

Lessons Learned

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 Sep 2018 23:39

It has been quite some time since I have posted on my own thread titled "My Story and G-d Bless GYE". Being that those submissions are in the balei batim forum and therefore off limits to all our single friends here, I figured if I wish to post, it's time to open a new thread.

BH we are at day 627. That's a big number. A number that represents a chunk of life. Different seasons, various occasions, many opportunities, a kaleidoscope of challenges. And with Hashem's help (and as I have written many times - with the help of some great GYE chaverim - specifically "one_day_at_a_time") I have stayed clean.

During this period of growth I have made some observations. Firstly, as a rebbi of mine used to say - no specific type of yid has the "copyright" on yiras shomayim. Eye opening to me has been how individuals from very varying lifestyles all truly want to be close to Hashem. It is not just lip service. It is genuine. I am humbled and amazed how even so called "modern" Jews walk determinedly against the tsunami wave of decadence, indecency, immodesty, and liberalism which is trying to inundate the world and destroy every vestige of holiness in its path. These dear teenagers, married fellows, and even post middle aged heroes ignore the current threatening to drown them and keep moving forward. And of course, being that this scourge does not discriminate, all kehillos and "types" are affected. GYE is like the Kosel - one can find every type of yid there crying for help. In summary, everyone wants to be kadosh v'tahor. Imagine how proud Hashem must be.

A second observation. So many unnecessary tears, so much unnecessary pain. How many bochurim stay clean while in yeshiva and camp only to fall within hours of returning home on their parents' devices which have not been properly filtered. The anguish these boys share is heartbreaking. These are boys who will not enter an internet café or library. They avoid public transportation except when absolutely necessary. They are careful in the street. They are the

brave ones who picked up the phone and shared their most personal and embarrassing secrets with total strangers from GYE. But spending a weekend at home where every other room has an unfiltered device....How naïve can people be? How many drashos have been given, and articles written, and people really still think "it cant happen in my house"?! Is the convenience of unfiltered internet worth these churbonos? I am not passing judgement on anyone specific - just publicizing the very painful issue.

Number three - There are many helpful ideas on GYE. Each successful person here will tell you about the "cocktail" he used to break free. A combination of all or some of the following: shiurim, forum, chats, Taphsic, chizuk emails, 90 day chart, phone conferences, therapy referrals, 12 steps, and of course tefilla, guide people from the abyss of the sewer to the summit of a life of freedom. However I believe if a poll were taken, a great majority of people would credit the human connection as the main weapon in the arsenal that blasted them through and saved them. To hear, and even better, to meet and see, an individual who struggled and now is clean, is a tool that is extremely powerful. It shatters the destructive mindset of "it's impossible - no one gets better". Sitting by therapists, as helpful as they are (and they are part of many people's recovery), is not nearly as powerful as someone being honest and telling you what he used to do and how he stopped. Someone who "has been there and done that" can help rewire the unhealthy thinking and give new perspective - there simply is life, even without sex. Plus one must learn the true and Torah perspective on sexuality. One must be educated that he has been poisoned by the evil and filthy portrayal of an act that we now know is uplifting and elevated, even holy. We are more open to be reeducated by one who initially believed as we did. Secondly, that real person can hold your hand in those first days and weeks when it is really difficult to get started. He can give you the chizuk to get past the withdrawal period. He is an anchor. Thirdly, when you see a successful frum fellow standing before you, you realize you are not the rasha or loser you thought you were. You really are a nice good person who has a struggle. That knowledge gives one more self esteem and resolve to get started. Based on my personal experience I would advise any newcomers to figure out which safe person on the site appears to resonate with them, and then carefully - in the beginning anonymously - reach out and let someone help them.

Lastly (for now), we see a sad issue. So many people join GYE and then disappear. They had hisorerus, found the site, joined, maybe even posted, and then they are gone..... It is incumbent on those of us who have tasted success to make ourselves available to help others. We know the pain anguish anxiety depression and turmoil these chevra are experiencing. We know where their eyes and hands are - even though they don't want to be doing those things - and we have

the ability to help. Some will argue, "I don't know what to do". Others will say, "Now that I am better it isn't good for me to be focused on this so much". True, but its payback time. Do something. And if you really can't, then at least daven your kishkes out for all the strugglers. And of course - give a nice donation to that great place that got us all back on track - the very holy mosad GYE. If not for them, where would I (and you) be today?

