

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 - 16 Dec 2011 13:48

Thanks Elyah, good review, and very inspiring!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Dec 2011 13:17

One of the many factors which has made sobriety a challenge is that mikvah night was last monday night, and as of yesterday we still had not done anything.

On Monday night, my wife just suddenly seemed so exhausted, so we just went to bed.

On Tuesday evening, we had to make an emergency shopping trip for a new washing machine. We got home very late and just went to bed.

On Wednesday night, one of our children were up with a fever and a cough.

On Thursday night, I had something else already planned.

So, as each day went by, it was difficult, but I was able to accept the circumstances. My wife really doesn't hate me. It's really not her fault.

But then, Friday night went by. We had a difficult conversation with our oldest son, which drained us. We just went to bed.

Now THAT really got me angry! Friday night! After a whole week and Friday night didn't work out! It'll NEVER work out!

I went to shabbos shacharis thinking, "I hate G-d, I hate my wife, and now I'm going to be saying a bunch of lies for the next few hours by praising G-d in these prayers even though I hate Him!" I was repeating this message to myself, and even saying it out loud here and there. I did try to change my perspective, but it was hard to let go of this prevalent thought. As shacharis went on, I let go more and more.

I decided that I have to be able to accept WITH A FULL HEART that life isn't going to go my way. I have no control over my wife, or over our s*x life. I have to LET GO OF MY EXPECTATIONS. If G-d truly wants me to be married and cellobate for the rest of my life, I need to accept this (though I really hope that's not His plan for me).

I ran that through my brain enough times, and with that I was actually able to achieve a level of peace and sobriety.

I came home and my wife asked me, "How are you doing?"

I said, "I wasn't feeling too good before, but now I'm feeling better."

She said that she could tell I wasn't doing well before (I was obviously upset with her before I left), and she asked how I managed to re-gain peace of mind.

Perhaps this was stupid of me, but I said, "I have come to accept that marital relations aren't a regular part of our relationship. Maybe it works out once in a while, but I really can't expect anything."

We talked afterwards for about an hour. She basically said that yes, she is interested, but it's been a particularly difficult week. And, our life is pretty difficult overall, and perhaps I could be more flexible.

We agreed that there really was no reason we shouldn't try that evening.

THEN, my wife got all worried about our children's safety. We were up late, worrying, and trying to take whatever precautions we could.

I said, "I guess that puts a damper on our evening." But, I really could appreciate that our children's safety is more important than s*x. I was disappointed. BUT THEN I said, "Is there any way we could change the mood?" I was not expecting anything, but it was such a relief just to clear the air, and speak out my mind in a calm and respectful way. I felt a lot better that I could discuss this.

So, I learned something very valuable as a result of all this. Through the program I have been working on my resentments and fears, sharing them with other fellows from the program, and sharing them with G-d. I have been trying to follow the steps--especially in trying to surrendering my will to that of my Higher Power...

But, my wife and I are definitely have some difficulties and misunderstandings between us and, after I can put my expectations aside, and after I can overcome my tendency to blame, and after I can admit to my own contribution to the problem, and after I can put my trust in my Higher Power, IT'S OKAY (and probably recommended) to have some good, open communication with my wife, too. It was a huge relief to realize this.

We're really on the same side, we're in this together, and we can work things out together, too.

Perhaps all this--open communication, is supposed to be an aspect of step 9 (ammends), but if so I missed it until now.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by shemirateinayim - 18 Dec 2011 15:09

1. Get the GO AHEAD from a rav to be together **during the day**. Shabbos afternoon could have worked out for you.

2. technical thingy here, its dangerous for women after the mikva if they don't get together with their husbands, ??????. See ?? ????? for eitzos, things that will prove a shmira for her.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by ur-a-jew - 18 Dec 2011 20:31

Elyah, I very much appreciate your post and can relate to it. Yesterday, I came to the realisation that even when it doesn't happen they way I expected, I don't have to be obsessed with sex. I can actually train myself to look forward to other things. Good things. For example, I like learning. I enjoy getting into it. I can obsess over when I will have the opportunity to learn tonight in place of whether I will have sex tonight. The result is I'm not so bent out of shape about the sex and I may actually get around to the learning.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 19 Dec 2011 13:17

