

GUARD YOUR EYES!

WORKBOOK

Your Desire to Change

WEEK ONE

YOUR DESIRE TO CHANGE

CONTENTS:

- ✓ *Your Reasons for Change*
- ✓ *The Stages of Change*
- ✓ *Why is motivation important?*
- ✓ *Debunking Myths*
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DESIRED OUTCOME

In this lesson, you will discover your reasons for quitting pornography and masturbation (PeM for short). You will be introduced to the Stages of Change framework and learn how motivation is the fuel you need to change successfully. You will clarify your core values and discover which of the characteristics of successful changers you possess. Finally, you will set your first goal for your journey of recovery. This lesson takes about an hour, and by the end of it, you will have set your first goal and destination on your flight to freedom.

YOUR REASONS FOR CHANGE

Welcome to the Flight to Freedom program. Congratulations on being here today!

This program is all about you and your personal journey of freedom from P&M. To get started, we have prepared a short exercise that will help you to clarify your personal reasons for change.

Writing is an essential part of this exercise. It helps us focus and creates clarity for us. Please write down your answers to the following questions about change:

▶ **What bothers you most about P&M?**

▶ **If you quit P&M, what might be the *best* thing that will happen?¹**

- ▶ If you continue the way things are going now, what's the worst thing that might happen?²

Now that you have clarified your reasons for change, let's take a closer look at the process of change and explore what you can expect as you work through this program.

HOW CHANGE WORKS

You've likely tried stopping P&M many times in the past without success, and you may be wondering how long it will take to actually be able to change. In this topic, we'll talk about the concept of the "stages of change," which will help you see the big picture.

This Flight to Freedom program is different from any other that you may have tried; it has been created especially for frum Jews struggling with pornography & masturbation (P&M) based on the most up-to-date brain and behavior change science and many Torah sources.

We know that this may not be the first time you have tried to reach freedom from P&M; on average, it takes most guys several attempts to stop. Hopefully, through our unique and cutting-edge course, you will find the answers you need to create long-lasting change in your life.

We hope you come away from this course with increased confidence in dealing with temptations and a deep understanding of what has been holding you back from reaching true and lasting freedom. You can be proud of yourself for taking this very courageous step, and we are delighted to have you join us.

We have also taken the time to come up with a fun way of delivering the course. We decided to use the metaphor of becoming an airline pilot for the following reasons:

- ▶ **Like a flight, long-term change is a journey.**
- ▶ **Like becoming a pilot, it takes special practice and training.**
- ▶ **Like flying, it can be a thrilling experience.**
- ▶ **Like a pilot, once you learn to fly, you will always have your skills.**

The skills you'll learn here will help you abstain from P&M, achieve real change, and take flight on your journey to true freedom. While you won't become an actual pilot through this course, you certainly will have the tools necessary to live out your full potential. We'll do our very best to ensure your journey is as straightforward as possible and that your effort pays off, *b'ezras hashem*. And please make sure your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright position.

THE STAGES OF CHANGE

People who are successful in changing habits or addictive behaviors go through five stages, known as the “stages of change.”



Figure 1: Reaching freedom with the stages of change

STAGE 1. PRECONTEMPLATION

You haven't yet considered changing, either because you don't want to, or because you don't think you need to. You're probably not in precontemplation regarding P&M (or you wouldn't be taking this program), but you might be in pre-contemplation regarding other changes, like starting to do more exercise. Each change has its own set of stages. In the precontemplation stage, just getting yourself to consider the change is already a win.

STAGE 2. CONTEMPLATION

You're considering making a change, but you have mixed feelings and haven't yet made a firm decision to change. You're not sure if you're ready yet. In this stage, your job is to increase your motivation and reach the decision that P&M is not worth continuing.

STAGE 3. PREPARATION

You've decided to change – it has become a priority, and you're planning to actually change within the next few weeks. The question is not IF to stop, but HOW to stop. You are preparing whatever you need (like learning the skills in this program or getting advice) and working on a plan that is personal, realistic, and acceptable.

STAGE 4. ACTION

You're not talking or thinking about change; you're actually taking action.

You're following your plan and figuring what works best for you through trial and error (or success). Your main focus during this stage is staying on track and revising your plan after a setback instead of giving up. During the action stage, your brain starts adapting to your new way of living, and as a result, things get easier with time. This stage typically lasts 3-6 months and ends when you feel like the change is no longer taking up a lot of energy.

STAGE 5. MAINTENANCE

You feel like freedom from P&M has become “second nature” and doesn't require much energy except in high-risk situations. Your focus is on maintaining the change for the *long term*. While working on Kedusha (holiness) is a lifetime process, your overall focus in life is not on the problem behavior anymore but on improving other areas of life. Because when your life is satisfying and meaningful, it becomes less likely that you'll be tempted to go back to your problem behavior.

THE UPWARD SPIRAL

Keep in mind that your actual journey probably won't follow these stages in a neat order. More often than not, people move back and forth between the stages. For example, if you have a few setbacks in the action stage, you might start doubting if you're ready to change (contemplation).

