

Roller Coaster

Posted by bentorahyy - 11 Jan 2014 00:42

Hi everyone! I was hoping my subject line would get your attention. I wanted to share some thoughts and I'm very interested in feedback from the rest of you. Just a recap of my story: I have had ups and downs (mainly catalog pictures, internet, and m**) since my teenage years, and now I'm mid-thirties and married with a wonderful family. I was "clean" for about 2 1/2 years after getting married, but then after our second child was born the wait was hard for me so I slipped. I also had a summer job at that time with internet access and I slipped repeatedly. I had many ups and downs since then, sometimes clean periods for several weeks or months, but clearly going back to what "felt good". I learned in yeshiva and kollel for several years and so I always felt guilty about this habit (and alone-like many of you!). This past Elul I signed up with GYE, and at first it was a lifesaver! It was really the first time in my life I truly admitted to my bad habit and I felt like it changed me. I had a heart-to-heart talk with my wife who was and is very supportive and loving (which I am grateful for) and I made it to 90 days. On day 91 I fell into the trap again of looking at pictures on the internet I shouldn't be, so I started over. Then, after another 50 days or so, I fell again (m*), this time not due so much to looking at pictures but mainly due to not being able to wait until my wife was not a nidah anymore. I think I was thinking of her too much. Then, the next day, it was almost as if I was saying, well I fell already, so why not get it all in and look at some of these pictures you haven't seen in so long! Well, eventually I snapped back out of it and I restarted my 90 day chart.

I think I've fallen into the trap of thinking I became above it all, not realizing that it's normal to have an initial excitement of changing, just to eventually go back to bad habits. I realize I need to constantly, every day, maybe several times each day, stay on guard and daven that I stay clean, and not coast on auto-pilot.

Sorry this is kind of long - but I needed to share my thoughts here with you all. I'm finding now that even though my wife is mutar my brain seems to be constantly thinking about her (I guess that's a good thing - versus thinking about someone else!). For a while I was on a "high" about thinking about my learning, strengthening my relationship with my kids, etc, and now I feel like I'm slipping again. I want to be able to both enjoy my wife and also have healthy habits and relationships with my kids, etc.

I appreciate your thoughts and support!

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Re: Roller Coaster

Posted by skeptical - 12 Jan 2014 11:10

Welcome back!

A couple of things that you pointed out:

1 - Never become complacent.

So many of us just want to be finished with the whole thing. We want to beat the YH and show ourselves once and for all that we no longer have an issue anymore.

It doesn't usually happen that way. And it's ok.

We have many pleasurable memories. There's a reason we got into it in the first place. We like it.

Day 3,796 is the same as Day 1 in some respects. If we give in, we could very easily revert back to where we started. We need to really just take it one day at a time and not fool ourselves that the YH is dead. Giving the "salesman" **any** sign of interest will get him back into full swing in no time!

2 - Any lusting whatsoever is poison.

It doesn't matter if it's a picture of a nude girl, or a fully clothed one. It doesn't matter if it's a stranger or our own wives. Getting into lust mode is, well, getting into that mode. The tendency to slide down from there is all too common.

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Re: Roller Coaster

Posted by Imperfection - 12 Jan 2014 22:58

Thank you very much for writing.

Your situation sounds very much like mine. You're the first post I've seen that I can really fully personally relate to.

I have also learnt in Yeshiva many years and still in part time in a Kolel. I am also married with a wonderful family. Like you, my habits started as a teenager, sometimes improved, but never really left me. In a way, I could have just left things as they were. No person would have known. But this would be a mockery of all my learning, all my davening, any relationship with Hashem. It doesn't matter if our "habits" are not severe, not visibly destroying relationships. Lust destroys our relationship with Hashem. Even if we do not see it, it is destroying us!

What is helping me most from GYE is seeing the wider picture. It is not really about lust. It is about seeing that deep down, there is a part of me which is self centred, arrogant, self serving. This is what I am really working on. This is what is really helping.

Of course, we need barriers, filters, to be careful where we look, where we walk. You're a ben Torah. You know that too. But I am now beginning gradually to change now that I realise that the real problem is with me. Inside. What am I really looking for? Who am I really? Can I not just suppress that inner anger, but be genuinely tolerant and understanding. For me, this has become a wonderful opportunity for inner growth

Thinking of you

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Re: Roller Coaster

Posted by Ezra - 21 Jan 2014 17:58

bentorahyy - A refreshingly honest post. Skeptical already said it, and you probably know it, but for the sake of emphasizing for everyone... lust seems to be the commonly confused cousin of intimacy. Does not matter if one is married, dating, or at any other stage, one needs to be careful how they view and think about others. Does one truly view others as people, or something less?

