

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.

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 12 Jan 2012 17:51

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 12 Jan 2012 13:53:](#)

The work is rather to work the steps and change my attitude to begin with.

Relate to everything you wrote, but the words, "*change* my attitude". Instead of imagining that I am 'changing' myself, I get nowhere unless I say in my heart "**choose** a different attitude". And I can only really choose a different way to think about stuff that happens in my life, by taking different actions.

Like, admitting I am (unfortunately) prideful, and that is why my son's *not listening* drives me wild or makes me emotionally messed up. I am afraid of silly things like never having sex a gain, and that is why my wife not being in the mood for it makes me so squirrely inside that I feel I *must* have it tonight. I really believe that nobody *else* has the 'right' to just be a jerk sometimes, so when a person (yes, indeed a jerk) cuts me off rudely (and dangerously) on the highway I feel *desperate* to overtake him and slow down in front of him just to teach him a lesson...etc., etc...

All these things are excused in my heart in some way, by Torah!

Yes.

I tell myself deep in my heart that:

it's **Kibud av v'eim** that drives me wild from my son's behavior...

it's her lack of taking my normal male needs/our shalom bayis/the risk of me having a wet
)seriously, that drives me wild with lust for my wife....

it's my obligation to teach this bully (and he may indeed be a bully) that he simply can't get away
with this kind of dangerous behavior...

I sacrifice my sanity and yishuv ha'da'as way too easily.

Like you said, "we stop fighting everything and everybody" (see AA, at the end of the story
started on p. 407), and we take action to choose another way to behave.

dream (:

And it is only **G-d** who changes us, if we are ever changed, at all. And He does, thankfully. For if
we had that power, we good, frummeh yidden would have done that long, long ago.

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 31 Jan 2012 14:11

Haven't written in a while. Thank G-d I've been doing well.

Yesterday I had a very productive morning. Then I came home and my wife was away so it was
my job to take care of the kids. I was not happy about this, as I have been especially frustrated
lately because I don't have work at the moment and I don't even have the peace of mind or free
time to figure out how to find work. My wife called that she would be even later than expected

coming home. I got extremely angry and started snapping at the kids.

One of the kids had somewhere to go, and another one asked to go to a friend's house, and my wife mentioned I should ask one of the neighbors to babysit our youngest. I decided instead of trying to be a martyr and manage this all by myself, I sent all the kids out. I was going to take a nap, but lustful thoughts came into my head. I made a few calls and felt better. I managed to nap a little while, and took consolation in the thought "it's not all or nothing." I might not have the whole afternoon to figure out a work strategy, but at least I can salvage part of it. I had about an hour before the kids were supposed to come home. I recently made a list of all the work efforts I could do. I managed to prioritize this list. Then, I realized there were one or two big items which, if I tackle them, everything else will fall into place. So, I started to work on those things (and to ignore the things which are right now just busy-work, though important they may seem to be). In a brief time I clarified an awfully lot and felt alot better.

I did this work on the computer. I was feeling particularly susceptible to lust so, although I only intended to use a word processor, I unplugged my modem line from the wall to reduce the possibility that I might make a quick slip to some place on the internet where I shouldn't be going.

I was able to finish off the day on an especially good note. I stayed home to take care of dinner time so my wife could go somewhere she needed to go. I was patient and in good spirits taking care of the children for dinner time and putting them to bed. I know they enjoyed their time with Tahte.

Thank G-d for another day in recovery.

--Elyah

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by chaimyakov - 01 Feb 2012 01:17

Wow. You deserve a great big Shkoach and a hug. i am very inspired by how you handled everything especially unplugging the modem, simply brilliant.

Hatzlacha in all things GOOD.

chaimyakov

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by tehillimzugger - 08 Feb 2012 17:55

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 12 Feb 2012 13:52

Hello. I recently went through another one of those very rough moments. I was trying to work steps 4-9 in order to, with G-d's help, gain a healthy perspective on life.

It didn't work.

AWESOME!

I realized my steps 1-3 were not in order; particularly my step 2. "Came to believe that a Higher Power could restore me to my sanity."

I believed that G-d COULD, but I didn't feel that He WOULD.

A while ago I put aside my conception of my Higher Power, a G-d who does wonderous miracles, because I didn't feel I could consistently rely on such a Power. I accepted, instead, that G-d orchestrates my life in subtle ways--through the people I meet, or through the thoughts that enter my head--in order to guide my life. That was something I could live with on a regular basis.