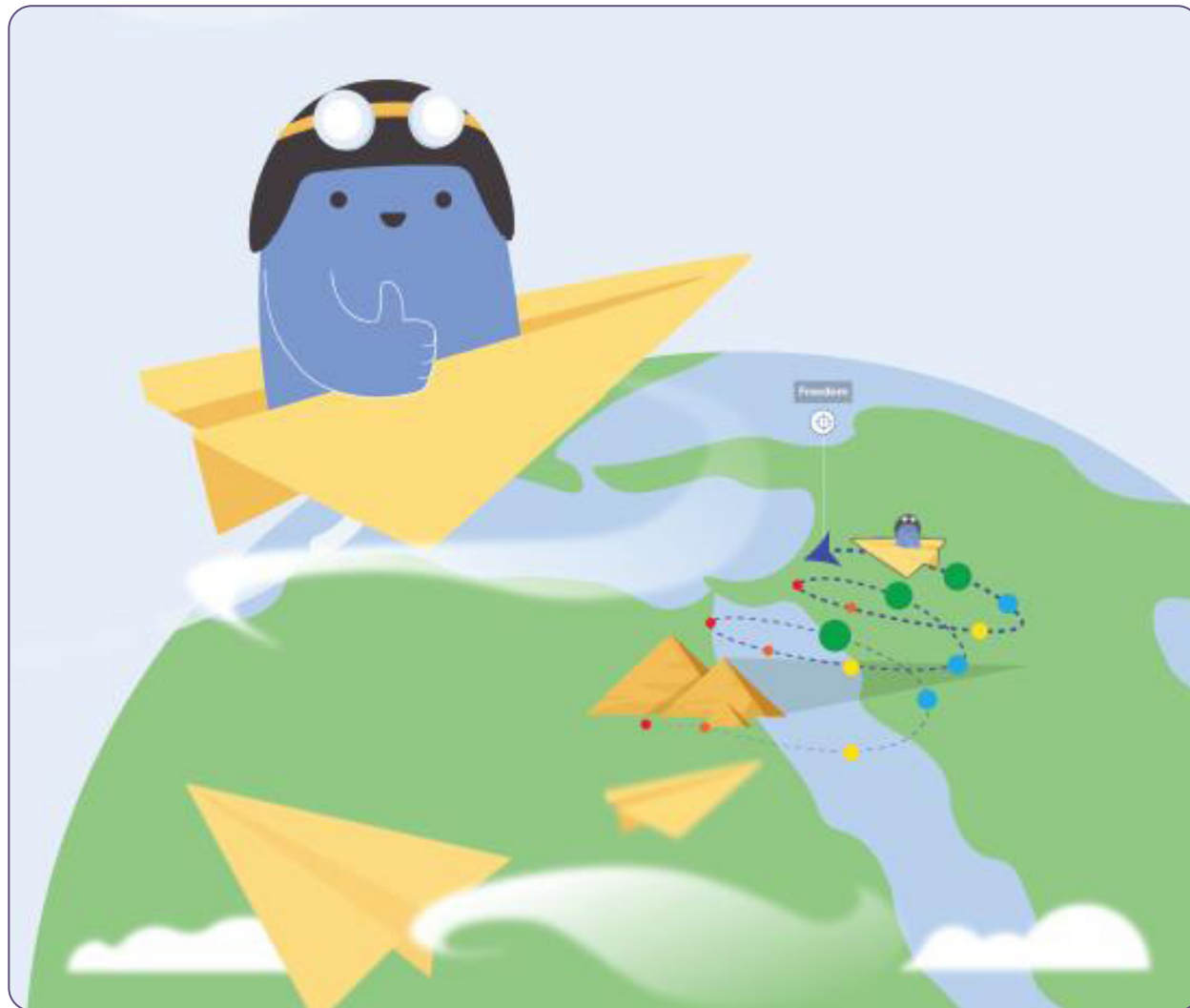


Figure 2: The upward spiral. Every time you go through the stages, it increases the chances that the next attempt will succeed.

This back and forth is called “the spiral of change,” and it’s common for people to cycle through the stages a few times before reaching lasting freedom.

The good news is that each time you cycle through the stages, you become more skilled at using the strategies successfully, and your chances of reaching long-term change have become much higher. For example, the second time you’re in the preparation stage, you already have lots of skills and experience compared to the first time, and you might complete the preparation stage in hours or days instead of weeks. In this sense, the stages represent a spiral staircase, where each time you go through the stages, you have a higher chance of succeeding compared to the previous round.

RECAP

In this topic, we discussed the following points on the stages of change.

- ▶ **Change works in stages**
- ▶ **There are 5 Stages of Change**
- ▶ **It’s common to go through the stages more than once before reaching lasting freedom.**

In the next topic, you will learn why motivation is important for change and how you can motivate yourself to succeed on your journey of change.

MOTIVATION FOR CHANGE



This topic is about motivation. You will learn why motivation is important—especially in the early stages of change, and how you can motivate yourself once you have made a commitment to change.

