

ADHD and Porn Addiction

Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 23 Feb 2009 22:38

I am now finishing my third week of being clean and b"h, bli eyin hara, I have had close to no urges. I had one small urge last week, but it was so weak, one can barely call it an urge. I fought it nevertheless. On top of that I have had very subtle bad thoughts, and therefore for the most part my whole mind has been clean. It has been b"H, a big bracha. Now I have had this in the past, but every time I get this, I get hit out of nowhere with the urge and then I fall. So now that I am experiencing my 'high', I want to take proactive measure to prevent this fall again. In my current state, I cannot ever imagine watching P. or M. It is so far from my mind. I have no struggles right now, nor have I had in the past 19 days. But I am scared it will hit me again. Now, I was told by my dear friends on this forum not to get scared. And I took the moto for myself to "be scared that he could hit any moment, but I am confident that I will win". But I am rationally scared as opposed to emotionally scared. The difference is that when a person is rationally scared, he is justified. I know I have failed in the past. And I am beginning to see the picture that brought it on, so I want to figure out how can I prevent it for the future.

So I began to look into myself and figure out what are the current triggers. At a later state, I may want to psychoanalyze myself and understand childhood background that may be deeply rooted in me. But for now, I want to understand what situations make me tick? what moods make me tick? what inner feelings make me tick? And the more I think, one thing comes to mind for me and that is ADHD, which only a few years ago did I discover that I have. Now, I will describe shortly my self-assessment, but for now, I would like to pose this question to the forum. Are there any studies about linking addiction to ADHD? The reason I am asking is for the next issue, And that is, is that if I have a certain condition called ADHD, and that is contributing to my addiction, well it would be foolish to try to solve the problem of my addiction and not address the ADHD that is contributing to it. So my second question is: if there are studies linking the two, what are the appropriate approaches to solving the problem?

Now I will describe some of my finds about myself. I realized as a youth, I craved lust like crazy. I ran after it. It was on my mind all the time. I could not rid myself of it. Every opportunity I had to act out I did. If I was in a back seat of a car, I would do it there. I did some really insane things. Even after I had a spiritual awakening at the age of 16 (I am now 31), and decided I am going to change my whole life and 'frum out', as we like to say, my lust stayed with me. I would stare at women at every possible moment. I would try to restrain so hard from buying magazines, but I did it from time to time. I was considered one of the top bachurim, and got learning awards, My classmates looked to me as a role model for being a masmid. Some of my friends even asked advice on how to stop masturbating, figuring that I had the answers. And the truth is that I loved learning. But I also loved lust. After acting out I would cry my heart out, and then contemplate suicide. I would stand at the top of a tall building for long amounts of time ready to kill myself. Even today, when I think of my emotions then, I remember with vivid memories the feelings of wanting to commit suicide. I can see myself actually leaping. I really wanted to die. This lasted through my first few years of marriage, where my lust was

uncontrollable and my suicidal thoughts remained in me. Getting married brought a new opportunity for me. I knew my wife's schedule and I knew when I could watch porn without her walking in on me. I was working in NYC at the time, and I would leave work mid-day to go to dirty places. This was during working hours. If I was caught, I would be fired on the spot. But I could not help myself.

But even during all these years of intense lust, I know that one of the main triggers for this lust was **frustration** and **inability to focus** and **distraction**. When I was in school, elem, H.S. and college, I remember that I could not sit in front of a book. And whenever I tried, I went straight to masturbating and then to porn, if it was accessible. And if it wasn't, I would go crazy trying to get it. I would roam the streets, until I found something. There were so many times that I was determined to sit down and study and get my material done. But I could not concentrate. I always felt **distracted**. I would get annoyed as if someone was distracting. But it was my own self. Already in elem school, I had this issue. Many times, I could not even study for more than 10 minutes without the distraction. Now, I would also get frustrated with work. If I had to write a paper, and could not think of what to write, I would get very **frustrated**, and move on to masturbation. That was like the next logical step. If you can't think, might as well masturbate. I would often hate my teachers for giving me assignments that I could not do, because I would blame my failure to control myself on them. [it is interesting to note, that when it comes to learning, I can concentrate for hours on end undisturbed, writing chidushei torah. But even then, a minor distraction could throw me off. People are amazed how intense I am. They do not realize that if I were not intense I could not learn] Now these two components, inability to focus and frustration are very much key elements of ADHD. There are two more situations that brought it on. I know that **boredom** is another one. Now, b"h, I have always lead a very fruitful life and always kept myself busy. But when I would end up in a situation that I had to do something that I lacked interest in, I could not get the job done no matter what. Until today, I suffer from this. I cannot accomplish the most simplest task when I lack interest. And when I try to do it and I can't, I move on to masturbation and porn. Another trigger is the element of **accomplishment**. This is a strange one. Whenever, I worked hard on something and came to a point of accomplishment, I would move on to porn and masturbation. I remembered this happened the day I got a job acceptance, I was so excited I went to porn. It was so strange. It was as if I did not know what to do with myself. Strangely enough, this is related to the boredom factor because both stem from a feeling of 'now what, might as well do that.' Now the last aspect that I will mention over here is the power of **impulse**. And I do not understand impulse. But this is perhaps a common enemy for many of us addicts here. And that is that all could be calm, and then I get this impulse, out of no where to just look at porn. And I just do it. This is very foreign to a non-ADHD person. But to us ADHD'ers, we know the power of impulse all too well. Now, this is where the filter fits in very well. Now obviously, I also had plain old lust for its own sake as well as **curiosity**. If I would see a woman dressed in a certain way, I would experience lust and desire and desire until... This was lust out of **exposure**.

