

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 yehoshua - 14 Jun 2012 07:09

VAU, MAZEL TOW!!!!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 03 Jul 2012 16:44

In the SA groups I go to, when you have a sobriety anniversary, you get to give a little speech. So, upon reaching a year of sobriety, this is basically what I said:

I usually feel like I'm not getting anywhere in recovery. However, I recently celebrated a year of sobriety, which gave me a chance to look back and see that I really have made some progress.

I have actually been on the road to recovery for about three years. I started as an active member in the Guard Your Eyes forum. That helped but, for me, it wasn't enough. I joined the Dovid Chaim 12-step phone conferences (offered through GYE). That helped a lot more, but I fell after a seven-month clean streak, twice. I realized the long-distance support wasn't strong enough for me (I'm in a different time zone than most of the other people on the phone conference). I needed face-to-face support, so I joined SA just over a year ago.

I remember I used to feel possessed by a demon, being forced to masturbate--about once a week. I have not felt this feeling in a long time, thank G-d. Also, whenever I sat down in front of the computer a voice in my head would say, "porn, porn." I felt compelled to look, no matter what I was doing and no matter what was going on in my life. Even when I didn't look, I felt this constant struggle. Thank G-d, and thanks to the program, I usually don't hear this voice anymore. I can sit and work at the computer for hours without the thought of pornography entering my head.

I also used to suffer from terrible mood swings--sometimes I would be flying in the clouds, and at other times I'd feel like I was trudging through hell (neither of which is healthy). Thanks to recovery, these mood swings are less frequent, and less extreme. A really serious resentment which used to linger for weeks or months and wreak havoc all the while, now, with the tools of recovery, is usually gone in less than twelve hours. I can sometimes get rid of lesser resentments on the spot.

For example, I went to the hospital a few weeks ago and had an unpleasant encounter with the guard at the door. I was in the hospital for a few hours and when I left, the same guard was still there. I went over to him and made a quick amends, "Sorry for the misunderstanding." He responded, "You're all right! You're all right!" I knew I had done the right thing at the right time; I didn't want to have to wait for six months later and then wonder how I'll ever manage to do amends with this guard that I'll never be able to find again.

It's not only that negative aspects of my life that are starting to go away, but I see that positive things are starting to happen, too. I have been working "free-lance" for about ten years, which means I've basically been wasting a lot of time on the computer and not earning any money. I just recently got a regular job with regular work that pays. I'll admit it's not the greatest job in the world, but it's finally a step in the right direction after having traveled in the wrong direction for most of my life. I'm finally being responsible and mature.

In addition, I'm part of a kollel--a program for Talmudic studies. I've spent years learning on my own--nobody else was fast enough, or smart enough, or dedicated enough to learn with me. I have started to recognize that this is really a result of my sickness--staying isolated. I have started being involved with other people and learning with them--no matter what their capabilities are, and no matter what their personality may be. I have even starting learning with someone whom I once despised--but I'm enjoying it now, and I am happy now to spend time with him.

Furthermore, for years I was seething with resentment at my Rosh Kollel (the head of this program) for not recognizing my talents and putting me to use. In the past few years he would always show up on my fourth-step (or tenth-step) inventories. I'm so smart with such great abilities to teach! But he has never given me a teaching position. Lately I have been able to put aside my resentments, accept things the way they are, and I even got up the courage to discuss this matter with him. As a result, opportunities have opened up. Not long ago the Rosh Kollel was out of the country, and I taught in his place. If not for the program of recovery, I'd still be sitting by myself in a corner seething with resentment.

You probably appreciate hearing how the program has made a difference in my life, but I imagine you're even more interested to know how the program can make a difference in your life. What did I actually do to get these results that, perhaps, you can do and get similar results?