Fundamentally, recovery from any kind of negative behavior hinges on being motivated. In your flight to freedom, motivation is the fuel of your plane.³ To fly, you'll need much more than just fuel, but without it, your plane won't be able to takeoff.

In the same way, while your flight to freedom requires many skills, the first thing to focus on is your motivation to change. Once you have the motivation for change, you'll be ready to invest time in learning the skills to reach freedom.

The fact that you're here, reading or listening to these words, suggests that you already have *some* motivation. Deep down, you know that making the change will be good for you. But you might still have doubts whether making this change is worth your time and effort, and you might be wondering if you're really ready to live without P&M.

Having these mixed feelings is very normal, and it's okay to admit that this is where you are right now.

It may feel like part of you will be unhappy no matter what you do, and you feel stuck. In the words of Chazal (Brachos 61a), "Woe to me from my creator (if I don't change), and woe to me from my evil inclination (who will keep on bothering me if I do change)."

To move from *contemplation* to *preparation*, you need to increase your motivation to a level where you make the decision that despite any pleasure P&M brings you, it's *not worth it for you* anymore.

Sometimes, the guys who are highly motivated to quit have hit rock bottom before they come to GYE. They've become so upset about the effects of their negative behavior on their lives and loved ones' lives that continuing the problem behavior is no longer an option.

The good news is that you don't have to hit rock bottom (or anything close) to start your journey and to succeed at it.⁴ Investing the time to build your motivation is crucial to ending this unwanted behavior. You'll be glad that you did so before and not after it's done real damage to your life or your loved ones' lives. You also don't need to wait until you've suffered the embarrassment of getting caught red-handed!

If you feel like change might be worth the effort, but you're not quite sure yet, doing the exercises in this lesson will help create the motivation you need. They'll help you get passionate about making this change and improving your life. If you already feel motivated, the exercises in this lesson can help to supercharge your motivation. An extra boost of motivation never hurts.

Motivation doesn't just mysteriously happen. Real change comes from within, and so does the motivation to create this change. This lesson isn't about trying to convince you to stop P&M (we know this won't work!); it's about helping you connect to your deepest desires so that you can decide for yourself whether you're ready to move ahead with the change.

RECAP

In this topic, we discussed the following points on motivation:

- ▶ **Motivation is fuel for change.**
- ▶ **You can develop motivation as you take your journey.**
- ▶ **It is perfectly normal to lack motivation at times—but you can build it.**
- ▶ **It is normal to harbor mixed feelings about change during the contemplation stage.**

In the next topic, we'll discuss some of the common myths that may have been a barrier to your success.

DEBUNKING MYTHS

This topic aims to debunk a few of the common myths surrounding P&M negative behavior, which can act as barriers to your recovery. We'll also explain a little about the neurobiological and psychological elements of negative behavior. ⁵

MYTH ONE:

AT SOME POINT, I'LL FAIL ANYWAY, SO WHAT'S THE POINT?

When you're changing a negative behavior, lapses into the old behavior are incredibly common. While these setbacks are by no means inevitable, they don't mean you've failed either. Remember, it takes time and repetition for new neural pathways to form in your brain and establish different, healthier behavior. So while you're doing the difficult work of reprogramming your brain, be patient with yourself and, most importantly, be kind.

Taking it one day (or moment) at a time and acknowledging and praising your short-term progress will ultimately lead to long-term progress. There is a saying that "time will pass regardless." It means never giving up on a goal because of the time it may take to achieve it. Time will pass anyway. If you give up now, in the future, you'll still have the problem but be no closer to liberation from it.

 TRUE or  FALSE?

A friend of yours has a weight problem and has failed at dieting in the past. This means that they can never lose weight in the future.



MYTH TWO:

I'VE TRIED MANY TIMES WITHOUT SUCCESS; THE STRUGGLE IS JUST TOO HARD FOR ME

Negative behaviors are notoriously difficult to quit, and if you've tried to give up P&M before without success, you're probably well aware of this. However, there are valid scientific reasons why overcoming a negative behavior is difficult, and believe it or not, these reasons have nothing to do with your perceived personality flaws. So go ahead and give yourself a break; these things are more complicated than you think!

In the same way your body builds muscle when you lift weights, your brain grows new neural pathways when you repeat mental and behavioral patterns. These pathways become imprinted more deeply into the brain each time you perform the habit. Your brain's ability to create new neural pathways in response to learning is known as *neuroplasticity*.

Just as it takes practice to become a good pilot, it takes practice to overcome addictive behavior. Millions of people around the world have found freedom from all sorts of addictive behaviors—which means that you can too!

 TRUE or  FALSE?

When you first learned to ride a bike, you probably fell off many times. Falling off meant that learning to ride a bike was unachievable, and so you gave up.

MYTH THREE (FOR SINGLES):

THE PROBLEM WILL GO AWAY AFTER MARRIAGE.

One of the problems with pornography is that it dehumanizes its participants, particularly women, reducing them to mere objects or toys. Instead of preparing you for marriage and a healthy sexual relationship, pornography, in contrast, leads to unrealistic expectations about marital intimacy and a lack of satisfaction in marriage. Many married men who've come to GYE have told us about the negative impact porn has had on their marriages.