Of course there are more situations, and some of these overlap, but I am trying to clarify the issues for myself as much as possible. In all of these situations, once the lust was in me, I could not get it out until I would spill my seed. I would sit in class and think about it. I would be

on the subway and think about it. I would sit in my bed at night and think about it. I was not calm until I went back to it. I have always had a strong level of imagination and fantasy. [One of the things I began working on in the past year was learning to control my thoughts and not just actions. B"H, I have come a long way. I have begun working on myself even in regards to my own wife. I realized there is a time and place for everything. It is not appropriate to be thinking about ones own wife (especially when she is nida, igros moshe), as this is objectively detrimental and it leads to unclean lewd thoughts. The y"H tricks us into thinking this is a mitzvah. That is the way he works (see mishlei perek 5).]

Well, I realized that while I had this uncontrollable desire for lust which was often triggered by the above situations accompanied me for many years, as my late 20's came, it simmered down immensely. I do not know when the change happened. But I do know that today I realized that lust is not my problem. It is porn. When I was young, I was addicted to lust, and the porn was my avenue for lust. Today it is porn that I am addicted to. In fact, I seem to hate porn. I stopped enjoying it. But I had to do it. It is so strange. It's like it was part of my nature. I would resent my own self for it, that I would do something that I do not even enjoy. I hated every second, but did it anyways. But one thing I realized is that all my triggers are still the main causes.

I am sorry for writing such a long post. I have lots of thoughts and i need the space to convey myself clearly. If anyone wants to share similar feelings please go ahead. If anyone has important comments how I should go about helping myself. As I mentioned at the start, I am in a 'high' now and feeling awesome with myself. My daveing and learning are at all time high. I have no urges for porn. But I am rationally scared for the future. If there is something in my personality that brings this on, I feel I should deal with the root. Thanks for reading.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by mevakesh - 24 Feb 2009 16:57

Hi ykv,

I don't know if boruch has the time now to post, but I think he would be a good resource. Boruch has been diagnosed w/ ADHD and has done quite a bit of research on the subject. You may want to PM him.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by battleworn - 25 Feb 2009 13:45

Dear Ykv,

Although my mind is really not with me right now, I want to try to write you a few points.

We definitely all agree with you, that this is the way to go. When we said not to worry we were talking only about emotional worry.

The link between the addiction and ADHD is well known.

I don't have ADHD, but I definitely can relate to most (maybe all) of what you wrote. One thing that I learned from experience is, that when I have clear focused goals that I'm working on in my life, it makes a world of difference. In addition when I invest energy in my Avodas Hashem (Did you ever Daven in "Karlin"?) it changes the whole picture.

CHAZAK VE'EMATZ!!! HATZLOCHOH RABOH!!!

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by boruch - 25 Feb 2009 16:18

[Ykv schwartz wrote on 23 Feb 2009 22:38:](#)

And I am beginning to see the picture that brought it on, so I want to figure out how can I prevent it for the future.

So I began to look into myself and figure out what are the current triggers. At a later state, I may want to psychoanalyze myself and understand childhood background that may be deeply rooted in me. But for now, I want to understand what situations make me tick? what moods make me tick? what inner feelings make me tick? And the more I think, one thing comes to mind for me and that is ADHD, which only a few years ago did I discover that I have. Now, I will describe shortly my self-assessment, but for now, I would like to pose this question to the forum. Are there any studies about linking addiction to ADHD? The reason I am asking is for the next issue, And that is, is that if I have a certain condition called ADHD, and that is contributing to my addiction, well it would be foolish to try to solve the problem of my addiction and not address the ADHD that is contributing to it. So my second question is: if there are studies linking the two, what are the appropriate approaches to solving the problem?

