

# **The Mask in the Mirror**

*Practical, Proven Advice to Achieve  
Emotional Sobriety*

**by**

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## Preface

Every person is born with an innate need for connection. As infants we find solace in the arms of our mothers and as we grow we feel a part of our family when we are hugged and made to feel a valued member of our family.

When neglect, abandonment, abuse or trauma separate children from their family unit, physically, sexually or emotionally, children learn quickly to find someone or some thing they can connect with in order to feel safe and secure. Some children turn to join gangs or use drugs because they finally feel accepted as a member of this new group. Others turn to alcohol, sex, work, food or gambling to numb the agony of abandonment and low self esteem.

To cope with the outside world in the midst of inner turmoil, the addict resorts to compartmentalizing his life; wearing a mask in public to cover up his inner shame and guilt. When he returns to his "accepted group" of choice he looks in the mirror and convinces himself that he has now transformed himself into a new person behind the mask. His mask becomes his identity.

The Ateres Zekainim on Pirkey Avos says on the Mishna in Perek 2:2, *"dissatisfaction is a prime factor in man's vulnerability to the temptation of the Evil Inclination. Unfulfilled people may fantasize that if only they had this or that pleasure, they would truly be satisfied."*

Instead we are commanded to fill our time with both Torah study and an occupation so we have no idle time for fantasy. This also leaves us no time for inner contemplation and reflection.

Yet, it seems the pull of the evil inclination is much stronger for the suffering addict. When he feels resentful, irritable or discontent; when he is not spiritually fit, he reverts back to his childhood belief that again he is disconnected and abandoned. Now he must choose fantasy to fill his time instead of a more rational, healthier activity. His mask again hides his secret life until he looks in the mirror. In the mirror he senses there has to be a better way to live than in the prison of his own mind, behind this mask.

For several years now, I have had the privilege of helping hundreds of Jewish addicts get and stay sober due to my association with <http://guardyoureyes.org>. This book is a compilation of letters, poems, essays and practical advice which I have shared in personal correspondence, group sessions and in person with people suffering with addictions. It is my hope that you, the reader will discover practical ways to stay sober and achieve serenity and in the process be able to help others.

All names and situations have been altered to protect anonymity, the foundation of all 12 step programs. Because of the nature of writing a book in the form of letters, many ideas will be repeated. But just like repetition in meetings is helpful, reading similar concepts over and over again, categorized by topic will help you remain balanced no matter which way the storm blows your ship.

## **Haskomos (Approbations)**

Before you ask for Haskomos, consider whether what you're looking at, going to, being intimate with or acting out with has the Haskomos you're looking for. Then come to me and let's talk about addiction.

## **Introduction**

The Gemorah says, "Sheva Yipol Tzaddik V'Kum." A Tzaddik falls seven times and gets up. It does not say this person is a rasha, it says a Tzaddik. Part of being human is to fall and get up, NOT give up.

Want to find out if you really have an addiction problem? Answer these questions:

Are you unable to concentrate on other areas of your life because of thoughts or feelings you are having about sex? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you find yourself obsessing about a specific person or sexual act even though these thoughts bring pain, craving or discomfort? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Have you ever wished you could stop or control your sexual and romantic activities for a given period of time? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you find the pain in your life increasing no matter what you do? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you feel that you lack dignity and wholeness? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you feel that your sexual and/or romantic life affects your spiritual life in a negative way? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Have you ever thought that there might be more you could do with your life if you were not so driven by sexual and romantic pursuits?

For a more complete list of questions go to: [http://www.slaafws.org/download/core-files/The\\_40\\_Questions\\_of\\_SLAA.pdf](http://www.slaafws.org/download/core-files/The_40_Questions_of_SLAA.pdf)

If you are indeed addicted then you have a disease which is causing a lack of motivation and a longing for connection. Addicts sexualize boredom, loneliness, anger, guilt, stress and resentment.

Our addiction (the Yetzer Horah) tells us that we can do Teshuva by passing by places we used to go, just to say we passed by and didn't go in again, or didn't meet that person again. But this is a setup, because when you do it enough times you will go back to it.

It's like this anonymous story in 5 chapters:

**Chapter 1:** I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in. I am lost... I am helpless. It isn't my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.

**Chapter 2:** I walk down the same street; there is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see. I fall in again. I can't believe I am in this same place. But it isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.

**Chapter 3:** I walk down the same street; there is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see the hole, I fall in, it's a habit... but my eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately.

**Chapter 4:** I walk down the same street; there is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.

**Chapter 5:** I walk down a different street.

This is the story of recovery... setting boundaries, slipping, getting back up, working on your character traits, eliminating resentments, making amends and helping others find serenity and sobriety. Only when we let go and admit our powerlessness can we begin walking down a different street.

## **Breaking through Frustration**

Giving up has never been an option for me, although many times in my life I have succumbed to the temptation. Ancient wisdom tells us that anxiety is fear of the future and frustration is actually a good emotion. Frustration in thought is merely indecision. Should I do this or do that? Should money be my end goal or something more spiritual?

Claiming frustration as a bad emotion is like saying debating a point is worthless. When you debate the pros and cons of a question, the argument itself clarifies both sides and helps form a conclusion, or at least some semblance of a clearer picture. So it is with frustration. Mulling the pros and cons over in your mind or on paper helps bring focus to the situation. Benjamin Franklin would draw a line in the center of a sheet of paper and list the pros and cons of any problem he was trying to solve.

If you give up you're just not trying hard enough to reach a conclusion. Procrastination sets in, fear envelopes you like a grey fog and you've made a decision to be safe and do nothing. Doing nothing has never been an option for me either. I get things done, just later than I'd like.

Some days I'm frustrated but I look at it as a temporary condition. I've spent all of my adult life trying to fix my faults and imperfections, trying to change them perfectly, leading me to the next crises. A spiritual life is about change and becoming a better person; perfecting our character and humbly doing for others.

Is frustration an act of faithlessness? Not really. Frustration is simply fear of making a decision. If we were prophets we could tell if our decision is going to pan out. But we are mere mortals, stuck in indecision, with one foot on the pedal and one foot on the brake. Achieve, work hard, set goals. Pile yourself up with to-do lists and you'll overwhelm yourself to the point of doing nothing.

Make a decision to do one thing right now and finish it. You'll then slowly build up your self confidence to move forward with the next task, next project and next goal fulfilling act.

No one can stop your frustration. You can only have one thought in your mind at any given time. If that thought is confusion you'll remain paralyzed with fear like the bird perched upon the branch. A snake slithers below, opening its jaw to reveal its frightening fangs of venom. The bird, safe upon the branch falls into the mouth of the snake merely from fear. All it had to do was fly away.

When you feel frustrated; when indecision envelopes you and won't let go, flip a coin and just do something. If it turns out to be wrong, well, you've learned a lesson. If it turns out to be right you'll enjoy the moment. In either case you've broken through

frustration. Like shattered glass, indecision radiates colorful rainbow like crystals toward the heavens.

## **CONNECTION VERSUS ISOLATION**

Dear Fellow Jew,

Sex and Love Addiction is a problem of connection. Some people have a hole in their soul and fill it up by escaping into a fantasy land where quick pleasures give them temporary relief and then they feel horrible and do it again to feel better again. It becomes a vicious cycle of feeling → sooth feeling → regret action → sooth regret. This is no way to live. Figure out what is causing you to want to escape (loneliness, anger, resentment, fear, anxiety, stress) and learn new ways to cope.

G-d gives us certain tests to overcome. He also gave us Teshuva (repentance) KNOWING we will fail, or else why would HE give it to us? As long as you're working on improving (spirituality), G-d will listen to your regrets and consider them as a positive restoration of your soul. Regretting sin is repenting. So you are already a Baal Teshuva (person who has repented).

This is also a disease of isolation. We are desperately looking for connection with G-d and another human being to fill up this hole in our soul, which causes us to numb out with fantasy. Then we feel bad and numb out again to relieve the pain.

You cannot avoid sin completely. King Solomon in Koheles (Ecclesiastes) said, "There is no man who has not sinned." There will always be triggers, anger, isolation, loneliness and sadness. It's our attitude which determines what we'll do when they occur; and they will occur. You cannot simply avoid the world and live in a cave the rest of your life.

Spring time is the season of introspection. Passover is the holiday of freedom; freedom from bondage of self. Your job is to figure out what is making you want to escape into fantasy land. Usually it is one of these character traits: fear, loneliness, anger or resentment. Eliminate these from your heart and you'll enjoy freedom from bondage.

How do you do this?

- Join a 12 step group in your city or on the phone.
- Read the Handbook and Attitude materials on <http://guardyoureyes.org>
- Get a sponsor or a friend to talk to. The more SPECIFIC details you reveal, the more you release the shame and guilt from your body and become free.
- Read recovery books and materials before you go to bed.

- Make an accounting of your day before you go to bed. Were you angry, short tempered? Is there someone you need to apologize to? Did you spend your day helping someone else, or were you isolated and self absorbed?
- Get up in the morning and pray to G-d to help you stay sober, just for today.

Remember, doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is INSANITY. It's your choice. SERENITY VS. INSANITY. Which one will give you long lasting happiness instead of a quick fix or cheap thrill?

## DEPRESSION

Dear Fellow Jew:

None of us want to start over again. We want the world and everyone in it to treat us kindly, say the right things every time, and meet our demands and deadlines. It's all about us; ME, ME, ME, ME.

Depression is anger turned inward. You seem angry at people who say they are weak. Yet, you're beating yourself up and they're still sober, weak or strong. Don't judge your recovery comparing yourself to others. Comparing is deadly. He is not you. He didn't have the same upbringing, history, wife, children, education, etc. Stand up for yourself and don't listen to what everyone else has to say.

The only way out of depression, aside from Prozac, is action. Instead of wallowing in your own misery, do something fun for yourself that's HEALTHY! When was the last time you and your wife went out to a shiur. for a walk or to dinner together?

If you suffer from depression, look into **antidepressant medication**. If you suffer from obsessive sexual thinking, look into [SSRI medication](#) (scroll down in the link). Today, these medications can work wonders in tandem with therapy, and they have virtually no side-effects! Also, the therapist on the line last night explained that these meds do not have to be taken for life, but rather a period of 8-10 months is often enough to help you on your way to recovery.

**So dear Yidden!** It is vital to realize that often it's not just a matter of *chizuk* and *mussar*. This is a medical condition and disease, and it must be treated as such, hand in hand with the spiritual healing.

**We've all waited too long. The time for excuses is over.**

## **FIGHTING VERSUS LETTING GO**

Dear Fellow Jew,

It's not your body you have to control, it's your mind. Switch your thinking and your body will heal. You can only have one thought in your mind at a time. Use your mind for a change!!!! The key to recovery and serenity is to live in the moment, just for today, just for the hour, just for the minute.

The more you fight to be in control of everything around you, the more you'll fall and keep falling. Let go, relax and let G-d control things for you. Find a live group in your area. Accept what is happening is what G-d wants to happen. HE will help you but you have to be willing to accept HIM being in control. You have to become a pure accepting vessel before G-d will fill you up with serenity.

You're realizing with each fall how powerless you are to control this by yourself, aren't you? That's the first and most essential step. It is good idea to begin looking inside for what is causing you to be irritable, resentful and disconnect and needing to escape into a fantasy world.

Just going to meetings will not do it. You've got to begin establishing personal relationships with people you trust, from the meetings and meet with them personally to discuss what is going on. This is really not about sex, alcohol, drugs, work or food. It's that we use our acting out behavior to cover up a spiritual hole yearning for connection and intimacy with another person and / or with G-d.

The key to letting go is to admit you are powerless over this addiction and that your life has become unmanageable. Here is how to begin.

Go ahead now and write down:

10 ways you are powerless over this addiction and  
10 ways it has made your life unmanageable

Then go over it with a sponsor or someone you trust who can relate.

Trace back what is happening in other parts of your life that is making you fearful, angry, lonely, tired, anxious, etc. That's where the work needs to begin. .

Answer this question, what is the payoff for you to keep acting out?

Surrendering to G-d is giving up and giving it over to G-d. You're still trying to



control it, waiting for some miracle. Accept it, instead of fight it. You've got a disease, you're powerless to stop.

You look away because you're powerless and you know that if you look too long, lust will fill your heart and you won't be able to stop. G-d said looking repeatedly is forbidden exactly for that reason, because you might come to act out. So once you show G-d you're serious, HE will help you by taking away the lust and the cravings and making it easier to deal with.

Get the book by Patrick Carnes called "Out of the Shadows" or /and Rabbi Twersky's book, *Self Improvement? I'm Jewish*. It explains the twelve steps and how to work them.

Are you going to meetings? Are you calling people when you're getting close to acting out? Do you have friends you hang out with, or are you isolating?

You're successful in business? How much more successful could you be if you stopped? Does your self esteem hinder your ability to become more successful?

If you went a week without it and you're getting work done, you're seeing results. Hashem is helping you by reminding you to call someone and by your going to the office alone and not acting on it. That's what accepting powerlessness is. You're powerless so you need help to overcome it. The idea is to call someone. G-d helps you make the right decision.

Hashem is not ignoring you. You have to become a 'vessel' worthy of HIS helping you by making the decision and action not to act out. Once you do that and you realize you are not in charge (G-d is) then HE will help you. It's just like Hishtadlus. Got it?

You're doing all the right things. It's a slow process. If you've filled your mind with porn for 5 or 10 years it's not going away in one week. Sorry to disappoint you, but those are the consequences of your actions.