For the 4th step inventory I've got this pre-fab worksheet which contains a set of standard

character defects to look out for in ourselves:

Selfishness

Dishonesty

Self-seeking

Need to control

Fear (of loss)

Inconsiderate

I realized that a list of character defects for me isn't complete without adding a few more (not to get too carried away):

Impatient

Dependant

Indecisive

Just recently, I realized just how significant this impatience is. When something in life doesn't go my way, I really don't believe THIS WILL NEVER GET FIXED. What bothers me most is: this isn't going to get fixed NOW!

I can find a great deal of reassurance reminding myself that things will eventually straighten out, even if it's not going to happen immediately.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 21 Dec 2011 09:58

A really tough week full of obvious challenges passed by for me, and I managed to stay sober throughout. Afterwards, I thought I should have some clear-sailing at least for a few days, but I was feeling the pull of lust just as strong as ever. I spoke to a few people about this and came up with the following insights:

1. Sometimes we're weakest RIGHT AFTER a struggle. It took a lot out of us and we need to be especially on guard until we recuperate. The struggle isn't just emotionally exhausting, it is also physically exhausting; sleep isn't as calm and relaxed, etc. So, I need to take that into consideration and take it easy a bit.

That most struck a chord with me.

Another possibility is:

2. During the struggle, the focus is on SUR M'RA--don't do anything wrong! Do whatever it takes to keep from acting out. During the calm, the task is a different one--ASEH TOV. Nothing feels obviously wrong in life, but without taking positive action to break out of self-centeredness and to be helpful, the pull towards lust can be just as powerful.

3. Perhaps there are yet deeper issues that I have failed to acknowledge and to deal with. It's obvious that something's wrong when our hot water heater is broken and our washing machine is broken and our children are sick and we are waking up alot throughout the night. BUT, when the externals of life seem calm and all I am left with is the internal restlessness (dis-ease), it's not so easy to notice. And, I think a lot of my restlessness is because I need more structure throughout my day, and in life in general. Or, I need to accept that, at times, being off-schedule is the schedule I have to accept.

4. Also, another person I spoke to put it this way, "The pilot light is always on." So, no matter what, we can't ever think we're safe from lust.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by aamallen - 21 Dec 2011 10:30

I haven't been following this thread for the 1000's of posts but the most recent episode - waiting for the right time after the mikvah to have relations really hit a chord for me.

So typical- immediately when there an oppertunity to be together after niddah you think - well what are you (the wife) waiting for - I have been good for two whole weeks and now I am ready to burst (something like that) then you tell yourself wait- if your wife is tired, upset or whatever is not going to be enjoyable anyway - hold on there your time will come .

Then shabbos or another "ideal time" comes up and you tell yourself - ahh! finally I will get what I have been waiting for and then low and behold it still doesnt work out -

So then you tell yourself - now I have a good reason to be upset - after all I have been good for a really long time - I have been patient - doesnt she realize what a struggle I have been going through to make it to today - how can she possibly say no now -

I have been there so many times I can even "taste" the sentiment and the frustration

Often this will bring me to "talk" about us and our sexual relationship and - where it has gone wrong

This of course is the kiss of death and very very very unlikely to lead to anything physicial that night or the next

So what is a guy to do ???

Here is what I have learned - often the test is not forever but lies just a few meters beyond where we are - i.e. if on that friday or saturday night when things dont go as planned we are still good and tolerant - patient - its very possible that that exactly what Hashem was waiting for and if we pass that moment when everything is on the line - things we really start to fall into place. just another few meters - that all it takes.