Yaakov,

You should have much hatzlocho. In my own experience after 36 years of struggle what has finally made a difference is being prepared to go the distance. As the Alcoholics Anonymous people put it, half-hearted measures won't work. In your post you are showing that you are prepared to go the distance, that you are looking for all the contributing factors to your addiction and that you are ready to do what it takes to address them.

Studies linking **substance addiction** with ADHD abound. Here is a recent link:

[Study: 33% of alcoholics had ADHD, 65% of drug users had ADHD](#)

The experience of therapists suggests a similar link with sex addiction:

[Treating Pornography Addiction](#)

And yes, you are absolutely right that if you are serious about your addiction you need to address the ADHD. If you have a hole in your bucket you need to plug it. The real question is how far you are prepared to go.

I once heard HaGaon HoRav Simcha Schustal Shlit"a Rosh Yeshiva of Stamford (no I did not learn there) say that the possuk in Nitzovim (30:15) says re'eh nosati lefonecho hayom es hachayim ve'es hatov ve'es hamoves ve'es hora. He asked why the Torah puts the affects, chayim umoves before the causes, tov and ra, it should have been the other way around, putting the causes first and then the affects.

He answered that you see people smoke for years even though they know that it is dangerous. However, as soon as they have their first heart attack, everything changes.

What happened? They always knew that smoking was dangerous. He said that what happened is that **for the first time not only does the smoker know that smoking is dangerous he now sees giving up smoking as a life or death choice.**

He said that just like smokers who know that smoking is bad we learn mussar and yet much of the time we see little or no change. He said that if we want the mussar to work, if we want to change, it is not enough to know right from wrong, **we first have to see the choice between tov and ra as a choice between chayim umoves, we have to realize that our choice is no luxury, it is life or death** and that is why the Torah puts chayim umoves before tov and ra, so that we realize that we are making a life or death choice.

Now there is one thing about a life or death choice, there are no limits to what a person will do.

Now, we both know that the minimum requirement for teshuva is a once and forever azivas hachet. A complete one time commitment to never return to the aveiro. The problem is that untreated ADHD almost guarantees a relapse sooner or later. So, if ADHD is threatening to undermine teshuva and teshuva is life or death, then I have to tell you that from everything I know, there is no alternative to medication.

Yes, you can find other ways to address ADHD such as therapy, diet modification and many other approaches. And you can survive on only those. But, equally you could also survive without any ADHD treatment at all.

I have Adult ADHD (discovered 6 months ago) and I did fantastically in school without any medication. I was able to memorize almost everything my teachers taught as they were teaching it and I was able to think extremely fast which helped me spend a minimum amount of studying to get great grades. I was very competitive and thrived in the structured environment of school. However, adult life was a totally different story. Exactly as you described, anything uncomfortable did not exist. I would get busy with distractions which of course included and extended to my addiction. I have tried many approaches and life did not begin to become manageable until I took medication. I have a teenage daughter with ADHD and she too is on medication. In my experience and from everything I have read and heard the results from all of the other approaches are very poor in the absence of medication. So if you are truly serious you cannot, in my experience and opinion afford to rule medication out.

My daughter does very well just on medication. However, I have not stopped at medication and both for myself and my marriage I do therapy. Even then I have found that the combination of those two, empowering as they are were not enough to change my life. I started posting on these forums and that too was not enough. Now I have joined a 12 step group on which I invest 6 hours a week including travel time to attend two meetings.

I have finally come to the realization that if I want to give up my addiction which has been such a fundamental piece of who I am and if I want to give it up forever with no relapses, then **it is not my behaviors that I need to change but I need to change who I am as a person.** As the Rambam (Teshuva 2:5) says the pathway of teshuva includes, "changing ones name, in other words declaring, **'I am another and I am not the same person who did those deeds'** "

As someone with ADHD I can say with full conviction that were it not for the medication, the therapy, this forum, working the 12 steps and attending the 12 steps groups I would not have sufficient support to undertake something as daunting and comprehensive as becoming a different person. That is no simple task for anyone, let alone someone with ADHD. And I will add here that the all-or-nothing approach is a very good fit for people with ADHD and addictive behaviors. It's both spectacular and compulsive and it really turns both the weakness of ADHD which craves excitement and the weakness of addiction which craves compulsion into major strengths.

