

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 (Elyah) official count
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 07 Sep 2011 15:38

"Kol hapoisel pasul, u'bemumoi poisel".

As I typed that I thought of something. As you mention, there are 2 types of criticism. One can criticise something that someone has done ("you shouldn't have done because ") with the genuine intention of helping the person. That is constructive criticism and when applied correctly is good and will actually be appreciated by the "victim".

The second type is when you criticize the PERSON (" you are such a , because you ?"). That is the what the Gemora means by "Poisel", where you are labeling and denigrating the person because of what they did. And in such a case it is usually a reflection of the criticizer's own faults, because he is projecting them onto others.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by obormottel - 07 Sep 2011 16:29

It may be taking away a bit from Elya's main point, but I'll chime in about the criticism:

Similar to what Gevura shby is saying (BTW, my admiration for you is growing with each post of yours. I know a guy or two with similar tendencies, and to me this seems an extremely difficult battle):

Not so much an object of criticism (action vs. person) but the critic's agenda: is he/she out to

better you with their critique, because they love you and they want you improve, or are they out to put you down because it makes them feel better about themselves? To better you, they would criticize your action, to make themselves feel better they will criticize you.

SOMETimes, wives loose the point of this, and they will criticize YOU in order to make YOU better. Perhaps pointing it out to the wife will help her to focus on the reasons for her critique and consequently direct it towards discussing action ,not person.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 07 Sep 2011 16:38

I'll share one of my favorite anicdotes about criticism. If it is from the heart and out of love - *d'varim hayotzim min halev, nichnasim el halev*. I think often our pride gets in the way, and we are not really doing it for the other person's benefit.

Once, I was in yeshiva on Purim and was a *bit* drunk. Ok, *very* drunk. Anyway, I saw another bachur smoking. Being that I was drunk, I didn't have my usual inhibitions. I *sincerely* went up to him and pleaded with him to stop smoking, I told him that it was bad for his health etc. I was able to really do it out of love (b/c i was drunk). He dropped the cigarette and I gave him a big hug.

Now, if I could only bottle that and do the same while sober. ???

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 08 Sep 2011 19:35

Happy to see my thread has taken on a life of its own while I haven't been here so much.

I'll chime in, too with a word about how to give criticism.

Here's the litvish way to give constructive criticism about your wife's cooking:

"Last week's cholent was MUCH worse than this week's!"

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 08 Sep 2011 19:42

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by gibbor120 - 08 Sep 2011 19:46

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 08 Sep 2011 19:47

I just recently made 90 days AGAIN.

Besides that, I had some major slips lately, but they're pretty much behind me now.

I find that, when I think TOO MUCH about all this recovery stuff, it backfires.

The best remedy is to focus on life, and try to do my best, and try to accept life on G-d's terms.

Or, you could alwasy just drop her a link to the cholint thread

If I understand correctly, a big part of recovery depends on improving your awareness of Hashem and relationship with Him. Another major part of recovery depends on changing your attitudes.

I had a couple of books that help with these 2 issues I have read through before, but am now re-reading them and taking them more seriously.

One is another book by Rav Arush: Garden of Emuna. That's for the G-d part, and also helps with changing perspective, too.

The other book is MIND POWER into the 21st century. It is very powerful to help appreciate the power of your thoughts, and very practical in giving tools to change them. (A word of caution: if you read this book, you've got to remember to plug G-d into the equation, too).

So, that would be my recommended reading if anyone wants to listen.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 08 Sep 2011 19:54

I have been meaning to get the garden of peace. have you read that?

I posted here www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=4337.msg118130#msg118130 recently about fighting the Y"H. Or perhaps NOT fighting.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by yehoshua - 09 Sep 2011 06:31

Mazel Tov on the 90. And thank you for writting, that you did have slips - made me feel lighter (like in that Bards sense of the word). Just this morning I feel like I am not going anywhere and you put well, saying that one needs to do his best.

The whole question is a mistery, cos the questions is two folded: what do I do and how do I do it. The mystery of "doing".

You said focus on life. I would say, that is the answer to the question "how to do it"!

Thanks Elyah.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 12 Sep 2011 06:30

I've been having an identity crisis lately (happens every so often).

I realized I have a problem keeping on course. I hear an idea that might be very powerful and helpful, and then I think THIS is the way to recovery. And then another idea... NO, THIS is the way to recovery!

I used to relate to learning gemara in this way. I used to always be looking for the best method of learning, and as soon as I would discover something new, I would start all over again. But, I realized I wasn't getting anywhere that way, and I'd never get anywhere that way. I had to pick a method and stick to it, and I may add to it as I go along, but I can't keep starting over from scratch or switching directions. I might not have the perfect method but, on the other hand, I will make progress and gain satisfaction from it.

Recently I realized that recovery, and the rest of life, is the same thing. I have to pick one method that has proven to be effective and stick to it. I may learn other powerful ideas along the way, but I can't suddenly give center stage to those new ideas. I can use them to make my main approach more effective, but if I keep changing approaches I'll never get anywhere.

And, I have to take all the priorities in my life and list them in order of importance. The most important ones don't necessarily take up the most time during the day, but they are the ones that must be attended to most regularly. So, I made a hierarchy: Recovery, Emunah, Wife, Children, Learning, and Parnosa.

That's as far as I got. I need to determine now, what do I actually need to do in each area to be doing a good job? Then, where there are conflicts, how do I balance between them?

Because until now, when I started worrying about parnoso, so that became the most important thing and everything else was neglected. Then, when I realized I was slacking off in recovery, THAT became the most important thing and everything else was neglected. Then, when I realize I had neglected my wife too much, SHE became the most important thing and everything else was neglected. Sort of like the guy at the circus spinning the plates on the ends of a bunch of sticks--as he gets another plate spinning, the other ones start to fall so he has to rush frantically back to those and get them spinning again, but then the other ones start to fall etc.

I don't think that's the right way to live.

Part of recovery means having a new way of living. I think part of the old way of living is thinking that, if I just exert my intellect enough, or go ask the right people, I'll get whatever answers I need as soon as I need them and I'll get whatever results I need as soon as I need them. Part of this new plan of recovery is PATIENCE, trusting that G-d has the answers and the solutions. I can turn to Him and ask Him for them, but He will provide them on His own terms whenever He sees the time to be appropriate, and however He sees fit.

I have to give up self-reliance, because it doesn't work, and it has driven me crazy.

Another point: I realize that one thing I have been missing is, deep down, I haven't really accepted that G-d is more powerful than my addiction. It seems absolutely unstoppable. So,

this is one thing I need to work on.

I give special thanks to Guard and Dov for helping me through this confusion.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Shteeble - 12 Sep 2011 11:08

Elyah,

Mazel tov on your 90.

I relate a lot to the story of constantly starting over with new, "better" approaches.

I'm curious.

How long to you plan on sticking to the same approach for?

Eventually, some ideas that we have DO turn out to ACTUALLY be much better than previous systems.

kol tuv.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 12 Sep 2011 14:17

I hear you loud and clear Elya. I can relate. Keep us posted.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by the.guard - 12 Sep 2011 18:15

Thanks for the insightful, humble and honest update.

You're a beautiful Jew.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by mechazek - 13 Sep 2011 12:06

Elyah thanks for sharing in such an articulate way I can not believe some one knows exactly what goes on in my head all the time I gotta read what you wrote again.

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