On note I have learned that the whole line of thinking - i.e. I am due for some S-X ! is very negative and detrimental

becuase it puts the focus on the physical act and what I (the husband) need rather than the relationship of what my wife needs - we turn ouselves from giver to a taker - we become selfish- this is not what hashem wants and therfore he is likely to make things more difficult the more we push rather than better

Think if Breer Rabbit and the tar baby the more you push against the obstacles the harder it is to break free

BUT if you let go - not forever - not a life of celibacy chas V'shalom- but you truly focus on your wife and her needs and let the desire for physical activity go momentarily - you'll see - she will surprise you and when you do have S-X it will be much much much more enjoyable

good luck- this is a tough one

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by ur-a-jew - 21 Dec 2011 13:38

Aamallen, so true what you wrote thank you. I saw a story from Reb Zilberstein this past week along these lines. There was an elderly woman, a Holocaust survivor who had no one to take care of her. There was a woman in the neighborhood who would care for the woman. She was always there for, taking her around, visiting. There was a time she was in the hospital and it looked like the end was near. The woman said to the elderly woman, I just wanted to ask you remember me in your will. Thereafter, the elderly woman was niftar when the lawyer opened the will the original will left the woman helper her spacious apartment. But there was an addendum to the will the day this woman asked her to remember her in the will taking back the bequest. Because as a result of the request the older woman saw that the whole time this was the motivation. Says Reb Zilberstein so many times in our life the yeshua is right there behind the next door. And through our actions because we get impatient WE bring upon ourselves that we lose this thing that was otherwise coming to us.

Continued hatzlacha

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Dec 2011 15:29

202 clean days today, one day at a time. My longest streak was 211 days. I feel I am in a much stronger place this time around.

Yesterday I had one or two major issues buzzing around in my head. I took some time to do some writing--I thought I would get these couple of things out of my mind and then get back to being more calm about life. I wrote, and wrote, and wrote, and kept on writing until I came up with over a dozen major issues. It was nice to get them out on paper and, strangely enough, now that they have been set down in black and white, I see how G-d is working His magic, on His own time and not mine, to relieve these problems.

One problem is that the people in my family are all tangled together in a big mess. I have managed to stay out of it, but now I am improving my relationship with people I haven't had so much to do with in a long time, and I'm starting to get caught up in the cross-fire.

My sister says that Aunt so-and-so is impossible and tells me all the horrible things she is doing. Then I speak to Aunt so-and-so, and she seems really together. AM I CRAZY!

Then I recalled something from the Sandy B recordings. His sister was planning a big family get-together. He said, "But don't invite Uncle Bill--he's so loud and obnoxious!" Her reply was, "Oh, he's a wonderful person; he only acts like that when you're around."

Our own behavior and our own attitudes affects the way that people act towards us. So, when my sister complains about Aunt Bertha (name has been changed to protect the person's true identity), that is very likely because my sister, with her own shortcomings, is drawing out some of the worst of Aunt Bertha. But, as I believe my own character is much healthier in many ways than my sister (a great deal thanks to recovery), I am likely to have a completely different experience with Aunt Bertha; I will draw out some of the better aspect of her, and I will not activate some of her less desirable attributes.

So, that was one issue I feel much better about.

Another major issue was that we are having trouble with our oldest son (10). He is acting very chutzpa-dic towards us. We imagined the worst--"Oh no, all these problems that we have, being addicts and co-addicts with control-freak character traits, ARE SHOWING UP IN OUR SON, NOW." Despite all our effort to improve ourselves, we feel that we totally lost as far as our children are concerned.

My wife spoke to a friend from her group, and she reassured us that chutzpa is rampant in children in our generation; it is normal and doesn't have to be a sign of some deep underlying issues. She did advise us that he needs more discipline (ask your own sponsor regarding your own situation) as it has been a bit lacking until now and so he is testing the boundaries; he needs to know that his mommy can be strong; without that, he is perhaps unsettled. We should give that a try before looking into deeper issues.

We have put that plan into action, and this was another issue which I feel more at peace about now.

Another issue was insufficient income. I hope to be able to post soon about this problem being resolved, too.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by ur-a-jew - 28 Dec 2011 16:05

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 28 Dec 2011 15:29:](#)

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So, that was one issue I feel much better about.

