

Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Jul 2009 21:08

I'm new to this forum, but not new to this struggle. I signed up to the weekly E-mail lists a few months ago. I often just glance at them, as I'm trying not to spend so much time reading E-mails. But, even with this, I have gotten chizuk through the themes that keep repeating themselves.

I grew up secular, but did Teshuva in college--I came to Yeshiva in Israel and never left. Now I'm married with five children (our oldest is eight and our youngest is a month old).

I was in the habit of staring at girls, I remember even in nursery school. I just liked the way they looked. Things got worse when I was 10 or 11. My sisters had a "facts of life" book with indecent pictures and crooked ideas, and I found it. It described Mast... as a fun thing to do, and so I followed the instructions. I've been stuck ever since.

I was a member of a shul youth group around the age of my bar-mitzvah. The youth group leader gained my trust very early on, and I could discuss anything with him. Luckily, I learned early on that mast... is wrong. I've been fighting it ever since, sometimes more successfully and sometimes less so. I think now I go two or three months clean, and then I tend to trip up a few times close together. I always feel that the yeitzer hara tricked me, and somehow it's strategy was different than last time. Also, I view it as tripping up for one "phase," instead of multiple times. So, I manage not to get too depressed about it, and can pick myself up again pretty quickly.

I would like to be able to stop altogether. But, I am more concerned with controlling my eyes. I feel that it is impossible to walk down the street without taking a look at every woman along the way. I think the trickiest part is that, in my neighborhood, everyone is dressed so tznius that it's hard to feel that I'm really doing anything wrong.

Besides that, I slip up every once in a while with the internet--probably a few times a year. But then, I feel that I was somehow outsmarted again by my Yeitzer. I wasn't looking for indecent pictures... I was just curious about such-and-such an actress... I wasn't expecting to find such indecent pictures...

I see the progress is still very slow on my own, and that's why I decided to become more involved in this forum.

But, I find this is also a challenge. I think my own situation is rather mild, and I find that by seeing other people's stories which are more involved than my own, I end up getting thoughts instead of getting rid of them. Any advice on this point would also be helpful. Thanks.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Jun 2011 20:44

Here are a few things I came up with (but please don't let that stop you from stating your opinion).

Regarding the ups and downs, instead of just waiting for life to bring these along and then trying to cope, it seems that I can keep myself in practice. Maybe read stuff that I know is likely to inspire me, and keep in mind that the inspiration might not last, but enjoy it while it does (and don't take it hard when it doesn't).

Another thing, regarding my insanity that I keep forgetting. I need to write a list of the more likely triggers I know I am susceptible to, and also write a list of activities I can do, or ways I can change my perspective, instead of lusting.

I can do a few things a day to help my wife and children that I might not usually do. This is a little exercise to help me remember they are people and I should be focused on helping them.

Regarding triggers, the all-or-nothing attitude with my wife. We do have certain days we plan to have intimacy (though it doesn't always work out). I should actually try to show some sort of affection on the OFF days, and I should keep in mind these are OFF days, so not to go crazy.

Your question struck me because my focus is always on DON'T DON'T DON'T. I have a tendency to focus on the negative, which is another part of my whole problem. I should pick

one thing each day that I viewed as negative, and try to change my perspective on it, to view it in a positive light. I shouldn't just wait until some catastrophe strikes and then wonder what good is supposed to come from it.

I think the prayers mentioned in the White Book (and that you mention alot, too, Dov) should be helpful--Asking Hashem that I should find in Him what I am looking for in this object of my lust, and also surrendering my lust to Him. But, I have to be persistent and patient--just keep it up and not wonder if it is "working" or not. It will take time to really sink in, and some days it will seem to be more helpful than on other days.

I should print up this post and review it a couple of times each week, so that I have a better chance of remember all this and putting it into action.

How's that?

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by ur-a-jew - 13 Jun 2011 22:17

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 13 Jun 2011 20:44:](#)

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--Eye.

These things all sound great. But in my view trying to swallow all of these at once is dangerous. What I would suggest that you print this out as an aspirational list. These are things that I think someone in my position can be holding by with work. Then pick one of the items to really work on. If you focus on that one, you have a hope of accomplishing that one. If on the other hand you try to accomplish all you'll feel guilty with yourself when you are not living up to all of them. Hatzlacha.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by ulay-yachus - 13 Jun 2011 22:30

Bs"d

You write about focusing on the positive, and I don't understand if you meant, positive vision, in general - or in the struggle that we have here.

I myself, have a problem that I feel [in the former 50 days] that I'm pure from the outside [not falling, b"h] but in the inside I feel that I have already had a fall. I feel that my mission is to get out from the addiction from the inside, and this is what I call, viewing things positive. I mean, start to build an inner self, that can be happy without the lust, and not just keep saying to myself: "you shouldn't m*!"

Although I'm clean for about 50 days, I feel like I have a hole in my soul, which wants to be filled with....lust. Although I'm frum, and learn chasidut and other stuff which has a connection to the Tora of the soul, I don't know (yet) how to change this lack in the Nefesh, with loving to G-d. I wish I knew....

