

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 mifatfait - 14 Aug 2012 20:51

Wow Elyah, that's really tough.

I really hope that you get right back, so many of us get from you tons of encouragment.

All the best, my friend (I got your message, I'll return back soon hopefully).

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 15 Aug 2012 06:53

I think it might be helpful to say what happened.

When I was just getting involved with GYE, I had some confusing situations with my daughter. I had set up some boundaries and hadn't had much of a problem since then. However, I was keeping a huge distance between myself and her just to play it safe.

I was advised recently that this is not good, either. A more senior member of SA I had spoken with had taken this path of keeping distance and, many years later, he is still suffering from the damage that caused.

So, I once read in one of these Chinuch books the importance of just telling you kid you love them and giving them a little kiss on the forehead or something before putting them to bed, and these books say that you can't believe how much good this does. So, with my oldest son there's

no problem--I kiss him on the forehead and he lays there like a gollem. But my daughter is starting to get older, she's 9 now, is very affectionate. When I kiss her on the forehead, she turns around and kisses back, and alot. I got drawn into this and I think this has been developing over the past couple of months when I not only play into it, I have started to actually look forward to it. Besides this, I am very easily triggered--when I had arrived at GYE I still would sometimes lose my sobriety from just holding onto a thought a bit too long--no touching and no pornography. So, a couple of weeks ago this really triggered me which did actually surprise me. I had talked it over with my sponsor and, since it was so unexpected at that time, and considering the confusing circumstances, it did not constitute a fall. Yet, it happened again a couple of days ago and I must say that it was less of a surprise and less innocent. So, it was a fall.

I told my wife about it, explaining it pretty much the way I just did in the above paragraph, but I didn't explain exactly how far this has gone. I felt that she needed to know that there's a problem and that I need to get help. Which was good because when my sponsor strongly encouraged me to visit him the very next morning for a long talk, my wife understood and was supportive.

After speaking more at length to my sponsor, I need to recognize clearly what are appropriate boundaries, and I need a plan for how to deal with triggering situations. I should not give my daughter the opportunity to kiss me back, but I can't just shun her either. I also need professional help for this. I am actually travelling with my wife soon, but when we get back I'll start the professional help.

What surprises me most is that my behavior was degenerating and I wasn't able to stop it and I didn't really think there was anything wrong about it. I am grateful to the program of recovery because I have to be honest with myself and with other people and now I hope this spiral has come to an end and I'm going to get help. I think the reason this behavior has reached this point is because I was feeling embarassed about it and I haven't been completely honest with anyone about it--I did make a few feeble attempts to discuss it, but I didn't go far enough and I wasn't open and honest enough. Immediately after this last time I called up my sponsor and said, "I think I just lost my sobriety," and I told him exactly what happened without padding my words. Without recovery, this same thing could have continued, yet more boundaries could have become blurrier and been crossed, and this could have become extremely destructive.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 15 Aug 2012 08:11

I hear. Ashrecha that u can share this openly about such a potentially embarrassing thing. Shameful, isn't it, having lust temptations resulting from our own daughters. A shanda!

Ha. Lotta good that does....

Anyhow, you are doing such a great thing here and by learning boundaries that work. Hatzlocha with that difficult thing - learning is always hard to do. But that's the only way anyone really learn...

So this will sound like a broken record and mat surprise you, but even though you assume you love your daughter and all that fatherly stuff....I ask you to consider praying for your daughter(s) at least every time you seriously pray in the day (besides whenever you remember during the three regular davenings - for you will not remember every time, of course - stick it in the extra little prayers you send to Hashem over the course of the day, here and there) to bless and help your daughter(s) with all they need now and will ever need. Work it like a rib, you know. Love, real love needs to be cultivated - it is not usually natural for us sexaholics. That is a shock.

We assume that we - of all people - are the **world's best lovers!**

Gevalt, how wrong. You probably do not love your daughter as you assume you do. And that's OK! Just work on it.

You may be surprised. We do not lust with one we love. We just don't. It isn't a matter of guilt or shame to do so - it is just the way it works. But it needs to be real love....even just a little real love. But real. Kechudo shel machat, me'eiver l'eiver (through and through...as the Kotzker said).

