

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 ZemirosShabbos - 24 Oct 2011 15:04

thanks for sharing so honestly, clearly and for teaching by example

you are a good man

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 24 Oct 2011 16:50

Ditto!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by yehoshua - 25 Oct 2011 14:32

Beautiful Elyah!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 31 Oct 2011 19:47

...you know you've been OFF GYE for a while when you've got to click through multiple pages to find your own thread!

My filter malfunctioned recently. I did one of those stupid things, "BUT, IT'S SET ON HIGH! FOR SURE X-Y-Z WON'T GET THROUGH!" But, it did. The thought entered my mind, "Is this what you're looking for? Is this going to make you happy?" I had this image of myself as a decrepid old man, sitting all alone, hunched over in the dark in front of a computer screen, pathetic, glued to these images. No real human being in sight--no wife, no kids, no friends. No life. Just me and these 2-dimensional images. It wasn't pretty.

My wife has the filter password, so I had to admit to her, "I don't think the filter is working properly." We changed the settings again, to practically de-activate the internet.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by ur-a-jew - 01 Nov 2011 23:38

You're a good man Elyah and I have a lot to learn from you. Thanks for sharing its uplifting.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 27 Nov 2011 07:11

I've had a lot going on lately, and came to a new appreciation of the SA program and how it works.

I don't have so much time to post right now, but I'll say this:

I've been listening to the AA Sandy B recordings (available at Silkworth.net, free downloads). He spoke weekly, each time on a different step. However, it was a large meeting and he assumed that each week there were lots of newcomers, so each week he gave an overview of the 12-step program. I was tempted to start skipping this, but I found the review was really helpful; it has really clarified and solidified some important points for me. Also, each time he elaborated on something more than other times, and that turned out to be something I really needed to hear.

I have gotten caught up alot with people trying to explain HOW and WHY the 12 steps work. Sandy B, however, says something like this: The 12-steps are a spiritual plan (not an intellectual plan). If you analyze them and "study" them, they don't look like they'll DO anything. "These are nice ideas, but they don't look like they have anything to do with my problem."

He quotes one of his friends in AA who says, "AA is taking 12 steps that we don't believe in"--BEFORE we take them. However, AFTER we take them, we see the results, and then we believe in them.

The main thing is to look at the results. Look at your way of life and the results you are getting. How's it going? Look at the way of life of people following the program and the results they are getting. Which would you rather have? Theirs? So give it a try--even if it doesn't make sense. And YOUR JOB is not to analyze and understand, YOUR JOB is just to pay attention to the results you get, and see how they compare to the results you were getting with your previous way of life.

Also, I recently attended a 12-step workshop; a fellow who has been sober through SA for about 16 years took a whole group (about 90 people attended) through all 12 steps--in two evenings. It was fast, but it was thorough; I saw a "Back to Basics" workbook (once offered as part of a GYE phone conference) which says that, originally, the steps were given over very quickly--in a weekend, or in four sessions--once a week for four weeks. I gained a lot from this workshop and, IY"H, I hope to share some more of it here in the forum.

I also attended a TOOLS FOR RECOVERY workshop, with over 100 tools for recovery. I hope to somehow share these with the forum soon, too.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 27 Nov 2011 07:38

Thanks so much for that, Elyah. Beautiful!! KOT

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by yehoshua - 28 Nov 2011 07:30

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Nov 2011 12:44

Here's another thing I wanted to share from the Sandy B recordings:

He says the goal of AA is to stay sober AND HAPPY. "If you're not happy, you're not doing it right."

He says that people have a misconception. They think being "powerless over alcohol" (for us, lust), means that once we take that first drink, we can't control ourselves. But then, if that was the problem, the solution would be simple--just don't take that first drink.

Thank you for the link
Our problem is WHEN WE'RE SOBER! When we're not "drinking" we feel so miserable--we can't handle life. And it feel like such a huge sacrifice to refrain from our "drug of choice." But

you can't stay technically sober and miserable for very long. We're just a time bomb waiting to blow up.

