

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 gibbor120 - 11 Oct 2011 14:27

Thanks for sharing Elya. Have a chag samayach!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by obormottel - 11 Oct 2011 16:25

Always very, very helpful Elya. I'm off to reading the books, my financial woes are eating me up...

Just to comment on your point of "who am I to talk to G=d":

Mi ani umoh ani is anivus sheloy bimkoimoi, imho.

You're G-d's only son, a teiere ben-yochid, so you think He prefers you cry yourself into a pillow or run to Him whenever you need something?

Another point, thinking that you're not worthy of G-d's Ear is pure Ga'ava, because that means you think of yourself as "something" and that "something" has qualities that G-d may or may not like. If you realize that before G-d even Moshe Rabbeinu was truly nothing, than this humble realization will throw you into G-d's open hands, and there will be no room for thinking haughty thoughts about your "madreiga".

Just a layman's opinion, based on some chassidic writings.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by ur-a-jew - 11 Oct 2011 22:01

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 11 Oct 2011 14:20:](#)

Additionally, my sponsor pointed out that there are groups that apply the 12-steps to their financial situation; treating it as a spiritual malady, with spiritual (and also practical tools) to improve one's situation. There is a group DA, Debtors Anonymous, and another side of that seems to be Compulsive Under-earning.

There are two book I have been reading from a person who has recovered through DA:

Get out of Debt, Stay Out of Debt, and Live Prosperously,

and Earn What You Deserve.

Both by Jerrold Mundis.

I am finding both books very helpful (the second one repeats a lot from the first one, but I think it's still worth the read).

--Elyah

Thanks, I just reserved both books. You may also want to listen to this workshop from Aryeh Pamensky.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Oct 2011 11:28

I just had a sobering thought:

I have been very frustrated that, although I seem to make some major headway in this progressive battle against lust, I very soon afterwards seem to end up almost where I started--especially with the subtler forms of acting out.

Then, I remembered, this is a progressive illness. My renewed struggles with the same triggers aren't necessarily a sign that I have gotten weaker again; it's just as well a sign of the progression of my malady.

I need to step up my recovery every day in order to keep standing in the same place.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Blind Beggar - 17 Oct 2011 20:06

Hello Elyah.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by yehoshua - 18 Oct 2011 07:05

What do you mean by subtler forms of acting out? Do you mean the finance?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Oct 2011 08:38

[yehoshua wrote on 18 Oct 2011 07:05:](#)

What do you mean by subtler forms of acting out? Do you mean the finance?

I mean looking at tzniyus women on the streets. As opposed to p*rn and m*st.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Oct 2011 08:45

In the book about applying 12-steps to underearning, "Earn What You Deserve," it mentions a (one of many) technique for dealing with negative feelings, such as anger and resentment (these techniques are best applied in the context of a full recovery program). It basically says, instead of trying whatever methods to rid yourself of the emotion, just EXPERIENCE IT, fully. Feel the emotion, abstract, without any actions or people or anything attached to it. The feeling grows more intense, expands, but then reaches a point where it just bursts and then is gone.

I thought, maybe this could also work for lust. When that feeling comes along, instead of fighting it, just accept the feeling. Not to ACT upon the feeling, but just to accept the feeling, an abstract feeling, let it come, and watch it go.

I have been happy with the results. So, I thought it was worth sharing here.

I had the question--isn't this asking for trouble--accepting lust and allowing it to stay around? But I find, through this technique, it goes away a lot quicker then when I'm trying to banish the thought from my mind (whether directly or even indirectly).

Good Moed,

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by yehoshua - 18 Oct 2011 08:50

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 14 Oct 2011 11:28:](#)

I need to step up my recovery every day in order to keep standing in the same place.

In "Alice in wonderland" there is this same thought. Alice is with the black queen and they are running really really fast, but to the surprise of Alice, they are not moving. So Alice asks: "Why are we not moving?" And the queen says: "Well, for moving you have to run even faster!"

So we are stepping to be stopping or even stepping in order to be running backwards. Are we running back to Hashem?