[And if anyone who reads this thinks it is an insult ("Ooh, you don't love your daughter, [i]shame [i]on you!") then they are confused and did not get what I was saying at all, so I say read it go jump in a lake. Or a mikvah, better.]

Seeya!!

- Dov

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by rt - 15 Aug 2012 12:03

Reb Elya, shkoach for sharing.

And it is takke helpful. Just to imagine, to tell one's wife such a thing, that's already a reason enough (for me) not to fall. shkoach for giving me the chizzuk and mussar (it was efshar not meant this way, but I feel it in this way).

Shameful, isn't it, having lust temptations resulting from our own daughters. A shanda!
yeaaa... And it hurts me as if I would be on Elya's place...

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 16 Aug 2012 14:58

Elya, thanks for sharing so openly

you are a true inspiration

kol hakavod

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by yehoshua - 17 Aug 2012 06:51

Elya, a big thank you for your post, since I too will become a dad of a little girl very soon.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by me3 - 21 Aug 2012 18:28

Dov

I did not get what you were saying (And I read it more then twice). Unless you meant that we
lust addicts don't really know what love is and that our screwed up brains confuses close
emotional attachment to be lust when it really should be love, because we arent familiar with the
emotion called love.

If that's what you mean, I understand a little but I don't really agree because if so he should be lusting after his mother and sister as well? Heck he should be lusting after his brother for that matter!

Can you elaborate for me, please?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by alexeliezer - 21 Aug 2012 20:01

Probably you're doing this already, but try, in every shmona esrei, to daven specifically for an appropriate, nurturing father-daughter relationship in which you are the giver and not the taker.

Wishing you much hatzlacha with this nisayon.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 21 Aug 2012 22:39

1 - I'd wager it is not a nisayon at all. You are probably just a sick man, as I and all addicts are, and need real help, as we addicts all do. In other words, I am suggesting that this problem is **not** a religious matter and Hashem is *not* looking over your shoulder 'hoping' you will allow the Yetzer Tov to win here by being omeid benaisayon". Rather, I believe that instead He is looking over your shoulder and 'hoping' that instead of you seeing it as evil, you see the facts here that you are sick - and that you are mekayem v'nishmartem me'od lenafshoseichem and get healthy in the head with real help. Taking out your tehilim and doing Teshuvah is nice - not for the lust, but for putting off getting healthy and sane! Like with any illness, the mitzvah now is not *lo sasuru*, and *not more tehilim*. It's time for growing up and taking real care of yourself. You may be sick.

It's for your to decide, not me.

2- Love...yes, we may love our daughters, mothers, sisters, or whoever. and I am not talking mainly about davening for them when in Shemoneh Esrei - for you are probably not lusting for them while you are in shul! I am facing the fact that we may love our family member to pieces...but when their butt is right there and is the perfect shape just like in the dirty magazines...**we forget the love**. It goes right out the window. Like forgetting about Hashem because we have a desire. (like the Brisker Rov's vort about 'Lefi shehotzi es atzmo min haklal, kofar be'ikkar'. *First* the person wants to be out of the klal - he *therefore* conjures up 'holocaust/philosophical kashyas' and says "Gevalt! How can I honestly be a Jew?")

So I am talking mainly about davening for her health and well-being and happiness *in place* the lust we are feeling **at that very moment** while we are feeling it. I use yivorech'cho Hashem, etc., for whenever I am lusting after anybody....of course, I stop looking at them first, cuz that's what I need first. That's *a/ways* the way we pray when we lust after a strange women in the street.

My main point was that it is the same exact thing with a daughter. Getting caught up in the *shanda* of it is just a silly distraction from the true work at hand.

That any clearer?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by alexeliezer - 22 Aug 2012 15:01

By nisayon, I simply meant "challenging situation."

We all agree that the baal ha-thread is sick with this addiction.

Reb Elyah, you have done a great job of recovery over the past year+. The inner addict will always try to get his drug. It seems he's found a new outlet in an unexpected place; a place where you didn't have your guard up. I have no doubt that you will apply your recovery skills to this new challenge and put the addict back in his crate.