So, ultimately, everyone is different. But here is something that I have observed. For years I went for help to Rabbonim, Mashgichim, psychologists, therapists and every time before I had even walked into the room for the first time, I had an entire subconscious list of all the things I was NOT prepared to do. What is different now beChasdei Hashem is that I have finally realized that **the only thing that works is having no pre-conditions and being prepared to do everything.**

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by boruch - 02 Mar 2009 16:25

I got email from a member of these forums asking about the possibility of treating ADHD behaviorally and asking about the potential side effects of medication. My initial reply (with slight editing from the original to protect identities) is below including a piece on what ADHD medication will and will not do.

ADHD MEDICATION: SIDE-EFFECTS, BENEFITS, WHAT MEDICATION WILL AND WILL NOT DO

You wanted to know about the option of behavioral treatment. Studies show that at times of difficulty people with untreated ADHD are totally unchanged and unmoved by prior knowledge of consequences. To people with untreated ADHD in time of difficulty there is only now and not now and prior knowledge and future consequences do not exist. Therapy has been found to be only useful to the degree that it is used to create a physical environment in which there are effective immediate physical prompts and physical stimuli of immediate and short-term benefits and immediate physical warnings of immediate and short-term negative consequences. Imagine creating a workspace with prompts such as post-its, messages on a computer screen, work area etc and training to use them. It is not easy and the results are usually not great.

I know a therapist who told me that in a teaching course she was training a woman who was on ADHD medication. The woman was doing very well on ADHD medication and needed no therapy. Then she got pregnant and stopped the medication, and this student who was herself learning therapy got ADHD therapy from a faculty member. The therapist who was teaching her told me that even with the therapy this student was a fraction of her former self and that the results of therapy could not in any way be compared to the results of medication.

So what is medication like? How do I feel? Much of the time very normal (significantly better than before), often good and sometimes great. There are rarely any noticeable differences even to me and on several grounds I am convinced that no-one notices anything different. The rare and fleeting side effects that I have are a slight and very fleeting dryness of mouth in the middle of talking (30 seconds here and there up to 2 or 3 times a week) that even when it is there is just slightly uncomfortable. And for me that is it.

You are concerned about side-effects in general and being slowed down in particular. I was too, but I was really desperate and so I was ready to try it. Now I have tried it and am very pleased with the results, here is what I have learned and can share with you about your concerns.

First a little theory. The key to all psychiatric medication is good dosing. That means having a good psychiatrist who will start you on the right medication for you at a low dose and work gradually upwards.

You don't want to start high because that increases the risk of side-effects and even more importantly the medication is most effective and efficient at the correct dose. Anything beyond that will reduce the benefit in addition to increasing exposure to unwelcome short-term and ch"v long term side effects.

Now in terms of the risk of being slowed down, as far as that is concerned you can break the medications in two groups, stimulants (such as Ritalin, Concerta, Aderall and Vyvanse) and non-stimulants (such as Strattera).

The non-stimulants may slow you down and are a potential cause for concern in that respect. Now I am no Doctor, but nevertheless, I would advise anyone who is lively and energetic (most of us) to avoid Strattera which in my opinion is not a good personality fit for someone with ADHD and so I would recommend to go for a stimulant if your Doctor asks your preference. Unless that is, you have had prior issues with insomnia (meaning not being able to sleep once you have gone to bed as opposed to just not going to bed which is a staple of ADHD) in which case the insomnia would almost certainly become more severe with stimulants. For people suffering from insomnia Strattera is the best bet.

In my opinion stimulants are a really good fit for the majority of people with ADHD. At the correct dosing level you don't get overly wired or geared up and you do get a sense of control, purposefulness and to a certain extent even an increased sense of strength and power. That may sound a little scary to someone who has not tried them, but for me at least, it all manifests itself in a very good way, such that I can now be, Bechasdei Hashem on an everyday basis exactly like I used to be on a once in a blue moon rare excellent day.

So I find that I have not at all changed to a personality that was not myself, I am just able to

have a good day every day. Now that doesn't mean that life becomes artificially good, medication is certainly no guarantee of a good day, it's not auto-pilot, it's only a tool and there are still many options for having a day that is almost as bad as the days before treatment. More about that later.

Now there are two types of stimulant, those like either Ritalin or Concerta on the one hand and those like Aderall or Vyvanse on the other. My Doctor told me that in his experience kids do better on Ritalin or Concerta and adults do better on Aderall or Vyvanse.