It takes some time to become fully healed, so it's great that you've decided to start the GYE program while you're still single. By taking this positive step in overcoming your negative behavior now, you're far more likely to enjoy a healthy and satisfying marriage when the time comes.

 TRUE or  FALSE?

In the past, whenever I started a new chapter in my life, I instantly became a changed person, and all my old problems disappeared.

MYTH FOUR:

MASTURBATION IS A NEED; IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO RESIST.

Some guys assume that single guys need to masturbate because their urges would be intolerable if they didn't. However, those who've successfully abstained from masturbation have found that while it felt uncomfortable in the short term, there was no unbearable "build-up".

"I used to think back when I was regularly motzi zera levatala [masturbating] that it would be impossible for me to stop completely and that I would necessarily fail even if I tried to stop. And that's exactly what happened. Every time. Until I found GYE. I learned something important—I was capable of restraint. Masturbation was NOT something that I needed to be happy. In fact, I found myself feeling happier, more satisfied, and more fulfilled without it." @Ftndrug

 TRUE or  FALSE?

I have never successfully exercised restraint before. Restraining myself from doing something I enjoy is always just too unbearable.

RECAP

You may have believed some of these common myths because you had some faulty thinking about negative behaviors and were previously unaware of things like neuroplasticity. Hopefully, in this topic, we've succeeded in debunking these myths and removed some of your mental barriers to overcoming P&M. In the next topic, we will explore core values and how they are essential to your success in quitting P&M.

YOUR CORE VALUES

In this topic, we'll ask you to think deeply about your personal core values. Clarifying your values can help you understand how your current behavior may go against them. When your behavior undercuts your values, it also goes against creating the life you want and being the person you want to be.

When we get swept away by a storm of urges and negative behaviors, it's our values that can provide direction, like a GPS. When we talk about values, we're talking about **your deepest desires** for how you want to live your life and what kind of person you want to be. Here are some examples of common values:

- ▶ **MARRIAGE** – to have a happy and loving marriage
- ▶ **PARENTING** – to be a great parent and role model to my children
- ▶ **LOVE** – to be loved by those close to me and to give love to others
- ▶ **LEADERSHIP** – to inspire and guide others
- ▶ **FRIENDSHIP** – to have close, supportive friends
- ▶ **SELF-ESTEEM** – to feel good about myself
- ▶ **HASHEM'S Will** – to live a morally pure life and fulfill my mission in life
- ▶ **INTEGRITY** – to live my daily life in a way that is consistent with my values
- ▶ **TORAH** – to learn and be knowledgeable in Torah
- ▶ **MASTERY** – to be competent in my everyday activities
- ▶ **STABILITY** – to be consistent and assured things will turn out okay
- ▶ **LEISURE** – to take time to relax and enjoy
- ▶ **POPULARITY** – to be well-liked by many people
- ▶ **CHESSED** – to be kind, giving, and helpful to others
- ▶ **HAPPINESS** – to feel happy and fulfilled
- ▶ **RESPONSIBILITY** – to make and carry out responsible decisions
- ▶ **CONNECTION** – to feel connected to Hashem and deeply connected with others
- ▶ **SELF-CONTROL** – to be disciplined in my actions
- ▶ **FUN** – to play and have fun
- ▶ **GENUINENESS** – to act in a manner that is true to who I am
- ▶ **HEALTH** – to be physically well and healthy
- ▶ **SIGNIFICANCE** – to feel unique, important, special, or needed
- ▶ **GROWTH** – to keep expanding capabilities, changing and growing
- ▶ **INTELLIGENCE** – to keep my mind sharp and active
- ▶ **SAFETY** – to be safe and secure

Values are the deeply held personal principles and standards you live by when you are being your authentic self. They also act as a guide for how you treat yourself and interact with others.

When people aren't in touch with their values, they can find themselves behaving in ways that lead to dissatisfaction in the long term. These behaviors cause inner conflict because they aren't consistent with what they really want deep down.

EXERCISE: YOUR TOP VALUES

This exercise can help you to become crystal clear about your personal values. This process can also increase your motivation to live according to your values and to change behaviors that aren't aligned with them.

STEP 1

Write a list of all the things that are important to you. When considering your personal values, reflect on the things you feel are most important for living a rich and meaningful life and what type of person you want to be. You can use the list above to help you get started.

If you have a hard time coming up with the list, think about the following questions:

- ▶ **What do you try to live up to? What type of person do you want to be? What values would you want your children to have?**

- ▶ **Imagine yourself looking back in five years from now. How do you wish you would have lived these past five years?⁶**

- ▶ **If someone were to ask your closest friends to tell them what you live for and what matters most to you, what do you wish⁷ they would say?⁸**

- ▶ **Review each of the values above and imagine if you couldn't live according to that value, which one would you miss the most?**

STEP 2

Now choose the five values you feel are most important to you. Tip: If you have a long list of values, first choose your top 10 values, and then it will be easier to narrow down your list to the top 5. Don't worry about writing them in the correct order; it doesn't need to be perfect.

