

Need feedback

Posted by struggler - 10 Oct 2011 02:48

Hi Everyone,

Last couple of weeks I have not being doing so well w/my P & M addiction with strong urges and frequent falls after going 30 days clean, which for me was longest streak in a while. I have decided to switch gear a little bit & focus on treating my depression / stress issues first and put my P & M battle on hold for now and fight it at a later point once I am doing better with depression. I just want to hear what you guys think.

Thanks in advance for your feedback.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by wishing for the real me - 31 Oct 2011 05:14

Yes, tell me more Im like a fish without water. To your first question, check my posts from last week.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by struggler - 31 Oct 2011 23:57

Thanks everyone for your support. I have been doing better. Last week I had less urges and there were less intense & I am clean for a week now. So hopefully vitamins will help & I would not need SA meeting or shrink. Somewhere on this site I have read that SA meeting is only recommended for people who participate in more risky behaviors & for people with just P & M issues it might be bad idea to attend. I just worried that I will learn more about risky behaviors and might start to participate in them (in the past some of the things I read in GYE forums were triggering). In white book they do not recommend telling love ones about the addiction. For me GYE forums have been great, now I have pretty much got everything off my chest. There are still some "single issues", but I do not think I could resolve them in a meeting or shrink's couch. I just have hustle & hope everything will work out w/Hashem's help.

Obormottel, sorry to hear that you having hard time now. It seemed that before you were trucking like a bulldozer, hopefully call ins will help.

Real Me, if you have suicidal thoughts, I would strongly suggest you get some help. I actually know 2 people who committed suicides, it's very serious matter which needs to be taken asap.

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Re: Need feedback
Posted by Dov - 01 Nov 2011 17:26

Struggler, you are a geshmakeh person. Hatzlocha with everything always!!

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Re: Need feedback
Posted by struggler - 06 Nov 2011 13:51

Dov, thank you for your support!

Last week has been pretty bad, with a few falls & return of depression. I would need to try to rebound this week.

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Re: Need feedback
Posted by obormottel - 06 Nov 2011 17:43

Hey brother struggler! Glad to here from you. Hang 'round!

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 07 Nov 2011 22:01

my personal experience has been that as Im doing better there are more, not less urges and the intensity is often unberable. I dont know if youre measuring correctly. food for thought.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 07 Nov 2011 23:59

[Gesher Tzar Meod wrote on 07 Nov 2011 22:01:](#)

my personal experience has been that as Im doing better there are more, not less urges and the intensity is often unberable. I dont know if youre measuring correctly. food for thought.

I do not get it. How are you defining "doing better"?

Are you sure that you are having more problems as you improve? Are you holding your breath, or giving them up? If the former, then I understand...and I thank Hashem that I do not need to do that. You are a true gibbor, I guess. I am just a recovering pervert who is clean and growing cleaner with Hashem's help, growing in Torah and Yir'as Shomayim and emunah, and ben odom lachaveiro, and dibbur tov and other stuff I find important, one day at a time. It is a beautiful thing, especially for a guy who - in his acting out - looks forward to the next masturbation and sex experience like there is nothing else important in the world, loves the sweetness of porn and is drawn to it like to gold, and makes a mess of things. I am truly so fortunate to be OK today!

The struggle is easier every year for me, *definitely* not harder. Perhaps you are still in the first few months at this? OK, so in the *first* few months there are some very hard ups and downs, and when it is still new there is a lot of painful confusion about what we really need and how

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I respect you a *lot* and am just asking you to explain this. Can you describe what you are doing and in what ways things are getting worse for you?

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by struggler - 08 Nov 2011 00:43

obormottel, thank you for your support.

Personally I define "doing better" / "doing worser" by how I generally feel (happy / depress) and strength & number of urges. One of the issues I have with staying clean for significant time is that once I start to have a clean streak I start to have urges & I do not feel like fighting back, since they return if I push them off and I always fall anyway, so I get this feel to just to do it.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 08 Nov 2011 02:40

Nu. When it finally costs you too much to screw around, you'll finally do something real about it, besides just 'stopping'. By 'real', I mean changing the way you live and react to *life* just a little itty, but *real* bit.

It took me about 15 years to get to that point. Hatzlocha.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 08 Nov 2011 08:33

YES!!!! I finally got a real response from Dov!

I've been wondering how long it would take b4 I said something that irked you.

Not that Im trying to annoy you, I just felt that I wasnt really accepted into the forum unless Ive received mussar from Dov.

Probably the answer to your question is that yes, I am here less than a year, still trying to find the right attitude and approach. so it is probably more difficult for me than for you.

