

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 official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Sep 2010 11:12

I've got this feeling that my wife and I keep talking around in circles.

Dov thanks. Though in theory it sounds great, I really shouldn't be in the role of my wife's 12-step sponsor.

I officially resigned; my wife has a couple of other people she could speak to if she wants to persue this.

I feel relieved; got some clarity--it's not my job.

Like, if she asked me repair a clogged pipe. I'm not a plumber. Even though I'm her husband, and even though I'm conveniently located, it's not my job.

So, if she wants to work through her resentments, it's not my job.

(I just hope I can remember this all the time now).

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 28 Sep 2010 11:28

I was talking with someone recently (not my wife) about this RID thing.

Can it be you just act out without any RID? Does RID always have to be the problem?

I'll just speak for myself. Before I was involved in the 12-step program I was already starting to focus on my thoughts and moods that preceeded a fall. I noticed that it was easier to deal with those, and once those thoughts were resolved, I automatically didn't want to act out.

Instead of struggling with acting out or not, I was struggling with feeling frustrated or not.

Until one day, everything was fine. I was sitting in a beis medrish doing nothing other than learning gemara. THEN, I was struck by the urge.

BUT, there was no reason for it!

I almost fell. BUT then I realized, DEEP DEEP DEEP down, VERY SUBTLE, I was driving myself too hard; I was making myself nervous with unrealistic expectations. My whole approach to life was DO DO DO DO DO DO. This causes a lot of uneasiness.

SINCE I've noticed that, AND since I've started to go easier on myself, my struggle with acting out has become MUCH easier. It's not even on my mind so much anymore. I don't have constant musings about acting out. I feel tested from time to time, but it's not constant anymore.

THEN, after I joined DC's 12step phone group, I gained new tools. Instead of fishing around my subconscious and trying to guess why I feel uneasy, the 12-steps gives you a ridiculously simple way to identify the problem AND to deal with it. Simple (but not easy). I couldn't believe how straightforward and simple the whole thing is.

Since then I've only gotten stronger and stronger. My struggles now are in shedding away yet more layers of fears, and yet more resentments. The outcome, automatically, is more contentment and happiness in life.

So, for me, identifying the RID and getting RID of it has made all the difference.

So, you ask "Can't you just act out without having any rid?"

I'll ask, "Can you say that you are free of fears? Can you say that you are free of resentments?" It doesn't matter what they are about. BUT, if you have them, you almost surely feel restless, irritable, and discontent most of the time. That's RID. And that drives us for our pain-killer, for our drug-of-choice. That drives us to act out.

There are probably other ways to recover. But, if the 12-steps has been good enough to get millions of hopeless drunks back on their feet, then I think I really want to give it a fair chance with my own lust-addiction.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by kutan - 28 Sep 2010 16:06

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 28 Sep 2010 11:12:](#)

Like, if she asked me repair a clogged pipe. I'm not a plumber. Even though I'm her husband, and even though I'm conveniently located, it's not my job.

> >! Like recently, when our toilet was clogged, I insisted on doing it myself... OK it took 4 days and 3 tries, but we finally got it right, with no leaks and drips left over, and saved \$125! ;D

(had to take off the toilet from the floor and auger it backwards....)

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Sep 2010 09:16

I just wrote something to somebody which adds to the RID story.

It doesn't necessarily have to be that your chavrusa, boss, or your wife chewed you out for three hours straight. ~~my wife WISHES I had this attitude >~~

Sometimes it's something that doesn't require psychoanalysis; just a technical difficulty.

Like, being off schedule (or not ever being on one), not getting regular sleep, eating less than usual or more than usual or just differently than usual (for example, during the holidays). Also, if you're in a different environment for whatever reason, this can also be unsettling.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by frumfiend - 29 Sep 2010 13:43

How do you you deal with the technical rid. When you cant fix the technical issue.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 02 Oct 2010 18:32

[Frumfiend The star wrote on 29 Sep 2010 13:43:](#)

How do you you deal with the technical rid. When you cant fix the technical issue.

I'm pretty new at dealing with this RID thing myself. Perhaps Dov has a better answer.

I can just say that, I think, it is sometimes reassuring knowing "I'm tired," or "I'm off schedule," and THAT'S why I'm feeling the URGE. I have a little more hope. Though difficult as the situation may be, I can hang in there until I get some sleep, or until vacation is over. I can accept that something other than acting out can restore me to sanity, which makes it easier not to act out.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 02 Oct 2010 19:00

In case you didn't notice, I started doing a kitzur Eye.nonymous thread; a summary of this thread, so I can keep track of all the insights I've had throughout this struggle. (Perhaps after I've condensed it, I'll take on the task of actually organizing it).