But, I was missing something, which I just realized. I believed that, through the people I meet and the thoughts that enter my head, eventually, G-d will be able to direct the world AS I WOULD LIKE IT TO BE. He will make things happen THE WAY I WANT. Not suddenly, but AT LEAST eventually! And, have seen a lot of things work out other than the way I would desire--through the people I meet, and through the thoughts that enter my head.

SO, I had to refine my conception of my Higher Power a little more. Yes, He does influence my life constantly, and subtly--through the people I meet and the thoughts that enter my head. BUT, He will guide my life according to what HE has in mind for me; not according to what I have in mind for Him.

I can't expect that He will make life turn out exactly the way I would like it to be. But, I can rely on Him to keep me alive, calm, and sober, no matter what happens (provided I make my effort to turn to Him instead of drowning in my ego).

--Elyah

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 20 Feb 2012 14:40

The other day I was talking to my wife at lunch. I felt a thought burning within me, "I MUST GET TO THAT COMPUTER. WHEN WHEN WHEN CAN I LEAVE THE KITCHEN, GET AWAY FROM MY WIFE, AND GET TO THAT COMPUTER!"

I wasn't going to look at p*rn. I was just going to do work-related activities (of various levels of importance and significance). I realized THAT FEELING was an obsession no less than my obsession for lust. It took over my whole mind and heart. IT IS LUST, of a different sort.

I realize I want to surrender EVERY obsession to G-d.

On a seemingly unrelated topic: After a couple of years (almost 3) since joining GYE, I have made a lot of progress in coping better with life, and with not m*sturbating or looking at p*rn. By the grace of G-d, I am sober today for 8 months and 11 days, one day at a time, and I feel like I am in a strong place and growing ever stronger, overall--with G-d's help. I had two clean streaks previously, each for about 7 months, which is still a big improvement (I think, before GYE, I was acting out at least once a week). Yet, I feel that I have made barely a dent in my obsessive looking at women on the street.

I spoke to someone recently, who said something very clear and obvious, though I never really thought about it so clearly before. Looking at women has two components--the actual looking, and the WANTING to look. As long as I WANT to look, I won't be able to physically keep my eyes down for very long. And, if I don't keep my eyes down, even in the unlikelihood that I don't WANT to look, I will look--and if I look, I will start lusting.

I have been trying to figure out: WHY do I look? Very intellectual and analytical. What am I missing? What am I looking for out THERE? How can I fill this void; WHAT do I need to fill it with?

I didn't find an answer yet. BUT, I noticed something very subtle. That same feeling I felt when I wanted to go use the computer, a sort of INNER EMOTIONAL PANIC, a BURNING FEELING OF OBSESSION in my heart, a feeling which I thought was the product of SEEING some female in the street, actually PRECEEDS my eyes even looking up or even looking at anyone.

LUST is THAT FEELING, which exists even in a vacuum. It is actually not connected to any particular trigger. IT'S AN INNER FEELING OF NEEDING SOMETHING, OF WANTING SOMETHING, even before I look, and even if there is nobody to look at. It is that RAW feeling which is LUST, it is THAT FEELING which drives me to act out, and it is THAT FEELING which I need to be aware of, and which I need to surrender to my Higher Power.

I feel this is a whole new level of awareness. I hope that, in trying to describe this realization, I have done at least some justice to it. I hope, perhaps, you might find it useful.

--Elyah

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by tehillimzuger - 20 Feb 2012 14:43

classic shtickel, elyah

very true

thanx

=====

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 20 Feb 2012 15:03

Wow Elyah, are you inside my head?

I feel that all the time, whenever I am bored or stressed out. Just an undefined **yearning** for **something**...

If I let it fester it will latch on to the next trigger I see and drive me crazy. when I'm lucky i can catch it and use it for good. I **want** to daven better, i **want** to be a better husband/father, I **want** to feel love for my wife....

=====

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 20 Feb 2012 17:16

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 20 Feb 2012 14:40:](#)

I spoke to someone recently, who said something very clear and obvious, though I never really thought about it so clearly before. Looking at women has two components--the actual looking, and the WANTING to look. As long as I WANT to look, I won't be able to physically keep my eyes down for very long.

I think that's what it means to "give up" and "let go". We need to be willing to "give up" our desire to look and "let go" of it. As long as we want to look, we are in a struggle. I think that is what dov means when he says that the struggle with the Y"H is toxic. If we are struggling, we want it. In that case, it is just a matter of time until we fall. We need to let go of that desire, we need to give it up. I think that is step 3. Turn our will to G-d. Meaning give up the right to WANT to look. Only want what Hashem wants for us.

