

Need feedback

Posted by struggler - 10 Oct 2011 02:48

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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 ZemirosShabbos - 10 Nov 2011 18:51

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agreed 100%

that was very well-said Dov

[dov wrote on 10 Nov 2011 00:30:](#)

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.*

this sums it up

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 10 Nov 2011 21:30

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Well said Dov! Thank you for clarifying.

I only wish that the non addicts camp had someone who would present things as well as you do.

I strongly feel that is lacking here.

One of the issues that you raised I asked way back when. Namely, are the hashkafos that I used for the past 30 years that got me here to be tossed? You 12 steppers have guidance, we seemed to be groping in the dark. Can someone please enlighten us?!

PS thanks for the Rage memory...

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

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 10 Nov 2011 21:58

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Dov, thats' a masterpiece. I read it over a few times and I'm still not sure I get it.

But if I can jump in and summarize, and maybe clear up a little of the confusion....

We all agree that the Ikkar is to be close to Hashem, and that the way to do that is through the

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instructions He has given us - the Torah. Mussar, Teshuva, Tefila, Dibbuk Chaveirim, Cheshbon Hanefesh, etc. are some of the tools that He has given us to improve ourself with.

But some people have become so messed up that they no longer have the ability to use these tools properly. So they need help in changing their basic attitudes about things, in order to "live themselves into thinking right", as Dov so eloquently puts it. And this is where programs like 12 steps come in. The steps are essentially the same exact things described above, just organized into a logical plan, and made non-sectarian so they can be used by anyone. And for a frum Yid, they can be the steppingstone to getting back to where they can think like Yidden again and use the Torah methods the way Hashem intended.

Kind of like "Derech Eretz Kadma Latora".

Personally I am not doing a formal program, but I have read through some of the 12 step material and I found that the ideas there helped me to focus my own methods. Working on not lusting instead of just fighting triggers, turning the fight over to Hashem, helping others in order to help myself, etc.

So for instance to me "I am powerless and I turn over my lust to Hashem" really is just another way of saying "Yitzro Shel Odom Misgaber Olov...Im Ein HKB"H Ozro Einio Yochol Lo". But saying it the SA way turns it into an affirmative act instead of just a Maamar Chazal, and it helps me to personalize and internalize it better.

I hope I helped a little, and I apologize if I misunderstood anything that anyone wrote.

Gevura!

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 11 Nov 2011 00:21

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[Gesher Tzar Meod wrote on 10 Nov 2011 21:30:](#)

I only wish that the non addicts camp had someone who would present things as well as you do.

I strongly feel that is lacking here.

One of the issues that you raised I asked way back when. Namely, are the hashkafos that I used for the past 30 years that got me here to be tossed? You 12 steppers have guidance, we seemed to be groping in the dark. Can someone please enlighten us?!

Rav Twerski tries to do it. Some here try to do it. But one of the problems with it is this: Who will do this? It will be hard to find many non-addicted Rabbonim or Talmidei chachomim who will admit that they themselves were plagued for years with compulsive porn-viewing, masturbation, vouerysm, sex fantasies, and the like? Addicts are OK with meeting others and sharing their experience with them...non-addicts are just going to be seen as "former resho'im". And that's fine, maybe, in theory. Few will have the garbazos to get up and do that, I bet.

And my assumption here is that it must be actual, *personally* experienced, Torah-based success that is shared, not theory. But hey, if it is just Torah-based **theory** that you are saying people here need or want, then fine: there are *so many* people around salivating to tell *others* what to do, *as long as they do not have to admit* they **too** loved looking at dirty magazines once, and even masturbated to them a few times. Nu. I am probably wrong. There probably are some good talmidei chachomim out there ready to do that for Klal Yisroel. I will pray for that with you.

A few things can surely be borrowed from the addicts, even for non-addicts. Like the need for sobriety in order for recovery to really happen over the lifetime (Sh'ma and Shuchan Aruch, etc.). Like the need to really get a more and more real relationship with your G-d and with the people in your life (Chovos halevavos, RMCh"L, Rav Avigdor Miller, Bilvovi Mishkan Evneh, etc). Like the need to be totally, totally open with *someone* (Tzet'l kotton or hanhogos tovos #13). Like the need to have a chevra of like-minded people with similar issues as you have to work together with on a regular basis (B'nei Machshovah Tovah by the Piaszetzner Hy"d). And other ideas.