In addition I was merely expressing what I believe is a common phenomenon referred to by chazal as the stronger your yetzer tov gets the yetzer hara gets stronger as well.

Am I not undersanding that chazal correctly?

And finally there are aspects that are easier, ie my will power and ability to block out potential trouble, but the desires and urges are not going to go away, are they?

Dov, you yourself just commented on Blind Beggars thread about "pink knuckle" days isnt that an indication that the desires and urges are alive and well?

perhaps we arent talking the same language and its an argument in semantics.

either way, it's great to hear from you!

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by struggler - 09 Nov 2011 01:56

[dov wrote on 08 Nov 2011 02:40:](#)

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It took me about 15 years to get to that point. Hatzlocha.

I have been trying to change my routine & start to new positive hobbies, like working out / learning, but ever time some things come up & I am not able to start. I hopefully I am able to start with this weekend.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 09 Nov 2011 04:39

[Gesher Tzar Meod wrote on 08 Nov 2011 08:33:](#)

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And finally there are aspects that are easier, ie my will power and ability to block out potential trouble, but the desires and urges are not going to go away, are they?

Dov, you yourself just commented on Blind Beggars thread about "pink knuckle" days isn't that an indication that the desires and urges are alive and well?

OK, so I am an am ha'aretz and no one to explain any Chaza"l definitively. I propose what a particular Chaza"l may mean, and am pretty convinced at times by my experience. But who am I to know or be asked what the truth is?

As far as that Chaza"l, there are probably three completely different ways to interpret it, and each seems to 'neutralize' the other! So no, I would not prefer to interpret the Chaza"l the way you are. And I have not found it to be that way in real life, either. I certainly do *not* want even more desperately than ever to run after women for fantasy and sex than ever before. I am *not* bothering my wife for sex more than ever before. And incidentally, the gedolei Torah among us certainly do not want to molest anyone just because they are in a high madreigoh. And *if* as a recovering person I found that my desire grew with every passing day that I didn't end up needing to partake in it...then I would run and find a different program of recovery, fast! For *that* would not be recovery, to me, but just *waiting* to act out. That can't possibly be what

Chaza"l (nor Hashem) are wanting for us. And it does not *work* at all for any long term change, either, in my experience. Maybe that is not what you meant, though.

I am an addict. My 'will' is basically bubkess. (liking that word today!). If you are not an addict and hence do not *really* need G-d for you to stay clean, then that is 100% fine! I love it and have total, unblemished respect for you! (kol hakavod, as they say) But as an addict - a sick man - / need Him, for I have searched and found no earthly power that could possibly keep me clean, (including me). If you find one for me, let me know and I'll consider it. Seriously.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 09 Nov 2011 12:09

Dov, you have me totally confused. Granted addicts are different than non addicts. But we all **really** need HKBH, what exactly did you mean by that?

I also dont understand what the big deal is about admitting that the YH / urge/ whatever you want to call it, has gotten stronger. I dont agree with your exagerations either. Do you mean to tell me that once youre a recovering addict, the YH is no longer a factor?

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 10 Nov 2011 00:30

[Gesher Tzar Meod wrote on 09 Nov 2011 12:09:](#)

Dov, you have me totally confused. Granted addicts are different than non addicts. But we all **really** need HKBH, what exactly did you mean by that?

I also dont understand what the big deal is about admitting that the YH / urge/ whatever you want to call it, has gotten stronger. I dont agree with your exagerations either. Do you mean to tell me that once youre a recovering addict, the YH is no longer a factor?

This may come as a shock to you, but me and many of the other frum sex addicts I know in recovery for many years (many of whom wear shtreimels, some of whom also hold shtellers, and many of whom are talmidei chachomim) **do not hold that this problem we have is about "the yetzer hora", at all.** We honestly believe that we are just very, very sick. Period. And no, it's not just a convenient way to make us feel better, rid us of guilt, or to say "we are irresponsible for our behavior". For through this recovery **we actually stop!** And we make restitution in any way possible for any damage we caused others (steps 8-10). We know that we will eventually ruin everything and even die, if not for recovery, and we also discover that only G-d can help us. The YH may have *started* it, who knows...but the way we personally chose to **use** the drug of sweet fantasy, porn and/or sex (whether with ourselves - you call it masturbation - or with others) as a way to medicate ourselves through the years, we see as a symptom of a progressive chronic and terminal illness which has *nothing* to do with Teshuvah and *nothing* to do with a YH any more. We usually do not get better otherwise.