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by mechazek - 21 Feb 2012 13:12

I have been told that the whole idea of the 12 steps is to enable us to live life comfortably that way we will not need to act out. When I feel the need to look I am not comfortable, it is usually a sign that I am not completely at peace with my reality.

Someone shared with me recently a tool on how not to lust. When you see that married woman that you absolutely must look at that woman belongs to someone else she is not yours to look at and cherish and want. She is none of my business she belongs to another man. Sometimes I pray that she has a strong loving relationship with her husband and that my relationship with my wife is a loving intimate connection between us.

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Feb 2012 13:19

8 1/2 months. Thank G-d.

The Big Book describes the illness of addiction as a sickness of the Mind, Body, and Soul.

I understood the Mind--keep thinking about women and s*x (or keep thinking about how I shouldn't be thinking about them.) And, absolutely convinced that all I need is s*x to make all my problems go away.

I understood the Body--that I can't control my mind or my hands.

But "the Soul," was a mystery. I just thought it was a side-effect of the other two areas.

But, in light of that obsessive feeling I recently described here, I think "Soul," means the feelings in the deepest recesses of our hearts.

I learned a Chassidic Sefer once, "B'nei Machshava Tova" by the author of "Chovos HaTalmidim." One of the things he says is that we can feel spirituality, we can feel our soul, but we've been conditioned to misinterpret it. In truth, every emotion we have--no matter how small, is really a stirring of the soul.

So, I think those raw feelings in my heart are signs of my soul.

To recover, healing must come about in all three areas.

Until I became aware of these feelings, in my little prayers, I surrendered my mind and body--my thoughts and actions, to G-d. I tried to hand those over. But, especially against those constant struggles (such as looking at women in the street), I felt the progress was minimal.

I think a reason was because I had not surrendered all three areas.

Now, I try also to surrender those raw emotions. I feel the stirrings in my heart--before I even think of looking at anyone. I surrender those feelings to G-d. Sobriety is calm, and through this I have found a new, and deep inner sense of calm.

--Elyah

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Feb 2012 13:23

Here's another, unrelated thought:

Did you ever hear that the defects you see in other people are really a reflection of YOUR defects?

I used to understand that as: Whatever they are doing is really something that I also do. However, in order for me to notice the character defect, it is eggagerated in this other person.

On a more sophisticated level, I realized that, their defect is a reflection of my defect--but I might not necessarily do exactly the same way. In some abstract way, there is some relationship between what I find distasteful in this person, and what I need to correct in myself.

I recently had another realization about this: When I see a defect in another person, it is a reflection of my own defect. There is perhaps NO connection between what I am bothered by in their behavior and between what is wrong with me. Nevertheless, it is a reflection of my own character defects: If I were more understanding, or more tolerant, or more loving, or less self-centered, etc, I would not be bothered.

--Elyah

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Feb 2012 13:33

Hat trick today.

I have been feeling very positive lately; like things are starting to flow.

After 15 years of sitting by myself in front of a computer hoping a good job would just suddenly appear, as if I would see an ad, "Looking to hire Elyah." I am making a lot of changes now, and I am actually speaking to people and I am sending out real resumes to real companies that might actually hire me for a real job. (I am also working with a life-coach to guide me along.)

I have had to come out of my dream-world for these changes, I have had to come down for a landing in reality, and that would not have been possible without recovery.

I was describing my recent successes to someone, and noticed how happy and excited I was sounding. I was a bit concerned--even when good things happen, it creates a sort of positive "restlessness," which can lead to acting out.

But, I don't feel like I'm on the road right now to acting out. Why?

I think there's a difference between when things in life, whatever external circumstances, go my way and then I feel happy from it. I am getting happy about something that is beyond my control.

Here, I think my happiness is a positive thing; I am happy about the responsible choices and actions I have been taking. I am happy to be thinking creatively, and practically, to overcome life's obstacles. These are things I should find enjoyment in. Perhaps this is part of what is meant by a "spiritual life" or "an entirely different plane of existence," or something like that which is described in the Big Book. Life is supposed to be enjoyable.

--Elyah

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Feb 2012 13:35

A while ago I noticed that so much of my focus in recovery is, "don't act out; don't look; don't touch" etc.

I added to my arsenal of little prayers, "Please G-d, help me to have a positive sobriety."

I think it has made a difference.

--Elyah

=====

=====