

BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 04 Nov 2012 16:11

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This is my fourth year on the GYE program. I have never posted on a forum or had a public dialogue about my struggle with lust, because it's something I have always been ashamed of. I figured that I could get through this test from hashem on my own and without any support system, but considering my track record, my approach/mindset has yet to be fully successful.

One of the most important lessons I have learned from GYE is that there is nothing wrong with being honest with yourself and saying that your current approach to dealing with addiction isn't working as well as it should. I have tried many of the methods on the website...90day chart, taphsic/shvuot, GYE partner that I update with regularly etc.

These methods have been very helpful. Compared to when I was a teenager and sinning through lust daily, I am very far away from that stage. Since being on the GYE program I have been able to stay clean for (considered me) long periods of time beyond 90 days. But I can't help feeling depressed/dismayed that I can't achieve abstinence, or, for me, being clean for an entire year.

I am self aware and in my long experience with the yetzer hara I have become pretty familiar with some of my triggers. I have an excellent filtering system on my computer, and if it wasn't for that I would be very very lost.

But with all of my progress I am still very unhappy with where I am. I want to act like a ben torah all day long for the rest of my life. I really want that lifestyle more than anything. I want to learn torah without a guilty conscience or lustful thoughts entering my mind. I want to be an eved hashem that is 100% committed to the service of hashem and sees the hand of hashem at every moment of my life. But I have not been able to achieve this. And it's so hard to want that relationship with hashem, and not be able to maintain it with consistency.

I'd like to give some background about myself. I started struggling with my addictions around the age of 13.

You can't blame other people for your struggle with lust, because it is your bechira, but lets just say that I was exposed to very inappropriate things lying around my house when I was very very young (about 9). That definitely wasn't my fault, and I sometimes think about whether my struggle would be less sharp if I had not experienced such an abnormally young exposure.

Then I ask myself why hashem would have allowed me to be exposed to such stuff at such a young age...and I get pretty depressed/lost when i go down that path.

Regardless, where I am now is on the path of working toward a deep relationship with hashem and not looking at inappropriate things on the internet or when I walk around.

I am around 80 days, about to hit 90, but over the past week I have been going through a rough time. I could use some momentum.

Chizuk and advice considering my personal experience are very welcome.

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 29 Nov 2012 05:24

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11 days feels so great! Thank you hashem!  
No more Ego, No more ego...only self-honesty.

Dov, you are so right about this whole idea of being honest with ourselves.

I don't know if I'm at the point of going to SA, but the principle of self-honesty in the way you explained it to me I think is applicable to everyone. Addicts, those who struggle with lust, and all in between if such exist.

It's so refreshing to think and act all day long with a central goal in mind of not lying or manipulating your service of hashem and to never let your ego take over any situation.

, but so joyful and refreshing.

1daat, working on the de-stress. thank you sir!

Hmm...If I keep working and acting on these ideas, maybe I won't have to live in fear of myself...

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by Dov - 30 Nov 2012 18:45

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That was beautiful. Continued hatzlocha! And good Shabbos!

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Still working out the kinks obviously

Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 10 Dec 2012 03:25

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21 days

Here are a couple of things I have noticed.

The idea of accepting my powerlessness has affected many other areas of my life aside from

lust.

I am much more calm about my classes. I work hard but accept that I can't be a control freak about my performance in school. As a result, school is a much more enjoyable place to be.

I am more careful about my brachot.

I have noticed that for the past 21 days I have said all sections of krias shema al hamita carefully before going to sleep. This may seem like a simple and easy mitzvah for some, and maybe I've got some mitzvah performance problems. But I can say with honesty that I have always been bad about committing to keeping this mitzvah carefully. I'm not 100% about this, but something has definitely been different for the past 21 days, since I have been **acting** differently for the past 21 days in fulfilling this mitzvah.

I have paid more attention to my lashon hara and I try my best to not slander or be a litzan in speaking about my friends. I have even noticed that I will start saying lashon hara and cut myself off halfway. big change for me.

