

The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 02 Oct 2024 19:59

Hi everyone. I raise my voice now for the first time here, but I've been listening to all yours for some time now. I've decided to muster the energy to get a significant post out now that it's Rosh HaShana. Perhaps this post and attempt to become clean will be my defending angel in Shamayim.

I'm going to start off with my story. Then I'll explain what kind of help I think I need. Please feel free to comment anything you think will help me!

Here goes.

So, I've had sexual tendencies for a really long time.

My first pull toward such content was literally at 5 years old. There was a day that I was so curious to see what a female breast looked like, that the second I got my hands on a free computer away from my parents, I looked up an image of bare breasts. To this day I remember that image. I got very freaked out at the sight and quickly plugged out the computer, shutting it off.

It's not normal. My hormones shouldn't have been that active at just 5 years old. I still can't explain it. But that experience was just the start.

Like many of you, I grew up with parents oblivious to the challenges of technology and growing men. By 6th grade I was handed a smartphone to do anything and everything I wanted, filter free. I don't even think my parents knew at the time that you could filter a phone. It wasn't a thought in their mind. Not even a possibility that their child would experiment with such things.

Well, I got instantly hooked. I was consuming tons of porn all throughout 6th - 8th grade. The funny part is that I didn't know how to masturbate at the time. Like for some reason I didn't put together how to do it. So I would just watch for hours until I had something else urgent to do. I couldn't "finish" a session because I didn't know how to release. In 9th grade I figured it out and I just went on a deeper spiral then. It didn't help that I was in a modern orthodox school with promiscuous girls, dirty minded classmates, etc. I was just surrounded by filth but didn't even realize it was filth. I didn't think much of it. I knew it was like a little bad but I knew everyone was involved with it so I just stayed careless.

After high school, I went to yeshiva in Israel. I finally woke up to what Judaism was about. I become frum, “flipped out”, whatever you wanna call it. And I started the battle. And I fought. And fought. And fought. I was overall successful in Israel. But I didn’t manage to cage the beast. Once I was back home, with unfiltered devices again, it was tougher than ever.

I had better days and better weeks. I had worse days and even worse months. But I never stopped fighting. I tried so many things. Nothing really worked. I was in a yeshiva college, so I still had regular Sedarim and all, so I wasn’t like disconnected from learning and Yidishkeit. But it just stayed tough. I was pretty up and down for the next 2.5 years (ages 19-21)

Then something interesting happened. In February this year, my parents brought up the subject of Shidduchim to me. I was 21 then (turned 22 this summer). They asked me if I was interested in starting. I didn’t say no, but I didn’t say yes. I kind of just left it as “we’ll see I guess if anything happens...”. Two months later my sister told me she has a great girl for me to go out with.

Although I was still struggling with P&M, I was managing to go clean easily for 4-5 days at a time back then, so I said yes to go out. Maybe it was against my better judgement. But let me point out something.

I went out with this girl for 3 months (before I broke it off as I realized we just aren’t the best match... story for a different time). Those 3 months, I had no urges. No desire for porn. I loved the girl and I just wanted to give and give and give to her. I didn’t fantasize about her. I didn’t view her sexually. I cared about her on an emotional level. And interestingly enough, I wasn’t like super attracted to her physically to start. But I gave it some time and grew to like her personality and character traits a lot. That’s kind of what built our relationship. It was like a gap in me got filled and I just wasn’t interested in P&M anymore.

But as I began to realize that we just aren’t a match and decided I was going to end the relationship, my urges began to resurface, after 3 months in hiatus. And right after we ended, there I was again with the unfiltered devices at home. My sessions were pretty frequent for a couple weeks from June - July, but I managed to slow it down by August time.

And here I am. At the start of October. I have not dated a girl since. Not because of any reason in particular - I just haven't gotten a Shayach suggestion yet. And it's just been up and down all throughout September. I stay clean pretty easily for 4-5 days more or less, then I fall, and the whole cycle repeats. But I need a long term solution. I can't expect my future wife to fix this problem. I need an internal change.

So I ask of you guys-

What do you think of my situation?

I want to know- is my issue habitual or lust? If it's lust, how do I learn to control my lust? Lust is what will kill a marriage. I need it under control.