I know there is a lot to say about this issue, stemming from the fact that **this** addiction, unlike alcohol, gambling, and cocaine, the activity itself happens to be an issur chamur and understood as immoral. So confusion with "the YH" and Chaza"ls about it is common.

Now, I believe that a frum yid who habitually looks at porn and even comes to zera levatola once in a while c"v, is *not necessarily* an addict. And maybe *that* is where you and I miss each other. Calling the habitual use of porn "an addiction", is common here, and I fel it does a great disservice to some. Addiction, from the 12 step perspective is *clearly* defined in the first step: I am *powerless* to stop, but *must* stop. And the second and third steps speak only of needing sanity and of starting to accept that G-d's Will for me is the only real point of being here - that is, growing up, and not about stuff like repenting and becoming 'moral' or good, for a change. This is clearly not a religion. It's clearly for *sick* people, not *bad* ones.

We can all agree that masturbating is an aveiro! Following pretty women to get a better look at them is assur, too. It's immoral, cheap, and stupid - and Yidden, of *all* people, should *not* be doing it! That is plain. There **is** a Yetzer Hora for z'nus and lust, and it is in all of us, it seems. But a habit is *not* what addiction is. Habots are about doing things because cuz we like the way it makes us feel. Orgasm is a big payoff. So the habit happens because of natural desire, period. The fact that it is forbidden may make it feel even more tasty. Yet that may not be an addiction (yet).

An *addict* keeps doing it even though he no longer always enjoys it! He apparently **needs** it. He tries to get it, though he fails very often. It seems to be a compulsion with a life of it's own. It drives the poor fellow crazy. He comes to see that he obviously cannot stop. He figures he will die with this secret after 120, and that is a pretty sad feeling. This is a problem for his yiddishkeit - *not* because of the issuring he is doing over and over, but because he wonders where his

bechirah has gone! This *is* an aveiro, after all, no? Sadly, he does not realize that for him, it is exactly like alcoholism. The fact that his drug is an aveiro and destructive to his os bris kodesh is 100% irrelevant.

But those who call it a YH and say he will do Teshuvah to stop make the problem even worse! He knows that in the long run, no matter what the Torah seems to be telling him, **he has no bechirah to stay stopped**. Yet the blindly frum guys (who may or may not have the problem, at all) repeat to him that he just needs to be good enough, and he will stop. They feed him a lie that **he can do it** with his own bechirah, for "Hashem does not give a nisayon to anyone that they cannot withstand!" Of course, it does not occur to anyone that he might actually be a little crazy. Till things really get out of hand, R"l. When they do, the well-meaning frum advisor runs to the shrink for help. "Gevalt, now he has *cracked*! But he is such a nice, frum guy!". OK, enough out of me about this.

Discussion about this with the typical sweet, good yid it is a total waste of my time - unless *they themselves say they are addicts and are failing in recovery*. With *those* guys *a'aneh chelki*. I suggest they consider that part of **why** they are unsuccessful is because they are still trying to use their old derech of Torah and Teshuvah as the tool to stop - even though it actually *has not worked* for a decade or more. They keep trying the same thing while faithfully expecting a totally different result. That is a kind of insanity, really. Bitachon is not the litmus test of being on the right path! Plenty of goyim the world over have a sincerely deep and abiding faith in ideas we consider very, very wrong - and some we even consider very evil. Does their misguided deep faith make them *right*? I think not.

And many discover that - though it sounds strange - their personal perspective and derech in Yiddishket was actually a bit off-kilter. Then they realize that all along it was one of the main factors in their developing as messed up as they - we - became in the first place! But that is a different discussion. So their perspective on Torah and yiddishkeit is quite likely tainted - infected, and probably useless as a tool to stop and stay stopped. A bad idea to rely on *their daas Torah* to get fixed! As it says: *v'el binascho al tisho'en*. It is like trying to open a can over and over using a perfectly made, \$4 million diamond ring...it's perfect, it's beautiful...but not made for that, so it will not work.

You do not know my story, GTzM, but some guys here do share my problem and really are addicted. It's probably only a minority, but still there are quite a few here who actually are addicts. I have met at least ten, so far. I am definitely a **sick** man and need training in thinking and living on a different basis than I did while I was in Yeshivah and masturbating habitually. Not 'more morally' or 'better', but more **sanely**. Insanity is definitely not an aveiro. It is a huge problem, though, and makes it impossible to be a real Jew, real father, real husband, and real human being. It is a sickness...like cancer. It ruins careers, marriages, and lives and even kills

people. But nobody ever convinced me of this: it was only because *my* approach did not work for me for over 15 years and theirs did work for me ***when I tried it***, the the AA's sold me the approach that sanity in real life is my main problem, not *sin*, and that we do not get cured, but put into remission by our G-d, as long as we try to live for him and not just for ourselves. One day at a time.