▶ Value 1: _____

▶ Value 2: _____

▶ Value 3: _____

▶ Value 4: _____

▶ Value 5: _____

STEP 3

Now ask yourself, “Is P&M aligned with my top personal values, or does it go against them? Is it irrelevant to them?” If it goes against your values, how does it interfere with them? Write down your responses in the space below.

 **RECAP**

This topic was all about your core values and how clarifying them is important for motivation and direction on this journey. The following points were covered:

- ▶ **What values are**
- ▶ **Why values are important**
- ▶ **How to clarify your core values**

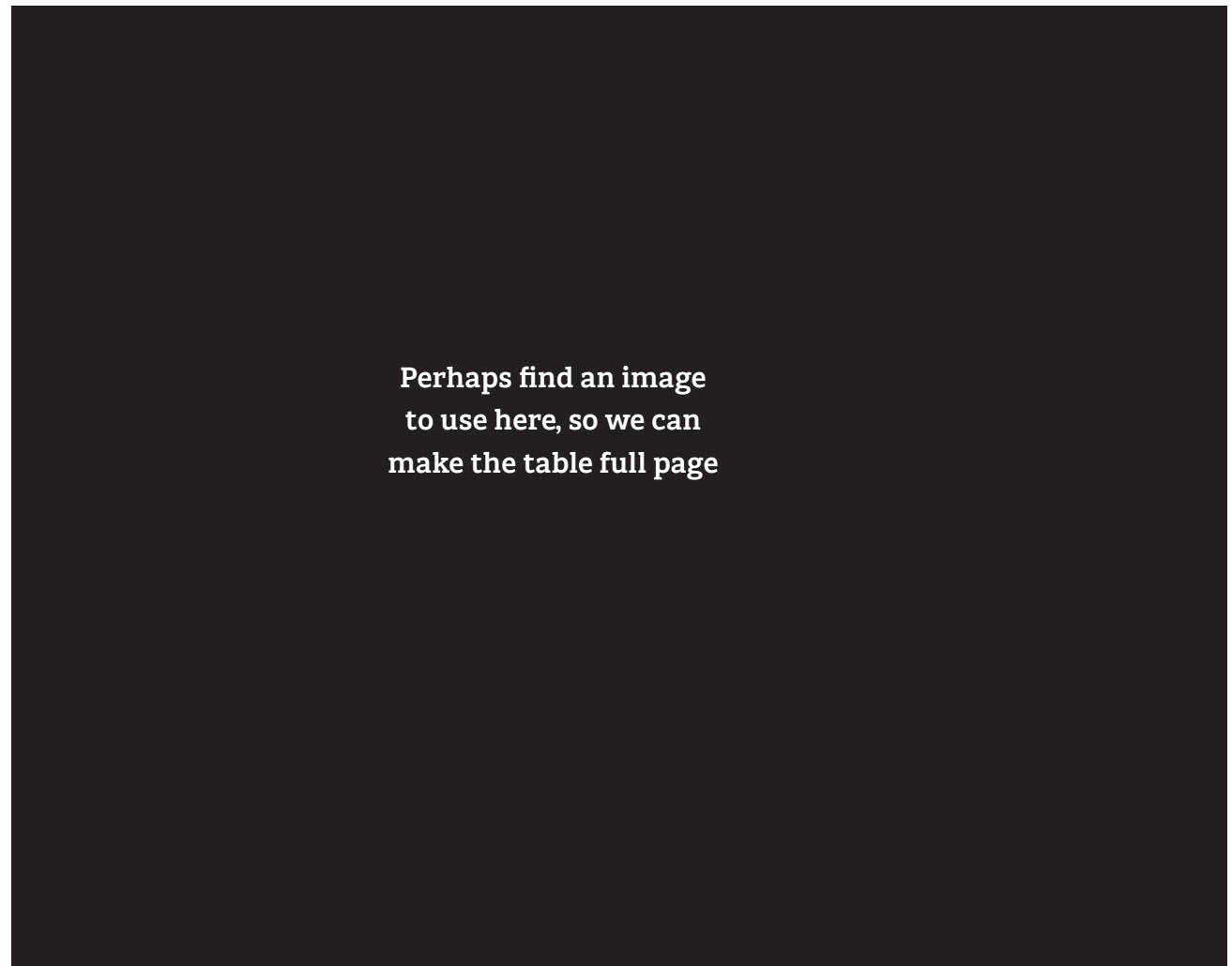
In the next topic, we’ll discuss some of the characteristics of successful changers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL CHANGERS

In this topic, you will be guided to identify which of your character traits and strengths can help you succeed in reaching freedom.

Each of us has many positive character traits of successful changers. These characteristics— or strengths are key to moving through each of the stages of change as you work towards quitting P&M.

Dr. William R. Miller, one of the world’s top experts in behavior change, discovered that when people were able to identify their strengths, they became more confident and hopeful⁹ about changing their behaviors.



 **EXERCISE**

STEP 1.