Begin to THANK Hashem instead of asking HIM to give you things. Thank him for what you do have in your life when you're davening and I believe you'll feel a difference. Keep going to meetings, talking to your sponsor, reading a little each day (don't overwhelm yourself and try to digest the whole elephant at one time - that causes heartburn :)

Hashem gave us the tools to deal with this. They are called eye lids.👁️👁️. Seriously, there is no way to avoid this; you don't have to look for a long time or stare, or drive around the block and keep looking. The more we resist looking, the more obsessed we become. So I'm going to suggest something really radical. Try it and let me know if it works.

Use the 3 second rule. Actually look for three seconds then turn your head away, cross the street, look down, whatever to not keep staring. Then say to yourself, "*what am I*

*going to get from this girl. If I approach her she might have mace or a gun or a knife and that won't be much fun. If I attack her I could get arrested. There is nothing I am going to get from this person that is going to help me, so why bother."*

Here are some more tips for guarding the eyes on the street:

**1)** Tell yourself that no matter how painful it feels NOT to look, it will be MORE PAINFUL to look. Why? Because when you look, there are two acute pains you will feel.

**a)** You feel suddenly far from Hashem and from your goals.

**b)** You know you can't have it anyway, and when you look - you desire it, and you **can't have it**, and it HURTS.

So essentially, the pain you feel when not looking is MUCH BETTER than the pain of looking.

**2)** The pain you feel when not looking is HEALING pain, like the pain from an important surgery. The pain is healing you. On the other hand, the spiritual pain of looking is the pain of the disease getting worse. Which pain do you choose?

**3)** The pain you feel when not looking is not really your pain at all. It is the pain of the Yetzer Hara in his "death throws". He is screaming that you are hitting him hard. So enjoy the pain! You are feeling the pain of your enemy as he dies!

**4)** The whole desire is a blown up bubble of hot-air, built around what we see and imagine in our mind. Experience has shown us all, that as soon as we get what we thought we wanted -- what we thought was going to be absolutely incredible (according to what we saw), as soon as it's done, the bubble pops and all that's left is "hot air". And we are left shaking our heads in disbelief. This was the whole thing for which we sold our very soul?

So in essence, the fact that we struggle so much with *shmiras ainayim* and all these powerful fantasies, and the fact that we need to use such strength and give our hearts over to Hashem - this all is really Hashem's greatest gift to us.

This sounds a little strange, so let me explain what I'm trying to say:

If we would just be like other people and just give in and get all we wanted in these areas, we would have NOTHING at the end. Do they have joy from this? The minute it's over, they are left disillusioned and seeking other pleasures to fill the void they feel. So think about it. Hashem has chosen us and uplifted us from the filth of the world with such kindness. He has given us the opportunity to give him our very hearts! We have the opportunity to make all these "valiant" struggles every time we turn away from looking at something the Yetzer Hara wants us to look at. But what is the alternative, if we would give in? Nothing! Emptiness and disillusionment! The Yetzer Hara promises so much but delivers nothing! This whole blown up desire we have, and all these difficult struggles not to look is all a "game" that Hashem is playing with us. He makes us feel we are

"ripping out our hearts" for him - and he indeed gives us the reward AS IF WE DID RIP OUT OUR HEARTS and he allows us to come closer to him than any non-Jew could dream of coming, and yet, it's all a game. For if one would be able to see in advance the way he would feel **after he would give in**, he wouldn't even have a struggle!!

Someone once posted on the GYE forum:

*When I was struggling with shmiras HaEinayim, I felt that the Yetzer Horah (evil inclination) was literally pulling and pushing my head in any direction that he wished. It was as if I had no free choice. The reason I felt like this is because...this IS what was happening. He was in control. Where ever I would walk, I tried and failed. Then, I decided to make very, very small goals. I would accept upon myself, that the walk from shul to my home, (about 100 meters) I absolutely no matter what, would not look anywhere except at the ground. It was difficult, but this was a goal that I could handle. After a few times of doing this, I was able to increase the goal. During the same period when I was driving, which is much more difficult as we are looking almost everywhere in order to drive safely, I could see with my peripheral vision, that there were "interesting" things walking on the sidewalk. I literally had to scream and shout with pain in order to break the pull of the Y"H. This too worked, and immediately afterwards things became much easier.*

That is perhaps what Chazal meant when they said that one day the Tzadikim will weep with joy that they were able to overcome the mountain of the Yetzer Hara, and Resha'im will weep that they couldn't overcome this little string of the Yetzer Hara. One may ask, how could the Yetzer Hara really be two things? Based on the above concept, it could be that the Tzadikim are talking about the "mountain" that the Yetzer Hara "FELT LIKE" – when they DIDN'T give in. But the Resha'im are seeing the little "nothing" that the Yetzer Hara really was WHEN THEY GAVE IN.

So it's really all a game of Hashem's chesed and love for us. Hashem is really only asking of us to overcome a "small string", but he makes it LOOK like a mountain so that we can truly give him our hearts and get the tremendous reward he wants to give us!

You can heal and get better but you'll have to work harder at recovery that you're working to cover up whatever you're doing.

## **GOING TO ANY LENGTH (WILLINGNESS)**

Dear Fellow Jew,

You now have an allergy to porn. If you had a peanut allergy and you knew if you ate another peanut you would die, would you eat another peanut?

I know people who have killed themselves over this disease, been put in jail, and contracted all types of horrible diseases. This is a progressive disease. Once the images are no longer exciting enough, people go on to more dangerous; thrill seeking activities like participating with live people instead of simply looking. If you don't stop now, you're headed for hell on earth. Marriage will not solve this. So many singles I speak to tell me they thought it would get better and they wouldn't need it anymore.

You asked me for strong words. If you're asking for advice **THROW AWAY THE IPOD** or erase it and give it to someone else. I know it is hard. I knew a fellow who looked at X-rated movies for over 30 years. The day he stopped he called me on the phone crying like a baby. He told me the people on the screen were his "friends" and he couldn't leave them. **IS THAT CRAZY OR WHAT?** But he was still in his addiction and couldn't think straight.

If you want Hashem to help you and only **HE** can you must become a pure vessel which can accept **HIS** help. If you're stuck in the mud, **HE** won't pull you out; you have to make the effort. Throwing it out **NOW** is the effort, then your mind will clear up, you'll get back to your learning and Hashem will help you.

***I'm so frum; I can't go to meetings in a church.....***

I know frum people who have been going to meetings in churches for over 10 years. They are still frum and people actually respect them as a frum Jew for wearing a kippa than when they don't. Rabbi Abraham Twersky, M.D. says you can and should attend even in a church.

Let me get this straight, it's OK to be seen going into a strip club or XXX video store or masturbating at your computer but now when you want to get better you can't go into a church? The meetings will literally save your life. It's pikuach nefesh. It's also your "addict" speaking telling you, you're too frum to go into a meeting. The meetings are not in the sanctuary of the church, they're usually in a classroom.

Twice a year there is a convention of frum Jews and their wives. They all have this problem. All of them go to SA meetings. They said the same thing you did. *"I could never show my face in such a place."* These people **COULD** show their faces in strip

joints, xxx video stores and in the arms of strange women, but when it came to getting better, they were just too frum to go to a meeting that would save their life! Now some of them have 3-4-10-20 years of sobriety from this disease because of meetings and having someone who understands to talk to. It's that simple.

Hashem put you in this situation because that is your nisoyon (test) to overcome. HE never gives us a challenge we cannot overcome. But the more you look at it, the further away from G-d you get and the further away from YOURSELF you get. See, when we sin, we are really sinning against ourselves. Take responsibility for your own actions, but do not judge others.

## **HAPPINESS**

True happiness comes when we become givers not takers, when we give of ourselves to help others INCLUDING OUR WIVES. Linking happiness to fulfilling every life pleasure is more like bondage to self. The pleasure doesn't last. Take a vacation for example. You have a great down exhausting yourself on vacation looking at museums, beaches, grave sites, etc. When you get home it is just another memory. True happiness is spiritual happiness knowing you've helped someone overcome depression, sadness, addiction, anxiety, etc., knowing you've made a difference in the world and in someone's life. Yes, happiness is limiting yourself (your ego) to help others. PERIOD.

## **HEALTHY SEXUALITY**

Woman and men are quite different. Women need to be romantic BEFORE they are interested in sex. Men do not need to feel romantic first when they see their wives as sex objects. When a person uses their wife as an object, this is just as bad. Your wife is not an object. Sex is a mutual bond you have when you both feel like feeling closer physically and spiritually.

The 12 step program (which you say you don't need) says that addicts (which you say you're not) are very selfish people. It's all about your desires and feelings.

The fact you have 67 days of sobriety is wonderful. Once you get to 90 it will become much easier not to get triggered. But I am concerned about your wife and her feelings. Yes, she gave you those things YOU wanted, but did she really want to? Did she feel manipulated?

This is what happens when we work on our character traits and have sex for the right reasons; mutual admiration, not selfishness.

Again, your wife is your partner, not an object to use when you get in the mood. Yes it can help when the *"bread is in the basket"* and you can begin to work on seeing your relationship sexually as a mutual agreement to stay close to one another - a spiritual experience, not an exhibition.

You both have to feel comfortable with what you do behind closed doors.

The problem is essentially the same, no matter to what extent a person is acting out, except it gets worse if you don't do something about it. In other words, you may swear today you'd never meet someone off the internet or go to a club or be with another woman before marriage, but unfortunately, it happens when the internet becomes boring, and marriage does not solve the problem. So I would listen to experiences with women

because if you've been on the internet looking you're getting a distorted view of love, sex, intimacy, etc. On the calls you're getting reality, struggles, successes, etc.

USING your wife for this is not what marital relations is all about. It's also not a good thing if your intimacy is a rare occurrence because you both need it. I would talk to your wife and maybe try and get away once a month so you can be alone, and send the kids to the grandparents. That's what they're for! Or tell her how you feel about her not being available as much and it really makes you want to act out.

Dear Fellow Jew,

Thank you for having the courage to write and finally enter recovery. The first step is admitting you are powerless over this and cannot stop. You have an addiction - a dis-ease of connection to G-d, other people and yourself; to fill up a hole in your soul which yearns to be filled up. Now you're filling it up with other women, getting depressed but doing it all over again. It's a cycle. Act Out, Feel Bad, Act Out so you won't feel bad, and on and on.

You mentioned twice that you have great sex. What else do you enjoy and respect your wife for? If it's all about sex, you can get that anywhere, right?

So what you must do if you're serious about recovering is the following. By the way, this is a progressive disease. A person looks at porn and swears he'll never go past that, then ends up in strip joints and massage parlors, then prostitution, adultery, etc. These consequences can be deadly; disease, infecting your wife, even suicide or death. That's why it's vital you get help. There is help and hope. You can start with going to a 12 step group for Sex and Love Addicts. You may need to go away to treatment, if this continues and it's worth it.

1. Go to the book store or shop online and get a copy of "Out of the Shadows" by Patrick Carnes.
2. Get to a live meeting immediately.
3. Search for the anonymous phone meetings on <http://GuardYourEyes.org>.
4. Call the GYE hotline any evening or on weekends.

To recover you must figure out what is causing you to do all of these dangerous things. Do you do them because you're angry, lonely, resentful, scared? These are things you should begin thinking about. Think about your past and what prompted you to look at porn in the first place. What feelings are you trying to escape from? Internet porn is so insidious you can get addicted just because you looked for a few minutes.

To get better you must stop acting out BECAUSE you cannot think clearly and rationally while you're in such a state. So take it slow and each day thank Hashem for keeping you sober today. Don't worry about tomorrow, just today. Say, today I'm not going to do this

anymore. The next time you have the urge (and you will) call the hotline, a sponsor or friend in the program and talk it out. Any time of the day or night.

Dear Fellow Jew,

So according to your wife, she's asking you to wait another 11-15 years until she reaches menopause to have any sexual relations? Does that sound fair to you? It's not what she agreed to in your marriage contract.

While you may be addicted there are some other serious problems. There is still a Mitzva of Onah and I believe your wife has an obligation to go to the mikvah even if for one night. There seems to still be a lot of resentment and lack of trust or revenge on her part and this is something you need to work out with her immediately. Either with a trusted Rav or Counselor or even your doctor (go together).

You're telling me you're sober for 8 years from porn and masturbation? That's an amazing feat and you should join the Guard Your Eyes forum and give other people Chizuk. We all still have tests in the street, at simchas, etc. That will never go away until we pass away. We have to learn to deal with it or move into the nearest cave.

Slipping a couple times in 3 years is not failure. That's success. There are people who cannot get sober in this disease for more than a few months at most. I am not Hashem but I think 8 years of sobriety IS TESHUVA and you should stop feeling guilty. THIS IS A DISEASE, not a weakness. It would be very beneficial for both of you to begin attending meetings; SLAA or SA for you and S-Anon for your wife. In some communities there is RCA - recovering couples anonymous.

Once your wife understands this is a disease and many couples are still together enjoying each other intimately, even more than before, she will have a new outlook. It's a matter of educating her on the facts.

A lot of women say they can live without sex, but once they understand this is a disease and you don't manipulate her for sex any longer, your relationship in and out of bed will improve tremendously.

There is hope. You just have to be careful while working on this not to become resentful or bitter. Don't make this issue the hallmark of your marriage right now. Show her you still care for her despite this and that you're no longer constantly looking for sex, but want an intimate relationship in other ways, until she can come to terms with this. So ask her to compromise. You will do your part, and she has to go to meetings, or make a call or at least read up on the literature so she understands.