OK, so closed-minded people will immediately assume I am saying "get away from Torah". They are wrong. I and many other frum recovering addicts are still in Yeshivah or avodas haKodesh - just as they abused marriage before and now are still married. Same thing. We are Yidden, and Yidden know what real life is about, though as addicts we lived a double life and couldn't do life right. Our problem was our totally incorrect application of the "fifth chelek of shulchan aruch" that was b'ochreinu.

This is not my shittah or theory. It is the approach that I and many others successfully work today, one day at a time.

That was # 1.

#2: By saying that non-addicts believe they do not need Hashem's help, I mean this:

A guy who is still *not* clean, who is very dissapointed (and maybe even cries about it) but still finds himself going after the schmutz and masturbating to his fantasies, or even filling his head with his struggle against them (sick, too) can also say: "of course I am fighting with Hashem's help, as it says "ilmolei (lo) ozro, eino yachol lo". But if they are failing, I suggest that they are just parroting the party line. It's mitzvas anoshim melumodoh. When RYb"Z was dying he blessed his talmidim with yir'as Shomayim as strong as having a man in the room with them. They were dissapointed and told him. He responded, "Halevai you should have that. People (he meant, "You tanno'im in training") do an aveiro and say in their hearts, "As long as nobody sees me!".

So I suggest that our emunah - my emunah - is not nearly as *true* as we think it is. These *doros* in particular, are pathetic. ***And that's probably OK for most yidden***, for only a small minority of Jews (and people in general) are addicts. For an addict, typical faith in Hashem is not enough. He is too sick and therefore needs much more. Sure, we know all the party lines, and know what we are *supposed* to believe. Some spend weeks learning through the pirush hamishnayos of the RMb"M in Sanhedrin to know what we must believe - but that does not

make them actually believe it, at all! How do we get emunah? By reading it in a RMB"M? I wonder.

So we can all say, "Of course I mean I do it with Hashem's help," but that does not make it so. Where is our emunah in Hashem when we are on our knees in the bathroom masturbating to our well-worked familiar fantasies? Where is He when we are sneaking another look at that particular type of porn we like so much?

The right Torah approach for most people (not addicts) who do not want to continue doing schmutz is, I guess, learning how to be more frum. Kedusha is fantastic and powerful, it seems. But the addict may have already gone way too far from that. He may need to discover that while he is *very* frum, when he looks really closely, he has no real, meaningful relationship with his G-d! That's a bit scary. He may need to come to admit that he really accepts many crazy ideas and that they are behind some of his behavior and stress in life. That's also scary. He may need to develop a true faith in Hashem - *a faith that really **works***, or he is finished.

He may discover that he has no *real* relationship with his wife, or with others. Sure, he knows how to *play* father or husband, or frum yid very well - even fooling himself...but he is lacking the ikkar. He is an empty box with great labels written on it, and not much more. It is not time for self-pity nor for giving up - the steps and the program teach him that he has work to do. Hashem can take care of him, just as He takes good care of others. All he needs to do is get out of Hashem's way. Until he learns how to do that, Hashem will probably not help him. Kol mi sh'ein bo *deyah*, assur lerachem olov - "umol'oh Oretz *deya es Hashem*..."

And finally, recovery is about common denominators in faith in a G-d, or "a Higher Power than ourselves". It is not about the madreigos, but about the most basic of basics. The stuff that even the goyim of the midrashim used to have. That is why 12 step recovery can fit for Jews just as well as it fits for lh' Mormons, Catholics, or atheists. Cancer treatment is no different for Jews than it is for goyim, and neither is this. Sure, many of the *goals* are very different. But the steps do not talk about *any* of that! The steps do not even talk about *not masturbating or drinking* any more! None of the steps are about resisting the urge to use porn or alcohol! It is only mentioned in the first step - the way into the door. All the rest of the steps are all about getting a real relationship with our own G-d and with the people around us. And to our surprise, we discover that we are restored to sanity in the process of doing that work! Obviously, only G-d can do this. If we are sane, which means really connected to our G-d and in good relations with everything and everyone around us, life is very different. As long as he never forgets that he is **not** like other frum yidden - who **can** afford to turn to lust and still get by - then he will reach out to his G-d and be OK without his drug. That is recovery as I have been shown it in SA.

To paraphrase R' Leibeleh Eiger zt"l: *Everybody **says*** they believe Hashem helps them - but the recovering addict **knows** that he has Hashem helping him.

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