

First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by MeeToo613 - 14 Dec 2014 02:54

For nearly 30 years I've been arousing myself and/or touching myself.

This is the first time I've ever really "spoken" to anyone about it. It never even crossed my mind that I might be an "addict" until 3 or 4 years ago.

While I have managed to to reduce the frequency over recent years, eg by having specific times when I won't, I would often "edge" during those times.

Until (b'hashgacha protis) coming across the Your Brain on Porn site a week ago I had never really considered that stopping was achievable for me. Having seen the 90 day plan AND the effect that looking at porn has on my brain, I felt a greater desire to stop than ever before + I now have a concrete and PG achievable target - 90 days - not just "forever".

I hope to follow the Your Brain on Porn criteria which includes not intentionally looking at anything which would arouse me, even if it is not porn, and also not "edging", which they say has a particularly bad effect on the brain. Although I won't necessarily "fail" myself if I fall down on these 2 points.

BH the first 2 days have been OK. I've had the expected cravings, not bad enough to make me consider actually doing anything but still difficult enough and a feeling of being on fire. I feel my heart rate increasing when I consider what lies before me.

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by Watson - 14 Dec 2014 03:17

Welcome MeeToo. I also started out on YBOP and the associated forum until I found GYE. GYE has been tremendously helpful. Stick around, post some more, read the handbook.

Behatzlocho.

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by Shakeitoff - 14 Dec 2014 03:40

Thank you for your thoughtful posting. As they keep telling us, none of us is alone.

I think that if you assume that HaShem underlies everything and the first commandment was to be fruitful and multiply, it follows that sexual touching including self-touching would feel good. If it didn't, who would want to procreate?

My first self-experience must have been in my early teens, at least 50 years ago. More recently, I was able to stay away for about 13 months. Then I went back to it. Since May, I haven't managed to stay clean more than 10 or 12 days at a time.

This time, I've done what you just did. I've joined GYE. My next step will be to install at least "reporting" software. Sometimes my son visits and uses this computer, and I'm afraid that "filtering" will prevent him from visiting sites he needs for his work as a musician: Youtube videos of friends, for instance. I don't know about you, but I would be ashamed of having the "monitor" know I went to such and such a site...even if the "monitor" and I never know each other! If you know any technical details about reporting software I hope you'll share them.

Staying busy helps me when I have a clean day: This time it was yesterday and today. I'm hoping to use a pre-written hour-by-hour schedule for every Shabbat from now on. I can't spend the entire 48 hours on Shabbat and the next day in shul. Thank Gd I have employment Monday to Friday. If I stay away from the computer after about 10 p.m. till 5 or 6 a.m., it's easier for me.

Shmiras Einayim is harder for me because I get "blind-sided". Last Sunday I went to the video store to rent some decent movies instead of trying out what is showing nowadays. Unfortunately, the twenty-something person staffing the store had decided to wear a low-cut dress. Obviously she didn't have me in mind! But it was still a nasty moment that I hadn't expected. I guess a frum person, unlike me, wouldn't be in a video store to begin with, but even they must get surprised occasionally.

Anyway, sorry for the rambling. Hope it's at least a way to let you know I'm struggling too. Best success in your work.

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by MeeToo613 - 14 Dec 2014 16:24

Thank you for sharing Shakeitoff.

What caused you to relapse once you'd been "clean" for 13 months?

I haven't used reporting software but I've heard people recommend Web Chaver. Alternatively if you have a TAG office local to you they may be able to install the filters you want without preventing your son's access.

Staying busy definitely helps, although I'm the opposite of you - one of the (many) reasons I am trying to stop is the amount of time I was wasting at work. I find it easier to keep busy at home, at least until the kids go to bed!!

For me so far the key has been:

1. Not to touch myself even the slightest bit, no matter how much I want to - experience has taught me that once I start it's massively harder to stop
2. Not to look intentionally at anything that would arouse me. From that point of view I am glad that we no longer have a TV/DVD player as I know that anything with even innocent romantic scenes in or even just attractive (fully-dressed) women would arouse me.

Having said that I am finding myself semi-permanently aroused at the moment, mentally, not physically. I'm trying not to think further ahead than the challenge of this minute (with an occasional thought re my wife going to the mikveh in a couple of days!!)

Hatzlacha

Keep in touch

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years
Posted by MeeToo613 - 14 Dec 2014 16:30

I meant to add that Shemrias Einayim vis-a-vis what I see out and about is a battle I don't feel ready for yet. I'm taking the approach of one battle at a time.

Also, I was surprised to hear you describe yourself as not frum. You appear to be shomer shabbos, a shul goer and someone who thinks about how Hashem runs the world and what Hashem wants from the world. None of these seem to be the behaviour of someone not frum.

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years
Posted by cordnoy - 15 Dec 2014 09:28

Welcome both of you.

It's good to see some fellow old-timers here.

b'hatzlachah on your journey.

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years
Posted by Shakeitoff - 25 Dec 2014 05:51

Thanks for the tip about not touching myself.

Thanks also for the gentle suggestion that I'm frummer (is that a word?) than I say. I didn't mean to ignore the comment, it's just taken me a while to think how to answer your questions.

I don't believe it matters much, because unfortunately the addiction has taken hold among people who are clearly more knowledgeable and more observant than I am. However...I still use electrical switches sometimes on Shabbat, in fact, to be with my less-observant relatives, I drove last Shabbat. I don't eat treyf or combine milk and meat at home, but my kitchen is not kosher. I lay tefillin, but I don't learn Torah regularly. I'm maybe on the derech, but at my current rate of progress I'll be 150 years old before I am anywhere near the level of some of the people on this forum.