I hope this helps. Don't ever give up hope. You've done and are doing a Teshuva Gemurah. Get over it, past it and under it. Stop beating yourself up and work on strengthening the other parts of your relationship.



## HONESTY

Dear Fellow Jew,

What we resist persists. When we overwhelm ourselves and tell ourselves we have to be clean for 90 days, it gives the pressure a lot of power. And if we're also addicted to failure, it's a sure sign we will act out. The reason you were able to stay sober is you gave yourself permission (you admitted you were powerless) over this addiction. By giving yourself permission and accepting reality you took the wind out of the sails of the addiction.

I recently received a private email from a 17 year old living at home. He had put hundreds of dollars on his parent's credit card talking on sex phone lines. He was overseas at the time and when he got home his parents asked him about it. He told them he knew nothing about it.

He wrote asking me if he should continue to lie or tell his parents the truth. I told him that life was short and if he truly wanted to get into Shidduchim and start his life off right, he couldn't live a lie the rest of his life. I told him exactly what to say to his parents - to tell them the truth. He wrote me and said he told his parents and they were very happy he did. If you Chas V'Sholom had a serious illness would you hide it from your parents?

This disease can kill us if we let it go too far. If your parents have the password and you don't they can use the internet unfiltered and you'll have it filtered. It's as simple as that. All you have to say is *you don't want the opportunity of pushing the wrong button and seeing those sites so you'd like their help*. If they say, NO, maybe you need to put the password on for THEM .

What if you went out of town and didn't take your computer and didn't use their computer. Do you think you'd live through it? People have lived for thousands of years without computers. I understand if you earn your livelihood on a computer, but if you don't there is really no excuse to spend every free minute for the rest of your life looking at a screen. This is what it means... going to any length to get and stay sober.

## **LANGUAGE**

**Dear Fellow Jew,**

The language we use both for ourselves and others is critically important in sending messages to our subconscious mind. When you say you had your first fall of the year it makes it sound like you're expecting more and this is just a normal thing that happens because you're back from camp. At camp you were busy, distracted in another way. You get home and you get distracted another way.

The word "try" is a weak word also. It's like "I might." Firstly when you try really hard you're saying you're in control and that's the problem in a nutshell. You need others to help you and be there for you when you're sober and when you're not.

This has nothing to do with camp or falling. It has to do with filling up something lacking in your soul by tuning out emotionally and spiritually. When you figure out what is causing this you will be able to heal. Until that time, wishing and hoping will get you nowhere.

I'm proud of your 2 months of sobriety, don't get me wrong. I'm simply pointing out what subconsciously you're already telling yourself, setting yourself up to fall again, maybe. In live groups this is where you get help, or on the phone groups where you can realize others are struggling and hear how they are dealing with it.

First of all stop calling yourself stupid. You're not stupid; you have an illness, like an allergy. You may need to go for treatment for a week so you can get sober and get some education.

## LOVING YOURSELF

The ultimate question is how to react to the actions of others, so it affects us in a positive, rather than negative way. The balance point is acceptance on one hand and being so comfortable with yourself on the other, that the thought of resentment does not even enter your mind.

The question is, “what are the terms of endearment?”

When the mind wanders into someone else’s emotional space and the heart wants a one-way connection, it’s time to live your own life, not through others’ lenses but through your own cherished uniqueness. For anything else is a recipe for disappointment.

When our expectations of others’ sincerity are measured by our own biased low expectations of ourselves; when we cannot validate our own specialness because we’re waiting for others to do it for us, we spend our lives existing in the shadowy expectations of others without regard to what makes us unique, fulfilled and ultimately happy.

We alone must nourish our inner child, not on the whims of other’s hectic lifestyles, but on the values, beliefs and traditions that have molded our benevolent actions thus far. We cannot dictate how others care for us. We can only dictate acceptance of ourselves and accepting others for what they do. And if inactions speak louder than words then we listen and next time, accept their intentions as upright and their inactions as simple human weakness.

For we all strive in our hearts to love and be loved by others but one cannot dictate how another loves us, only how we show and experience love for others. Only when we love ourselves can we accept other’s love in the way they feel like expressing it, not by our own expectant standards of heightening our own self worth through the actions of others.

## POEMS AND LETTERS

### *Goodbye to Addiction*

You protected me from conflict  
You soothed my shattered self,  
You were my friend when I was lonely,  
And when boredom came to rest.

You were my friend when lovers refused me,  
You always pleased me,  
At first I blamed you on pure curiosity,  
Then you got the better of me.  
I couldn't get enough of you,  
Now I'm getting rid of you!

Goodbye addiction, you meant so much to me,  
When I escaped into my fantasy world to escape my fears and insecurities.  
Being anonymous made me feel powerful, sly and invisible,  
But deep inside you ended up making me feel miserable.

I latched on to you to pass the time,  
When I started new projects or just out of town,  
I longed to connect to my fantasies and dreams,  
And you always obliged by creating the scene.

Even in success you enveloped my life,  
How could I be successful, it just didn't feel right.  
With you at my side, I could feel powerful and in charge,  
An excuse to procrastinate, to escape my wounded scars.

Now, as I think at all the time I've wasted,  
All the real hopes and dreams that could and should have been,  
I realize now that in a way you are a blessing in disguise,  
Because in my desire to get rid of you,  
I've come to appreciate my true self,  
And know that Hashem is really in charge,  
And all I have to do is give HIM the power to destroy you.

Dear Fellow Jew,

*I've come to visit once again. I love to see you suffer mentally physically spiritually and socially. I want to have you restless so you can never relax. I want you jumpy and nervous and anxious. I want to make you agitated and irritable so everything and everybody makes you uncomfortable. I want you to be depressed and confused so that you can't think clearly or positively. I want to make you hate everything and everybody- especially yourself. I want you to feel guilty and remorseful for the things you have done in the past that you'll never be able to let go. I want to make you angry and hateful toward the world for the way it is and the way you are. I want you to feel sorry for yourself and blame everything but your addiction for the way things are. I want you to be deceitful and untrustworthy, and to manipulate and con as many people as possible. I want to make you fearful and paranoid for no reason at all and I want you to wake up during all hours of the night screaming for me. You know you can't sleep without me; I'm even in your dreams.*

*I want to be the first thing you wake up to every morning and the last thing you touch before you black out. I would rather kill you, but I'll be happy enough if I can put you back in the hospital, another institution or jail. But you know that I'll still be waiting for you when you come out. I love to watch you slowly going insane. I love to see all the physical damage that I'm causing you. I can't help but sneer and chuckly when you shiver and shake, when you freeze and sweat at the same time, when you wake up with your sheets and blankets soaking wet.*

*It's amazing how much destruction I can do to your internal organs while at the same time, work on your brain, destroying it bit by bit. I deeply appreciate how much you sacrifice for me.*

*The countless good jobs you have sacrificed for me. All the fine friends that you deeply cared for- you gave them up for me. And what's more, for the ones you turned against yourself because of your inexcusable actions- I am more than grateful.*

*And especially your loved ones, your family, and the most important people in the world to you. You even threw them away for me. I cannot express in words, the gratitude I have for the loyalty you have for me. You sacrificed all these beautiful things in your life just to devote yourself completely to me. But do not despair my friend, for on me you can always depend. For after you have lost all these things, you can still depend on me to take even more. You can depend on me to keep you in living hell, to keep your mind, body and soul.*  
**FOR I WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL YOU ARE DEAD, MY FRIEND.**

Faithfully yours,

Your addiction

## **Present Moment**

Staying in the present moment. The antidote for acting out in addiction. Real trust in a higher power, in G-D, is doing what you can and accepting the results no matter what they are. This is not easy to do especially because the people I surround myself with don't really fully practice this – we just give it lip service three times a day. But we shouldn't judge what we have to do personally by what we assume is going on in the minds of others. That's the root of all sadness is making assumptions. If we are to live in the present moment we will live a calm, serene life, accomplishing intuitively what feels right at the time. Work, rest, play, read, write, enjoy, savor, sensual, exercise, music. what feels right....right now. And it doesn't have to be good feelings only like eating or playing. If we choose work that is meaningful that is fun like writing humorous greeting cards, our lives can be transformed from myopic drudgery to ecstatic rejuvenation. From a switch of priorities...from a shift from what others expect to what I feel I want to do now. The challenge is money. What is going to give me the feeling of working on a cause I feel passion about and be able to earn a living also? Am I putting the cart before the horse or do I need to turn the cart upside down and kill the horse? Killing horses. The horse represents the sturdy vehicle I ride to get to my destination. Sometimes the rider must hold the reins and pull them in different directions, stopping occasionally.

## **REFLECTIONS**

*Keep it simple*

*First things first*

*Do the next right thing*

*If you don't know what to do, do nothing*

*Take things one day at a time*

*Don't give up*

*The only way around is through - Robert Frost*

*Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans. The moment one definitely commits oneself; all sorts of things begin to happen that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the committed decision, raising in one's favor all matter of incidents, meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream, you can begin. Boldness has genius, power and magic on it. Begin it now... Goethe.*

The event does not determine your fate. It's your coping with the event.

To have more of what you've got, you've got to change who you are in relation to what you want more of... If you haven't changed who you are in relation to what you want, you'll always be the one who wants it, not the one who has it.

If you ever feel scared and losing faith in a higher power to lead you through difficult times. I never fail to be amazed, gratified, and reassured, when I remind myself of the synchronicities in my life, those intersections and turning points that seem divinely guided. When I go back in time and review my life with this lens, I am always reassured that I am not alone, and that eventually, it will all work out as it is supposed to. Yes, we have free will, but haven't all of us experienced moments where it feels as if our life is predestined after all?

## **Success**

*"That man is a success who has lived well,  
Laughed often and loved much;  
Who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of children;  
Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task;  
Who leaves the world better than he found it,  
Whether by a perfect poem or a rescued soul,  
Who never lacked appreciation of the earth's beauty or failed to express it;  
Who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had."*

--Robert Louis Stevenson

*When you relinquish the desire to control your future, you can have more happiness.*

*Humor is a rubber sword - it allows you to make your point without drawing blood...*  
Mary Hirsch

*The reward for conformity was that everyone like you except yourself...*Rita Mae Brown

*It's a sign of mediocrity when you demonstrate gratitude with moderation...*Roberto Benigni

*You're only given a little spark of madness. You mustn't lose it...* Robin Williams

## **Affirmations**

The world is a better place because I'm here.

Do I want to continue this or not? Do I want to be angry or right?

I wonder how quickly I will release the pattern in my consciousness that is creating resistance to my good.



## **PUNISHMENT AND DISEASE - SIN AND ADDICTION**

Everyone who overcomes a sin is a Baal Teshuva but Koheles (Ecclesiastes) said *there is no man who has not sinned.*

G-D knew this and that is why HE created Teshuva. HE knew people would sin.

There is an old saying that "curiosity killed the cat." An addiction is a disease not an intentional sin, but that does not give you permission to continue doing it because it will ruin your soul. There are plenty of legitimate massage places by licensed therapists given by men that can help you reduce your stress. From what you're experiencing the places you're frequenting are increasing your stress.

You have an addiction - a disease of connection. As long as you keep looking at porn and masturbating you will have no connection to Hashem or women. When you honestly can say you want this connection then you are ready to make a decision. Either continue to act out and eventually get worse, or get into a program where you can get some help and figure out what is causing you to want to jeopardize your life masturbating 3 times a day. Here are some ideas:

1. If you're learning in Yeshiva, why do you need to be on a computer? It's like going to the mikveh with a cockroach in your hand. Turn it off, get rid of it. If you HAVE to have it put a block on it so you cannot access porn, videos, You Tube, news, etc., all of which are triggers. <http://BSecure.com>.
2. Read the attached handbooks. There is a hotline in Israel for you to talk with someone and meetings to go to. If you have time to be on the computer you have time to go to meetings. It is the medicine for healing in this disease. <http://GuardYourEyes.org>.
3. Usually this means you are "medicating" some anger, fear, loneliness, stress. It's a vicious cycle which you can and must break. You feel stress, you masturbate to feel better, you feel guilty and shameful so you masturbate again and over and over and over. I believe you now see how powerless you are over this disease and how your life has become unmanageable. Only Hashem can restore you to sanity. But when you're an impure vessel, Hashem will not fill you with his Goodness. You must clean the vessel and Hashem will pour HIS blessing into you. You give up the struggle to control it and accept that whatever is happening in your life is Hashem's will for you. So there is no need for stress or worry because Hashem is taking care of you in a Yeshiva where people care about you. But if you're off on the computer all day, you can have no connection to Spirituality, Hashem, friends, women, etc.
4. Make the decision right now to turn your life over to Hashem, honestly daven and ask

HIM just for today to help you stop and you will see it gets easier and you will begin to build back your relationships with HIM, and everyone else.

Other people can't tell us a reason, but the Torah does say that there is a reason for what happens but we don't know what it is, yet we have to still do Teshuva. Teshuva means that we're on the right path and showing we're doing better and that Hashem sometimes wakes us up with health challenges. Only righteous people get health challenges in this world so it will be a tikkun (fix) for our actions. But we can't say it is a particular action or not.

Your husband is not bad, he is sick. When you look at it that way, this can be a tikkun for him and you to get better together. But to continue to beat yourself is not healthy for either of you.