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Dov - 14 Jun 2011 03:08

Dear Ulay-yachus,

If you had a sponsor in recovery you would get some help with these types of things, be"H. Personally, though the thoughts you are describing are so incredibly typical for me and others I know, the approach you seem to feel you ought to take is unacceptable for me. For *me*, mind you. What *you* can get away with is not my business - this is about sharing my actual experiences with you, not *advising* you. A close recovery buddy with more experience than you (sponsor) is for that, maybe.

In my case, the luxury of being preoccupied with 'when this hole will be filled already and I will feel sholeim' is actually just lusting. Lust for what *I* consider spirituality. The reason I see it as lust is because basically, lust is not evil - for it can be for things that are assur as well as for that which is mutar. Similar to the 'novol birshus haTorah'.

But wanting - no, it's actually *needing* - what Hashem is not giving to me, is just lust. It is poison for me. As a recovering addict I need at least a *measure* of acceptance. Acceptance that Hashem really **does** know what He is doing in my life and that he really does love me. But all those words mean nothing at all, if I don't really take actions that mean that I trust Him. And where and *how* am I acting with trust, if I actively harbor dissatisfaction with the life that He is giving me?

So I escape from it ke borei'ach min ha'eish. Just as I ought to escape from a woman getting dressed in her window. Hmmm, curious....my *gut* tells me it would be a real treat to stick around and watch a bit...in other words - that it really *is* in my best interest. That is what lusting means. But be"H, I say no. For I know where it leads me: away from everything and down the toilet. I must let it go and move on.

Now, thoughts like, "Whoa. Aren't we *supposed* to have spiritual ambition? Even financial ambition is a decent thing, isn't it?" I suggest you read Rav Dessler's first Kuntreis haChessed, perek 7, where he discusses this in a frum way.

But as for me, kin'as soferim tarbeh chochma happens not to work, at all. So? There are plenty

mottos in and lehavdil out of Chaza"l (and Mishlei) that have narrow application. There is nothing wrong with admitting that a particular piece of advice is totally useless for me at this particular time in my life. And for me, it is useless, only brings me to question my G-d, brings me to love shelo lishma more than lishma, and undermines my relationships to people and to Hashem...so it is certainly assur. It's worse than useless. So I do not use it, but use another attitude that does work.

I'm rambling because I am half asleep...goodnight.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Jun 2011 06:21

[ulay-yachus wrote on 13 Jun 2011 22:30:](#)

I my self, have a problem that I feel [in the former 50 days] that I'm pure from the outside[not falling, b"h] but in the inside I feel that I have already had a fall. I feel that my mission is to get out from the addiction from the inside, and this is what I call, viewing things postive. I mean, start to built a inner self, that can be happy without the lust, and not just keep saying to my self : "you houldn't m*!"

That sounds like what I mean. Being able to enjoy life and view things in a positive light (vice-versa?). Then, I feel much less of a need to lust when I can do this.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 14 Jun 2011 20:29

Dear Reb Eyeball,

Like UAJ wrote, taking it easy is more important than being right about all the things we ought to do. Hey, we are all screwed up to some extent. It's the *big* plans that always go awry, and taking one thing at a time may be the right thing to do in your case, too. It also has another advantage, because it shows patience and humility. Humility: because as with most gevurah/limitation, I hate it. The restriction of walking slowly drives me crazy cuz I am sure that I am 'way above that' - my gut starts to scream (cuz I am from NY, probably), "What, am I a reetard or something?!" But in some sense, if I really believe that I am an addict, then yes - I *am* a reetard, of sorts. I need to write stuff sometimes and even speak openly about some things that other - normal - people take for granted. Things like: do I really believe in a real, perfectly helpful and truly useful G-d?; like 'what is good about me, my wife, or our kids?'; like, 'what I like about being alive...and what I dislike and try to avoid (but like calling it 'procrastination')?'; and for sex and lust addicts in particular, 'what are the self-destructive lust behaviors that I obviously like to do and in what ways do I traditionally give them my power?'. We write some of these things down, look at them, and then - if we are really lucky - share them with another safe person or people. Because it is the truth about ourselves and life is not a fashion show. We are as ugly as we really are, period. The only way to get 'prettier' is to know what we need to let go of, clearly. And sharing it all with other people is the only way that it really works to get reetards to fully accept the facts about themselves and stop running.

These things are awkward. Very awkward. As far as I know, the very basis of any recovery *at all* is fully admitting to ourselves that even though we are truly wonderful neshamos and even wonderful *people*, we are unfortunately also childish, pathetic, and out-of-order in some specific ways. Without that, we do not yet *need* G-d and will not really use Him. The truly frum yidden of previous generations knew what it means to recognize we are pathetic before G-d. And not merely because *He* is so great, but because as tremendous as it is to be a Tzelem Elokim and yidden, bearers of the entire b'riyah and of neshomos that are more than 5000 years old...we *are* indeed also pathetic! Our emunah is so weak, our selfishness is so natural and strong, our dedication is so flimsy, our knowledge is so incredibly small...nu? And on top of all that, *I am an addict!* So naturally we addicts really, really feel we need G-d - as long as we are being honest and keep our eyes open.