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 04 Mar 2020 05:19

I Don't think that's the only issue. I was also thinking when I was introduced to GYE, why isn't everyone talking about this, we have a big problem, here is a potential solution, lets get going! But there is also the exposing people who were never exposed and I think that our gedolei yisroel (who know our problem for the most part) feel that we still need to keep those people sheltered. This obviously complicates things, as you would have to find a venue that serves only people already exposed, obviously a Melava Malka for sex addicts would be uncomfortable to attend (the stigma issue).

From what it seems, at this point, Mechanchim an Rabonim do refer people to GYE.

May everyone get the help that they need.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by doingtshuva - 04 Mar 2020 23:43

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 04 Mar 2020 05:19:](#)

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Mechanchim an Rabonim can refer people to GYE, but as long they are hiding their own issues and struggles from their own students, the topic will stay a secret.

We are in a generation that everyone is struggling, but no one is ready to get up and talk about it publicly.

I would like to hear of michanchim who share with their students the way they overcome their struggles.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Markz - 05 Mar 2020 01:18

[doingtshuva wrote on 04 Mar 2020 23:43:](#)

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 04 Mar 2020 05:19:](#)

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Whether we like it or not, before we discuss how much others should share their personal lives, we need to look in the mirror, remove the corona face mask and ask ourselves - have I disclosed my struggles honestly and sufficiently to my Rav / Therapist / Chaver...

I can assure you that if all the gye members ourselves would stand up to the plate, it would likely help significantly remove the stigma

GYE had a convention in Israel, how many of us would be ready to stand up to the podium to share our story?

Its a tough issue

#GdSaveUsFromAVirus

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Dave M - 05 Mar 2020 12:42

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#GdSaveUsFromAVirusVery valid point. However, It's very difficult to be the Nachshon ben Aminadav.

?Part of what makes GYE so successful is the anonymous aspect of it. People who struggles in these areas are very embarrassed to share their struggles. This is not as much the case when it come to those who struggles with other forms of addictions (drugs, alcohol, etc.). That's why the first step is removing the stigma. The frum community has been successful is reducing the stigma in other areas. If this is a widespread and rampant, then why is this not discussed more often and openly. People continue to use the euphemism of "Technology safety". Sometime, in order to get a message across, people need to hear the untainted truth.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Dave M - 05 Mar 2020 12:51

[Markz wrote on 05 Mar 2020 01:18:](#)

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by doingtshuva - 05 Mar 2020 23:26

Markz, your right, we should open up, but to people who understand addiction. Not to Rabbis who would look down on me after I took the courage to open up to them.

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by sbj - 19 Mar 2020 17:16

[Hashem Help Me wrote on 04 Oct 2019 16:47:](#)

Dave M, in response: In "real life" I am very careful with language. After all, our ability to speak is what elevates us from the animal kingdom. The mouth must be kept pristine. However on GYE I found that our hesitance in being open and blunt did not come from a holy place, rather from either fear of the "monster", or from denial. I suffered from both. The challenge became an anxiety producing, larger than life, monster. It would be impossible to stop or exercise **any** control. It was as if the eiver had a mind of its own. Sometimes I wanted to just cut it off. I was angry at it, and boy was I scared of it. I would have to hide erections! It became a separate entity from me, and it was calling the shots. Secondly, denial - how could I, a frum guy, talk about masturbation? How could I share those erotic urges I had. No, they must be shoved into a dark closet somewhere where they don't exist - until of course I plotzed and acted out big time. It took me a long time to be able to even write, let alone say, "I masturbated" or "I watched pornography/sex". The closest I would get would be to write/say "It happened". Then I graduated to writing m**** or p****. BH I realized that for my refuas hanefesh I had to write and say the words, knowing exactly what I was admitting to and knowing that it was not larger than life. My eiver is part of **me** and controlled by **my** brain. So Dave M, I agree. I wish I could get up in every shul and openly bluntly and beneficially talk about the challenges we all have and be living proof that b'ezras Hashem there is hope. We can stop doing aveiros and we can stop being so tzubrochen. But so far, without gedolei Yisroel instructing otherwise, we have to satisfy ourselves with speaking b'derech remez, convincing rebbeim (including chosson rebbeim) to allow people to **comfortably** bring up the subject, and privately, one by one help whoever we can. Truth to be told, even if a ho'ra'as sha'ah was made to have public discussions, most of us would hesitate being that open. Hey, we have kids to marry off iyh in the right time.....

Well, not everything is meant to be discussed publicly. It would be a great digression if we did

start to be open in public on these matters. What we do need is understanding; the right guidance and support in the appropriate manner. True, our times warrant responses according to its challenges, but the answer is not going public, rather working on improving within the existing structure, or come up with new creative resources in a private format. Of course the podium seems to be the easiest logistically, lemaase it is not.