Dear Fellow Jew,

I don't know if you're an addict or not. Read these 40 questions and answer them honestly. [http://www.slaafws.org/download/core-files/The\\_40\\_Questions\\_of\\_SLAA.pdf](http://www.slaafws.org/download/core-files/The_40_Questions_of_SLAA.pdf)

If you cannot stop when you're home and you can't stop looking until late at night, you probably are. A psychiatrist once told me, *if you're already asking, you're an addict.*

But that's actually a good thing, because now you know you cannot stop on your own and you say you are willing, motivated to stop. Are you looking at the computer on Shabbos itself or just Motzei Shabbos (I'm assuming the latter, Dan L'Caf Zchus.).

This is a disease. You are not bad, you are just sick and you can get better. This is a disease of connection. We try to fill up what is lacking in ourselves - the hole in our soul - by trying to connect to the intrigue, the pictures, the fantasy, and the forbidden. We also push ourselves away from Hashem when we do this, yet our souls yearn for connection to HIM also.

What to do?

1. Get a block for your computer at home. <http://BSecure.com>. Install it and give someone the password. Tell your parents you don't want to accidentally get on these sites and you need help, so please keep the password.
2. What if you didn't have a computer at home? What would you be doing with your time? What did people do before 1998 when there were no computers? Make a list of 10 things you like to do and get busy. Keep the computer off and don't open it. What's on there that is so important if you're in Yeshiva learning? Honestly? Yeshiva World?
3. There are three secrets to recovery: Willingness to go to any length to get better, Honesty with yourself especially and others and commitment to place your recovery before anything else. You have hours and hours to spend online, now you have hours

and hours to work on recovery.

4. What does working on recovery mean? Going to SA or SLAA meetings in your area, getting a sponsor to talk to and work the steps, reading literature. Most of us suffer from being RID (resentful, irritable and discontent). We have fears of loneliness and abandonment and yearn for someone to connect with us. Think about this in your life. Do you walk around resentful? A Rabbi told me resentment was kin to Sinas Chinam (unwarranted hatred). Figure out what you're FEELING or thinking about BEFORE you walk in the door and go to the computer. Lonely, angry, isolated, bored, fearful?

Awareness is the first step to recovery. Awareness of our feelings and having someone SAFE to talk to about them.

Is going home for Shabbos and Summer safe for you? Do you have anxiety being home? If so, deal with the anxiety and your problem will lessen.

Only Neveim can interpret our dreams. It probably was past experiences or fantasies that came to you in your sleep. If you've been doing this for years it will take more than 90 days to clear out all of the cobwebs. The 90 days begins to create new neural pathways that will help you clear your thoughts and mind. This is normal and part of the process. Trust the process. Probably reading some literature about the addiction or even saying the Yehi Ratzon before the Shema at night WITH KAVANAH will help you make a Cheshbon of your day and clear your mind for a good night's rest. A little exercise would also help.

## **RATIONALIZATIONS**

Your body and mind telling you its innocent is your addiction talking you into acting out. Once you start going to meetings and participating a lot of these feelings will subside, especially when you stay 90 days clean. The longer you stay away from a computer the easier it will get. Read the news in the newspaper, sports on the sports page and get the rest on the radio. Otherwise you CAN STILL SURVIVE without a computer. For now until you get a sponsor, you can call the hotline and talk when you feel irritable, restless and discontent.

Do you honestly believe the people you are talking to? They are actors who are only there to grab your money. That's why they extend the calls so long. A lot of them are sex slaves who are being forced to do this stuff. Do you really want to be supporting that? Call the phone company and ask them to block 900# from your phone. Find other people to talk to and meet with that are healthy.

What made you start back again? What's going on in your life? Think about it and how you can fix that. It's not about the phone sex; it's about the loneliness, anxiety, anger, resentment, fear - something....

You stopped for a year, you can stop again. It's decision making time. Either you can live needing help or you can live a life of serenity with peace of mind. It's up to you to decide. What you are describing to me is a life of abuse and trauma which is what is causing your addiction.

You're using your acting out to sooth your pain. The most effective way to treat past trauma is EMDR and a technique called psycho drama therapy groups. You must get to a CSAT counselor that specializes in these issues. You can find them in your area at <http://sash.net>. I would recommend that you both look into going to an intensive week or two to begin to get in touch with your feelings and begin to heal. B'H I live in a very warm supportive community where we have these intensives every few months.

### **Can I go to mixed group meetings?**

With a mixed group you learn the other side of the story - from the wife's perspective and this is revealing in helping you heal. Remind you wife that this is a disease like any other and not her fault. I think with your history she can relate to that.

I know hundreds of people who have stories just like yours and they are getting better and healing. You are not creating a chillul hashem to want to get better after what you've been through. Our problem is we isolate ourselves out of shame and guilt when what we need is an accepting SAFE place to tell our stories and heal. Group meetings and

intensives do that.

## **RESENTMENTS - THE NUMBER ONE OFFENDER**

*In Koheles, Chapter 11:9 it says "Rejoice, Young man in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in THE SIGHT OF YOUR EYES, but know that for all these things Hashem will bring you to judgment".*

Part of me says "I can't stand it anymore, I have to act out" or "If I only can do it one more time, that will save me". "Look one more time". "Go to that place one more time". That is my addiction talking. How do I overcome this? I ask myself, "Do I really want to go back to secretly sneaking around, lying to my family, covering myself up so no one will see me? Do I really want to go through this pain of withdrawal all over again?" NOOOOOO!!!!!!

But once a person lets their guard down, stops talking to friends, stops going to meetings, stops reading, it's easy to rationalize and say, "I can do this on my own". And then they fall.

What's the answer? Koheles gives it to us in THE VERY NEXT POSUK. Read carefully.

*Chapter 11:10: "Therefore, remove anger (resentment, fear) from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity". HEVEL!*

*This is the answer. "Remove resentment, fear and anger from your heart". For many people, resentment is the #1 cause of falling. Think about it. Do you ever act out when you felt on top of the world, that the world was yours and everything was going great. You had no worries? I doubt it. If you have, I'd like to hear your story.*

*We're not talking about emotional, physical, or sexual abuse here. Such people need PROFESSIONAL HELP. We're talking about everyday annoyances that we blow out of proportion and they affect us negatively.*

Dear Fellow Jew,

This is an addiction. It does not go away, married or not married. I would recommend you immediately get to a counselor, certified in sex addiction by yourself. Your husband's honesty about the addiction is refreshing but an addict will always think he can eventually control it by himself, which is baloney. This is a progressive disease. Meaning, you start with porn and when that doesn't become exciting enough you go further and further. You don't want to wait till he hits bottom with an affair (G-d forbid)

to first start treating this.

What is his plan to overcome it. The ONLY effective way is a 12 step program, and / or therapy with a certified sex addiction counselor. There are many GYE, SA & SLAA phone groups that meet during the week. There are live groups all over the world. His honesty is nice. Again this is an addiction, a disease and you should be supportive of his efforts to stop. He is not doing this because of you and it is not your fault, in any shape or fashion.

He's working on his Bein Adom L'Mokom? This is a spiritual disease. When you're cut off from the spirit of Hashem, you look outside for something to fill the void. For him it's porn. Only Hashem can stop this for him but the first step to admit he has a problem and cannot control it by himself. Just like in VIDUY. You admit, regret the past and vow not to do it again. He's admitting but not stopping. And he's in DENIAL that he has a real problem.

Dear Fellow Jew,

If your problem is on the internet, DO NOT learn Torah on the internet. There are plenty of seforim all over the world you can learn from. What you may not realize is our brains are affected by the visual stimulation of movement on the internet and it becomes a trigger in itself. When you act out on the computer, the next time you go to that computer, the first thing that pops into your head is "this is where I acted out."

If you want to listen to a shiur from the internet, download it onto an mp3 player, ipad or ipod.

Dear Fellow Jew,

Accountability should not be interrogation. It's only for you to tell him what is going on and he accepts that as truth and helps you work through it.

Here I go asking you a question. Do you think it's possible that your aggravation with this guy is causing you to act out? I'm asking this because it's important to identify your triggers. For some people the anxiety caused by conflict can be enough. That's the most powerful trigger of all.

He may have asked these questions to give you some boundaries around what you're doing in your spare time, so give him the benefit of the doubt. Resentments are our worst enemy. If you don't feel comfortable get a new partner. Your sobriety is what matters, not his feelings. Or, you just set boundaries and say "I'm not comfortable answering all of these personal questions right now, someday, maybe, but not yet. Let's discuss some ways to avoid triggers."

Think about this. How will you feel when depression is not an issue? What is your

payoff for staying in a depressed mood?

## **ROOTS OF SEXUAL ADDICTION**

Dear Fellow Jew,

An addiction is anything which a person cannot control, although they think they can and it begins to affect them and others physically, emotionally or spiritually.

First of all, are you sure your husband does not have an addiction to porn? Do you know how to check the computer?

Most addictions; work, gambling, drinking or food are a spiritual malady of wanting to fill a void in a person's soul. They are usually angry, resentful, bored, lonely, tired or fearful. I can imagine if he is not working and yet maintains a "chaotic" schedule, there must be something going on.

First make sure your husband is not doing this to avoid you and your relationship. This is not your fault. It is very common for addicts to not believe they need help. Unfortunately it usually takes "hitting bottom" for them to wake up and realize they are self destructing and destroying their families. Here are my suggestions.

1. YOU have to set the boundaries. If he says he can stop, challenge him and say, "OK, let's see you stop completely for one week." And if you can then you have no problem and we just need to work out a mutual arrangement about how long you will spend on the computer in the future, because I cannot go on living like this." (By the way, I know people whose counselor made them stay off the computer for an entire month and they work on the computer. The client told her that was impossible and she said, "*too bad, if you want to recover you do it.*" He did it and his wife answered his emails and he worked the old fashioned way, without the computer).

2. Check the computer to make sure. Go to the internet browser and look at the "history" button. When you see sites that are suspicious, they will be obvious, but if you see nothing that COULD be a sign he is hiding what he is looking at. I'm not accusing here, just being safe for you.

3. Talk to your Rav or go to the Jewish Family Service in your area. They have sliding pay scales for these types of things. Go for yourself and find out what to do. You cannot change your husband, but you can make it uncomfortable enough that he finally realizes you're going to leave unless he gets help. Unfortunately that's what it takes sometimes.

4. Talk to your husband about his feelings. Use "I" statements like, When you do \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_\_." He cannot argue with feelings.

Encourage him to express his need to be on the computer so much? And if it's not an addiction, what does he find so stimulating that he cannot go to bed at a decent hour? But, don't keep criticizing him for this, because if it is an addiction, porn or not, he is probably feeling low self esteem enough that in the back of his mind he knows he needs help. Open up the discussion without being accusatory, talk about feelings and tell him you're there to support him TO A POINT. And that POINT is he has to prove to you that he can control it and stop for a week. If not, he has to go to a meeting for people who have this problem. Once he begins making an effort, gets a sponsor, reads literature, goes to meetings then you must support him emotionally.

You'll get through this when you both want your marriage to survive; he just needs to know you're there to support him WHEN he's ready to get help.

Dear Fellow Jew,

The accepted literature at SLAA meetings and SA meetings is the AA big book and 12/12. We can apply the fact of having to let go for this to work. Just like the alcoholic cannot take the first drink, we cannot take the first look, depending on our problem; porn versus lusting after women in the street. But while we cannot look at the first picture of porn, the alcoholic can be around people drinking if he has good sobriety and it repulses him. We have to get to the level where porn repulses us. We will always have this disease, we will always be tempted, and it just gets easier to cope when you have the tools to avoid the triggers which cause us to act out. So you don't live in pain, you live in serenity when you know what to do when you triggered, DO IT and go on. But if you constantly live in fear of acting out, clinging on to lustful thoughts, you will eventually fall. Many, many, many alcoholic / sex addicts have told me that sex addiction is their root addiction and alcohol was used to cover it up.

We have to distinguish the difference between looking at porn and looking at women or men in public. One is much more addictive than the other. Porn is like taking the first drink, actually taking it and drinking in the pictures. Looking at women in the street is like sitting down at a restaurant and other people are ordering drinks. You can stare at the drinks, lust after them, imagine you're taking a drink or you can walk away for a few minutes. We can look for 3 seconds, look away and go on. If we drive around the block gawking at the girl or boy, stalking them, we've just taken the first sip of alcohol.

The bottom line: WHAT WE RESIST.... PERSISTS. There are also sexual anorexics that go to the opposite extreme. This is not healthy either. If we hide in a cave so we will never look at another human being again to avoid lust, yes you will live in pain. But when you accept the fact that you can look for 3 seconds and you can never look at porn AND you have the tools (books, GYE, meetings, sponsor, friends in the program, Carnes



Workbooks, etc. ) to know what to do when you are triggered you are assured of living an EMOTIONALLY SOBER life in recovery.

Dear Fellow Jew,

We don't put our jewelry and our garbage in the same place in our house, why do we put them together in our minds?

The duty of your subconscious mind is to answer questions. We're asking ourselves questions all day and our subconscious answers them.

So to access answers from your subconscious simply ask yourself, "What is causing me now to be R.I.D? Ponder it for awhile and let it go, the answer will come. If it's resentment, pray for the person to have what you want for yourself. If it's fear, ask Hashem to show you how to trust HIM more. In any case call someone and talk it out immediately.

As addicts we tend to over think everything and sometimes this can cause us more anxiety than we already have. Acceptance is the key. Accept the feeling, feel the feeling, don't push it away or you give it MORE power. Accept it, take a walk and think it over.