How true this is, especially in the way a lust addict relates to his wife. I often think that my wife is being so difficult especially when it relates to the bedroom, but when I manage to take a step back, I realize that the way I relate to her, brings out those feelings. If only I would control my own emotions and feelings, I would bring out the better aspects of her and it would make for a far more peaceful relationship. Thanks Elyah for the reminder.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Dec 2011 19:44

[ur-a-jew wrote on 28 Dec 2011 16:05:](#)

If only I would ~~control~~ **surrender** my own emotions and feelings, I would bring out the better aspects of her and it would make for a far more peaceful relationship.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by ur-a-jew - 28 Dec 2011 20:03

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 28 Dec 2011 19:44:](#)

[ur-a-jew wrote on 28 Dec 2011 16:05:](#)

If only I would ~~control~~ **surrender** my own emotions and feelings, I would bring out the better aspects of her and it would make for a far more peaceful relationship.

I surrender! Thanks for setting me straight, probably why I've been having such a hard time lately.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 01 Jan 2012 07:31

A couple of weeks ago I was spending a lot of time doing recovery work instead of doing other things. My wife was actually jealous, "How come I can't just take a morning off and do this stuff?" Her sponsor told her, "Your husband is a lot sicker than you are!"

So, I had a lot of things in my head this morning, particularly a huge resentment towards my wife. I took a while to do a writing exercise, sort of stream-of-consciousness, to get all the garbage out of my head and help me turn my attention in a better direction. I thought, for the fun of it, I would share it with you:

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Writing exercise: Jan 1, '12

I am extremely angry with my wife.

I just went out on a limb to explore a new job option, something that I admit isn't ideal but that I'm very interested in. I was willing to schlep to an orientation on Erev Shabbos, and I was willing to change my whole schedule around this week to attend training seminars, and I was willing to travel to Tel Aviv for a training seminar.

I admit, this job doesn't seem entirely appropriate for me, but on the other hand, it does seem like a reasonable beginning in the field of coaching, which I am greatly interested in.

I really am a lot happier about the local job with Company Z, but I am scared because it is part-time and only earns XYZ a month which, after taxes and after losing the kollel stipend and havtachat hachnasa and in case our bituach leumi doesn't get renewed, we're going to end up pretty much at the exact same place where we are now.

However, Company Z is just as much a good beginning as life coaching. I'll have a foot in the door with employment, and our neighbor said that Company Z is a big company with lots of opportunities.

So, what am I angry about? Company Z is just as advantageous as coaching. Besides that, in the short term, it is much more advantageous—a salary starting immediately at XYZ a month, and I don't have to wait a year or two to build up to this.

With life coaching, I could maintain the kollel stipend, but maybe not, and probably I would lose havtachat hachnasa.

At any rate, a salary from employment, even if it is the same as all these nebuch sources of income, is still better. It is more stable and I don't have to answer to a vaada in order to be accepted, and I don't have to worry if the vaada is going to refuse again after 6 months. Once you've got your foot in employment, especially with a reputable company (though one that I think is exploiting the charedi community), I think it's easier to keep finding employment or to stay employed than to keep proving yourself to some wicked vaada.

Also, I was excited about this technical writing. I wasn't really excited. I was willing to go out on a limb and take this course and spend ABC for it and accept full time employment schlepping back and forth to Tel Aviv for a year or two to get started. But that would be such a radical change in my life and I'd rather start with a less-radical change, if possible. Why take a risk and make such a radical change if it's not necessary. I have generally found that a gradual change is better than a radical change.

STILL, taking on a part-time job is also a radical change. I really haven't had any employment over the past TEN YEARS. I have done a little job here and there, but nothing I could actually consider to be real employment.

I can always look into life coaching later on, and I can always look into technical writing later on.

I have not, for sure, heard anything from Company Z yet. I have only heard ABOUT them, but it seemed pretty urgent and like a real possibility.

So, I am afraid that maybe it's a mirage, and for the sake of a mirage I am giving up a start in coaching, or a start in technical writing.

You know what? These aren't the ONLY job opportunities available. If I COULD take the Technical Writing course and get a job, but there are other courses, other jobs.

I also gave up this computer programming course as a result of total indecision and confusion. So, if it didn't work out, it wasn't meant to work out. I wasn't really thrilled about the possibility. I was taking the offer because it was available, and it was the first thing available, too.