If it's just habitual, obviously I will still keep pushing to end it, but perhaps marriage can help then? Perhaps that's why I was able to stay clean easily without urges while dating that girl?

Can you guys help me figure out the root of my problem here?

And so what's my next step? Unfortunately I can't filter those devices at home- they're not mine, they're my family's. And I don't want that to be the solution anyways. I'm tired of "running" from the problem. I want an internal change. I want to be able to feel it in my bones that this is not good for me, and to be able to act on that feeling. Is that a reasonable goal?

I've also been in touch with a user here I think some of you know - Muttel. He inspired me to get involved with the forums, so here it is.

Looking forward to meaningful conversations and sharing inspiring stories with you all. Shana Tova

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by BenHashemBH - 02 Oct 2024 20:26

Shalom tzadikatheart,

I commend your bravery in posting and sharing your story. Alas, it is erev RH and I look forward to connecting with you BezH after the Yom Tov.

Until then, wishing you all the best and Shana Tova to you too!

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by odyossefchai - 02 Oct 2024 22:00

Wow what a story.

You've come to the right place. You are amongst friends. BH

I'll be thinking of you over Rosh Hashanah.

Reach out to HHM, eerie, Chaim oigen and the other holy yidden here.

May Hashem bless you for having the courage and strength to reach out.

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by eerie - 06 Oct 2024 05:23

Hi! If you're in touch with Muttel you're in good hands, keep that relationship strong, it's worth

As far as some of your questions, without talking to you it's hard to know for sure but here's my thought

Many, many people don't have a real lust problem, it's not that they have this crazy strong sex drive, that their tayva is just through the roof. For many of us, it's an emotional issue that they

are looking to solve. They get an itch, say from feeling abandoned, not liked, not appreciated. And that makes them feel very bad inside, naturally. So, they look for something that can at least temporarily make them feel better. Now, sexuality is naturally a very deep, emotional part of us, so connecting to things using our sexual part can help us feel a little better. Of course, there's also the dopamine effect that sexual activity has. All that helps to feel better- for a few minutes. And then, we start feeling so stupid. And bad, and guilty. And so weak, like, didn't I know this doesn't help? So, why, oh why, did I do it again?

So, really, like someone here has in his signature, pornography is just the bad answer to a good question. Yes, you have a good question. Maybe we feel lonely. Maybe we feel that the people around us don't respect us the way they should. Or maybe we wish we were worthy of somebody's love and caring. That's what's really driving us to act out. And we don't know of a better way to deal with the triggers, in other words the things that put our emotional self off kilter, than acting out.

Which brings us to the natural conclusion, that for many of us (of course, this does not apply to everyone struggling with unhealthy sexual activity) if we can identify what it is that's bothering us, and if we can deal with that in a healthy way, we will be light years ahead of the game in breaking free from the clutches of porn etc.

What's the healthiest way to deal with emotional upheaval? Talking to someone, of course. Share. Call. Talk. Cry. Vent.

It's also very empowering to learn that it's not really that we need the porn or that we really want the porn, so we don't really have to be denying ourselves. We need to find ways to feel good about ourselves, and how to retrain ourselves that we don't use porn to feel better

You write that while you were seeing this girl you didn't struggle with porn. Again, it's hard to say for certain without talking, but that would seem to indicate that your going out with her was making you feel very whole on an emotional level. You write that all you wanted was to give, give, give. That's beautiful! You sound like a wonderful person, and being in that position gave you a feeling of fulfillment, so you no longer felt the need to look for porn to make you feel good

I would point out, don't think that if you married her it would stay that way. During the phases you were going through, and in early marriage, a person can feel super emotional and fulfilled in his relationship, but that can and probably will wear off.

The good news is that even if you are no longer seeing her, you can learn to regulate yourself, and can learn to deal with the frustrations life brings in a healthier way. Talk to Muttel, for

Wishing you loads of hatzlacha,

Eerie

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 06 Oct 2024 17:30

Thank you all for your kind words. Every time I fall (like last night again.. Hashem Yishmor) I just get so depressed. It's never been this bad. Recently it's like there is no Simcha at all in my life. There is no optimism. Yet I still keep giving it to the habit. I start to question if it matters so much. Who cares if I do what I want... I'm not hurting anyone... I need serious help.