Other ways to access your subconscious is to use questions as affirmations. Sometimes when we use affirmations our evil inclination counteracts it and says, "You think you're smart? Look how stupid you acted the other day!" So asking questions causes our subconscious to answer in the positive.

"How soon will I realize that I am free from resentments?" Imagine how calm and content I will be when I realize Hashem is always at my side guiding my path? How much more of this serenity can I possibly enjoy?

Dear Fellow Jew,

Look at this as an allergy. If you have an allergy you stay away from the cause of the allergy (lust in this case). If your husband has a dis-ease there is nothing to get upset about. As long as he is working on getting better, he will fall a few times, but he needs to work a program with a sponsor. If he, chas v'sholom had a physical disease, would he talk to the doctor or just wait till he gets really sick and it's too late? This is a progressive disease and he may be looking at porn now but soon that will not be enough and things he may swear he will never do, he may do anyway. That is the nature of addiction.

The cure for this disease is literally talking and having a connection with other people who understand and will not shame you. He is full of shame and guilt. The ONLY way to get rid of the shame and guilt is to tell someone about it. A wife can't be his dumping ground. Believe me, there are religious Jews, secular Jews, from all walks of life who

have this problem. Yet they get better by talking it out. This is the same concept as confession on Yom Kippur.

## **SLIPPERY SLOPES**

Dear Fellow Jew,

You mention, "when issues arise and lead to intentional sin." Get rid of these ISSUES and you won't sin. Whether it's an addiction or not, doesn't matter. If you can stop on your own, then just stop. If you're already telling yourself you're going to do it again, you're setting yourself up for failure. It's up to you to make the decision whether to feel miserable after masturbating (I'm assuming this is what you're talking about) or to spend your energy on figuring out your "issues" and doing something about them.

You can avoid the problems at night by getting so tired before you go to sleep that you're exhausted and only want to sleep. Or you can take a drink or some pills, which I don't recommend. Or you can figure out what the negative emotions are telling you and talk yourself out of them. It's called "reframing"

Make a list of 10 negative things you tell yourself. Then under each one, answer it positively. Imagine if you were speaking to a child that you knew was bright but the child said, "I failed this test, I'm dumb." What would you say to the child to make him feel better?

Sometimes we know how to help other people but not ourselves.

## **SLIPPING AND FALLING**

Dear Fellow Jew,

Having a fall is part of recovery. You learn a lesson each time you fall that you are not in control and no matter how much a person thinks they can stop on their own; they come to the realization when they fall. When your wife understands that this is part of the process, she can help you, not hinder you.

There is a lot of support on the Guard Your Eyes forum for wives of addicts and people to talk to, as well as for you to get to know people on the forum, join a phone group and work on your character traits. It's not about sex, it's about what's causing us to let it take over our life that is important.

Congratulations on being clean for so many days. Looking at porn for several hours, for several days is a relapse, not a slip. It's like an alcoholic saying he didn't drink whiskey, he only had beer.

Keep in mind that each time we slip we are at a new level where we've experienced clean living and sobriety. We know the sweetness of this period and no one can take that away from you. So when you slip, don't assume you've fallen down to the lowest level of the pits. Use it as a learning experience (its part of the process) and move on.

An addict slipping once in a while is part of the process, but an addict has to be in a process of recovery (sponsor, meetings, therapy, etc.) Isolation is poison to the addict. Just because you slip doesn't mean you have to become a full blown addict again and keep going. You stop; figure out what you've learned about your powerlessness and move on, starting over again. None of us want to start over again. We want the world and everyone in it to treat us kindly, say the right things every time, meet our demands and deadlines. It's all about us. ME ME ME ME. Depression is anger turned inward. You seem angry at him because of what he said. Yet, you're beating yourself up, and he's still sober, weak or strong. Don't judge your recovery comparing yourself to other people. Comparing is deadly. He is not you. He didn't have the same upbringing, history, wife, children, education, etc. Stand up for yourself and don't listen to what everyone else has to say (except for me of course).

The only way out of depression, aside from ingesting an anti-depressant is action. Instead of wallowing in your own misery do something fun for yourself that's HEALTHY! When was the last time you and your wife went out; to dinner, Broadway, Lincoln Center? I thought that's why you northerners live in that G-d forsaken melting pot. CULTURE - THE ARTS- SWARMING CHASSIDIM - THE ULTIMATE TORAH ATMOSPHERE. How about going to a shiur together.

I know! You're too busy and your wife doesn't go out of the house much and and and and and and and...

Dear Fellow Jew,

You are not doomed. Tell your parents you need help. Tell them SOMETIMES you've pushed the wrong button and seen things you don't want to see anymore. Especially during Chol Hamoed. You don't have to go into a lot of details about where, what, etc. Ask them if they are willing to help you by putting a filter on their computer. They would have the password and will be able to get to any sites they want.

This is only a temporary solution. The only way to beat this is to get involved in a 12 step group or on the forum or in one of the GYE phone groups. When you're ready to stop feeling like garbage, you will put up a fight and realize it's not worth the effort. Now you're using your parent's computer as rationalization for acting out. Recovery is getting to a place where you don't even think about it much, and when you do you know the good feeling you have when you don't and you remember those times.

Don't overwhelm yourself. Tell yourself and G-d that today, Just Today, you will not look on your parent's computer and ask G-d to help you. Then tomorrow morning do the

same thing.

By speaking with others and hearing their stories you will realize you are not alone and can do this. Just take 1 day at a time. Keep busy. Stay off ALL computers. With or without blocks until Friday Night. Just being on the computer is "triggering" you to want to look even though you can't and you need some time to "dry" out.

## **SOBRIETY AND SERENITY - WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?**

Dear Fellow Jew,

People who have sex addiction, act it out in many different ways. Porn is just one way. Others include chat rooms, adultery, prostitution, video stores, clubs, etc. I'm not giving you any ideas, I'm just showing you the severity of this problem.

<http://slaafws.org> .

One of the 40 signs of sexual addiction is having sex with your wife and thinking about other women. How is that different from thinking about having sex with other women? The root cause of our problem is a need for intimacy and connection. When we "sexualize" women we are looking outside ourselves for connection. You say, if your wife didn't get pleasure you would be acting out in other ways. What does that say about your marital relationship? Are you not sexualizing your own wife? Your wife is not an object, no matter how much she likes it. Other women are not either.

I know people who have attended 12 step groups with non jewish women and therapy groups with women who are married to sex addicts. Doctors, nurses and other intelligent people. And if you would hear their stories of their abuse and getting into bad relationships, you would never sexualize them again. You would sit down and cry as they have so many times over the past year. Women are different than men. They don't like "instant sex." They like getting in the mood with sincerely nice treatment, not quickies. I know people who used to do the same thing as you. I can tell you that once they stopped, their relationship with their wife, in and out of bed became much more enjoyable and closer.

So, we have a lot to work on, if you're willing. Does your wife know any of this?

#1: Join an SLAA group or SA group in your area.

#2: Read Facing the Shadow by Patrick Carnes

#3: Join a GYE phone group.

#4: Get a Certified Sex Addiction therapist. <http://sash.net>.

#5: What you resist, persists. Stop thinking of looking at women as totally sinful and accept the fact that you are a male human being and this is a natural thing. Accept the looking, not the acting on the looking. Now, look for 3 seconds, accept and turn away. Practice this and it will get a lot better. When you start fantasizing, stop, think about who you are and the consequences and then think of yourself and your wife, instead of the other person.

What and where are the "interactions" that you HAVE to have with other women?

Dear Fellow Jew,

Think about what is causing you to feel this way. Get more energy by doing something you like, like Karate or exercise. Talk to a friend you can share what you're feeling, not the details of what you're doing.

A lot of times as we approach a goal or a victory in life, we tend to sabotage ourselves, (fear of success) because we've always been told we were not good enough. How can I achieve this if I'm not good enough? That's just the Yetzer Horah (addiction) talking. Talk back to it in your mind and tell yourself why you are good enough. You're a good father, husband, friend, you help other people, and you're an asset in your shul. Your parents didn't know the real you anyway, in the past. Now the real you is coming out and you can begin to appreciate the little things you do have.

Whatever you accomplish, even if you were sober ONE day, I would be happy for you and proud of you and myself, because I know I helped you. Even if you were to slip, I would not feel responsible because I know it is normal and part of the process. As each day goes by we are at a different level than you were 77 days ago.

Co-dependency is a need to accomplish without causing other people to feel bad. Give yourself a break and pamper yourself a little. To hell with the rest of the world. It's time to take that big ball called the world off your shoulder, put it down and let someone else worry about everything else and EVERYONE else. You take up for yourself. Isn't that the same world I was carrying on my shoulder a year ago? I think so.

You deserve it.

Continue to mourn the pain you've been through. Put it in the past. There is nothing you can do about it anymore. The future is up to Hashem. You just concentrate on today, this minute and appreciate the little things. That's the key to serenity.

Dear Fellow Jew,

You solve your problem by totally giving up and asking Hashem to help you. But until you are a "clean vessel" to accept Hashem's help, HE will not. Falling is part of the process. It happens to teach us a lesson. What lesson did this teach you? First of all, when you've had months of sobriety you know how good it feels and you are never on the same level when you fall. You're on a higher level because you've experienced the goodness of sobriety.

You feel like two people because you are. One is your pure Neshama (the real you, the inner child, G-D's child) and the other is your addiction (the Yetzer Horah).

The reason it says you should worship Hashem B'chol Levavcha in the plural is that we have to worship Hashem with both our Yetzer Tov and our Yetzer Horah. So even in the depths of despair, once you make the commitment to stop and get better, Hashem will help you.

But you cannot do any of this alone. You have to stop isolating and be in touch with people, LIVE PEOPLE who can help you and guide you; who have been there before. Get a sponsor or partner, get to a meeting or a phone meeting and begin exploring what it is that you're trying to fill up in yourself by acting out with wandering eyes and masturbation. You're in the right place. Stick with it. Never give up.

### **Dear Fellow Jew:**

It's easy to tell you what to do, but until you experience sobriety for awhile you will never get to feel the joy of serenity. I've told many people to get blocks for their computer. They cry to me that they have to stop and ask me "what can I do?" But when I recommend they put a block on their computer their answer is "No, I'm not ready for that".

There are chemical imbalances in the brain caused by watching porn on the internet. If you don't believe it, explain to me why it is so hard to stop. And why are there withdrawal symptoms where you actually shake and sweat? Psychologically, when you know you don't have access, you forget about it eventually. I'm not saying you will never think about it, but the block is a great tool... **an essential tool**... to help you heal and get better.

The proven twelve step approach is actually a quest for spirituality. This is a disease of "lack of spirituality." Addicts are constantly looking outside themselves for validation, acceptance, companionship... for intimacy. But true intimacy is sharing everything, not hiding it from those you love. How long do you want to continue living a lie, to keep covering up everything you do so your wife won't find out? Eventually she will and then it will be too late. Get some counseling and your counselor or a sponsor/friend will help you and let you know when it is safe to tell your wife. Once you do that, it will release your mind and jet you on the way to recovery.

## **SPIRITUALITY**

Dear Fellow Jew,

Recovery is a process of working on your character traits and exploring the causes of what has been pulling you toward acting out: anger, resentment, fear, abandonment, loneliness. So these are things you can begin to explore in your group, talk about it and work the steps.

From what I know about non-Jewish 12 step groups, they discuss more about G-d and fixing character traits (midos) than any of my friends in Shul. Everyone in my circles is so focused on Halacha, but no one really talks about if we really give our lives and trust over to Hashem in our everyday life or not."

It is specifically us, those who are struggling with the Yetzer Hara so intensely and are in a daily battle, that have the biggest potential for real closeness with Hashem! Even the non-Jews in the 12 step groups achieve a closeness to Hashem through their battle with the Yetzer Hara that unfortunately not even from Jews always achieve! So imagine what potential for Kirvas Elokim (closeness to Hashem) a **religious** Jew has, who has both this struggle **and** the truth of the Torah!

(Excerpt from the Guard Your Eyes Daily Chizuk E-mail at <http://guardyoureyes.org>)

### **Horeb, Hirsch and Hirhur**

Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch says in Horeb, Section 1 page 10, "*Both minus (non belief) and zenus (sexual frivolity) lead to idolatry - riotous enjoyment leads to it directly; denial and misrepresentations of G-d usually over the bridge of pleasure. For as soon as enjoyment becomes the object of your life, you no longer regard yourself as belonging to the world but the world as belonging to you, and you know no law but your own capricious impulses. From that moment, you will no longer understand what is meant by unselfishness, you will see in every creature a being which only obeys itself and works only for itself.*"

*"There is no more effective protection against the danger or deifying the creature than a proper self-appraisal, than being completely permeated with the consciousness of your own task in life."*

Thank you for writing. You have begun on your road to recovery by taking the first step, realizing that your life is now unmanageable. Some therapists will tell you masturbation is normal, except the Torah says it's not permitted. It is normal until it becomes addictive. If you've been doing it since you're 13 and still doing it while you're married, you may be addicted. Go to <http://slaafws.org> and take the 40 question assessment and decide for yourself. That's the first step.

The point is your low self esteem. Spilling seed is just a way you are medicating yourself so you'll feel better. Some people use alcohol, drugs, gambling, food or work.

If this is normal and your friends are condoning (and probably doing it themselves) why can't you look people in the eye? There is no one who does not sin. Everyone has their own tests. This is yours. Other people have their own challenges. It is no reason to give up. The problem will never go away but it gets a lot easier.

