the solution, staying honest and asking God for help - it will eventually come.

Hatzlacha

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by Levi - 11 Aug 2010 15:28

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Thank you to all for your empathy and suggestions. I am feeling in transition and a bit destabilized by transforming my thought patterns towards a 12 step approach, and also looking for the true sources of this wisdom in the Torah (of which I am compiling a list)

I know it takes time, but it feels like I have a huge splinter in my head and everyone is holding the tweezers describing it and I want it to take the darn splinter out NOW. Not realistic, but feelings etc...

I am also resonating with ur-a-jews thread, and how to balance a normal sex relationship with de-fanging my obsessions. etc..

but it has been 30 yrs of on /off addiction so I guess it will take time.

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by silentbattle - 11 Aug 2010 21:20

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I know the feeling of trying to make sure everything fits hashkafically. The problem is that this disease can be very strong, and it can cause us to find hashkafic issues with things, even when the real reason we don't want to do them is that it means giving up our drug of choice.

Want to know my Torah source? Well, to be honest, I didn't completely follow the 12-step program, but nonetheless, this source applies: It's part of teshuva. It's a necessary part of stopping the aveirah, because let's face it - without something new, it's very difficult to stop falling. Which maimar chazal supports it? Dunno. But for now, I'll be happy that I'm clean for longer than I ever imagined possible. And I think chazal would be a fan of that.

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by Kollel Guy - 12 Aug 2010 22:10

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Wow, reading your story is very inspiring for me, but at the same time it scares me to think that c"v this problem can still be haunting me at 45 (i'm in my 20's).

I always have this 'knowledge' that without a doubt this whole issue and struggle will not be here for much longer, even though it's very much a part of my life now, and if you ask me logically how I know it won't still be here in 20 yrs - I really can't tell you. But in my mind it's a given.

Maybe I'm also 'fooling myself'...

In any case, I'm seriously in awe of the fact that you are still so dedicated to winning this war, especially considering what you've been through. I wish you berachah and hatzlacha, Tizku l'mitzvos!

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by Levi - 12 Aug 2010 22:23

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Kollel Guy

Perhaps a nechama I can tell you

PLEASE dont think it goes away

thats a lie, and I held it close to my heart for years

and made poor decisions based on it

12 steps seems to be the way, although I am slowly integrating step 1 and have a way to go

but

another nechama, we are climbing a mountain (gemarra sukkah 54) and as you get to the top, it gets steeper

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by silentbattle - 13 Aug 2010 06:34

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Nicely put...

KG - Maybe it doesn't go away, but perhaps we can train ourselves to have better habits. To make our default behavior to do the right thing, even if that temptation is always there.

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by Levi - 19 Nov 2010 12:46

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I wanted to follow up briefly, hopefully followed up by many other posts.

I have just been zocheh to finish the GYE4 call tour with Duvid Chaim, and my feelings of HaKaras HaTov are overwhelming. This call has been transformative for me and solidified years of other growth , and I can only encourage others who are in need to join the upcoming GYE5 tour to be announced soon.

I have come to terms with my past, present and future in a broad sense that cannot be described briefly. And while the same thought patterns exist from before, they do not (with HaShem's help) overwhelm me and lead to a downward spiral anymore. Amazing, and something I could not imagine prior to the call.

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by KiviYVY - 01 Dec 2010 15:14

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Hi Levi - it was encouraging to read this thread and to hear that the GYE 12 step conference has been so life transforming. I was wondering the list you referred to below is coming along? Is there any chance you could share it?

[Levi wrote on 11 Aug 2010 15:28:](#)

transforming my thought patterns towards a 12 step approach, and also looking for the true sources of this wisdom in the Torah (**of which I am compiling a list**)

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Re: Fooling Myself

Posted by Levi - 01 Dec 2010 17:09

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Hi, sorry, it is slow in coming along, many in my head, a few more on a word doc.

If you have a specific question on one item from the 12 step program, I may have a source.

There are others who have compiled this, it is actually a broad topic

My source have helped me deal with the initial resistance to the program and the question many

ask, why do we need the big book when we have a Torah, lhavdil.

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