It has been helpful. It's reminding me that I've used a lot of eitzas to get where I am now, and they can STILL be useful.

I've been very irritable basically throughout succos. On erev Shabbos I slipped. I reached that point where I thought I was going to have zera l'vatalah, but I didn't; part of me was thankful, and part of me was disappointed.

I had already called someone from DC's group, but I didn't relate to the help this time. It was moments before Shabbos, and there was no time to call anyone else. I decided I PROMISE MYSELF I'LL ACT OUT MOTZTAI SHABBOS!

Suddenly, I was calm and content. I didn't feel the urge anymore. But WOW was I looking forward to motzai shabbos!

So, I was safe for the moment. The trick that worked--say YES to the yeitzer, but push him off a little bit. Just like he does to us--yeah, learning is great, but first check your E-mail!

So, as I am accustomed to doing, I analyzed WHY did this work!

One thing is, I was digging for the source of my RID, but I couldn't come up with anything satisfactory. AFTER I promised myself a binge, the source of my RID came to mind. I'm barking at the kids alot; holding them to a high standard. Expecting them to comply to my wishes. YET, I know that I don't even comply to my own standards. Somehow, though, I think of myself as rather saintly--a mere technical difficulty if I don't do 100%.

So, here's the rid--the hypocrisy. FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE that my kids are still kids, and I'm not really that much further off than them. I see that I've really got a lot farther to go with perfecting my middos than I realized ever before. And this was a very humbling thought.

So, I'm not perfect. My kids aren't perfect. I really can just let up. That's a relief.

Another reason why I think the RID dissipated--I WAS REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO MOTZAI SHABBOS. I go though life jut trying to survive one moment at a time. I don't really look forward to it; I just try to get through it. If I could LOOK FORWARD to each moment, whatever it may bring, I'd have a lot more contentment in my life.

I realized some foods we eat because they're sweet and we like them. And some foods we eat because they're spicy--it's just sort of a challenge to eat them. So, some moments are like sweets, and some moments are spicy. Some people, too.

And, in my movie-going days, I'd watch a comedy, and I'd watch a tragedy, and I'd watch a horror movie. I'd enjoy each type of movie.

So, not every moment of life is a comedy. Some moments are tragedy, and some are a horror show.

But, I'd pay to see a horror movie. Why can't I appreciate these moments in life for what I get out of them, too.

BTW, right now I don't really care too much to keep my promise.

Shavua Tov,

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 03 Oct 2010 22:10

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 02 Oct 2010 18:32:](#)

[Frumfiend The star wrote on 29 Sep 2010 13:43:](#)

How do you you deal with the technical rid. When you cant fix the technical issue.

I'm pretty new at dealing with this RID thing myself. Perhaps [some guy out there] has a better answer.

I can just say that, I think, it is sometimes reassuring knowing "I'm tired," or "I'm off schedule," and THAT'S why I'm feeling the URGE. I have a little more hope. Though difficult as the situation may be, I can hang in there until I get some sleep, or until vacation is over. I can accept that something other than acting out can restore me to sanity, which makes it easier not to act out.

--Eye.

Yeah, but the way I like to see it, my character defects (like pride, grandiose thinking, and self-centered or childish fear) are not actually what make me act out.

What brings me to lusting my brains out and eventually acting out is the simple fact that I am a sick man. I am an addict: I have a mental illness coupled with an allergy of the body. When I am

connected with G-d (and with people) in a healthy way, I get a daily reprieve and things are good. However, when I think that I have the luxury to use what you call RID (never heard the term before GYE!) it's like I am dancing on a narrow bridge - I'm gonna fall off.

And like they say with buildings, "it's not the *fall* that kills you -- it's the sudden *landing*." When I let go of G-d long enough - cuz I am too preoccupied with myself and my self-absorbed issues and concerns (**even if they are "teshuvah"**) - I fall. And when I fall, I land on porn and masturbation and other such fantasy-driven insanity, and it's very damaging to my entire life. It makes it unmanageable misery.

Maybe it's semantics, maybe not. But I do not need an 'excuse' to feel like getting into trouble with lust - I am prone to it naturally whenever I am not in a healthy relationship with Hashem and/or people. So *it doesn't bother me* when I **do** lust. What, am I a kodosh, or something? "Far be it from me to *have* such thoughts," is an attitude I have learned to do without, boruch Hashem. Being an addict is not disgusting to me. For me, lust and my addiction is not in the moral/mitzvah vs aveiro realm. As I have always posted, my addiction and recovery is a bechinah of Derech Eretz - not Torah.