I see a lot of similarities between looking for a job and looking to get married. I do a hishtadlus, and just because an opportunity comes up doesn't mean it's the RIGHT opportunity. The only scary thing is, when you don't have a job and you are looking for one, your expenses don't all go on hold in the mean time.

So, what comes out from this?

I need to stay open-minded. I don't know what's a truly good opportunity or not. If I miss out on something, I shouldn't feel that I have missed out on the last opportunity ever. As long as I passed it up for a good reason, I can still feel good about the choice I made. G-d has plenty of opportunities waiting for me, and the hishtadlus of looking for employment is also valuable; just like the hishtadlus of finding a shidduch even without getting married; with each failed shidduch, I clarified my goals ever more, and learned a few more things about myself, and learned a few more things about dealing with other people, and it all made it much more likely that I would, indeed, recognize when truly the right shidduch came around, and that everything would work out in the right time.

What about my anger towards my wife?

I feel that, because of HER, I am missing out on some great opportunities and I'll never find the right job. She is so critical of everything and so skeptical. But, more opportunities will come. And, to be honest, my wife is right to be skeptical here; I'm so anxious to find a job I'm not really thinking clearly.

How can I deal with my wife in such a way that won't upset me?

I think it is most helpful to realize, that more—and better, job opportunities will come. If the coaching position was an office job, she would be much more supportive. But, it's basically

some sort of pyramid scheme of self-employed coaches which, is not very good for me right now. True there's a low risk involved and work can start very soon, but with all the uncertainties, it would be more appropriate to start with as a supplementary income—AFTER I have got some other work which is more stable and more reliable.

I should really invite my wife's opinion. "Hi, I'm not thinking clearly about this. What do you think? Do you think this is an opportunity I should go for, or do you think I should look for something else."

I am also bothered because I feel my wife turned on me. At first she was supportive—or at least trying to be—when I went to this coaching orientation. However, she really WAS more supportive at the beginning. And, if it was a regular job in some sort of office, and if the opportunity with Company Z didn't suddenly come up, I think my wife would still be supportive.

So, the facts changed, but I didn't adjust to them; my wife did, however, which I should really be grateful for.

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Some facts have been changed or obscured for the sake of anonymity.

I do feel much better now, and much more capable of dealing with life (and with my wife).

I noticed, when I feel I have run out of stuff to write but that some issue is still unresolved, I write myself a question, and then try to answer it.

I write whatever comes to mind, intuitive stream-of-consciousness, whatever flows. I don't give much thought to it; I'm not trying to be logical and come up with the RIGHT answers or the REAL issues; I'm just writing what I FEEL like writing. That, more than logical analysis trying to accurately figure myself out, seems to produce the RIGHT answers and the REAL issues. I DO try to be aware of my character defects at play, and try to let my better character traits emerge.

I usually just post the results of such exercises, but I thought it would be interesting at least once to post the actual process I went through.

I hope you, too, maybe found this helpful,

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 01 Jan 2012 20:56

Some people have found that when they cannot seem to accomplish what they'd like with their wives *verbally* - they **write** their feelings and what they'd like to say, to their wives. Then they ask them to write a response back to them.

I would strongly suggest handwriting, not emails. There is something cheap about emailing - people say things they do not really mean, do not really believe, and then "click!" Kind of fake, like I am behind a mask. That's why people get into so much trouble at work firing off nasty emails at co-workoers or bosses...then regretting it. They'd never have said that, nor written it in a *real* letter.

Also, when my wife and I get into a tizzy and cannot communicate, we have "a meeting of two". Adhering to the Robert's Rules of Order (as in typical 12-step meetings), we each take turns sharing our feelings and thoughts and are careful not to use the second-person. We speak about how we each feel and make reference to each other in the third-person, only. We do not interrupt ach other, and we do not have cross-talk. **No cross-talk** means that we do not respond *directly* to anything the other person said. Rather, we express how we feel and think - rather than trying to pull down what the other person thinks or talk about our reaction to what they feel. See, that's where arguments and self-centered power-struggles take hold.

It was very effective, and opened us up to real intimate talking, eventually. It works in marriage and any relationship where the parties feel seriously enough about the relationship to actually

take the time to respect eachother enought to do this.

Continued hatzlocha!!

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