I do think the time to daven for this is davka in shul when we are not lusting. Additional tefilos when we are lusting are certainly also worthwhile. Each has its place.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 23 Aug 2012 10:49

(Sorry Alex for being contrary and thanks for clarifying the nisayon thing. I am particularly sensitive to the issue because I have met enough chronically failing sex and lust addicts with peyos who finally come to admit that the old, familiar code words are poison to them:

They have no problem with 'G-d'...but '*Hashem*' carries with it their old and subtly twisted emotions and ideas that got them into their lust and masturbation obsession in the first place! Sad, but so true for many. Many have admitted that their '*Hashem*' makes them *scared*. And being afraid of your own G-d is not yiddishkeit, at all - it is apikorsus and silly. Hashem cannot possibly be our enemy. But to many, He is...for now. That fear of G-d means mistrust, and it creates a very deeply committed and religious person - with a dead religion. This is painful to admit for anyone, but comes around for many.

They have no problem at all with 'challenge' (your word)...but for them, '*nisayon*' carries along with it the same old, familiar, twisted emotions that 'Teshuvah' does. And it's treif. For it means a hopeless cycle of making G-d their holy janitor - "Gevalt! You took me back!! - I feel so close to You!! It's great!"....(lust and eventually masturbate)..."Gevalt! I am so far and stink so badly! Take me back! Tatty!". Sweet heilige stupidity. The see-saw.

I would bet you are 100% right Alex! But yeish, veyeish. And those who are the *most* confused and the *most* frum are sometimes the *most* surprised to learn they need to relearn from scratch what Hashem Elokeihem means. "This is the way to a faith *that works*." That's certainly what Hashem wants, no?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Aug 2012 16:24

One thing that has bothered me throughout recovery is that I don't see where there's a healthy equivalent in life to that intense physical pleasure you can get to acting out. But a recent experience helped me get a new perspective on this:

I broke out in a rash on my wrists. It was extremely itchy. I couldn't help but scratch, and it felt

really good to do so. Now, when I don't itch, it doesn't feel all that great to scratch.

So, I think acting out is the same thing. It only feels so good because, besides the physical act, it's relieving an underlying emotional irritation.

In and of itself, without that irritation, it's not so great. I have had more sober moments when, out of habit, I start going down the wrong path. But I stop fast because, under those conditions--without that underlying irritation to relieve, it just feels kinda' stupid.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by 1daat - 24 Aug 2012 03:34

Elya, Thank you very much for your post. Your honesty moves me. I have had similar experience, and it took everything I had to post about it. I so appreciate what you've done here. That you are going for professional help is the best news.

The word, "sick" has too many unkind connotations. But "sick" is the right word if what we mean is a sickness, as in a mental disorder. I have bipolar disorder. I have a sickness. But, "sick" as in "sick-o", this you are not. You tell your wife, your sponsor and all of us. You go for help. This is goodness. Hashem will get you to just the right therapist for you. The constriction (read din) in your heart will be sweetened at the source.

Hatzlocho brother.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 24 Aug 2012 09:34

My wife and I are going to be entering a very challenging situation soon. We'll be away from home and facing very difficult situations and people. We have been trying to prepare for it for the last four months already and this, alone, has almost driven me crazy.

I have no patience right now. I have been blowing up at my wife and at my children for the tiniest things. I think my outbursts are much less severe and much shorter than they would have been years ago but still, they are outbursts nonetheless. I am managing to be calm most of the time, which I just noticed and think is worth mentioning. My three-year old has come to me

several times asking for something and I can't understand him, but I gave him the patience and figured out what he needed and I was able to help him and then he was happy.

I really have been slacking off. Not writing so much, not calling people so much, not posting so much. And now I'm about to go into a new environment without much support at all.

My phone was in for repairs a couple of weeks ago, and because so much has been going on I didn't manage to make it to as many meetings. There was a positive side, in that I think I put more thought and more effort into that relationship with my Higher Power. But, I have to remember that, although that is necessary, it is not enough. I still need other people in recovery to help me, too.

Please wish me luck for the weeks ahead. I'll need a lot of it.

Thanks.

Elyah

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