So, for me, that concept that the RMB"M (really the Gemara) writes about applies to my addiction exactly: "*Al yomar odom, 'Ee efshi b'bosor treifah'. Ella yomar odom, 'efshi b'bosor treifah - aval mah e'eseh? - Sh'Bor'i osrah alai!*"

Same here. While it may be appropriate and even recommended (see Tanya, for example) for normal yidden to train themselves react to schmutz with disgust ("Ee efshi!"), that did not work for me, at all. Why? Because it was a total lie! While I may have indeed been *disgusted* by my pathetic dependence on it, when I needed it, I *really needed* it. I loved the way it felt....so I may repeatedly say, "yechh!", but who's disgusted? Not I. A *normal* person, maybe (and I really mean that) - but not a man who was preoccupied by lust adventure and depended on it daily to make him feel good when life sucked; when life was wonderful...but not wonderful *enough*; when he was lonely; when he made a great new friend; when Hashem apparently did not really know how to take good enough care of me...which was practically all the time, cuz things 'could always be better' (and no speeches please - I **knew** the Michtav M'Eliahu's and Orchos Tzaddikim's ideas about bitachon for *years* - I just didn't **really believe in them** in my own case, apparently **because I never had to**).

So, '*Efshi b'schmutz*' - but it'll kill me and I've had enough of that slop, so 'Mah e'eseh? Sh'chayay osrani alai! My own life makes it intolerable. Using lust doesn't work for me any more. In fact, being preoccupied with lust adventure is the most miserable existence I know. My

life "assurs" it on me. So 'what can I do?' I have no choice *but* to learn how to live without it.

That approach works for me just fine. And *I* don't think it's semantics.

In other words, for me - and this is the nekudah that differentiates me as an addict - the issue is mainly one of *sakanta*, rather than *issura*. Using lust ruins me. And, of course, '*sakanta chamura me'isura*'.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 04 Oct 2010 06:40

[dov wrote on 03 Oct 2010 22:10:](#)

Yeah, but the way I like to see it, my character defects (like pride, grandiose thinking, and self-centered or childish fear) are not actually what make me act out.

What brings me to lusting my brains out and eventually acting out is the simple fact that I am a sick man. I am an addict: I have a mental illness coupled with an allergy of the body. When I am connected with G-d (and with people) in a healthy way, I get a daily reprieve and things are good. However, when I think that I have the luxury to use what you call RID (never heard the term before GYE!) it's like I am dancing on a narrow bridge - I'm gonna fall off.

In other words, for me - and this is the nekudah that differentiates me as an addict - the issue is mainly one of *sakanta*, rather than *issura*. Using lust ruins me. And, of course, '*sakanta chamura me'isura*'.

Thanks Dov. This is easy to forget, and I needed to hear it again. I've been lusting like crazy

for the past few days now, with no luck in identifying the "RID," clearly enough. "Allergy" explains things well, and without having to psychoanalyze myself. And the antidote is straightforward enough--work on my connection with Hashem (and other people). And, I forget sometimes how dangerous this whole thing can be.

--Eye.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Sturggle - 04 Oct 2010 06:47

A breath of fresh Dov.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by frumfiend - 04 Oct 2010 08:07

Now i think i got it. The white book describes a concept of spiritual static. The static doesnt allow normal connections. This RID thing is a static that blocks the connection. (The big book does say that character defects block Hashem). When we are in rid mode our heads are focused on the wrong thing. Therefore we lose our real connection with hashem and others. Without the connection we are back to our addict selves. When inside of our selves we will act out because thats all we know how to do.

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 05 Oct 2010 03:58

Ahhhh....

Yup. That's why "*living in the solution, not in the problem*" is so emphasized by people in recovery. It's hard to understand, at first. "whadaya mean, *I'm living in the problem?*" When we delve and delve and delve...it wraps us up in the problem. Soon we will act out. Cuz we are sick and cannot stay sane very long while staring squarely at unhealthy living. Even if it is for the

sake of 'getting better'.

Even the 1st and 4th step inventories are not safe places to loiter. We cannot live without them so we do them with a sponsor and then he helps us move on and **use** what we have learned rather than *wallow* in it.

I need alternative things to **do** when that familiar *curiosity* strikes. Thoughts like, "Been clean four months. I can't believe it. But am I *really* a better person? What if I am *tested* a bit?"; "I've been clean for fifteen months now. Gevalt! I wonder if my anatomy *still* works!"; "Well, is that little video store *still* in business, or did Hashem *finally* strike it with that lightning I wished for?"; and like, "What was/is it that I liked so much about lust and porn after all? Why **was** I so caught up in it? *Ahh gots ta know!*".

Yeah.