Below is a list of 100 common characteristics of successful changers. As you go through this list, make a note of a few that describe you.

Accepting	Committed	Flexible	Persevering	Stubborn
Active	Competent	Focused	Persistent	Thankful
Adaptable	Concerned	Forgiving	Positive	Thorough
Adventuresome	Confident	Forward-looking	Powerful	Thoughtful
Affectionate	Considerate	Free	Prayerful	Tough
Affirmative	Courageous	Happy	Quick	Trusting
Alert	Creative	Healthy	Reasonable	Trustworthy
Alive	Decisive	Hopeful	Receptive	Truthful
Ambitious	Dedicated	Imaginative	Relaxed	Understanding
Anchored	Determined	Ingenious	Reliable	Unique
Assertive	Die-hard	Intelligent	Resourceful	Unstoppable
Assured	Diligent	Knowledgeable	Responsible	Vigorous
Attentive	Doer	Loving	Sensible	Visionary
Bold	Eager	Mature	Skillful	Whole
Brave	Earnest	Open	Solid	Willing
Bright	Effective	Optimistic	Spiritual	Winning
Capable	Energetic	Orderly	Stable	Wise
Careful	Experienced	Organized	Steady	Worthy
Cheerful	Faithful	Patient	Straight	Zealous
Clever	Fearless	Perceptive	Strong	Zestful

Choose at least five strengths from this list and write them down.

STEP 2.

Now, think about a time in the past that you've made a difficult change that you originally weren't sure you'd be able to accomplish. If more than one example comes to mind, you can write about each one.

▶ **I successfully changed:**

.....

Take the time to write the experience down in detail, as this will help to remind you of how capable you are of making successful changes in your life.

▶ **Which obstacles did I face while working on that change?**

.....

▶ How did I overcome those obstacles?

Which of your strengths has been key to this success? Which strategies did you use? What helped you succeed?

 **RECAP**

In this topic, we discussed the characteristics of successful changers:

- ▶ How to identify your own positive characteristics.
- ▶ How these characteristics can help with your journey of change and recovery from P&M.

LESSON ASSIGNMENT

In this lesson, we have discussed change throughout this lesson. We have discussed how difficult change can be. We have discussed the 5 Stages of Change and the characteristics of successful changers. You have determined your core values and increased your motivation or ‘fuel’—to help you make the change you deeply desire.

The exercises in this lesson gave you deeper insight into *why* you want to quit P&M. In later lessons, we’ll talk about *how* to make these changes.

Before we continue, here are a few questions to help you determine your goal and check if you’re ready to move forward.

▶ **A. Which behaviors are you ready to quit?** ¹⁰

(Check all that apply)

- Pornography
- Masturbation
- All problematic sexual behaviors

Optional: Additional notes about your goal

▶ **B. Summarize your top reasons for change**

Write your answer in a few sentences and use the information you gained from the exercises in this lesson. You'll be able to review this later if your motivation starts to fade, so write with passion!

For example:

P&M goes against my value of being honest and a good husband. It is blocking my potential and is toxic for me. Even occasional viewing of porn can lead me to a spiral that lasts for a year.... I've become a slave to it!

Porn pollutes my mind and is ruining my marriage!

P&M makes me feel like a fake and a hypocrite.

▶ **C. Which of the following strategies are you ready to commit to so you can be successful with your goal?**

(Check all that apply)

- Complete the exercises in each lesson
- Complete Flight to Freedom Program
- Journal about my journey

▶ **D. Where is quitting P&M in your list of life priorities right now?**

COACHES TIP



Come back to this lesson whenever you feel a lull in your determination. Motivation is your fuel line, so keep an eye on that gauge and be sure to refuel by reviewing or even deepening your reasons for change at any time in your flight!

You are well on your way to becoming a pilot. In the next lesson, you will be introduced to the practice of self-observation as you prepare for take-off.

If you skipped over any of the other exercises in this lesson, spend some time this week to go back and complete them. If you've already completed all the exercises spend 60 seconds each morning this week to have a brief look at your responses to one of the exercises. Each topic and exercise has been created to strengthen your ability to change—and will help you to prioritize change in your life.

This is the ideal time for you to make a commitment to yourself to complete the Flight to Freedom course no matter what comes up in your life.

To succeed with this program, consider making this change your top priority for the near future. If you feel you can still use some more motivation, we suggest that you try some additional motivational tools this week. Check out these [Motivational Boosters](#).

See you in lesson 2.