I pay attention so much more to when I try to control situations in life. over the past 21 days there have been some moments when that controlling attitude starts to resurface, but I have also started being more honest with myself. I don't try to ignore or buy in to the controlling approach and let it blend in to my overall day to day experience. I stop head on and really try to be aware of what's going on...to tell myself "you are in a moment right now when you'd like to be super controlling, and that's ok, but chill out man...nothing terrible will happen if you let go and relax a bit"

Also, after going through this, I do feel bad for having my 'control freak' moment. This is similar to my experience I can recall after lusting.

But I don't feel terrible. I don't feel depressed. I recognize that I had a struggle, caught myself halfway, and i move on.

My friends have noticed that I am more calm in general and have pointed this out to me. And I

Pretty satisfied with life right now.

My point in all of this is that the mentalities of one day at a time, powerlessness, everything comes from hashem, stop being a control freak, don't cut corners, and on and on are making drastic changes in my life. Not only in lusting, but in paying attention to my day to day experience.

That's it for now...don't won't to get too carried away before I forgot that today is today and

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Re: BroadLife's journey  
Posted by Dov - 10 Dec 2012 03:30

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Sweet, indeed!

~~tomorrow is tomorrow~~

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Re: BroadLife's journey  
Posted by Snow - 17 Dec 2012 20:24

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how are you doing??

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Re: BroadLife's journey  
Posted by broadlife - 17 Dec 2012 21:28

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With great hakarat hatov to hashem, I am 29 days clean now. Thank you, snow, for checking in. How are you?

I feel like I have been 'living' for real. This is an amazing feeling. Before I felt like i was drowning and plunging ahead through my day-to-day experience in life. That feeling is gone for now. There are hard moments, but when they arise I pray to hashem to help me get through them.

As I said earlier, I now know clearly that self-pity is poison for me. In the interest of self-honesty, i would like to share a moment of self pity I had recently.

I am in my early 20's...Recently a girl approached me and basically spilled her heart out to me. She told me that she had been attracted to me for a few years now and my lack of interest in her had caused her a lot of pain. She cared a lot about me...saw my tough moments...wanted to help me through them because she 'cared a lot about me'.

As i sat and listened to her tell me all of this, I was crying inside. What this girl had observed was watching me in my most depressed and self hating and miserable moments after a fall. She has **NO IDEA** why I looked so miserable, but because she was so interested in me and 'cared' about me so much, she had always wanted to help me and it pained her to watch me in so much pain.

I had a conversation with Dov about a month ago in which he explained to me that addicts will try to hide their deep dark secrets. They don't want the world to know about these secrets as that is part of the pleasuring experience. The self indulging experience.

I was not interested in this girl, but as I sat and watched this girl bawl her eyes out at me, I started to pity myself. Essentially she was watching my pain for three years and she had no idea where that pain was coming from, and I knew exactly where that pain was coming from, but I couldn't explain it to her. Not because I was afraid it would destroy me, but I was afraid it would destroy her, and I caused her enough pain as it is, that to tell her that she was feeling compassion toward a guy she was attracted to and cared about when in reality she was feeling compassion toward a guy who was lusting for girls on the internet in an uncontrollable way.

To a certain degree, I am also upset and disturbed at all of this...**I am trying to stay clean and the methods and thought processes I have taken on with the help of hashem and GYE are so refreshing and have brought me so much joy! And this is sucking the joy right out of me...**

When I thought about all of this, I started to pity myself...then I snapped out of it and prayed to hashem to save me from that self pity. But now I do turn to the GYE tzibur because I think this story is unique and deserves attention...what do I do with this experience? I really don't know how to react to it. And I am trying to move on...but this is really weighing me down. Stirring really deep emotions inside of me and with that, self pity.

So in the interest of continuing to grow and live the 'real' life and experience the joy of life that is so dear to me, please help me...

Also, another question: How do I experience deep deep emotions without somehow transferring

them into self-pity. I know this is a complicated question, but it's something I think I should address...

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 17 Dec 2012 21:31

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[broadlife wrote:](#)

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As I said earlier, I now know clearly that self-pity is poison for me. In the interest of self-honesty, i would like to share a moment of self pity I had recently.

I am in my early 20's and in a place with many young people my age. Recently a girl approached me and basically spilled her heart out to me. She told me that she had been attracted to me for a few years now and my lack of interest in her had caused her a lot of pain. She cared a lot about me...saw my tough moments...wanted to help me through them because she 'cared a lot about me'.