A big part of it was just going through the motions, though I felt stupid doing them. I would call people to say that I'm having a lust attack, or even just call to say hello. I called enough people often enough that people would start calling me, too. On a number of occasions I was sitting at the computer determined to look at pornography. I didn't want to give it up, and I didn't want to call anyone about it. But, just at that moment, someone called me--to say they were having a

lust attack, or just to say hello. I didn't have enough sanity to call them for help, but I still had enough sanity to pick up the phone and admit that I needed help. They instructed me, "Get away from the computer. Get out of the house and go for a walk." I listened, and I wouldn't have a year's sobriety today without that. On one hand it was a miracle they called just when I needed it, but on the other hand such calls have become a regular part of life for me.

For me, the most important phrase I learned in recovery is, "Increase your awareness of your perceptions and motives." When I joined the phone conferences with Duvid Chaim he said, "If this is the only thing you learn in the program, it's worth it." At first I became more aware of triggers, "I'm aimlessly searching the net, so if I keep at this I'll be searching for porn soon." Later, I started to become aware of my negative feelings which compel me to act out--mostly fears and resentments. Through the tools of the program I learned to deal with them instead of letting them fester. As time went on, I started to notice restlessness, irritability, and discontent, and more subtle feelings. Now when I just feel somewhat unpleasant, I know something is wrong; I know I've got to write about it and share it with someone as soon as I can.

I originally gave this speech at a Hebrew meeting which, for me, is another miracle of recovery. I have been afraid to speak to people all my life even in English, my mother tongue, and I have been especially uncomfortable to communicate in Hebrew. I attended a Hebrew SA group because it was in my neighborhood, though I felt uncomfortable with the language and didn't want to come back after the first time. Yet, the other fellows made me feel welcome and accepted--we had SA in common. Since then, as a result of the program, I was able to put aside my fears. I became more comfortable reading publicly in Hebrew, and I have even lead meetings. And, when celebrating a year of recovery, I was able to speak in Hebrew for a straight half hour, and what I had to say was understood and appreciated. Afterwards, when I got home my wife asked me, "Did you say anything about us?" I said, "No." I can't believe I forgot. So, thanks to her, I have a bit more to add...

I'll say that, at first, I hated going to meetings. I hated sharing with, "No cross-talk, please." I wanted to tell everyone about my problems, and then I wanted them to tell me answers. Instead, I'd complain about lust, and the next person would completely ignore me--he'd complain about his own life. We'd go around the room and people would complain about their jobs, their parents, their children, their wives, and their own struggles with lust. But nobody in the room would give me any solutions to my personal problems. I hated it. It took me a while to get used to this, and I'm just starting to really appreciate it. As an addict, I think, the biggest part of my problems is that I keep them to myself. Sharing, just plain sharing, is a big part of the solution. It is new for me to open up and relate to people as a human being, to be able to share emotions rather than just exploit information.

This is starting to happen in my marriage now, too. For example, I was disturbed about the family dynamics at dinner time and I recently told my wife how I felt. I just shared my feelings very politely and without placing blame. Later on in the week my wife asked me, "So what are we going to do to change dinner time? You said you didn't like it." I felt, though, that I didn't need to change it anymore. I just needed to tell my wife how I felt about it, and that alone was healing. I must say that, yes, problems still remain that do need a practical solution. But, as part of recovery, my wife and I are learning to take those problems to the experts who are qualified to solve them; we are learning to admit that we don't always know best.

As I become more aware of my perceptions and motives, I recognize that I am as powerless over anger as much as I am over lust. I have begun to surrender this, too, and life has only gotten better as a result. I see this, especially, with my children. I am able to answer their questions and be helpful to them--even though they are interrupting me in the middle of work. I can put my three-year-old to bed and, although it may take a half-hour or more, and although he may scream and cry all the while, and although I may have planned to do other things, I no longer resort to yelling or other such measures. I can remain calm and gently rock him, and even sing to him. Thanks to the tools of recovery, I am becoming the type of father that I had always hoped to be.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 03 Jul 2012 17:01

Yup. Sounds like recovery to me, too. Makes me want to cry with gratitude sometimes.