BONUS: MOTIVATIONAL BOOSTERS

GETTING MORE INFORMATION

Usually, focusing on the negatives of porn is counterproductive because it keeps you focused on the problem rather than on the solution. But during the contemplation stage, it can actually be quite helpful. Learning about the effects of porn might change your perception of the pros and cons of porn, and can tilt your decisional balance towards change. Here are some good resources for increasing motivation:

- ▶ truthaboutporn.org/media. It includes over 20 eye-opening video interviews with experts on the effects of pornography. The site also showcases a collection of research papers on the topic.
- ▶ easypeasymethod.org (chapters 4-10) challenges many of the supposed benefits of watching porn.
- ▶ *The Porn Myth*. A book that draws on the experience of porn performers and users, and the expertise of neurologists, sociologists, and psychologists to demonstrate that pornography is destructive to individuals, relationships, and society. Available on Amazon.
- ▶ *Porn Use Effects*—A collection of recent scientific studies on the effects of pornography. Available on GYE's wiki.
- ▶ *Shulchan Aruch (Even Haezer, Siman 23)*, discusses the halachos relating to PerM.
- ▶ *Building a Foundation For Life: A Guide to the Challenge of Kedusha in Our Generation*. This book by Rabbi Chaim Dov Stark explains how increasing your digital Kedusha will transform your life for the better.
- ▶ *The Battle of the Generation Part 1-3*. An inspirational book about freedom from PerM. Free download.
- ▶ *Zos Brisi*—A book that describes the spiritual benefits of freedom from PerM. Available on Amazon.
- ▶ *Why Porn hurts Marriage*—A powerful approach to Porn from GYE member @ HashemHelpMe. Available on GYE's wiki.
- ▶ Browse the GYE forum. Reading insights from other people who are dealing with the same struggle may help you clarify what you really want for yourself.

DECISIONAL BALANCE¹¹

If you have decided to change, but need a bit more of a push, doing a *cost-benefit analysis (CBA)*¹² might help you increase motivation by crystalizing the reasons why change is necessary.¹³

When you first started using P&M (and perhaps even now), you probably told yourself that the benefits outweighed the costs. However, have you ever really stopped to scrutinize just how true this is?

People with negative behavior typically have two types of thinking—short-term and long-term. Short-term thinking tells you that P&M makes you feel instantly better, whereas long-term thinking tells you the behavior is bad for you and you want to live a healthier life.

As short-term and long-term thinking never happens at the same time, the CBA exercise helps you to closely compare your behavior's immediate benefits and its far-reaching consequences.¹⁴

Early hints to the CBA exercise can be found in Pirkei Avos: “Consider the cost of a mitzvah against its rewards and the rewards of a transgression against its cost.”

A word of caution though: If you haven't yet decided whether you are willing to let go of P&M, using this tool will be counterproductive.¹⁵

Example of a CBA for P&M:

BENEFITS OF P&M:

Write a list of the benefits of watching P&M. Indicate whether these benefits are short-term (ST) or long-term (LT).¹⁶

- *It feels good while I'm watching it (ST).*
- *It helps me release stress (ST).*

COSTS OF P&M:

Write a list of the costs of watching P&M. Indicate whether these costs are short-term (ST) or long-term (LT).

- *I feel guilty and ashamed afterward (LT).*
- *It's hurting my relationship with my wife (LT).*

BENEFITS OF CHANGE:

Write a list of the benefits of not watching porn. Indicate whether these benefits are short-term (ST) or long-term (LT).

- *I won't have to feel anxious about getting caught (LT).*
- *I won't feel guilty or hypocritical anymore (LT).*

COSTS OF CHANGE:

Write a list of the costs of not watching porn. Indicate whether these costs are short-term (ST) or long-term (LT).

- *I won't get that instant feeling of physical release (ST).*
- *I won't know how to function without getting this feeling of release every day (ST).*

Now write your own CBA, listing as many of the benefits and costs you associate with change or no change.

WORKSHEET:**BENEFITS OF P&M:**

Write a list of the benefits of watching PerM. Indicate whether these benefits are short-term (ST) or long-term (LT).¹⁷

COSTS OF P&M:

Write a list of the costs of watching PerM. Indicate whether these costs are short-term (ST) or long-term (LT).

BENEFITS OF CHANGE:

Write a list of the benefits of not watching porn. Indicate whether these benefits are short-term (ST) or long-term (LT).

COSTS OF CHANGE:

Write a list of the costs of not watching porn. Indicate whether these costs are short-term (ST) or long-term (LT).

LEVERAGE YOUR EMOTIONS

Try imagining what your life will look like in the coming years if you don't change. Imagine tough situations throughout your life where you'll suffer the consequences of watching porn. Be realistic about what might happen.

Imagine vividly how continued porn usage (for example) and its side effects will impact your relationship with your spouse, your children, and your career. Imagine the lost opportunities of actualizing your most cherished dreams and life goals because porn has embezzled your time and focus. Imagine what might happen if someone finds out.

Then once you're done, imagine how it might feel if you quit. Would you feel much happier? Would you feel more confident? Would you take on new goals? Would it have a positive impact on other areas of your life? Would your relationship improve?

Often the reason we don't change is that we focus on the short term vs. the long term. The problems we'll have later in life due to watching porn seem too far away. This exercise can help you feel these consequences more vividly and arouse your emotions. Once your emotions are aroused, you might feel ready to finally quit.