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by Snow - 18 Dec 2012 00:33

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The longer you stay sober....the more life will be happening more fully for you. This girl coming to talk to you...beautiful. are you interested in her at all?

[broadlife wrote:](#)

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by Dov - 18 Dec 2012 02:17

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Wow, 'broadlife' (I forgot your real name [if I ever knew it], sorry)! That's quite a share you've given us.

As for converting deep or painful emotions into self-pity, the way I work best is by eventually accepting my deep or painful feelings as actually *mine*. That may not seem like a chidush at all - but it is huge. Any self pity shows me I am running. For when I actually *use* self-pity, it is to emotionally isolate and mope, or push my loved ones away by raging. I would often physically isolate as well, as in going off and sitting alone somewhere like the bathroom. In AA they say,

Think it over, please. Accepting my feelings as my own means a few big things:

1- That what I am experiencing *is* a real feeling...100% real *feeling*. Not **reality** - just a feeling. Accepting my feelings as real also means seeing them as what they really are rather than running from them, fighting them, screaming at them, "Evil! Disgusting!" and getting guilty or resenting others to turn them inside-out. Doing all that usual stuff just clouds our thinking and creates mountains out of molehills. Bogeymen. We *never* end up facing reality then, for we are all focused on the huge issue of our big, all-important *feelings*. But it's just not reality.

And living in a distorted reality causes all sorts of nasty problems for us and our relationships - and **especially** for our relationship with Hashem.

2- We no longer need to isolate in shame or fear from others just because we feel the (stupid) way we feel. That's huge itself, for we might then stop hating ourselves. And that's getting closer to living in reality! It took me almost a year and a half sober in recovery to realize that I actually loathed myself. The only thing that allowed me to accept myself and my sometimes screwy feelings, was working the 4th step properly (with help). Seeing and knowing my true character defects - and knowing that Hashem had **known** all these things all along - and *He led me into recovery anyway!* That showed me He loves me even though I am not A-OK. Hashem is certainly **not** only 'for' the tzaddikim...maybe He is even *more* for us than He is for them? Maybe.

3- Self-pity, though it is often our very best buddy after depending on it basically since we were about 5 or 6 years old (I know I used it heavily) - very soon becomes a less attractive coping mechanism once we really accept our imperfect reality. And if we are in 12 step recovery and really working our steps in writing (the only way they really work), we will hit the 4th step. Working it simply and honestly, we will come to know that the sadly overwhelming pride and fears that have been motivating us so deeply along with our other living defects of character, are nothing to get bent out of shape about. They are things to admit and take responsibility for doing something about! The 12 steps are all and only about finally accepting personal responsibility - instead of demanding that we be entitled to keep right on beating our heads into the wall, pridefully expecting to solve all our problems by way of our superior intelligence and motivation. It's OK to accept our limitations, know how much we need G-d, and *use Him*. That's what I really believe.

OK....so finally...next post, be"H, for the next thing you asked about.

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Re: BroadLife's journey  
Posted by Dov - 18 Dec 2012 02:23

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OK, now about the girl.

You refer to her as a 'girl'. Is she a woman, or a girl to you? In other words, is she a person who you take seriously as one with whom you could reciprocate her feelings and grow a *marriage* with? Or is she just another innocent bystander, another victim of infatuation?

That's #1 here. Everything else follows from that, one way or the other, I think.

And I am *not* asking you this in order to be judgemental or to criticize you for dating, girlfriends, or whatever! I do not know you and what you are believe about all that. I am asking to know what direction this issue is facing, that's all.

- Dov

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 18 Dec 2012 05:08

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[Dov wrote:](#)

...Accepting my feelings as my own...

...1- That what I am experiencing *is* a real feeling...100% real *feeling*. Not **reality** - just a feeling...

2- We no longer need to isolate in shame or fear from others just because we feel the (stupid) way we feel. That's huge itself, for we might then stop hating ourselves. And that's getting closer to living in reality...Seeing and knowing my true character defects - and knowing that Hashem had **known** all these things all along - and *He led me into recovery anyway!* That showed me He loves me even though I am not A-OK. ...

3- ...we really accept our imperfect reality...we will come to know that the sadly overwhelming pride and fears that have been motivating us so deeply along with our other living defects of character, are nothing to get bent out of shape about. They are things to admit and take responsibility for doing something about! ...pridefully expecting to solve all our problems by way of our superior intelligence and motivation....It's OK to accept our limitations, know how much we need G-d, and *use Him*...