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by yosef10 - 19 May 2020 16:18

[doingtshuva wrote on 05 Mar 2020 23:26:](#)

Markz, your right, we should open up, but to people who understand addiction. Not to Rabbis who would look down on me after I took the courage to open up to them.

It's interesting you say that. To some this isn't even an option, but to those that do, the least a Rebbe can say is that he doesn't understand, a true Rebbe know when to say "I don't know, you may have to ask someone else".

in my experience though, I have had the zechus of speaking to Rabanim who know the struggle, understand and sympathies with it, and can have a real conversation with you even when you feel like trash. Also, it really depends on where you live, but I'm a lot of Jewish communities the psychologists are usually Jewish.... And sometimes even have Smicha. My psychologist had two switches, when I wanted to hear Hashem love me and some breslove Torah, he had that.... When I wanted to hear nothing about Judaism and for him to give me the cold hard facts... He had that as well. It was a huge bracha for me, and hopefully all of us at one point can have that opportunity.

I think though it's also helpful just to know that such a person exists.

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 07 Jul 2020 03:14

1300 days. Truthfully there is no significance to the number. However from time to time we have to stop and express appreciation. Thank you Hashem! Thank you One_Day_At_A_Time for being my support, thank you to the whole chevra, some who have been silent for some time now, some recently joined, for keeping me going. Thank you GYE.

One thing I will say - I pray that everyone reading this should get healed at least to the level I did and be able to decide what to write or not to write on day 1300.....

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 28 Jul 2020 01:09

I think we have to write a GYE *kina* for Corona. So many dear friends (mostly bochurim, but some marrieds too) crying and miserable. They had worked so hard, b'ezras Hashem reached major milestones, and had attained real menuchas hanefesh. They had set up practical *gedarim*?, filters, guidelines, accountability. They were doing great. They even had it all planned out for bain hazmanim - knowing their homes were a challenge (due to parents' naiveté and leaving around unfiltered devices - a painful subject in and of itself). Some guys joined live meetings which were beneficial in so many ways - actual help, camaraderie, and accountability. And then came Corona.... The loneliness, the lack of getting out, the anxiety and edginess, feelings of unproductivity, live meetings non-existent, and weeks of access to unfiltered Internet - including supposedly "safe" zoom for yeshiva and college (the yeshivas that stuck to the phone conferences exclusively should be blessed), was just too much a nisayon. Even those chevra fortunate enough not to have easy access, reverting back to masturbation as the default stress reliever - instead of a good basketball game or other normal exercise - became extremely prevalent. A massive collective tragedy. Oy!!!!

So do we end this post mired in depression? Absolutely not! Everyone here at GYE - after digesting the above - reach out and help. These guys want to hold on to our hands so let's stretch them out. Even if you only listen and validate their pain you will have helped them unload, and show them someone cares. It is reassuring to know one is not alone (and is not a rasha or loser) and that many other great guys are struggling badly. And may Hashem give everyone the syatta d'shmaya to also advise each individual properly.

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Dave M - 28 Jul 2020 13:01

[Hashem Help Me wrote on 28 Jul 2020 01:09:](#)

I think we have to write a GYE *kina* for Corona.

I think Grant400 is the person for the job. Did you see his poem of chizuk he wrote for me on my thread?

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by sleepy - 28 Jul 2020 16:29

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and what about HHM being out of gye commission for a few weeks!

OY!!! MEH HAYA LANU...

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Re: Lessons Learned
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 13 Sep 2020 06:47

BH progress! Just passed one of my biggest triggers from the past successfully. I just returned from Slichos. I daven in a shul that attracts a very large crowd for the first night of Slichos. It is a very intense matzav. Usually the tension that it causes triggers me immensely. I used to panic when Slichos arrived. This year BH there was barely a whisper.

Chaverim, two points everyone should know:

1. As strange as it sounds, the Yomim Tovim can be triggers. Specifically for anxiety driven guys like me the intensity of these days/ lengt of davening, coupled with the lack of the usual daily structure and with the guilt feelings that these days often bring ("my teshuva, torah, tefillah, etc are not the way they should be"), i often have a harder time during this holy time of the year than usual. It is amazing how many times Motzai Yom Kippur was an intense acting out time. I just had to release all that stress.

2. With some retraining of thought processes, one can break out of this pattern.

Hatzlocha and a Ksiva V'chasima tove to all

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Re: Lessons Learned

Posted by Ihavestrength - 14 Sep 2020 02:11

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2. With some retraining of thought processes, one can break out of this pattern.

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Thank you for sharing. I can relate to this very much. What do you suggest is an appropriate mindset so as not to turn Yomim Tovim into triggers?

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