

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.

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Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by PSimon23 - 03 May 2012 07:38

Similar subject was being discussed at yahoo answers last week. I can post the link if needed

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Re: ADHD and Porn Addiction
Posted by mifatfait - 04 May 2012 08:17

I read this whole long thread. Fascinating. As far as I know I don't have ADHD, and I don't know too much about it.

But I was thinking that like every disorder there are the super mild cases aren't at all diagnosed because they are more of a personality than a problem. So I can say that I too am a sort of intense type of guy, for good and not so good, and I have felt many times how the lack of inner calmness feeds the addiction. I'm always looking at everything too big and complicated. Perhaps that is why I've grown so much from working on "one day at time", the idea is to put myself in a world where only the simple present is what exists. That's pretty focusing, right? Maybe the surrendering to Hashem also helps for this non-ADHD form of ADHD.

It could be I'm talking rubbish, tell me chevra what you think. Gut Shabbos.

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