If I tried to become such a person, I'd be totally destroyed in a few weeks. The gayvoh would simply kill me cuz I am too sick.

There are people who can build it, and some here in the old days have tried. But that requires a few ingredients that they do not often expect. Like the need for experience rather than **only** Truth (Torah) to be involved. When it is only Truth (Torah) involved, then it reverts back to the same old mental exercises and game-playing that got all of us in trouble in the first place, eventually.

My two cents.

Hatzlocha.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 11 Nov 2011 06:17

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Dov your two cents are worth more than my million dollars. thanks.

I think we need to return this thread to its owner, Mr struggle.

Who by the way places himself in the non addicts camp, no?

that's what I understood anyway.

Regardless, struggle

my apologies for hijacking your thread, it wasnt intentional

It just happens.

I know, its happened to my threads as well

And now without any further ado....

struggle!

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 11 Nov 2011 07:28

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I am apparently having a bad day. Would someone please let me know if I am writing

offensively on this thread? I want to do better, please help me. Thanks.

- Dov

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Yossi.L. - 11 Nov 2011 14:38

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I've been following this conversation the past couple days...and Dov you have been everything but offensive.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 11 Nov 2011 20:47

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When you say "...everything but...", does that include 'nasty'? ;D

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by struggler - 13 Nov 2011 00:28

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Good avog. Sorry guys that I have been MIA last couple days, I did not have access to internet in the evening and I could not really write during work, but I see there were some good activity last couple days. Dov, your posts have been excellent. I want to add my five cents, but have to go now , I will try to post it within next couple days.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by struggler - 13 Nov 2011 17:21

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I think there are a lot of people out there who might not be addicted to porn / masturbation, but still struggle with what Torah require of them and what their natural instincts want and sometimes the later wins. They might not be addicted, but it's still a struggle and need support. For other vices like gambling and drinking, Torah is relatively lenient and occasional use is allowed. However when it comes to sex, Torah is very strict & only intimacy that is allowed is within marriage. Nowadays struggle with lust is very tough since we are surrounded by promiscuous culture and easy access to shmutz and no matter how frum one is, it is going to have an impact on him. Unfortunately, in the frum world there is very limited sex education and no training on how to reconcile ones natural desires and what Torah wants. I think we also borrowed from church the notion that sex is dirty and something that never should be talk about. For these people better education and tshuva mythology could alleviate the conflict and pick the correct option of not getting involved in porn.

However there are certain people who have no control and are truly are addicted. Usually there are other issues involved like bad childhood / poor family dynamic, depression & ocd. For these people tshuva mythology would not work additional steps need to be taken.

I am sure there could be some Gadolim that struggle with lust, but I do not think it's good idea for them to "confess". I as far as I know we do not believe in public confession & I think it would do more harm than good. I think the better approach would be to help out people who are struggling with lust issues education / prevention. I think people are running this site are stepping up & are talking about splitting site and creating one for people who are not addicted, but struggling and people who are addicted

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 14 Nov 2011 18:31

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Can I please say this without being accused of being snide? I do not point at anyone and mean no criticism of anyone at all. I am not sarcastic and that is not in my personality. So:

I liked reading that. I will leave out debate on the points I disagree with, as I have discovered that debate is not always tolerated well here. Of course, if you are open to calm discussion, rather than me trying to shove something down your throat or put you down, then just let me know and I will be willing to try to actually just share my experience about it calmly. If not, that's OK with me.

I sometimes think I should save myself the personal discomfort of being accused of intolerance or apikorsus, and rather, choose to allow the facts to speak for themselves when people sour and eventually ruin their lives and the lives of their wives and families. I do not mean this tongue in cheek, and I am not accusing you of being a screwball. But I have seen goodhearted frum men arrested, couples divorced, women wishing they were dead, and children whose lives are being poisoned - by having an extremely frum father who is out of control sexually, emotionally, or otherwise - even though he is a successful maggid shiur, a good provider, and to all appearances a true ben Torah. But it's not a shanda, because it's a complete secret. Seriously. It's not seen as one.