As said, though, being observant and knowledgeable does not seem to help by itself when you're addicted to something. I think I'm dealing with two separate issues: I'm addicted and I'm less observant and knowledgeable than I'd like to be. I guess Guardyoureyes is about addiction. I know what to do about observance and knowledge. I don't live in Yehupetz. I'm just scared to change too fast.

Thanks again for your kindness.

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by serenity - 25 Dec 2014 20:06

Welcome to GYE! Congratulations on taking the first steps to recovery! I'm 45 years old and have been a sex addict since I was 12 as far as I can remember. I suspect that my addiction actually goes back to a younger age. I'm not sure at what point I realized I was an addict, probably when after marriage I still couldn't stop, but I am sure that I didn't have any concept of what it means to be an addict until I came to AA and learned about it 15 months ago. I am now happy to say that I am in SA as well as AA, go to face to face AA and SA meetings and have AA and SA sponsors. With 2 rare exceptions over the years, I had never been able to maintain abstinence from compulsive sexual behaviors for more than two weeks. The fact that I have any more time than that is nothing short of a miracle. A healthy desire for pleasure, is not my problem. If that was my problem, then marriage should have resolved it or at least made it better. The fact is that only got worse after marriage and as the years went on.

Much Hatzlacha on your journey!

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by MeeToo613 - 05 Jan 2015 04:26

Alert: Possible trigger

Thanks for your reply. My apologies that it has taken me a little while to respond - it's not often that I get some privacy on the home computer, I can't logon at work for obvious reasons and it's too difficult on my phone.

You are obviously correct that level of frumkeit doesn't necessarily preclude sex/porn addiction, although I would hope that the percentage of frum people affected is lower than the percentage for the wider population.

Re level of observance the only other point I'll add is a comment from a Rabbi I respect, that I find both encouraging and obliging. He said that "the definition of a good Jew is someone who wants to be a better Jew". Ie it doesn't matter what level you're at as long as you're moving in the right direction. Conversely, someone could be the frummost person in the world but if they're not improving then they're failing.

Re myself, the battle continues. I have marked myself down as having had a fall after 19 days (still the longest I've gone in nearly 30 years). Although I may not have technically fallen per GYE rules, I let myself browse picture of scantily clad women whilst touching myself. There was no "completion" and no porn but, from what I understand from the YBOP website, this is the kind the behaviour that reinforces the brain's addiction so I wanted to reset my counter so I know when I have had a true 90 days. I did find it psychologically difficult calling it a "fall". PG this time I'll manage to keep it going despite coming up to my first full period of niddah since starting.

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by Shakeitoff - 05 Jan 2015 07:11

Thanks for the alert about possible trigger...In this college town, I find spring and summer more

difficult because I react to the way some female persons choose to dress at that time. I can well understand someone responding to a picture. To quote a somewhat unfair generalization: women show, men look. Of course, men also look AWAY!

Would you consider discussing with an expert whether you actually had a "fall"? I think I understand about not reinforcing addiction, but I wonder whether a quest for "perfect" behavior will in the end delay your progress unnecessarily.

I need to follow my own rule and get off this computer (it's about 9:15 p.m. and I'm weaker when I'm tired), but I'm glad I saw your posting. B'hatzlachah! And thanks for your encouragement!

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years
Posted by dms1234 - 05 Jan 2015 08:41

I don't know if it really matters whether you had a fall or not. Just brush it off and Keep on Going!!!!

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years
Posted by serenity - 05 Jan 2015 08:49

I don't think addition discriminates between religious and non-religious people. Addiction is no different than other disease. My AA sponsor told me, and I believe him to be correct, that people with addictive personalities gravitate to religion. That is because we have a great need to fill a void within ourselves. Based on that it would be reasonable to say that the incidence of addiction may be higher amongst religious people. Also religious people may be less likely to get help with their addiction, because of the stigma and pervasive lack of knowledge or understanding in these areas.

Anyone have any thoughts on that?

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by cordnoy - 05 Jan 2015 09:22

I do, but I like to stay away from both topics.

Warning: Spoiler!

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by serenity - 05 Jan 2015 09:29

Yes, I agree. (I couldn't figure out what the 2 topics were, so nice spoiler!)

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Re: First time in nearly 30 years

Posted by Shakeitoff - 06 Jan 2015 06:20

I don't know how you would prove or disprove that people with addictive personalities tend to gravitate to religion. Maybe this is a case in which the main thing that matters is not "someone with an addictive personality" or "someone who is/is trying to be religious", but you...or me...as individual people.

I am catching myself before I fall, thank Gd. It's been a long day. It's dark and cold outside. I get on the computer, start looking up Jew hating sites (I don't know why, but this is my own mishugas). After a couple of minutes I get depressed and tense at the same time, if that's even possible. It looks as though the whole world hates Jews, not just a few pathetic creeps. So I change topics...I'm thinking about repainting the kitchen. I look that up, and golly gee whiz...here's an ad with an immodestly dressed woman! Of course that's related to painting a kitchen. Isn't it? So, I hope in less than Rabbi Twerski's 3-10ths of a second, I mouse down, then get off the site.

I'm trying to use Tool #1 in the list: STOP for this moment. Thanks again to everybody including my sponsor for all your help. I'm off this computer! Time for SLEEP.

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