THINK ABOUT YOUR HISTORY WITH P&M

You can also reflect on how P&M has affected you in the past:¹⁸

- ▶ *What brought you to GYE? Which consequences of PerM did you feel were no longer acceptable to you?*

- ▶ *How did PerM affect the way you see yourself?*

- ▶ *How has PerM affected your family (and your marriage)?*

- ▶ *How has PerM affected your goals for your life?*

- ▶ *Did PerM ever put your reputation and future at risk?*

- ▶ *Give examples of the craziest things you have done because of your attachment to PerM.*

- ▶ *Have your episodes of PerM become more severe and extreme over time?*

Thinking about these things could be painful, but it can also light a spark that fires up your motivation. You don't need to share the answers to these questions with anyone, but it can be helpful to put it all in writing with plenty of personal examples.

RECORD YOUR THOUGHTS

▶ Option 1:

Arouse your emotions by recording a quick video or voice recording each time you *finish* watching porn (or masturbating) and talk passionately about how you feel. Or write down your feelings on paper. At the end of the week, listen to the recordings (or read your notes), and check your decisional balance worksheet to see if there's anything to add.

▶ Option 2:

Before you actually watch, think why you are about to do it (e.g. I'm bored, stimulated, stressed, etc.) and write down any other relevant info that might be related—the more details, the better. After you get a few records, you'll be able to look back and see why you're doing what you're doing. By becoming more aware of your motives, it can help you get the clarity you need to make a decision. For example, you might notice that very often you're watching because you're stressed or tired, not because of pure sexual desire. You then might come to the conclusion that if it's mostly due to stress, there are far better ways of dealing with it than by continuing the current behavior.

SAY GOODBYE

Write a passionate goodbye letter to P&M and related behaviors. Make sure to include a detailed description of how P&M has harmed you and how great your life will be once it has become a thing of the past.¹⁹

CONTINUE THE COURSE

If what's holding you back is that you don't feel confident that you can really change your habits, try continuing the course and exploring the tools. They may help you realize that it's really possible.

Endnotes

- ¹ Miller, W. R. (William R., & Rollnick, S. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: helping people change* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.
- ² Miller, W. R. (William R., & Rollnick, S. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: helping people change* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.
- ³ Cognitive appraisal and decisional balancing processes, including effective pros and cons for a behavior change, have turned out to be "the motor of self-change" mediated by societal conditions (e.g., stigma) that facilitate or impede change. Klingemann, H., & Klingemann, J. (2009), Ch. 14.
- ⁴ For a full discussion see Hester, R. K., & Miller, W. R. (2003): 131.
- ⁵ For references see http://wiki.guardyoureyes.com/Debunking_Myths.
- ⁶ Based on Miller, W. R. (William R., & Rollnick, S. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: helping people change* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press. Feiner, J. (2019). *Mindfulness: A Jewish Approach*. Mosaica Press.
- ⁷ See Harris, R., & Hayes, S. (2011). *The Confidence Gap: A Guide to Overcoming Fear and Self-doubt* (p. 154). Trumpeter.
- ⁸ Miller, W. R. (William R., & Rollnick, S. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: helping people change* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.
- ⁹ Miller, William R.; Rollnick, Stephen. *Motivational Interviewing, Third Edition (Applications of Motivational Interviewing)* (Kindle Locations 4338-4341). Guilford Publications. Kindle Edition.
- ¹⁰ Although ultimately, your goal will be to stop all of your negative behaviors, it's important to work at your own pace. If you feel that going completely cold-turkey straight away would set you up to fail, quitting porn first may give you a taste of success. Once you've gained more confidence, this can motivate you to quit masturbation as well.
- ¹¹ For references see [wiki.guardyoureyes.com/Cost_Benefit_Analysis_\(CBA\)](http://wiki.guardyoureyes.com/Cost_Benefit_Analysis_(CBA)).
- ¹² Janis and Mann (1977).
- ¹³ Klingemann, H., & Sobell, L. C. (Eds.). (2007). *Promoting Self-Change From Addictive Behaviors*. Boston, MA: Springer US. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-71287-1>, citing dozens of studies.
- ¹⁴ Hester, R. K., & Miller, W. R. (2003). *Handbook of alcoholism treatment approaches: effective alternatives*. Allyn and Bacon: 240.
- ¹⁵ Miller, W. R., & Rose, G. S. (2015). Motivational interviewing and decisional balance: Contrasting responses to client ambivalence. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 43(2), 129-141. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1352465813000878>
- ¹⁶ SMART Recovery Handbook. See also Velasquez, M. M., Crouch, C., Stephens, N. S., & DiClemente, C. C. (2015). *Group Treatment for Substance Abuse Second Edition A Stages-of-Change Therapy Manual*. Guilford Press., P/C/P 10.
- ¹⁷ SMART Recovery Handbook. See also Velasquez, M. M., Crouch, C., Stephens, N. S., & DiClemente, C. C. (2015). *Group Treatment for Substance Abuse Second Edition A Stages-of-Change Therapy Manual*. Guilford Press., P/C/P 10.
- ¹⁸ Based on https://12step.org/docs/Step1_WS.pdf
- ¹⁹ Norcross, J. C., Loberg, K., & Norcross, J. (2012). *Changeology: 5 steps to realizing your goals and resolutions*. Simon & Schuster.