

My story

Posted by bearman13 - 02 Dec 2013 17:01

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Hi.

I don't know whether I should share my story or not, but I think it is supposed to help you if you tell it. And I think it will help me to put it out in the open. There is only 1 other person I have told this to and it is a therapist that I went to see about 8 months ago. It was very beneficial to finally speak out loud about this things, and really helped me to move along the road towards recovery. I'm not there yet (not by a long shot) but am better then I was and I have faith I will get there in the end.

I'm sure many people here will see familiar elements of their story in mine. Anyway, this is it:

I am now 31 years old. I first started looking at internet material when I was about 16years old. My parents obviously had no idea. Computers in the home were new, and the internet had only just been born. And of course, my parents are from the previous generation. They don't know what the internet can do. Even now most parents are unaware. It's a dangerous situation.

I looked at the material irregularly over the years. Looking back now I'm sure this behaviour was laying the groundwork for future problems but at the time the problem didn't seem so serious. When I became about 24 the problem started to get serious. I was studying in a yeshiva then, and every weekend I would leave for a few hours, and find an internet cafe where I could look at internet material. Then I would go back to yeshiva as if nothing had happened. It was weird. It was like I had 2 separate lives. The me in yeshiva would never go and look at that stuff, and yet for a few hours every Friday I did.

After leaving yeshiva at about 25 I entered the workforce. Over the years since then my habit got progressively worse and worse. Until when I was about 29 it led to the worst kind of behaviours possible. I don't think it is appropriate to put my actions into words. I don't want to put imagery in others minds, especially not people who are struggling with this like I am. The terrible behaviours continued on/off for the next 2 years until earlier this year I was at the lowest point.

Something snapped in me and I said I can't do this anymore. It has to stop. I looked up a therapist and booked in. I saw the therapist for about 3 months before I stopped going (it's quite expensive). I don't know how beneficial the therapy was, this therapist didn't really talk much.

But the huge benefit for me was finally being able to talk about it. The greatest pain is carrying this double life with you. People say I'm such a nice guy, meanwhile inside I'm dying from shame. What if my parents knew, my siblings, my friends, community? No one would believe it. The truth is I don't even believe it. I used to live a double-life.

Through spending time with the therapist, and a lot of introspection I know that these behaviours relate to other issues. The internet has become like a crutch, a way to escape from the tough times I face in my life. Everybody has challenges in life, and I have mine. Escaping to internet material has only made me put off facing those challenges, deferring the pain that facing them will cause – although putting off facing them only increases the pain. As a result I have stagnated in my life. And this has fed the addiction. It became a self-perpetuating loop. I had to feed my habit to escape from a stagnating life.

But now I am on the mend. It's not easy. I have robust filters installed on my laptop which I must have for work purposes. I've removed another internet device that I used to use. My phone is not connected to the internet and I have no intention of getting one that can connect to the internet. The biggest step was recognising that I have a problem. I wasn't mostly OK and just slipped occasionally as I used to tell myself. Once I recognised I had problem somehow it made dealing with it easier. More achievable. I read a whole bunch of psychological books, and books about goal-setting and goal-achieving. They have been very helpful.

Goal-setting theory says that to achieve your goals they need to be defined, achievable, and written. I wrote down 7 goals to achieve and beating this habit was #1. This is the goal I am totally focussed on. I cannot fail, because failure is not an option.

I can't change the past. Those actions will live with me forever. I will probably be doing teshuva on them until the day I die. But tomorrow the sun will rise and it will be a new day. A new beginning. Hashem has thrown me this test, but he wouldn't have given it to me unless he thought I could pass. I can and I will.

This reminds me of the famous gemara (sukkah 52a):

Rabbi Yehuda lectured: In the future, Hashem will take the yetzer hara and slaughter him in the presence of both the tzaddikim and the reshaim [wicked ones]. To the tzaddikim he will appear like a high mountain and to the reshaim he will appear like a thin hair. Both, however, will cry. The tzaddikim will cry "How could we have overpowered such a high mountain?" and the reshaim will cry: "How could we not have subdued such a thin hair?"

We on this site know how big a mountain the yetzer harah is. But we will conquer it. And then we will cry, "How could we have overpowered such a high mountain?" With Hashem's help, and each other's support.