Eerie thank you so much for your post. I realize that I do feel lonely. And porn is not the answer. I also understand that marriage would not completely remove my temptations. The start of a relationship definitely gives that excitement and helps, but it is not long term.

I need to figure myself out on my own terms. I don't want to risk assuming getting married will make everything easier and manageable. Sounds dumb to even assume that.

I need help to care again about this issue. Please guys. Motivate me. Give me reasons to push again. I am so tired of pushing and failing. At just not being able to exhibit basic self control. I've become so numb. I've stopped caring about a lot of things. I need a fire again my life to fight this.

I'm in a bad spot

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by eerie - 06 Oct 2024 17:54

Ouch. Hurts to read. Painful

My friend, it's very hard, if not impossible to give another person motivation. You are losing motivation because you feel you keep failing. So, you have to redefine success, my friend. You

have to learn to love yourself. Appreciate yourself and the things you do to grow. Celebrate wins. Realize that every time you move the pin even a little you are on the road to success.

And try to alleviate the loneliness. Make safe friends here. Or elsewhere(except that I don't
)

Reach out, my friend. You can break free. Believe me, I've seen it happen so many times. You

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know where else you can find friends like these
Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 06 Oct 2024 21:15

I just had the immense pleasure to speak to Eerie over the phone. There's so much in my life to be proud of - this challenge doesn't define me. I've been so disheartened and hopeless because I keep telling myself that this challenge is everything. But it's not. It's one part of me that I am working on, but there is so much other good. I will start to draw strength from that. I am overall good. I am not a bad person. It's OK to struggle. It's OK to feel lonely, and there are ways to deal with that properly.

I would love if everyone who reads this just drops a comment to the thread with some more motivation to fight and the many benefits that come with it. I need all the support and love right now. I will read these when I feel low and when I am getting attacked by the Yetzer Hara.

Bzh I hope to stay positive in this battle!

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by stopsurvivingstartliving - 06 Oct 2024 22:42

So happy for you made the phone call! I had the zchus to talk to him as well and yes he's the man!

A short answer to your request: A motivator to fight is, it helps us go from survival mode to living mode (hence my username!).

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by eiyantov - 06 Oct 2024 22:57

Tzadikatheart,

Firstly kudos for making that call. I called one of the tzaddikim on GYE a few weeks ago. Best thing i did for this fight.

Be strong, we are all cheering for you! I think the best thing for me is the accountability. Checking in every night with my mentor. I just cant bear to check in unclean, so I make sure to avoid any and all triggers.

Hatzlocha!

Davening for you!

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by amevakesh - 07 Oct 2024 03:09

Lucky man! With friends like Muttel and Eerie you're gonna go far indeed! You're a hero for reaching out, and just for the record, you have great taste. These are two of the finest GYE has to offer! Looking forward to hearing more from you.

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by Muttel - 07 Oct 2024 08:49

[tzadikatheart wrote on 02 Oct 2024 19:59:](#)

Hi everyone. I raise my voice now for the first time here, but I've been listening to all yours for some time now. I've decided to muster the energy to get a significant post out now that it's Rosh HaShana. Perhaps this post and attempt to become clean will be my defending angel in Shamayim.

I've also been in touch with a user here I think some of you know - Muttel. He inspired me to get involved with the forums, so here it is.

Looking forward to meaningful conversations and sharing inspiring stories with you all. Shana Tova

Tzadik, it's being inspiring to get to know you, and I feel terrible that you fell. But knowing you, your fortitude, your knowledge of what's right and your persistence to get there, I'm sure bezh you'll get right back up!

Youve actually reminded me of the time I was in first grade and had a teacher lean over, and I peered into her shirt to view her shadayim (for the record, she wasn't wearing undergarments). I haven't thought much about it until reading this post. How weird it is for a 6 year old to be drawn like that... and I remember feeling aroused and attracted... bh we can still get back from this and imyh you will!

With a ton of brotherly love,

Muttel

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by upanddown - 07 Oct 2024 13:29

Dear tzadikatheart,

My heart goes out to you! What a difficult (but courageous) journey! I totally relate with all the feelings you describe, especially the despair you're having at the moment. You're going through a difficult phase. But you should know that it's all normal. Don't get so upset about it. So many of us have been in a similar situation but eventually succeeded. I have been there as well. Hit rock bottom. Falling is sometimes harder than winning.