I would recommend that anyone with Adult ADHD try either Aderall (available generically) or Vyvanse under good and sound dosing and unlike Strattera which takes several weeks to get symptom relief it takes less than an hour to get instant symptom relief.

So what does medication help for and what will it not do?

Medication increases control and focus and gives you the option and ability to see a task through all the way to the end, no matter how difficult. It decreases the need to shift from one task to another and to be constantly be chasing new excitements. At proper dosing all that can be achieved without in any way undermining liveliness, energy and a sense of fun. I do not believe that stimulants turn anyone into a deadbeat.

But medications are not motivators and they are not an education. They give you the ability to do the things you wanted to do but could not (with untreated ADHD, the onset of anxiety or mental difficulties will undermine even the biggest motivation) but medications will not persuade you to do the things that you are not very interested in doing and they can help you focus even more on the distractions that you prefer when unmotivated.

Medications will give you the opportunity to create new habits but they will not give you the habits in pill form, so work is needed to create necessary habits that were until now unattainable.

ADHD medications will give you the perseverance to face anxiety, fear, anger and depression that often interfere with what we want to achieve but they will not treat those emotional difficulties and so work is still needed to improve and change.

But for me at least medication is a life saver. I have wanted and tried for over 20 years to change myself and I was never able to. I tried years and years of practical mussar, years and years of organizational methods and techniques, all to no avail.

Now, due to the challenges of years of neglect, years of bad habits and a deficit of good habits I need therapy but I see "mamash bechush" that without the medication I would not be able to implement the therapy at all. It even took going the whole way with the 12 steps groups before I could implement the therapy and without the medication I would never have been able to make the 12 steps groups a reality for myself.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by boruch - 02 Mar 2009 16:46

In follow up email, a member of this forum mentioned his wife, who does not know about his addiction and is not very positive to the idea of his taking medication. It's not easy to give advice in such circumstances and certainly the last thing I am going to do is make a blanket and public post about this. I do have several ideas and possible suggestions on how to get wives to come to terms with taking medication without revealing addiction. If, by any chance anyone is interested they can email me.

He also asked about the cause of the link between ADHD and addiction. That I can post here:

The link between ADHD and addiction

You asked about the nature and mechanics of the link between ADHD and addiction. I am aware of two neurophysical views on ADHD, both of which explain the connection between ADHD and addiction. One traces the source of ADHD to deficiency in a single neurotransmitter while another links ADHD to a disorder in a complex system of brain function involving many neural elements.

Some have suggested that ADHD is associated with below normal levels of one neurotransmitter, [dopamine](#) produced in the brain. Dopamine is believed to be an an integral part of the pleasure system. The theory is that people with untreated ADHD compensate for their low levels of dopamine by dosing heavily on substances and sex which increase the dopamine level.

See:

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/08/070806164505.htm

The controversy over this is whether the low dopamine levels are the cause of the hyperactive and/or inattentive symptoms of ADHD or whether the low dopamine levels are just a symptom of ADHD.

Another view I am aware of, sees ADHD as, essentially a disorder of in a complex system of brain function involving many neural elements, the [Executive Function](#) (EF) of the brain. The proponents of this view are divided over whether ADHD is a fundamental disorder of EF or a selective disorder of EF for certain activities. Here is an excellent article examining the differing views of the connection between ADHD and EF, that is well worth the effort in understanding:

www.drthomasebrown.com/pdfs/ef-conflict.pdf

In this view in healthy people the key to avoiding addiction which is by definition pleasurable is in proper function of inhibition (being able to apply the brakes) which is a key part of the EF system (according to Barkley it is the key part of the EF system) and therefore people with ADHD who according to this view have a disordered EF are particularly vulnerable to addiction.

For what it is worth, I identify more with Brown's view but one thing is certain, people with untreated ADHD have a far more difficult time than their non-ADHD peers in separating themselves from activities which offer immediate pleasure and people with ADHD find that future negative consequences are unfortunately much less of a deterrent than they are for their non-ADHD peers.