And if any of this talk feels *negative*, *discouraging* or *disparaging* in any respect, I submit that the words have been **completely** misunderstood. There is no looking down at anybody here - even ourselves. It appears that we addicts cannot **possibly** live without real **hachno'oh**. And the only way I know of that *I* can ever plug into a real hachno'oh before Hashem that 'has teeth' and *works*, is to admit it to other people. We have all been down the 'self-help' road. The fox has been guarding the henhouse for years, and there are very few chickens left. Enough with judging our sincerity by our 'crying real tears', or by the lumps in our throats. Our feelings

have *almost always deceived us in this arena*, and always will! We need action, not real feelings of sincerity. And that is the only thing that people (including me) resist, I have found. I wonder why...

And actions of openness with *real* people is the only tried and tested way to become open with a *real* G-d...and with ourselves. And these people need to be safe people who really understand the insanity of our thinking. And they cannot see it as some badge of courage or gedulah, and praise us over much for our 'brave honesty' - we are trying to save our own necks, what *else* do you expect but honesty? Nothing else will work! It is enlightened *self-interest!* Anyway, we in recovery cannot afford to be in that Navardoker joke where the older bochur turns to the newbie who is saying, "ich bin gurnit! Ich bin gurnit!" and tells him angrily, "And who are you, to say you are gurnit!? You just got here!" Ultimately, I think there really is no such thing as an 'older bochur' here. Just sick people who have hurt more than others and are

I am rambling again, sorry.

Hatzlocha, one step at a time.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 15 Jun 2011 06:08

Thanks UAJ and Dov.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 16 Jun 2011 11:38

I got a sponsor, and he gave me some exercises to do as part of the 12-steps.

I see now that my lust actually goes much deeper than I realized. I thought I was doing okay in not lusting but really I just wasn't acting out so much on my lust, but it was tainting everything. The thoughts of lust were still in my head. I wasn't getting rid of them so much as I just wasn't acting out on them.

I see now that the goal is to completely get rid of these thoughts--to surrender them to God. And it will take time.

True, the RID causes our lust. I have been focusing so much on identifying the RID and dealing with it. I didn't notice so much, first, exactly how much lust overpowers me.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 16 Jun 2011 20:33

Yeah, the big deep change may take time. But giving it up and letting Hashem in takes a second, and there can be a change right now. Maybe just a small step, but it is a real one. And it gets real-er every time it is taken.

You are on the Derech haMelech now, chabibi. The Derech haMelech.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 19 Jun 2011 08:00

This recovery thing is getting very intense. It's especially confusing in how it plays out between my wife and I.

One moment she seems all in favor. The next minute she breaks down crying. And I can't make any sense out of it.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 19 Jun 2011 15:35

And if you made sense of it, then what would you really do better? The ikkar is treating her right, not worrying about fixing her moods. Feelings and women are not to be understood - they are to be treated right, period end of story.

Respect her feelings and give her space. You cannot protect her from the truth that her life is not as she wished it would be, for she is married to an addict. She can find tons of chizzuk speaking with other wives in her predicament, but that is not something you can make her do. Offering it to her once is enough....maybe even more than enough.

Focus on doing the recovery work for yourself and she will be fine in time. You are powerless over her, in the end.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 19 Jun 2011 18:29

I guess she's got to go through her process of dealing with these things and healing, and her ups and downs are not guaranteed to be in-sync with mine.

After crying a bit, she reassured me that she is in favor of what I'm doing to recover (we need to tone down the physical side of our relationship for a while), but it's really sad.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 19 Jun 2011 19:47

Aye, sad it is, indeed. But the alternative is always guaranteed to be sadder. I **need** to remember that, even if she forgets.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by KiviYVY - 20 Jun 2011 13:35

[dov wrote on 19 Jun 2011 15:35:](#)

And if you made sense of it, then what would you really do better? The ikkar is treating her right, not worrying about fixing her moods. Feelings and women are not to be understood - they are to be treated right, period end of story.

Beautifully put.

I've experienced, and still experience, similar ups and downs with my wife. I think this issue eats at her sense of security. What usually gets her going is the thought of how far this issue has gone with the husbands of other wives that she knows. She has expressed that while she's certainly not naive, she just wishes she'd never hear of where this addiction takes people. She'd rather not know about men, especially Frum men, who've been having secret relationships with other women. I can't relate to this feeling of hers, except that I've pointed out to her that when I hear of women involved in errant activities it bothers me more than when I hear of men doing such and she's said that hearing of women also doesn't bother her as much.

Either way, I'd echo Dov in saying that our job is to just "Be Nice". I think it would also help to tell her how much you feel for her, show her how sensitive you are to what she's going through, and be appreciative of all the support and commitment she has shown.

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