The fact that your struggles started at such a young age definitely makes it more difficult (might be worth going for some therapy btw).

I also started young, at the age of 5 I had a certain weird sexual habit (that I'm embarrassed to share even though it's all anonymous here...) and at the age of 7 years old I would masturbate whenever I could (climax without ejaculation). At 9 years old I had a friend with whom I would get together every few days to do some sexual stuff... Then, at 11 years old I was abused by an uncle on a weekly basis until my bar mitzvah! By me it was an escape. My parents were fighting day and night and - from a very very young age - I took responsibility. There was immense tension at home, talks about divorce... really tough times... so I ended up indulging in my sexual fantasies... about the girls who would give me the love and warmth I so desperately needed... I discovered pornography (my parents were also naive so we had an unfiltered computer during all of my teen years)... it was a comforting and warm place to escape to but ultimately it left me with a brain that was damaged and wrongly wired. Wired to think that I can't manage without. So even once I left my home and went to Yeshiva and eventually got married to a wonderful wife - I couldn't stop. No matter how much I tried, I fell again and again. Each time harder than the one before. I had years of despair. The more I felt the more numb I became and the less motivated I was. I was furious. I was ready to give up all my yiddishkeit... but BH with the help of GYE I've managed to break free and I'm seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.... Apologies for writing so much about myself, I got carried away... but I guess it's comforting for you to know that other people have also had a tough journey and that despair is very normal. It's just another challenge to overcome.

As I once heard from a great Mechanech: ?????, ??? ????? - despair is not from the ???, it's from the ????? ?????.

Don't give up!

"Try your best and Hashem will do the rest" - I promise it works!!

Speak to friends. Post on your thread. Read TBOTG (see link in my signature). Take it ODAAT. Celebrate even the smallest wins. And iyH no doubt you will succeed!

And if you need another bit of motivation and reason why you should get this beast under control, then maybe read [this great post](#) (by choosemyshem).

Looking forward to hearing from you updates...

Stay strong,

UpandDown

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by BenHashemBH - 07 Oct 2024 15:45

Shalom Brothers,

There might be something to learn from these seemingly odd behaviors for such a young child. At 4-5 years old are my earliest memories of desires that needn't be detailed. The thoughts and things felt good, and I wanted more. I fantasized a lot about it too.

Years later, I looked back and thought I must be broken. I was born with this quirky thing and probably it messed me up for life. It wasn't fair.

It wasn't my fault, but I didn't really concentrate on whose fault it was. At some point I recognized that it was Hashem's 'fault'. He made me that way. On purpose. I had no seichel, no real choice, no clue about anything really.

So the question then becomes: Why did Hashem design me and my circumstances to be this way? What was and is the purpose of it?

My conclusion of what the purpose was, is that it set the trajectory of my development - at least in a large part. All the emotions both then and in subsequent years have surely shaped how I feel and think. In good ways and in seemingly not great ways (everything that Hashem does is for the good, I just don't have an understanding of all His ways).

What is the purpose now? Well, following the previous thought, there is a reason for me to have had that experience. Hashem gave it to me, and therefore it must play a role in His mission for me in life. I don't know if I did what I was supposed to with it yet or not; but it is inherently good somehow. It's no longer something I'm ashamed of or confused about. Hashem chose it as my nature, and now it's my job to figure out how to nurture it appropriately and fulfill its potential as He intended.

"Sometimes when we're in a dark place we think we've been buried; we've actually been planted".

- Someone, and also Rabbi YY

At least that's how I think about it.

Curious to hear your thoughts?

Kol tov

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by eerie - 07 Oct 2024 16:53

How are you doing today, Tzaddik?

Of course, it's the simple truth that you, and all of us, have so much to be proud of!!!! The YH works overtime convincing us that all that we do is worthless because of our shortcoming in this one area. And that's utter nonsense! You have so much to be seriously proud of! Just look at

yourself! You are truly amazing! Keep up the good work, keep smiling, and keep working at this,
with simcha!!!!

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Re: The Start of My Freedom

Posted by tzadikatheart - 07 Oct 2024 16:55

Hi, thanks so much for your post!

Yes I forgot about how real life becomes when you aren't chasing your desires. I want to be
free! I want to live again!!!! Let's do it!!!

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