Studies show that people with untreated ADHD are more vulnerable to addiction, drive faster and more recklessly, and are in general more likely than their peers to engage in high risk activities. So, if you have any addiction, including an addiction to porn, then the chances are higher than normal that you also have ADHD.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by boruch - 02 Mar 2009 17:22

Here is another excellent article by Dr TE Brown on ADHD and Executive Function impairment that is easier to follow:

http://www.drthomasebrown.com/pdfs/Executive_Functions_by_Thomas_Brown.pdf

Here is a very important piece by Dr TE Brown on 10 common myths about ADHD:

10 Myths and Facts about Attention Deficit Disorder

(ADD/ADHD)

from Attention Deficit Disorder: The Unfocused Mind in Children and Adults,
by Thomas E. Brown, Ph.D. Associate Director of the Yale Clinic for Attention and
Related Disorders (Yale University Press, 2005)

MYTH: ADD is just a lack of willpower. Persons with ADD focus well on things that interest them; they could focus on any other tasks if they really wanted to.

FACT: ADD looks very much like a willpower problem, but it isn't. It's essentially a chemical problem in the management systems of the brain.

MYTH: ADD is a simple problem of being hyperactive or not listening when

someone is talking to you.

FACT: ADD is a complex disorder that involves impairments in focus, organization, motivation, emotional modulation, memory, and other functions of the brain's management system.

MYTH: Brains of persons with ADD are overactive and need medication to calm down.

FACT: Underactivity of the brain's management networks is typical of persons with ADD. Effective medications increase alertness and improve communication in the brain's management system.

MYTH: ADD is simply a label for behavior problems; children with ADD just refuse to sit still and are unwilling to listen to teachers or parents.

FACT: Many with ADD have few behavior problems, Chronic inattention symptoms cause more severe and longer-lasting problems for learning and relationships for those with ADD.

MYTH: Those who have ADD as children usually outgrow it as they enter their teens.

FACT: Often ADD impairments are not very noticeable until the teen years, when more self-management is required in school and elsewhere. And ADD may be subtle, but more disabling during adolescence than in childhood.

MYTH: Unless you have been diagnosed with ADD as a child, you can't have it as an adult.

FACT: Many adults have struggled all their lives with unrecognized ADD impairments. They haven't received help because they assumed that their chronic difficulties, like depression or anxiety, were caused by other

impairments that did not respond to the usual treatments.

MYTH: Everybody has the symptoms of ADD, and anyone with adequate intelligence can overcome these difficulties.

FACT: ADD affects persons of all levels of intelligence. And although everyone sometimes has symptoms of ADD, only those with chronic impairments from these symptoms warrant an ADD diagnosis.

MYTH: Someone can't have ADD and also have depression, anxiety, or other psychiatric problems.

FACT: A person with ADD is six times more likely to have another psychiatric or learning disorder than most other people. ADD usually overlaps with other disorders.

MYTH: Medications for ADD are likely to cause longer-term problems with substance abuse or other health concerns, especially when used by children.

FACT: The risks of using appropriate medications to treat ADD are minimal, whereas the risks of not using medication to treat ADD are significant. The medications used for ADD are among the best researched for any disorder.

MYTH: ADD doesn't really cause much damage to a person's life.

FACT: Untreated or inadequately treated ADD syndrome often severely impairs learning, family life, education, work life, social interactions, and driving safely. Most of those with ADD who receive adequate treatment, however, function quite well.

Source: http://www.drthomasebrown.com/pdfs/myths_and_facts.pdf

Additional reading on Sleep disorders and ADHD:
http://www.drthomasebrown.com/pdfs/sleep_chapter.pdf

In general I have found Dr Brown's [site](#) to be an excellent resource.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by Ano Nymous - 03 Mar 2009 15:28

I took an add test in the summer, and I answered yes to most of the questions. I certainly have it to some degree, but I feel I am able to control it well enough without medication. Boruch and others here have it much worse and are truly helped by medications and lost without them.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by boruch - 03 Mar 2009 18:55

[Ano Nymous wrote on 03 Mar 2009 15:28:](#)

I took an add test in the summer, and I answered yes to most of the questions. I certainly have it to some degree, but I feel I am able to control it well enough without medication. Boruch and others here have it much worse and are truly helped by medications and lost without them.

Ano,

You may not need medication but the question is not at all whether you or anyone else would be lost without the medication. The question is a cost/benefit analysis. Do the costs of taking

medication be they financial or physical outweigh the benefits in productivity and avodas Hashsem. Yaakov who was the one who started this post, unlike myself and others like me is not lost. And yet he suffers significant impairment.

But his concern was a bigger one, can he be realistic and truthful in his quest to do the minimum for teshuva- total azivas hachet with no relapses if he won't do whatever he can to increase the odds of maintaining his sobriety.