I was not dating her. She was not my girlfriend. I was friends with her. nothing more than that to me.

That's it. I did nothing to spur her on. I don't get into casual/physical relationships with girls. Not my thing or approach. And I have no interest in 'growing a marriage' with he'.

She became infatuated with me a couple of years ago. We talked and I explained to her I wasn't interested in dating at that point and my goal for dating girls was more modern orthodox to right wing...which she was not

Despite that conversation, her infatuation with me still remained though hidden for a couple of years. She didn't express it to me...but it was still there.

Finally, she asked me to speak to her this past weekend. We spoke privately for a few hours and she poured her heart out to me saying the things I posted above in my previous post.

I told her that

a) I was working on myself and dating was exactly right for me at this moment (which is true, but not fully detailed regarding the lust. I don't think I need to tell her that). Maybe with some more time...i'll be ready

b) I reaffirmed that when I am ready to date I will be looking for different things religiously than she is and that i wasn't interested in her

My post was intended to understand how to cope with the self pity that arose from that experience, which you answered in your first post. I am still reading through that and trying to understand it.

1. I can sense that this is a real feeling. I know it's not something fake but a feeling that's part of my reality if that's what you mean

2. I am still working on not hating myself. I have begun to think through this idea that hashem ALWAYS loves me, and that he created me with my character defects, and that's not an excuse, but something to be mindful of. So far been good, but this incident did bring to surface more self hate...

3. I can relate very well to the 3rd point in your post.

Out of all of this recent experience I just described, one thing that smacked me in the face when ) was that **I dont think I am a person who deserves to be loved by another girl in an intimate way...at least not right now**

I feel the love of my parents, the love of my family, the care from my closest friends, and I am starting to feel the love of hashem more than ever...but after using girls for so long in a lustful way...I dont understand how I can deserve to be loved by another woman. Hopefully as I continue to grow and date and treat women with more respect in all areas of my life both private and public I will be able to come to senses with this...but right now I cannot even begin to imagine a women truly loving me, and even if some woman really did love and deeply care about me at this moment, it would be very hard for me to believe her, considering my own internal sense of not being worthy of being loved. And that's either self-pity, honesty, or probably a mix of both. Or its part of the fantasy experience I can't shake...

ahhh so confused...

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by Snow - 18 Dec 2012 12:01

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[quote="broadlife" post=200251][Dov wrote:](#)

...Accepting my feelings as my own...

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ahhh so confused...

Broadlife - I relate a lot to what you have written. It takes time. Being sober is a process not an event. So....hold on....more & more good things usually come. And that will likely include feeling and believing that you can be loved by a woman.

I woke up the morning after the 4 hour talk (I was very tired

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by Dov - 21 Dec 2012 22:35

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Yup, well-said, Snow.

Broadlife, I had no idea how hard that conversation must have been for you. I think it would be very difficult for me to say all that outright to another person, especially feeling sorry for them and naturally wanting to at least have her respect and not to risk being hated. Nu. It sounds to me that somehow you did a great job anyway.

And no, of course there is not tachlis to telling her (or anyone who does not need to know) about your lust challenges. I found that when I wanted to tell girls about my lust problem, it was usually just a way to tempt them to seduce me, actually. And BTW, I have seen that many married sexaholics start to try to do that with their wives, too.

Nu. We are certainly works in progress. And I think you have made progress here!

Good Shabbos!

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 30 Dec 2012 09:52

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Just checking back in - 42 days!

Hodu la-hashem ki tov, ki l'olam chasdo

I have been experiencing tough moments, and reminding myself of the joy I get to experience as a bracha from Hashem of being clean and being able to live a real life and not a fantasy. This is the greatest bracha I can imagine, and despite feelings of emptiness, self pity, etc that sometimes arise, I constantly remind myself this, and it brings a smile to my face no matter what

Feelings from my Ego have not surfaced for a few weeks now. Baruch hashem.

Life is good, and I feel so much more relaxed.

Going to eretz yisrael this week. Gonna pray to hashem in yerushalayim as a clean man trying

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to live a real life, and not a self pitying fantasy man. I cant wait