Ashreinu, mah tov chelkeinu just to be in reality and to see it isn't bad at all, if we don't *make* it bad...

Thanks for sharing that, Eyeball!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 03 Jul 2012 19:17

Thanks for this beautiful Share, **Elyah!**

It sure is a good thing that I was not sitting in at that Hebrew meeting where you shared all this. It would've been a pity to miss out on something as encouraging as this!

Keep on sharing your ES&H with us!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by SoldierOfHashem - 03 Jul 2012 21:05

wow!! Thanks for sharing that speech. It is very inspiring to me and addresses so many things that have been on my mind lately.

Thank You and Mazal Tov on your year!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by yehoshua - 04 Jul 2012 07:31

That's a good speech, honest to the bone, so honest that it makes the world a bit more sunny, a bit more kind, and life a bit more possible. Elya you brought a bit more light into my life. Baruch Hashem.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by 1daat - 06 Jul 2012 17:11

Eye, mazel tov! What a post! Thank you so much because you touched on so many of my things and how you've let go and let go over and over. You are such an example of recovery for me/us all. Concrete and specific stuff changes at the core! Thank you for how honest you are.
J/Yoel

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 08 Jul 2012 13:33

After that great post and wonderful report of recovery, I must also report that I am human and life goes on.

I am now in a rather challenging period, a lot is going on. The biggest issue is that my wife and I are planning a trip in a few months for a family occasion. We're going to encounter a lot of sick people that we moved far away from them davka because it was the healthiest choice we could have made--and thank G-d we managed to do so. Now, as we're about to have a little reunion with them all, a lot of negative feelings are coming up. It's hard on my wife, and I have to admit that it's hard on me, too. It's also hard on our relationship, as much of our discussions now are focused on this ordeal.

I really wish we could both just be cheerful about it and handle the whole situation gracefully, so I think that's what's got me feeling unsettled lately. I need to accept reality the way it is, I need to accept my wife the way she is, and everyone else in the family, too (I'havdil).

Besides that, I've got a job now with regular work and regular pay, but it's a big change for me, and also a big disappointment. I would hope, for the effort I am putting in, I would be earning quite a bit more. But, I'm not. And I'm scared that I really can't do better than this, and that the only way to earn more is to spend more time at the same job--but I think I'm at my limit for how much I can do of this each day.

So, that's another challenge.

I have been feeling lust creeping up on me more and more, so I realize I haven't been writing enough and calling enough. I hope enough sharing of this type will eventually clear my head of all the clutter, and that I'll clear up enough of this noise so that G-d can direct me in the right direction and help me stay calm and sober.

Yesterday's sobriety doesn't guarantee I'll be sober today. I need to keep on working at recovery, and sometimes I've got A LOT of work to do.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by E-Tek - 08 Jul 2012 19:16

Shkoyach for the post!

It's always refreshing (and sobering) to see honesty like this.

Just saying.

Hatzlacha!

Meir

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Dov - 08 Jul 2012 21:26

Sweet. It's good to be alive, no?

This thread seems to have the most posters who sign with their **real first names**. That means *something* good about what's hapenning here!

Fantastico!

(Dov)

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Sturggle - 09 Jul 2012 05:16

Eye!

I know it's been a forever, but I'm here, lurking in the shadows, so I figured I'd come out and say hi. Looks like you're really working at this! I'm impressed. Not that that is what it's all about or what you are looking for, maybe better to say I'm inspired. Yeah, I think that fits better.
Hatzlacha!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by obormottel - 09 Jul 2012 05:24

Oh poor, poor child! It must have been a nightmare growing up...
Sturggle (my real name)

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by E-Tek - 09 Jul 2012 21:14

[obormottel wrote on 09 Jul 2012 05:24:](#)

Oh poor, poor child! It must have been a nightmare growing up...

Yeah, do you get asked if you misspelled it by accident?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 09 Jul 2012 21:31

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Sturggle :D>

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