This forum is an excellent first place for people to begin their quest for sobriety and one day at a time is a good way to begin. **However, I have found for myself that if I don't remind myself frequently of the enormity of the undertaking of giving up for life then I am not going to be motivated enough to go the distance to do everything possible to make it a reality.**

And I have seen the same problem in many extremely motivated people who do not have ADHD. They are just not motivated enough to do whatever it takes.

My own advice here, to whoever would listen, would be that since stimulants increase focus and self-discipline, even for those without ADHD, then at least, if technically you qualify as having ADHD, then go get the medication and do whatever you can about your addiction. As the people at Alcoholics Anonymous found, half-hearted measures don't work.

But more importantly Ano, people who suffer from untreated ADHD are very weak when it comes to self-awareness. If you have truly learned to compensate for your ADHD in your everyday activities then there is over 80% chance that you would currently score negative on this test:

[WHO/NYU Adult Self Report Scale](#)

If you score positive then it means that you are most likely missing out on a lot all around, a lot when it comes to work productivity, a lot when it comes to kavono in davening, a lot when it comes to chazoro, completion and achievement in learning, a lot when it comes to managing money and finances and a lot when it comes to safe driving.

But in all honesty and without disparaging anyone, after all I am a newbie here with only 42 complete days of sobriety and I have a very very long way ahead to my commitment of a minimum of another 77 years (I'll renew my commitment if I am still addicted after I am 120 years old --- although there is no known case of addiction of any sort after that age), but let's be honest for a moment, surely the more we admit that beating this addiction for good is a very tough assignment that beats all but a select few individuals the more we would be prepared to do to beat our addiction, and **if we truly appreciated the difficulty and challenge we would be prepared to do everything in our power.**

So many without ADHD are unable to ever do any better than a revolving door recovery. Add untreated ADHD to the mix and you are setting yourself up for a losing battle. So, if you ask me anyone who answers positive to the ASRS test above is already lost when it comes to beating addiction.

It is so easy to deny the impact of ADHD that in my experience there is no alternative to being totally open to how much we are really impaired. After all, we really owe ourselves the opportunity to get beyond the impairment. The increase in productivity and avodas Hashem is so significant that we really deserve the chance to become the people we always dreamed of being but our impairment would never allow us to be.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 03 Mar 2009 20:08

[boruch wrote on 03 Mar 2009 18:55:](#)

But more importantly Ano, people who suffer from untreated ADHD are very weak when it comes to self-awareness.

For me the opposite is true. My ADHD makes me hyper focus on things that really matter like gemara and self awareness. I am very in tune to myself. But I must say it comes with an effort. Making a cheshbon hanefesh daily is a difficult task. But I force myself, and once I get into I am glued as if nothing else in the world matters. I have learned to makes charts and take notes

about myself. I keep a notebook and record all my thoughts. I am a bit disorganized about it but I am focused on which matters I want to work on. I, of course suffer from the classic syndrome of jumping from one thing to the next. Try sticking to one shaar in chovos halevavos for more than three weeks. Impossible. But over time, I have gone through most of it and it has changed my life. Couple that with the works in Rabeinu Yona, mesilos yeshraim, mishlei, etc. I jump around but it gets done. I cannot stay focused on one midah at a time. But, one thing that I have gained over the years is that I am in tune to my every emotion and thought. I will write down an infraction of gaava, kaas that I experinced during the day. Again, the ADHD part of it is that I get too focused in that and forget that there is a world out there. I have even learned to write whole essays explaining myself to myself. It sound weird to do that, but that is the only way I can clarify my thoughts.

[boruch wrote on 03 Mar 2009 18:55:](#)

If you have truly learned to compensate for your ADHD in your everyday activities then there is over 80% chance that you would currently score negative on this test:

[WHO/NYU Adult Self Report Scale](#)

If you score positive then it means that you are most likely missing out on a lot all around, a lot when it comes to work productivity, a lot when it comes to kavono in davening, a lot when it comes to chazoro, completion and achievement in learning, a lot when it comes to managing money and finances and a lot when it comes to safe driving.

That test so describes me it is close to scary. I answered often/very often to all. Boruch, the more I read your posts, I am getting more convinced. Many of those items I always thought were just personality issues. Like the fact that I am so hyper. I was never a trouble maker as a kid, and I was actually on the shy side. No one would describe as hyper. But I am. I talk at an extremely fast pace. My body is in constant motion when I learn (which I do most of my day, i do not start working until the evening). Friends would always comment in surprise how hyper I am. I obviously do calm down. I can be a very calm person. I try to force myself to be calm, as I know it annoys some people when I am too hyper.