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Re: Roller Coaster

Posted by cordnoy - 21 Jan 2014 20:07

Lust is not sex, and it is not physical. It seems to be a screen of self-indulgent fantasy separating me from reality-either the reality of my own person in sex with myself or the reality of my spouse. It works the same way whether with a girlfriend, a prostitute, or my wife. It thus negates identity, either mine or the other person's, and is anti-real, working against my own reality, working against me.

I can't have true union with my wife while lust is active because she as a person really doesn't matter; she's even in the way; she's merely the sexual instrument. And I can't have true union within myself while I'm splitting myself having sex with myself. That fantasy partner I've conjured up in my mind is really part of me! With lust, the sex act is not the result of personal union; sex doesn't flow from that union. Sex energized by lust makes true union impossible.

Lust Is

Not being able to say no

Constantly being in dangerous sexual situations

Turning my head as if sex-starved all the time

Attraction only to beautiful people

Erotic fantasies

Use of erotic media

Being addicted to the partner as I would be to a drug

Losing my identity in the partner

Obsession with the romantic-going for the "chemistry"

The desire to make the other person lust

Another Personal Perspective

Lust Kills.

Lust is the most important thing in my life; it takes priority over me.

Captive to lust, I cannot be myself.

Lust makes me its slave; it kills my freedom; it kills me.

Lust always wants more; lust creates more lust.

Lust is jealous; it wants to possess me.

Lust makes me self-obsessed; it drives me into myself.

Lust makes sex impossible without lust.

Lust destroys the ability to love; it kills love.

Lust destroys the ability to receive love; it kills me

I have found that during my acting out time, I may have been viewing pictures, scenes, etc. for stimulation, but climaxing was many times with my eyes closed. lust is about us....not about any partner....even one's wife.

[Agav, it is good to relate to people, but many of us here have

1. started in our teens
2. married with wonderful family
3. learned in yeshiva/kollel
4. cant break the habit of internet/ pictures/porn/etc]

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Roller Coaster

Posted by I will win the battle - 29 Jan 2014 05:20

Hi Ben

It is good to hear from you again!

My initial excitement after joining GYE also went away after a while, and I found myself going back to my old ways. There are so many eitzos in the handbook that are great - dependant on where you are holding. See what works for you

Keep us posted

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Re: Roller Coaster

Posted by bentorahyy - 30 Jan 2014 04:59

Hi everyone - thanks for the chizuk! Ok, while I think alot of positive has happened (like the fact that I only had 1 real fall in the last 5 months!), but I'm finding myself lately having a hard time staying away from "innocent" websites - like news, weather, etc., which I know have ads or pictures I shouldn't look at. When I first signed up for GYE I was very good at sticking to only the websites I knew for sure were ok (matzav, weather.gov, my financial things, aish.com, Torah sites, etc.) but now I have this constant urge to see the "news" or "weather" even though I know I'll inevitable see something that will trigger me.

To fill in a bit more - at work I don't think it's shayach to install a filter or to disable the internet since there are strict company rules (I even asked if the internet could be disabled and the IT person told me he's never gotten that request before!). So - for a while I was real gung-ho GYE and not looking at these sites but now I feel this urge. I know if I continue to give in eventually it will lead me back to sites I've ventured into before which will be a very quick slippery slope. Any ideas??!!

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Re: Roller Coaster

Posted by Imperfection - 09 Feb 2014 20:13

This is very familiar to me - my main problem with internet is also at work where it is not practical to install a filter.

What has helped me a lot is the realisation that acting out means different things to different people.

In other the words, for some people acting out is looking at pornography, but for me it is looking at treif news sites. For me, in a way, looking at news sites is just as bad as pornography. This is my "dirt". It makes no difference that for 99% of the world looking at these sites is " normal ". What matters is what it means for ME. For ME, this is where the Yetzer Horo know that I am vulnerable.

So I would not even call this the "Slippery slope". For me, a treif news site is a fall blown fall.

Things can change as well. As we become "cleaner" the point of struggle may change. In the past a fall may have meant pornography, now it may mean "just" a news site. But it makes no difference - a fall is a fall!

Boruch Hashem I am now 46 days clean, including of treif news sites and purposeful erotic thoughts. This has only been possible when I realised that NO COMPROMISE is the ONLY way!

I would suggest you using a TRIPHASIC fine method for news sites, as you would with pornography. What helped me more at the start was making a list of things to do before looking at these treif news sites - for example:

1. Is there any more "work" to do (after all I am getting paid!)
2. If I have spare time, why not phone my wife?

3. Any e mails I should be writing?
4. Have I kept up with the GYE chizuk e mails?
5. Anyone needs help on the GYE FORUM?
6. Am I up to date with my Tehillim? Daf Yomi?
7. Have I checked out the kosher new sites? Do I really need to know any more?!

The list goes on. (These general ideas are in the GYE handbook)

Invariably, once you have gone through the list, not forgetting to daven a lot, the Yetzer Horu is greatly weakened!

Thank you for your post

It is nice to hear from someone in the same boat!

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