I might think those thoughts every now and then, **and that's fine**. Thinking them is not my fault - but holding onto them and acting on them *is*. I believe b'emunah sheleimah that **I need to let them go**. Others may have the luxury of thinking it over, conducting further 'research', and figuring it all out, and G-d bless them. I do not. And figuring out why *they* can and *I* can't is *veiter* none of my concern.

It's late and I'm tired. Good night Reb Eye, FFTS, etc., Shlit"a!

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 05 Oct 2010 06:56

Thanks Dov.

I am wondering, when someone is leading a 12-step group, how much is purely the 12-steps, and how much is that person's take on the 12-steps.

From the DC calls, I get the impression that:

Lust is caused by Restlessness, Irritability, and Discontent.

The RID is caused by Ego.

If we let go of our ego and it's derivatives, if we try to "change our glasses," (apparently, the 4th step inventory) then the world will not strike us in a way to cause RID. And then, without the RID, we won't feel a need to act out.

The way it sounds to me, if we pull out that 4th step inventory whenever we feel uneasy, we should ward off any lust attack.

But, you're saying this is actually counterproductive (and this is what I'm starting to feel). The 4th step is something to do every so often, briefly, with a sponsor. It's not something to live by.

Am I misunderstanding something here?

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Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 07 Oct 2010 03:27

The 4th step is not a solution of any kind - it is only about admitting to ourselves what the exact nature of our problem is. For example, we get RID, and (when it finally bothers us enough) we write out a short inventory for the purpose of uncovering what is wrong with us, rather than figuring out what is wrong with the person we are RID-ing about. The latter is so much more natural, but leads to ever more mental wrestling and RID. So we choose the other way - to accept their imperfections, but to simultaneously face the fact that the only - only - reason we are so bent out of shape about the issue is that there is something wrong with us. We are using an inflated self-image (pride), self-centered and often childish fear (fear), or some other natural character trait to deal with this issue. And it's killing us. So we ask, "Hashem, please help me do my 4th step honestly and fearlessly."

Once we do the inventory (4), *we have not really **solved** anything at all*, of course.

Nevertheless, we often feel a sense of balance and wholesomeness already - *if we **really believe*** what we have discovered and really accept it. Sometimes we need to ask Hashem to help us do even *that* simple task. Nu.

Then (5) we find some person to share it with and tell them all about it, if we are smart. It makes it more real and in doing so, we sometimes discover that we never really believed what we wrote about ourselves in the first place! Then it's back to the drawing board....Nu.

When we finally feel certain that we possess the truth about ourselves, we decide if we are sick of that defect. We may have been aware for years already that we possessed it and cultivated it anyway. That means we probably love it! We love bathing and frolicking in resentment - especially sweet is the resentment that we really see is justified! So what if it is poison that leads us to isolate and act out. Nu. It was always *her* fault for my need to stomp out of the house (and drive to the video store...), or *his* fault that I felt crabby right on my way to work and had a horrible day (and really needed this nightcap...). Well, now it's *my* fault, period. I can either be sick and tired of it and do step 7, or hold onto it.

Merely being *aware* of it is no guarantee at all that I am *ready to give it up!* Any momentum in the steps is artificial. It's either real, or it's a game or show. And we have been there, and done that before - shows and demonstrations do not really work, in the end.

So, if we are lucky, we are ready (6) to let a precious piece of ourselves go. Like a limb, practically. I meet amputees and sometimes get them to talk a bit about what it was really like to lose a leg, just to understand what *I* am doing a bit better.

The 7th step speaks for itself.

So to get back to your thing:

Yes, the thorough 4th step inventory is something we do with some help from a sponsor and we refer back to it sometimes (maybe once a year?). The more frequent mini-inventory is a *mini-4th* step (w/the same four columns) to use when life begins to get complicated, c"v. (It is not like the 10th step, at all, which is about how we *treat* other people, while 4-7 is all inside us and about how we are treating *ourselves*.) After writing this tool out a few times and using it successfully,

we usually get the ability to do it all in our heads and in the space of about a minute or less. (That took me about two years, I think) After learning how to depend on these four steps RID is much less common, and our lives begin to be more level, sensible, and maybe even less crazy. If we do not get too uncomfortable, we will be much less likely to reach for our drug, that's all. Much less *likely* to need it. It's a lot like driving with your eyes open all the time, as compared to closing them for 10 seconds every minute or so. If you say value your life and are still closing your eyes for *that* long every now and then while driving, you *don't* really value your life that much.

Life is precious. A non-sober life is horrifying to me. So I do what I can to remain reasonably comfortable by using the tools called 'steps 4-7'.

Have I confused the heck out of everything, or is something actually clear now?

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