The issue really is, like boruch stated, is maximizing potential. I am already very serious about many areas of my life. I, accomplish a lot, both in my ruchniyus and gashmiyus. I am very happy with my lot. I love my wife and children. I love what I do. I feel good with myself. However, if I am not reaching my potential because of ADHD, then that is a problem. Just because I accomplish a lot is no excuse for not accomplishing more. We should never short

change ourselves no matter ho high we go. There is always higher. And if I can attain that with meds, wihtout it inhibiting my current productivity and personality, then I feel I have an obligation. If I am not carrying out important plans of life because my ADHD somehow does not let me think through a problem till the end, and therefore my thoughts linger in my brain until they disapear, well that's a problem. If I forgot to attend a parlor meeting (which I did last week) after promising the one in charge that I would go, that is a problem. It totally slipped my mind. I do not even have a calendar to write it down. I have learned to compensate for my ADHD in the past years but perhaps I could better.

Once again, thanks boruch for taking the time to explain all these issues. I am sure many on this forum will benefit greatly from this. If any reader of this forum has experiences they would like to share, please do so.

Last point: Why is it that the ADHD'ers around here seem to write extremely long posts. hmhhh. something to ponder.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by boruch - 03 Mar 2009 20:13

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 03 Mar 2009 20:08:](#)

[boruch wrote on 03 Mar 2009 18:55:](#)

But more importantly Ano, people who suffer from untreated ADHD are very weak when it comes to self-awareness.

For me the opposite is true. My ADHD makes me hyper focus on things that really matter like gemara and self awareness. I am very in tune to myself.

That's why unlike Ano who was extremely quick to distance himself from those who need medication, you by contrast, have been and are much more open.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by boruch - 03 Mar 2009 20:17

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 03 Mar 2009 20:08:](#)

Last point: Why is it that the ADHD'ers around here seem to write extremely long posts.
hmmmm. something to ponder.

[Hyperfocus?](#)

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 03 Mar 2009 20:35

[boruch wrote on 03 Mar 2009 20:17:](#)

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 03 Mar 2009 20:08:](#)

Last point: Why is it that the ADHD'ers around here seem to write extremely long posts.
hmmmm. something to ponder.

[Hyperfocus?](#)

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by boruch - 03 Mar 2009 20:38

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 03 Mar 2009 20:35:](#)

I think we have a winner.

I think we have a winner. It is so good to have people that I can relate to.

That was my shortest post ever. A real winner ;D

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 03 Mar 2009 20:35:](#)

Yes, Yaakov, that's the beauty of this board and that's the beauty of SA.

=====
=====

Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction

Posted by boruch - 03 Mar 2009 21:15

[Ykv_schwartz wrote on 23 Feb 2009 22:38:](#)

Well, I realized that while I had this uncontrollable desire for lust which was often triggered by the above situations accompanied me for many years, as my late 20's came, it simmered down immensely. I do not know when the change happened. But I do know that today I realized that lust is not my problem. It is porn. When I was young, I was addicted to lust, and the porn was my avenue for lust. Today it is porn that I am addicted to. In fact, I seem to hate porn. I stopped enjoying it. But I had to do it. It is so strange.

Yaakov, lust is not static, it shifts and morphs. If you have to do it, that's lust. It may not come in the same guise as the lust you had in your 20s but it's lust all the same and doubtless the lust is getting stronger.

I knew sifrei mussar and all the methods for fighting the y"ח. I knew them all and yet in moments of nisoyon, it never occurred to me to practice any of them. Then I started attending 12 steps meetings and started calling members regularly. At first, when I had nisyonos I did not call. Then, after a while I made my first call to a member while I was in the middle of a nisoyon. He asked me why I was fighting the nisoyon and not working the steps. I was totally caught off-guard and was flabbergasted by how original his question sounded. I had been investing hours in going to groups, never once considering actually using the steps to work through my nisyonos.

So, I agreed to use the steps against future nisyonos. The next nisoyon was not long coming and I got ready to surrender to Hashem. Well, if I was surrendering to Hashem I knew what that

meant, I would have to see what He wanted me to do in a moment of nisoyon. I knew exactly where to look, I went straight to Rambam [Hilchos Issurei Biah \(21:19\)](#) and saw that the Rambam says "yasiya libo midivrei havai vehashchoso veyifaneh ledivrei torah". And so in surrender to Hashem I said the equivalent of "OK, Hashem You win, from now on I am ready to do it Your way"

=====
=====