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Re: My story

Posted by airmale613 - 02 Dec 2013 19:20

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Looks like you are on the right track. Keep up with the forums and work one day at a time. Don't let your success become your failure.

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Re: My story

Posted by Pidaini - 02 Dec 2013 22:48

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WOW!!! Amazing!!!

Good luck on your journey!!!

Most people take a map when they are taking a long journey, and nowadays they even have step by step directions from google or mapquest.

What are your plans to acheiving the goal? Which steps are you taking?

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Re: My story

Posted by SIB101854 - 03 Dec 2013 08:36

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Welcome aboard! Sharing your story, as many of us have here, in this wonderful example of pilpul chaverim, is one of the best ways of realizing that you have an addiction, and are looking for help. Keep on posting!

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Re: My story

Posted by bearman13 - 15 Dec 2013 03:40

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Thanks for the comments. Giving out your story does make a big difference. I do get a bit depressed when I dwell on it. But I'm optimistic now about the future. The internet filters have really helped, given me a break and time for those habits/neural pathways to calm down and become less effective.

I have to admit though, it's not easy. Coincidentally (but nothing is coincidence right?) I've been under huge stress at work. It's been tough managing it without my old "buddy" to escape to. But it's been a lot better. I think clearer, feel happier, and am more willing to engage in my life.

Looking forward to living a real life! But taking it one day at a time.

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Re: My story

Posted by Othniel - 20 Dec 2013 20:58

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I know what it's like to have people speaking well of you and you're feeling horrible inside because of your secret. I felt like such a hypocrite. But you're here now and that's important; that's what matters. These guys helped/are helping me. They can help you. Welcome to GYE!

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Re: My story

Posted by Pidaini - 21 Dec 2013 22:42

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Dearest Bearman (and Othniel) none of the good things people say about you is false!!!

There is no mitzvah in teshuvah to get depressed, all there is isto recognize where we holding and to get back on the path closer to Hashem!!

We are all great guys, we are all doing good things, we also have an issue. That issue does not disqualify everything else!!

We are what we are, and Hashem loves us exactly the way we are, as He is still letting us live. The question is,

Do we love *ourselves* this way?!

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Re: My story

Posted by SIB101854 - 23 Dec 2013 00:23

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Pidaini wrote in part:

"There is no mitzvah in teshuvah to get depressed, all there is isto recognize where we holding and to get back on the path closer to Hashem!!

We are all great guys, we are all doing good things, we also have an issue. That issue does not disqualify everything else!!"

This is a key issue for many of us, and we each have to find a derech that will bring closer to HaShem.

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Re: My story

Posted by cordnoy - 01 Jul 2015 16:52

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[Pidaini wrote:](#)

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We are all great guys, we are all doing good things, we also have an issue. That issue does not disqualify everything else!!

We are what we are, and Hashem loves us exactly the way we are, as He is still letting us live. The question is,

Do we love *ourse/ves* this way?!

Nobody says it like Yankel!

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Re: My story

Posted by waydown - 01 Jul 2015 19:48

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Bearman,

Your story truley is a huge chizuk. My story may differ a bit but I kind of see a common thread., I am new to the foreum and thought I was at the lowest point too.

I am happy that filters were one of the tools that helped you succeed.Unfortunatley, my work/

corporation won't allow me to add filters to my computer (I have no admin rights). And I must use it a whole day. While porn is not permitted Craigslist, facebook, you tube and other social media, dating sites are permitted (and occasionally I can bump into plenty of porn too).

As a side note, I do work with lots of young good looking interns. But while that may lead to immoral thoughts it won't get much further. After all 1) They know I am married and are pretty much upstanding people who won't mess around with a married guy especially out of a work place setting. 2) The fact that I am outwardly jewish, have a cholent boch and I am bald helps too. Not that #2 is a total free license as one never knows. So the internet is a far greater struggle with me.

As in your situation, I too turn to the internet often when under stress not realizing that it just causes more stress and messes up my concentration which is a must in my field. And I feel like I am living a double life too. Whats more, I am not trival to your marriage status but I will tell you that I am married. Thus I am living a double life to my wife as well. I know that my behavior must stop. I have not devised a game plan yet. I am contemplating different strategies but still not 100% sure how to attack it.

I think you truly are a bear.

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