If you really want to get better, you must stop doing it. If you're looking on the internet, get a filter. If you're buying magazines or going to places with videos, think about what would happen if you got caught or arrested? I know a guy in jail now because he got caught. Once you stop, Hashem will help you. While you're still doing it, Hashem won't fill you up because your soul is too full of the images.

Go to the slowest minyan you can find. Look over Tehillim and davening and pick one or two Psalms that speak to you. Like Tehillim 27 or 30 or the special Shabbos Tehillim we say during davening. Say these with intense Kavanah. Internalize the message.

Instead of asking Hashem for help, THANK Hashem for what you do have; a child, a wife, food, clothing, learning. You say your marriage is fragile. What is fragile about your marriage? Tell me more about that.

First step: write out 10 people, things, beliefs, and organizations that you resent. Why do you resent them? What did they do?

Then write out 10 of your fears: Fear of success, failure, Obama being elected President, Livni being elected President, nuclear holocaust, whatever.

**Here are some examples of things people resent:**

Schools that act before they think; they turn kids away and leave them out in the cold.

People who preach one thing but act another way.

They resent inefficiency and miss management because if there is a better way of doing thing why not make the most of things and make life the best it can be.

People who don't care about others; they turn people off to humanity

They resent things that make us do things against our will, because it traps us and never lets us live our potential.

Resent not living with joy; the sadness and loneliness never lets them realize their potential.



Arrogant people who know everything because they never show their human side.

Beliefs that deny the existence of G-D or claim that he has "help", it makes no sense and dilutes the truth in the world.

I resent immoral images because they destroy people's minds and make them slaves to society and it's pressures.

**Concepts people fear:**

- Not living life to it's fullest
- Living a consistent aspiring, energetic life without outbursts or crazy things
- Falling short of my goals
- Life going by too fast
- Not being given the tools to achieve my goals
- Not have money or that my mind will be controlled by things that handicap me in learning
- Could have married someone that was more attractive to me
- My marriage and physical life will always be o.k., but not amazing
- Never really make an impact,
- Never being respected by the people I meet
- Drifting through life without any solidity or knowledge of G-d's will for me
- Afraid of the dark, but more of the unknown

You can still put blocks on your computer if you're working. And if you need it for school you can use the library in a public place. And if you work for a large company they have ways of blocking this stuff also. It's all your addiction talking telling you you're doomed and you might as well just act out anyway, because it's all hopeless. It's not hopeless. Do the things you're supposed to do to avoid lust and you'll make it.

Don't every give up. This is not your fault - you're the victim here, but I'm telling you, you can get help. Please don't let frumkeit and church issues get in the way. The SA groups are to help you stop acting out in your addiction. And that will save your life, literally. You must stop to be able to begin thinking clearly enough to begin healing. It's the first step.

Dear Fellow Jew:

I will say, if a person has a good relationship with their wife now, I concur that getting it over with, eliminates the secrets and lets you live a life of freedom. Marriage is a true partnership, with ups and downs. No one expects perfection. However guys, before you just blurt out anything to your wife, PLEASE speak to a professional beforehand to help guide you through it. It can be very traumatic for your wife and damage your relationship. Some people do it with a counselor in the room.

There is a huge difference between simply being "sober" or being in real "recovery" from lust. When we are living a spiritual life, when we are not worried about the future and we have come to terms with our past... we live in the present moment, take one day at a time.

When we are living like this... in serenity... there is little chance we will act out... no matter if we have a filter or not. (*Webmaster Comment: Obviously though, until we really get there, a filter is essential*).

So this is the end goal. The filter cannot be the end goal. **Recovery** is the end goal. And that means working a program of perfecting our Middos so we don't hold resentments, anger, fear, etc. We trust Hashem that whatever he has dealt us, moneywise, healthwise, Shidduch wise, is meant to be.

We get rid of our resentments and fears by examining them for our part in them. We make amends to people we have hurt and help others recover.

The tools are all here on [the forum](#) and on the [GuardUrEyes site](#). The tools are in your communities at SA & SLAA meetings. There were 595 non Jews at a recent SA conference and 20 Jews from all spectrums. Chassidim, Misnagdim, all walking around with their Yarmulkes making a Kiddush Hashem. We had a minyan on Shabbos with a sefer Torah, all arranged by the conference.

If they can do that **publicly**, you can go to a meeting. If they can **LEAD** meetings and get up and speak in front of hundreds of people as a proud yid, you can too.

It all depends on whether you REALLY want to get better or you're happy living on the cliff of the slippery slope, where the Yetzer Harah continues to convince you that it's OK to just peek just as long as you don't go all the way.

Resentments and anger fuel your addiction and depression. Depression is ANGER TURNED INWARD. People can hold a resentment for decades. Here's how to get rid of resentments: Write a list of all the good things you can think of around those circumstances of whatever / whoever is making you angry (resentful). Look at this list every day for 1 month. Pray that the person you are angry with is blessed with the blessings you want for yourself (health, wealth, serenity, etc.). Explore what is causing

you to be resentful and where you had a part in it. Realize that there is good in everyone, even yourself. By staying angry, you are just letting others control your life by keeping you depressed and angry. Depression and anger are well treated with medicine and therapy.

Life is full of disappointments, but if we look at them as opportunities for growth and learn the lesson they are teaching us, we move on to bigger and better things. I know someone who was bankrupt at 27 with 3 children. Slowly he built a company up and after 20 years sold it for 1/2 a million dollars because he worked hard and never gave up.

Get the book "**The 4 Agreements**" and read it. If it doesn't change your life, I'll buy it back from you. If you go to movies, rent the movie "A Peaceful Warrior." Learn to live in the present moment. Forget the past, there is nothing you can do to change it. Don't be arrogant enough to think you can carry the world on your shoulder and change the future - or anyone else - for that matter. Forget the future. Live in the present. That's the key to serenity.

## **THERAPY**

The "Jewish Healing Group" had a great FREE phone session with a professional sex-addiction therapist (CSAT) on the line who offered a lot of important information of the nature of the addiction. One important aspect mentioned by the therapist was, that although we are all religious, *Mussar* and *Chizuk* alone are often not enough to break free from this insidious addiction. This is a disease on multiple levels, spiritual as well as psychological.

Take for example someone who suffers from "heart palpitations". It is true that they need to learn how to live a calmer life without stress, but at the same time, if they don't take the medication as well, they won't be able to heal. It is the same with this addiction.

**Spiritual therapy must go hand-in-hand with psychological therapy.** This includes group support, Psychoanalysis, reading books by the experts, learning the tried-and-proven methods, exploring the various treatment options and even sometimes medication. Many people with this disease suffered from trauma in their childhood. Either they were verbally abused, or even physically or sexually abused. Also, often people who suffer from low-self esteem or depression are prime candidates for addiction, since they seek to fill the void they feel inside by "medicating" themselves through "sexual acting out".

These issues need to be dealt with professionally. *Mussar* and *Chizuk* alone, no matter how inspiring, will not be sufficient to heal a scientifically proven psychological disorder.

Here are some great tips that we heard from the therapist, on the medical side of dealing with this addiction:

1) It is vital that treatment be given by someone trained specifically in sex addictions. [www.sash.net](http://www.sash.net) - is a site that can help you locate a competent sex addiction therapist in your area.

2) People who have suffered childhood trauma should look into getting treatment by someone trained in dealing with trauma. Here are two great treatment suggestions for childhood trauma.

a) **EMDR treatment** (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) by a competent therapist. This treatment is very helpful in removing the bad feelings that lead the patient subconsciously to act out.

b) **Psycho Drama group therapy**, where the patient sees others acting out the trauma and then reacts to it by screaming, beating on a pillow and getting it out. (We know someone who has been using this technique very successfully for a while now. He claims it is the fastest way to really heal from emotional abandonment, trauma, and neglect. The technique, in his words, helps us "let go of the shame, guilt and abuse and literally mourn for ourselves that we went through this - NOT to blame anyone - just to mourn. Once we do that we can heal").

3) Some important books to read by the world-renowned sex addiction therapist **Patrick Carnes**: "**Out of the Shadows**" and "**Betrayal Bonds**". Also: "**Healing the Shame That Binds You**" by John Bradshaw. These books have actual exercises and assignments to help a person heal from the shame and the bonds we make with people who have abused us or betrayed us. Also, the SLAA books on sex addiction can be very helpful in learning the proven 12 steps to breaking free from Sex and Love Addiction.

*Excerpts from Guard Your Eyes Forum (<http://guardyoureyes.org>)*

## **TO TELL OR NOT TO TELL**

Should you tell your wife? Telling her she is your "release valve" is abusive and will not get you any more sex for a long time. I would say that if you're working on your recovery and getting sober, you can tell her and you will have a better chance of keeping your marriage intact. Your wife will be shocked and probably angry for a while. You should disclose in the presence of a qualified counselor or sponsor.

But as long as you still feel you are in control of your addiction and that you're not an addict and you don't need the 12 steps, it will be impossible to stay sober. I hope you prove me wrong.

A woman can understand a man's urges but the urge to ejaculate for any reason other than to be intimately in love with your wife, is not only not permitted, it's not healthy, psychologically when used with pornography. We turn to masturbation when we're lonely, scared, angry, resentful and fearful. It fills up a hole in our soul which

should be filled by connection with our spouse and with G-d.

You don't need to tell your wife. Obviously keeping this secret is bothering you. Working a program of recovery whether you're an addict or not will guide you into realizing that sex is indeed optional and you can survive without it. You seem consumed by sex as if it is the only part of your relationship. Don't tell your wife yet, but start finding healthy things to do when she is not available intimately and don't make her feel that you're only being nice and sweet and romantic when she is available. I'm not saying you are doing this, it's just a suggestion.

I've thought about this all weekend. It was a little too early to tell her but now that you did, it is good she is accepting. You have to realize her concerns are valid and real. Here is what I would suggest you tell her:

*"If we get together I would have you hold me accountable to regularly go to meetings, get a sponsor and work my program. I would commit to discussing my feelings about all things with you and would hope you would do the same with me."* The thought of getting involved with other people is a concern in any marriage and you are choosing her and vowing to stay with her. You would make sure she has access to your computer, the password and a program to watch where you are going on the computer at all times.

The problem is not the porn. The problem is what is causing you to look. This is what you should work on together to help each other grow. This is what marriage is all about; helping each other overcome character defects and growing together into a unit that works together to make the world a better place.

Dear Fellow Jew,

Maybe its time to talk to your wife about the extent of your problem, or at least show her some of the material so she understands we are not "shumutsy" people but people with a disease and working to get better. You can get an accountability partner on the forum. There is a section there for that. It would help if you had someone to call before you act out. The best thing would be to keep a journal for the next month and write down everything you're feeling. This will give you a clue as to the extent of your discontentment, irritability and resentment. This is what is causing you to act out. You have to start with first step actions and stay off the computer. Unless you need it for work, you have no reason to be on it. People survived for thousands of years without depending on a computer for all of their knowledge and temptations of the Yetzer Horah.

You will not be able to do this on your own until you get involved in a live or phone group and begin talking about your problem with others. Getting out of isolation, being honest with yourself, your wife and others is the key to getting rid of the shame and guilt and beginning to heal. There are resources for your wife if she needs any kind of clarification, but if she thinks we are shmutzy and doesn't realize you have the same problem, you're living a lie. And that power of secrecy is causing you anxiety and anxiety is causing you to continue to act out.

## TRUST AND HOW TO REBUILD IT

### *A Letter from a concerned future spouse:*

*My problem is that I don't know what my opinion is. On one hand I understand that it's an addiction, and fight it as he might, it may just be too difficult for him to overcome now. But on the other hand, I can no longer trust him when he says it's in the past. He claims that it's not an addiction and that since discussing it with me this second time and realizing how much it hurts me he feels 100% confident that it won't happen again. I've tried to convince him to join a support group like the one on [guardureyes.org](http://guardureyes.org), but he claims that he knows of these things and they won't help him.*

This is all his addiction talking. Step one is the admission he is powerless over this. He is nowhere near that stage. Knowing it is hurting you won't stop it from happening again. Give him a few weeks and let's see. A support group or the forum on Guard Your Eyes has helped people get better right away.

*Finally we agreed that together we would go to a relationship counselor to try to work this out. He seems bothered by the notion that if he would have proposed to me a night earlier I would have said yes, but now I'm not as definitive. Today, a couple of days later, he seems to be largely in a cloud of depression, and it hurts me to see him that way. I want to help him, and the only way I know how is to help him get help, but all he's willing to do is go to a relationship counselor for one session and is convinced that I'll leave that session feeling confident that he's better. I'm not so confident, and I wish he weren't either.*

You have your head on straight here. One session will do nothing. There is a reason he is acting out in this way. Do you know anything about his past, his parents? Does he have a good relationship with his parents?

*I understand that recovery is not achieved over the course of a second, and I'm willing to stand by him as long as he makes the effort, but he doesn't seem to be. Now any time the topic is raised he gets all agitated with me, telling me that he should never have told me in the first place (even though I have told him repeatedly that his honesty means the world to me).*

*I grew up with a verbally abusive father and am very sensitive to put-downs. I'm starting to view his curtness as a forerunner to verbal abuse. I'm reaching the end of my rope and I don't know what to do. I understand that it's different in a situation where the man is married with kids, but my situation is very different. I love this man and I want to marry him, but is it a mistake rushing ahead to get engaged as we were about to without first and foremost resolving this problem? Depending on how serious an addiction he has (assuming he does have one of some sort), it could take years for him to fully recover, and neither one of us is willing to push off marriage that long. Is it stupid of me to marry someone who I know has had this problem and claims that it's in the past?*

YES. Until he has committed to therapy and a group and can prove his sobriety for at least 90 days, if you're asking me I would not get engaged and then face the disaster to break it off. Please don't do that to yourself or your friend. You're too good a person. I can tell.