BEEP BEEP BEEP, TRUCKING IN REVERSE!!! 8)

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Back on Track - 18 Oct 2011 12:08

Elyah, a gut moed. I totally agree w/ ur strategy and have found that accepting the feeling is helpful to me as well. These are very subjective feelings and difficult to describe to others. My take on this point ur bringing up is this:

Lusting is actively reveling in, strengthening and facilitating a fantasy abt 'xyz'. The addict within, is getting his fix through lusting in any form.

Accpeting the feeling is an internal dynamic of admitting I have a challenge w/ lust. The addict is not allowed to 'enjoy' this. Its more along the lines of the 'sober you' admitting defeat, the inability to 'fight this' or 'beat this.' With that acceptance though, comes along an internal desire, a sincere wish to be free and happy that the lusting goes away.

My thumbs are tired, but I'd like to say this connects to the mishna stating one must always consider the shar mitzva kneged hefsedo, and the hefsed aveira kneged scharo. There is a payoff and pain involved for both. Pick your pleasure, or pick ur poison. Whichever suits you.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by ur-a-jew - 19 Oct 2011 01:14

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 18 Oct 2011 08:45:](#)

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I had the question--isn't this asking for trouble--accepting lust and allowing it to stay around? But I find, through this technique, it goes away a lot quicker then when I'm trying to banish the thought from my mind (whether directly or even indirectly).

Good Moed,

--Elyah

Isn't this the pshat in surrendering our lust to Hashem. We come to the recognition that whether we get hit with lust or not is not up to us. Just like its not up to us whether some untzinyious person will be placed in out path.

A gutten moed to you too.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 23 Oct 2011 13:40

Not just for lust, but for all emotions. Feelings are just that - just feelings. They are not a reality, unless I sink into them and make it so. We really are free, till we make ourselves prisoners inside our own pain, lust, fear, etc.

But only G-d can spring us from this trap, as addicts before us have discovered already. This is real bitachon, not the 'mitzvah', not l'Shem Shomayim. Real, cuz we **need** it. We are using Hashem (who is Dodi li - for *us*), for ourselves, finally. Exactly what He wants. "HKb"H mis'aveh l'tfilasom shel tzaddikim, so he gives them tzaros." This is the poshutest pshat, no droshos.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Oct 2011 18:33

[dov wrote on 23 Oct 2011 13:40:](#)

Not just for lust, but for all emotions. Feelings are just that - just feelings. They are not a reality, unless I sink into them and make it so. We really are free, till we make ourselves prisoners inside our own pain, lust, fear, etc.

Wow, this is just what I needed to hear.

Oddly enough, when I've been feeling that recovery has been going really well, and when I've been very consciously surrendering my lust and other self-destructive emotions to God, I end up swallowed up in negative emotions.

My wife told me of an encounter she had today with someone of authority who was very condescending of our lifestyle, and who made comments by which my wife felt attacked and offended. I mentioned that we should probably report this person (this person is supposed to be working in a particular office for the public benefit). Then, my wife went ahead and said, "This person had a lot of valid points," and she continued by quoting the very statements she had mentioned made her feel attacked and offended.

I lost myself and yelled, "What are you doing! That lady is totally evil, and absolutely wrong!" Or, something to that effect.

We had a brief argument, but it was bitter. I caught myself after a few minutes and said, "Sorry I blew up. What do we do now?" Which, was a feeble attempt at making amends, though an attempt nonetheless. The argument ended, we had a civil discussion afterwards, but I still feel

an aftertaste from the whole thing.

To make things worse, we were planning to spend some time together this evening. I feel like I just messed things up and, even if we do stick to our original plans, it's just going to be one of those things that you go through because you have to, but end up finding out (in a later argument, about 2-4 years later) that your wife absolutely resented it and has been harboring ill will over the whole thing since then.

I feel unredeemable at this moment. I tried making calls, but didn't have any luck reaching anyone. So, I made some more calls, people I haven't tried to call in a while. I got through. I tried some more calls, and got through.

I still feel pretty awful about the whole thing. But, less so. I need to remind myself that feelings aren't reality. I need to surrender these feelings to Hashem--to ask Him to help me rid myself of them. I need to trust that things will be okay. And, even if there are some hard feelings, we'll get past them. And, even if our original plans don't work out, it's not the end of the world.

It's today. And, tomorrow is another day.

Despite this set-back, overall, everything keeps improving.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 23 Oct 2011 21:38

Thanks for sharing all that. beautiful, really....

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