Nu. So he masturbates practically every day to porn that plays in his brain. Nu. He does not call it an *illness*, but "a spiritual struggle for kedushas habris". So? What does it *matter* what his **label** for it is? He is just like me! I do the same in my addiction and did for more than fifteen years: He is another married frum Jew who sits open-mouthed in front of his computer (like a five year old) stealing good looks at some 'naked ladies', and occasionally ends up on his knees masturbating in the bathroom. **Just like a goy with the same habit.** He has the exact same problem the goy has (lust) and he has the exact same solution (act it out so the obsession 'ends')!

So he frames it as a frumkeit issue, not a disease. He frames it by (not taking real action but just) davening about it, by delving into hilchos niddah as a segulah (per R. Yisoel Salanter zt'l), and really tries to explain to his wife that she is matzilas min hacheit, which she should be proud of. But *saying* that it is a religious problem does not *make* it so. The emperor has no clothes, chevra.

So far, does this make sense to you? Or is cynicism the only thing you can see in my words...I mean none, I have none, and I love the talmid chochom who masturbates his brains out *far* more than most people I know do. *I* am not disgusted by him - for he is *me*. That's why I am here. I meet them, I share my problem and the solution I have been given, with them. And the ones who *want* to, get better by doing the work they need to do. Hashem has more for us than porn does, but nobody believes that till they get sober and have a bunch of recovery. It takes time, steps, and love - one addict to another.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Yossi.L. - 15 Nov 2011 01:53

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Lol. No not nasty at all.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 23 Nov 2011 21:39

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[dov wrote on 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 )

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?

I respectfully retract my statement. Being away from home for a significant amount of time, I see that I am alot stronger than I thought I was. And yes as Dov said, things have gotten easier, not harder. I have much more ability to control my mind and fantasies, even while lying in bed, alone, bored, stressed etc...

Thank you Dov.

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Re: Need feedback

Posted by Dov - 24 Nov 2011 02:50

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You are a mentch, that's for sure. But let's give credit where credit is due:

Hashem gives us all the goodness we have *now*, ever *had* and ever *will* have. He gives us all the sobriety and all the sanity, and all the freedom we ever get. 'Chayrus' is 'al haluchos'. It does not come from us, at all. All we do is let go of enough of the foolish trash we are holding onto so tightly, so that there is room left in our hands to accept and hold onto the beauty He is trying to load into them.

Megillah warning:

This is what the Ba'al Shem Tov said about the bas Kol b'chol yom me'har Choreiv. Every day? Who hears it? Why call out all the time? Is Sinai a radio tower?

He says that those who surrender their hearts to G-d by letting go of their egos will hear this voice automatically. And hearing this Bas Kol **is** hirhurei Teshuvah that we feel.

I have no idea how a normal person "lets go of his ego". But as an addict, I have a gift. I know exactly what I need to let go of. I need to let go of my pride that expects honor, understanding, and cooperation from other people; I need to surrender my firm belief that I am entitled to sex with my wife when and how I want it to be; and I need to simply give up on getting the sweetness of the great porn I could be taking in when I would want it. My penis, pride and selfishness ought not lead my heart around for today.

When I say "Sh'ma/b'chol nafshechem," or "beyodcho afkid ruchi," or "Hashem li v'lo ira", or "gam zu letovah," or "elokai..." all these things are empty if they are about ***giving my life to Him***. They must be giving my time to Him, my sex expectations to Him, my disappointment with lack of nachas from my child to Him, my successes to him, and everything to him. Starting with the real stuff....like the red light I just got that is making me later to a meeting... Either I give the little things to him, or I give nothing to Him. Pretending I give Him my life, while being unable to surrender the *next red light*, stubbed toe, mistake at the bimah, or headache to Him...well, that's the 'religiousness' that was empty enough to allow me to be able to get on my knees (not on the *tile* floor but on a towel, of course!) swing my tzisis behind me - and masturbate with gusto.

Something was really wrong with my religiousness all those years if they could coexist, at all.

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