About your father: You've just hit the nail on the head. If your man is curt and in your gut you feel it's the forerunner for verbal abuse, why are you doing this? Women pick men that are just like their fathers. If you've been verbally abused, he is picking you because you are setting yourself up to be co-dependent of him. He'll act out, you love him so you'll hope and wish he won't do it again, he'll apologize and say things like, we'll if it were last night we would be engaged. He's probably experienced trauma in some way also. People with this addiction have very low self esteem and they MEDICATE themselves with porn. In recovery he will begin to face this and explore ways to feel better about himself.

*I'm so torn over this. Part of me knows that I'll probably never find anyone as open and honest as he is, and knowing the nature of men, if I were to marry anyone else, there's a good chance that he'll also have a problem of this nature and even worse he may be trying to hide it from me.*

What are you basing this GLOBAL MIND READING THINKING ON? Every man does NOT have this problem. Honesty is great but if it is not coupled with a desire to get better, it is meaningless. It's just a set up to get married. He thinks that when he marries you everything will be better. You'll be intimate and all the lust for anything else will simply go away. What about the two weeks when you're having your period? Will he be able to control himself? Think about it? How do you know you'll never find anyone in the whole world as honest and open as him?

Dear Fellow Jew,

As I said in my previous email, men and women have different templates about sex. A woman links sex with her feeling during the day. If she has a romantic good feeling during the day with her husband, she will be more in the mood. Women do not just jump in bed and have sex. They do in the movies, on TV and in porn but not in real life !!!!!

Part of this disease is that addicts sexualize women, INCLUDING THEIR WIVES. People don't do it consciously. Women are not sex objects. Sex is a spiritual bond between two people; a mutual understanding that this is ONE way to show their love for one another. Yet to a woman you are physically entering her body and she has to feel safe enough to let you do that. If she senses you are full of LUST and you just want to have sex for your own physical desires, SHE AIN'T INTERESTED.

Now, for the remedy to fix all of this. The SLAA book says, "*The crucial change in attitude came when we admitted we were powerless over our addiction and we withdrew from our habit. For some it meant no sex with themselves, for others it meant no sex with*

*their spouse for a while to recover from Lust. We discovered we could stop, that not feeding the hunger didn't kill us, that SEX WAS INDEED OPTIONAL. There was hope for freedom and we began to feel alive. We turned away from our obsession with sex and self and turned to G-d and others."*

Here's what I want you to do, if you're open to my suggestion. The next time your wife is a Niddah I want you to buy her flowers DURING THE WEEK, not for Shabbos. If you don't usually do it for Shabbos you can buy them for her on Shabbos. The point here is to train yourself that you need to show compassion, love, intimacy, romance in OTHER WAYS besides sex. She may be surprised. Then begin to talk to her about all this. You don't have to go into details. Just say that you seem to want to have sex more often than she does and you would like to discuss it with her. Find out why she is not interested and tell her you would like to make amends when she senses that you are constantly wanting sex. Tell her you were embarrassed to talk to her about it because you don't want to hurt her or make her do things she doesn't want to do. (THIS IS GOING TO BE SO POWERFUL IN IMPROVING YOUR MARRIAGE).

Work together on other ways to feel close. Don't wait for her to tell you to take out the garbage or wash the dishes or help with the kids. You take charge. Your job from now on is to do nice things for your wife, whether she reciprocates or not. No matter when it is during the month. Got me? I promise you, she will reciprocate.

I guarantee, when you do this, things will change. It may take a few months or a year, but your intimacy will be richer both in bed and out. But you have to talk to her. Part of our problem is isolation. Your wife can be your biggest fan and help in all these matters. Tell her you get very frustrated when she is available and you really need to talk about this. It's not easy. Change in ourselves is never easy and that's why we have to talk about it to heal.

### **Letter from a confused husband**

Are just the lucky guys who are smart enough to marry the pretty girls who never have their figure change - and then there's the rest of us?

I am so jealous! I feel like the world in split into the haves and have nots - a real sex life - never mind money, looks...I don't know. When did I become so physical? I guess I expected marriage would help. It didn't.

Dear Fellow Jew,

What I don't understand is what you're learning in Yeshiva. Do you sing Eishes Chayil to your wife on Friday night? Does it say anything in there about her dress size? Yes women get thin before their weddings and then put on weight and have children and put on more weight. That's life. That's why men who fall out of love with their wives go for younger women because their values are all messed up.



Let me understand, you're struggling with your addiction, she is struggling with her weight and you're both struggling with each other. You both need to be supporting each other. She has issues and you have issues.

Her therapist, if she's experienced in sexual therapy should be able to help you both work through the bedroom issue. It sound to me you need to open up a Chumash to Parshas Yisro and read the last of the 10 commandments. Thou Shalt Not COVET.

What do you mean you met her therapist? This therapist may be the answer to your prayers. If you married a size two and she was not interested in sex or you, you'd still have this Tzurus. Don't assume pretty girls are good or interested in bed. Again, that's what TV, movies and Porn want us to believe.

Look at Tiger Woods. He was married to a beautiful woman and he's still a sex addict. And Christy Brinkley, the most beautiful model in the world has been married three times and her last husband was a porn and sex addict. Don't make assumptions. Appreciate that you're married and have someone to hold and love you and give you beautiful children, after those fat producing pregnancies. See now you don't have to go to the Mashgiach for Mussar this week.

You're a fellow Yid and I love you, but as I said I had to vent and your letter really touched some nerves, so don't hate me for expressing myself. Resentment is not good for either of us.

### **Answering a wife...**

Dear Fellow Jew,

If your husband is making an effort and honestly wants to get better and stop his behavior then you should support him in those efforts AND hold him accountable by setting up boundaries. (i.e. meetings, a sponsor, therapy) He may even need to go away for a couple weeks for an intensive). I am really not qualified as a counselor to advise you except to say that you've been traumatized by all this and need professional counseling from a certified sex addiction counselor. Some couples, who enter RCA (recovering couples anonymous) usually, make it. It's hard and it will take time for you to heal, but you've got to work through your pain by expressing it.

Does your husband have any history of abuse or trauma? Usually abuse or trauma is a catalyst for this sort of behavior. It would be wise to have him in counseling as well to search for the roots. Get a copy of the book, "*Facing the Shadow*" by Patrick Carnes.

As far as intimacy goes, I would say go with your gut. He has to feel there are consequences to his actions. I have a friend who loves his wife so much. He was "only" looking at porn on the internet, but her 4 children were in the house. She told him if he

looked again she would divorce him and she wasn't kidding. He has now been sober for over 3 years.

I would have a talk with him, set up a plan with boundaries. Find out what he wants from you, if anything that would make him feel less angry, resentful, lonely, or whatever is causing him to act out. Then you tell him what you want. I think a moratorium for a month would be a good place to start, but if it's getting unbearable for both of you that he's getting anxious and thinking about looking elsewhere, he has to communicate that to you.

If setting boundaries is hard for you, you may want to look into Pia Mellody's book on co-dependency. These will really help you come to grips with all this for yourself.

Dear Fellow Jew,

I'm inspired to hear you are temporarily under control. A lot of times our most Kedusha times are when the Yetzer grabs us - when we're confident Hashem will protect us. Don't set a goal of 90 days just yet. Set a goal of today, then another for tomorrow. Each day, one day at a time. 90 days is way too intimidating.

The key to stopping is to stop isolating. It's critical to join a group either in your city or on the phone where you can literally let out the shame and guilt. No, you are not alone, but when you experience other's stories and struggles it becomes a powerful bond that lets you heal. Having someone to call when you're feeling like falling is also a life saver. It's a hard thing to do, and part of the program.

Make a habit of reading a little bit of the Guard's material each day. Daven for Hashem to help you. Say the serenity prayer. *Hashem, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Do you have a filter on your computer? If not get one right now. [k9.com](http://k9.com) or <http://BSecureOnline.com>.

## WHY GROUPS WORK?

About 70 years ago, a doctor and a drunk went to the famous psychologist Carl Jung and asked him what it would take to get rid of the guilt and shame, the stigma and the hopelessness from drinking too much alcohol, raging and then feeling bad about it later.

Carl Jung answered: *"let people get together in a group and tell their stories and when they are finished telling their stories, do not criticize or give advice - just accept that person for who they are."*

We are all in this together. The proven way to get better and heal is to literally speak the shame and guilt out of your mouth and **out of your body**, similar to what we do on Yom Kippur at Viduy time. It is difficult to admit your faults and falls in public, AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHY WE MUST DO IT. We co-dependent, addictive, compulsive, lonely souls must learn to fill up the gaping holes in our souls with honesty instead of with acting out in our disease (**dis-ease**).

What we hold in our bodies and our minds grows more powerful, like *le'havdil* a cancer, *chas v'sholom*, and the more power we give it and let it grow the more it affects us negatively.. **Rigorous honesty is the key**; with ourselves and our families.

The power of the 'group concept' cannot be overstated. Isolation and loneliness are our worst enemies and our addiction's most treasured friend. The addiction reminds us constantly that our isolation will shield us from having to be honest with ourselves and others. And this is the power it has over us, until we kill the obsession by talking about it.... about our feelings... about our loneliness.... and yes, about the details of our acting out. Not in vague generalities like, *"I did that m-word-thing"* but actually saying it and getting it out. Not necessarily just on [the forum](#), but also in person.

I recently received a private email from a 17 year old living at home who had put hundreds of dollars on his parents credit card talking on sex phone lines. He was in Israel at the time, and when he got home to the US his parents asked him about it. He told them he knew nothing about it.

He wrote asking me if he should continue to lie or tell his parents the truth. I told him that life was short and if he truly wanted to get into Shidduchim and start his life off right, he couldn't live a lie the rest of his life. I told him exactly what to say to his parents - to tell them the truth. He wrote me after Shabbos and said he told his parents and they were very happy he did. If you Chas V'Sholom had a serious illness, would you hide it from your parents?

This disease can kill us if we let it go too far. If your parents have the password and you don't, they can use the internet unfiltered and you'll have it filtered. It's as simple as that. All you have to say is you don't want the opportunity of pushing the wrong button and seeing those sites, so you'd like their help. If they say, NO, then maybe you need to put the password on for THEM . Seriously if you truly want to stop, take the first step.

You can read as many seforim as you want, but until you discuss your concerns and stop isolating yourself you will continue to fall in the trap of the addiction.

How do people who are on drugs or alcohol break off from it? 12 Step Groups. But your Yetzer Horo tells you you're too good to go to a group - that's only for really sick people. Obviously it's not that big a deal because I've given you the proven method to get better and you don't want to do it.

There are no easy answers. Find something to put you in a good mood at night. Read a good book that's clean. I've now given you several inexpensive ways to get better. Or you can go for therapy at \$150 an hour. Which will you choose, if not all of them?

**BE THE AUTHOR OF YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE INSTEAD OF THE VICTIM.**

**Should a religious person attend a mixed group?**

I'm not sure what you mean by mixed. If you mean men and women are in the same group, this is a good thing because as sex addicts we sexualize women and if you're in one of these groups you learn not to do that and your social skills around women improve when you realize they are human beings not just sex objects, with feelings, problems, issues, compassion and love, just like us. So don't let mixed stop you. Explore all of these options with the same determination you have for finding creative ways to act out! Don't let your addict convince you otherwise.

Dear Fellow Jew,

The sponsor thing is crucial to getting better. So is the group, whether on the phone or live. Live groups are the best because you learn how not to isolate. A sponsor is merely someone else in the group with some experience and sobriety who you can talk to and get a RATIONAL sense of what is going on for you and help you work the steps.

By the way, looking at women in the street is easy to work on and much less serious than internet porn, unless you're masturbating in public or something like that. You'll get a chance to share when you feel comfortable.

## WITHDRAWAL

### **From the White Book of Sexaholics Anonymous:**

We can only speak for ourselves. The specialized nature of Sexaholics Anonymous can best be understood in terms of what we call the *sexaholic*. The sexaholic has taken himself or herself out of the whole context of what is right or wrong. He or she has lost control, no longer has the power of choice, and is not free to stop. Lust has become an addiction. Our situation is like that of the alcoholic who can no longer tolerate alcohol and must stop drinking altogether but is hooked and cannot stop. So it is with the sexaholic, or sex drunk, who can no longer tolerate lust but cannot stop.

Thus, *for the sexaholic*, any form of sex with one's self or with partners other than the spouse is progressively addictive and destructive. We also see that lust is the driving force behind our sexual acting out, and true sobriety includes progressive victory over lust. These conclusions were forced upon us in the crucible of our experiences and recovery; we have no other options. But we have found that acceptance of these facts is the key to a happy and joyous freedom we could otherwise never know.

This will and should discourage many inquirers who admit to sexual obsession or compulsion but who simply want to control and enjoy it, much as the alcoholic would like to control and enjoy drinking. Until we had been driven to the point of despair, until we really wanted to stop but could not, we did not give ourselves to this program of recovery. Sexaholics Anonymous is for those who know they have no other option but to stop, and their own enlightened self-interest must tell them this.