So, the 12 steps gives us a new game-plan for living, a new way to deal with life so we can stay sober and also happy.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by heuni memass - 29 Nov 2011 12:56

Nice point, elya. Thanks.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Nov 2011 12:56

I am going through growing pains. Coming slightly more out of my dillusions of grandeur, becoming a bit more grown-up and responsible.

For a long time I was holding on to this idea that if I just stay in kollel and work on the side (preferreably in kodesh) I'd eventually become some big talmid chacham-mechanech and, on the side, be able to earn a respectable income.

This plan, perhaps, worked at the very beginning when I was newlywed with only a baby or two and, besides that, inflation had not yet quadrupled the price of everything. But, honestly, this plan has failed; everything really fell apart a few years ago.

I have been trying to look at reality, and trying to be realistic. I am prepared to leave "full-time"

learning (which I barely manage part-time anymore), and I am prepared to take training in a new field. After a few months of exploring and researching various options, G-d finger seems to be pointing right now, for me, to a high-tech employment--something not related to Kodesh. I am taking some sort of aptitude test this afternoon, after which I will be eligible to start a training course.

This thought really brought me down yesterday. I made a bunch of calls and talked it out with some other people. Today I discussed it a bit further. Someone told me--a big part of this addiction is that we live in a fantasy world. Coming into reality is part of recovery. Also, a few people are stars, but most people are ordinary, regular, average people. Sometimes we need to "have the courage to be mediocre."

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by an honest mouse - 29 Nov 2011 14:29

both beautiful points eye thanks! I wish that Hashem should guide you down the right path for you and that you should have hatslacha, parnassah and a sipuk from what you are doing.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 29 Nov 2011 15:05

Great pionts Elyah. Thanks.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 01 Dec 2011 07:37

I am starting to feel I have reached a new stage of recovery.

For a long time, I had these messages in my head of selfishness, self-centeredness, and self-pity. The struggle until recently was merely trying to put them aside and do what G-d probably would rather have me do. The struggle went something like this, "OH NO! HERE I AM BEING SELFISH AGAIN! I HAVE TO SURRENDER THIS, I HAVE TO TRY NOT TO DO THIS." And, sometimes more successfully than others, I could put it aside. I experienced only these negative thoughts, and at best I could surrender them.

As part of the 12-step workshop I attended, I took a massive inventory of all my character defects. This was, at first, the result of doing steps 4 and 5. Since then, whenever I have felt disturbed, I tried to pin-point exactly what defect is at play. Do I feel left-out? Am I afraid of authority figures? Am I critical of others? Am I shooting myself down? Am I expecting the worst? Etc. I filled a whole sheet of paper (typed, with only a comma separating one defect from another). It was suggested to us to say the 7th step prayer for 2 weeks, and specify all the defects we want to humbly ask G-d to remove (if you don't ask, He won't remove them). So, throughout the day, I became extremely aware of when I was disturbed, and what was disturbing me (often a half-dozen defects at once), and then I humbly asked G-d to remove these defects--and to replace them with the opposite character assets. It has been very powerful.

I have lately been feeling new emotions. I accompanied my wife on a trip to the hospital--we needed to discuss possible treatment for one of our children (minor hearing loss). Before recovery, I had nothing to do with this; it was all on my wife. Until recently, I would have felt, "I'm off schedule all morning, but I guess I'll catch up; this is really what I should be doing." But now I'm starting to have positive feelings like, "I AM A RESPONSIBLE FATHER; I AM DOING EXACTLY WHAT I OUGHT TO BE DOING RIGHT NOW."

I think I am starting to experience what I've heard so long ago--after you uncover the negative feelings that have been buried, then the positive feelings start to surface, too. (We have buried our negative feelings all our lives--but you can't do that without the positive feelings also getting buried).

7TH STEP PRAYER

"My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do Your bidding. Amen." (Big Book pg 76)

--Elyah

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