## WIVES AND HUSBANDS

Dear Fellow Jew,

Thank you for having the courage to write. I want to begin by saying I am not a professional, but I've been around a lot of gay people and straight people. This is the only sentence that concerns me:

*But the life is partly grounded in the idea that "feeding" my desire through reading, watching, thinking, etc is a workable way to manage what I think of as treatable but incurable. Just as with a diabetic, too much insulin is intoxicating and too little is life-threatening.*

I had a counselor once tell me that it was OK to fantasize as long as you don't act on the fantasy, if you're an addict. Lust is a cunning and baffling "devil" that can make us do things we swear we would never do. This is the reason for the "cold turkey" and filters, etc. I cannot be on a computer unless it is blocked. I am totally powerless to control myself.

So this really boils down to this. From a Jewish perspective, you cannot control your thoughts. Thinking is not a sin. I think the point is if you want to live a life of holiness, congruency and be honest with yourself and your values then looking at porn, masturbation, ready erotic literature could be switched into learning Torah or something more useful.

If both you and your wife are comfortable with your lifestyle, you have a good relationship with your children and you're TOTALLY honest with yourself and your wife, then I don't see anything wrong with thinking these thoughts.

BUT, if you find yourself on the computer for hours at a time and you can't stop until you get another "fix" of porn. Or if your "risky behaviors" are more than just something in the past and you keep going back to them, then you have an addiction problem, no matter what you're acting out with or whom.

Hashem gives us all challenges. I'd like to go to McDonald's and eat a cheeseburger but I don't because Hashem said no. This issue is your test and it seems you are handling it quite well, if you're being totally honest. The reason I say this is because in your letter you said several times you weren't doing this EXCEPT this and that, so I got a little curious.

We all long for things we cannot pursue. Life is full of struggles. But if you've got a wife that loves you unconditionally and beautiful kids who love you and you love them... You better count your blessings because you're one in a million.

The only thing your thoughts damage is your soul. When we're living a life of congruity with our values, when you're living in the present moment and not lusting for the future or reliving the abuses of the past, then you're living a serene life, religiously, psychologically and socially.

I think what's important here are your thoughts while you're intimate with your wife. If you're sincerely in love with her and not thinking about others at this time, then I think you're on a good road. But if you're fantasizing about others when you're with your wife, that's manipulative and can hurt your marriage.

Dear Fellow Jew,

A porn addiction will lead to an active sex addiction outside of marriage IF you don't do something about it NOW. I don't mean to scare you. BUT, once the porn addiction becomes commonplace, it is no longer exciting or stimulating. When that happens, addicts swear we will never go to a club or video store or hire a prostitute, and then magically some end up there. So that is why the stress is on "active sex". It's actually just looking outside ourselves to fill up this void of a spiritual connection with another human being and with G-d.

The answer is 100% YES. The meetings will help. As his wife, it is best to remain supportive BUT also put your foot down and lay down the riot act if he does not make any effort to get better. (Groups, counseling, 12 steps, sponsor). Again, this is not about you as his wife. It's his problem but you can help him get better by talking ABOUT FEELINGS with him and not judging or criticizing. This goes both ways. He talks about his feelings and you talk about yours. "When you do this.... it makes me feel\_\_\_\_\_.

Once your husband begins to realize that sex is not the most important aspect of his life and it is indeed optional, your private relationship will improve tremendously.

Anyway, I hope this answers your question and concerns. There is hope and you're both in the right place and on the right track. We preach PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION. There are S-anon groups for wives. I encourage you to find one and go to it. You'll find loving, caring and supportive people there for your concerns.

Dear Fellow Jew,

I'm not sure whether this is your problem or your wife's problem. I would suggest if you're going to SA that your wife go to S-ANON. If you're not doing anything wrong but looking, your wife MAY be blowing this all out of proportion and may be overly critical for no reason. However you say she does praise you.

Her requirement for you to be totally 100% impulse free is impossible and causing undue stress which is totally uncalled for. Unless you want to live as a hermit in a cave, you and your wife will have to learn to live in the outside world. A wise counselor once told me that it's OK to fantasize as long as you don't act upon it. It is natural to be attracted to the opposite sex and as long as you are doing nothing about it, there is nothing wrong with it. You cannot be expected to walk in the street with your head between your legs constantly because you might bump into a fire hydrant.

I do not know the extent of your other acting out. If there is other acting out that's another story. But if all you're doing is looking, your wife has trust issues and the only way to build trust with your wife is to do what you say you're going to do when you say you're going to do it. And if that is not doing it for you, I would seriously consider letting your wife leave the marriage, or maybe beat her to it. If you're doing nothing wrong, it's her problem, not yours.

Dear Fellow Jew,

You're trying to overwhelm yourself with getting better, mussar, Torah, etc. It's really very simple. Tomorrow morning, before you get out of bed, sit on the edge of the bed and say Mode Ani. Then say to Hashem in your own words, "Hashem, I cannot control this without your help. I am willing to not look at the internet just for today. I cannot promise tomorrow. So just for today, please help me. "During davening, instead of asking Hashem for all of your needs, THANK HIM for what you do have.

You seem very lonely and isolated with no one to talk to or confide in. That's very sad. Do you think that has something to do with why you go to the internet to escape from reality? What is your reality like?

Dear Fellow Jew,

You don't have to tell your parents you have a problem. Tell your parents you accidentally typed in the wrong name of a website and ended up on a site you shouldn't be on. You want to avoid this from now on and would like their permission to put a simple filter on the computer to stop these things from happening again. They (your parents) can have the password so if they are ever blocked they can put in the password and go from there.

You are powerless to control this. It is an addiction. This is a matter of life and death. If you had an allergy to peanuts and knew they could kill you, would you not tell your parents because they might get upset? Of course you would.

My other suggestion is to stay away from the computer. What are you doing there that is soooooo important? Watching U-Tube? Find some other healthier things to do with your time.

The fear of your parents may be something to think about. This is a disease of connection. Wanting to connect with people close to you but you're afraid that you might get rejected. Instead of being on the internet, make me a list of 10 things or people you resent, fear, are angry with. Write me 10 ways you are powerless over this. And 10 ways your life has become unmanageable.

Let me know what you decide to do and how it works out. I'll be here to support you if you tell your parents and they get upset. I'm happy to talk with them for you. Don't worry. Telling the truth never lets you down. Never. Be strong. It's how you get honest.

Dear Fellow Jew,

A friend of mine was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer. As he faced the thought of maybe not ever being intimate with his wife again, he looked back at the 20 years before he knew he was an addict and thought about all of the times he manipulated his wife into being sexual with him, when she really didn't want to. Today, they have a very open, trusting and mutual relationship. Because of recovery, he doesn't get upset when she says no, like he used to - and then act out.

See, one of the greatest lessons we addicts need to learn is that sex is optional.

We addicts think, live and breathe sex. We "sexualize" guilt, anger, loneliness, and pain. I can tell you that when you can stop resenting your wife when she refuses and work on being intimate with her without sex, you'll have a much more fulfilling life in general -



and sex life as well! Find out what puts your wife in the mood (it could be washing the dishes - believe it or not) or just doing little things around the house or with the kids, BEFORE she tells you to.

*A woman wants to know you love her outside the bedroom and then she'll love you in the bedroom.*

Yes it takes work, just like everything we do in recovery, but it don't take much to take out the garbage and wash the dishes without being asked, or to give her flowers when she knows you're not expecting ANYTHING.

It's quite simple, and extremely effective.

**"What do I do if she's rarely interested?"**

*I have a question regarding marital intimacy and perhaps you can offer some advice. I feel that my wife and I are on two different wavelengths. I am in the mood to be intimate almost every night while my wife is not a niddah, and she is interested much less (0 - 1 times a week). Because of this, we are together only (0 - 1 times a week). I have not expressed this to my wife, as I am embarrassed and don't want her to do something she doesn't want to. Do you think this is an issue that I should be more open with her about? At this point I have not said anything and just try to quell my desires.*

Dear Fellow Jew:

Men and women have different templates about sex. A woman links sex with her feeling during the day. If she has a romantic good feeling during the day with her husband, she will be more in the mood. Women do not just jump in bed and have sex. They do in the movies, on TV and in p\*\*n, but not in real life!!

Part our disease is that we sexualize women, INCLUDING OUR WIVES. Women are not sex objects. Sex is a spiritual bond between two people. Sex is a mutual understanding that this is ONE way to show their love for one another. Yet to a woman, you are physically entering her body and she has to feel safe enough to let you do that. If she senses that you are full of LUST and just want to have sex for your own physical desires, SHE AIN'T INTERESTED.

Now, for the remedy to fix all of this: The SLAA book says,

*"The crucial change in attitude came when we admitted we were powerless over our addiction and we withdrew from our habit. For some it meant no sex with themselves, for others it meant no sex with their spouse for a while to recover from Lust. We discovered that we could stop, that not feeding the hunger didn't kill us, that SEX WAS INDEED OPTIONAL. There was hope for freedom and we began to feel alive. We turned away from our obsession with sex and self, and turned to G-d and others."*

So here's what I want you to do, if you're open to my suggestions. The next time your wife is a niddah, I want you to buy her flowers DURING THE WEEK, not for Shabbos. (If you don't usually do it for Shabbos, you can buy them for her for Shabbos). The point here is to train yourself that you need to show compassion, love, intimacy and romance in OTHER WAYS besides sex. She will be surprised, and then you can begin to talk to her about all this. You don't have to go into details. Just say that you realize that you seem to want to have sex more often than she does, and you would like to discuss it with her. Find out why she is not interested and tell her you would like to make amends IF she senses that you constantly want sex. Tell her you were embarrassed to talk to her about it because you don't want to hurt her or make her do things she doesn't want to do. THIS IS GOING TO BE SO POWERFUL IN IMPROVING YOUR MARRIAGE.

Work together on other ways to feel close. Don't wait for her to tell you to take out the garbage or wash the dishes or help with the kids. You take charge. (They say that romance for a man is a candle-light dinner, while romance for a woman is when her husband does the dishes :-). Your job from now on is to do nice things for your wife, whether she reciprocates or not. No matter when it is during the month, Niddah or not. Got me? I promise you, she will reciprocate.

I guarantee, when you do this, things will start to change. It may take a few months or a year, but your intimacy will be richer, both in bed and out.

But you have to talk to her. Part of our problem is isolation. Your wife can be your biggest fan and help in all these matters. Tell her you get frustrated sometimes when she's a niddah, and you really need to talk about this. It's not easy. Nothing we change in ourselves is easy, and that's why we have to talk about it with others to heal.

#### **RESOURCES:**

<http://guardyoureyes.org> (Recovery resources for Jewish addicts)

<http://slasfws.org> (Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous)

<http://sa.org> (Sexaholics Anonymous)

<http://recoveryzone.com> (Assessments and tools for recovery)

<http://bsecure.com> (The best internet filter on the market)

<http://gentlepathpress.com> (Books and Recovery resources)

<http://iitap.com> and <http://sash.net> (CSAT certified therapists)

<http://allanjkatz.com> (copy of this ebook and a book on work addiction)

<http://coachkatz.com> (Allan Katz's coaching website to help sufferers cope with everyday addiction issues).



**Allan J. Katz**

**901-3598299**

**<http://allanjatz.com>**

**<http://coachkatz.com>**

Allan J. Katz is an Associate Sex Addiction Therapist completing his Master's Degree in Counseling at the University of Memphis. He is presently working toward licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

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For the past four years he has been the moderator of the Guard Your Eyes hotline and phone conference, helping sufferers and their spouses cope with sexual compulsivity, relationship problems and addiction.

Before changing careers, Allan was a marketing consultant, copywriter and strategist for over 30 years and is the author of several books on marketing including The Complete Guide to Retail Loyalty Marketing.

He is former President of the Direct Marketing Association of Memphis. He served as an adjunct professor at the University of Memphis Continuing Education Program on such topics as The Basics of Direct Marketing, How to Start a Mail Order Business, Marketing Your Small Business and Problem Solving.

His latest book, Addictive Entrepreneurship deals with how to succeed in business with the character traits you already have. It is a guided meditation guiding you as you weigh both sides of 13 critical success principles. It also explores the distinction between 'workaholism' versus being 'addicted' to the ecstatic rush of starting and running your own business. <http://allanjatz.com/ae.html>.

### **Certifications & Degrees**

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor

Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling

Associate Sex Addiction Therapist (<http://iitap.com>)

## **Association with organizations**

American Counseling Association  
Tennessee Counseling Association

## **Intervention Model**

I believe in the medical model of addiction. Lust addiction is a disease of connection where the client attempts to fill the hole in his soul by escaping into fantasy. Sexual compulsivity occurs when the patient is angry, resentful, lonely or scared and uses sexual fantasy to escape these negative feelings. I use the tools pioneered by Dr. Patrick Carnes to assist clients in breaking the compulsion and discover how to live a life of serenity through sobriety and midos improvement. These tools include education, exercises, therapy and accountability.

## **Client types**

Men  
Women  
Couples  
Spouses of Addicts

## **Medium/s of Interaction with Clients**

Face to Face  
Phone  
Webcam

### **Normal Fee per 1/2 hour session**

\$75

### **Discount Fee for GYE members?**

\$50

### **Medicare / Other Insurances**

No

### **Accepting new coaching clients?**

Yes. Call 901-359-8299 for a free 15 minute introductory consultation and assessment evaluation.

**Website: <http://coachkatz.com>**