

New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 26 May 2009 17:22

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First, let me explain the name.

I once read in some stupid magazine that if a guy says his favorite comic book hero is batman, then it means he is reserved, keeps his emotions to himself, but he has a strong sense of justice and it will take time to get him to open up in a relationship, if you can even get him into one to begin with. It'll become clearer later on.

Anyway, here's my story:

I am 22, male. I come from a broken home. I was first exposed to porn at a young age, around 10 or 11. Maybe even 9. I honestly don't remember. I remember once in seventh grade someone brought some pages from a magazine to school and we looked at them, but I wasn't like the other guys who could just look at them, enjoy them and then forget about them. I enjoyed them, obviously. That's normal. But I also wanted to keep them. I wanted the girl to come to life out of the page and be mine. In short, I was obsessed. I latched onto it very strongly. That was a pattern that would repeat itself for years. I couldn't really understand why the other guys didn't like it as much as I did. I thought maybe I had reached a later stage of puberty than they had or that they might even be gay! I didn't understand until much later that my obsession was a serious problem. It did not really manifest itself badly until relatively recently.

I remember in high school I would spend all day looking at porn if I stayed home sick. Once I came home in the middle of the day to get something for school and I told myself I'd just sneak in a quick peek. I did, for maybe 5-10 minutes, but I was surprised when I ran into my stepfather on the driveway as I was going to leave. Apparently, he had left something as well! That was close call, and that's the first time I can remember almost getting into some major trouble with this.

You have to realize that in those days (only 5-6 years ago) internet technology was not nearly what it is today. I looked mostly at pictures, and I tried like hell to find free video. Back then it was mostly stuff you had to pay for. But now there are plenty of sites with streaming, high quality videos of anything you can imagine. Like Youtube for porn. That wasn't around back then so it's much easier to access now. Plus I have my own computer now. All I can say is thank G-d that stuff wasn't around back in high school or I would be even more messed up.

Why am I so obsessed with porn? Truth is, I don't even like it anymore. I've become so desensitized, that I don't even get aroused unless I stay away from it for 3-4 weeks at least. At this point, I'm basically addicted in the physiological sense. Neurologically, I am chemically dependant on it the way a crack addict needs crack to keep functioning, if you can call it that. I want to stop but I feel like I can't. The longest I've gone free, that I've counted, not counting my 2 years in Israel where I went clean for nearly 10 months straight (mostly because I had no choice), is only 42 days. My high school coach used to say it takes 21 days to break a habit. I'm betting that's just an average...

So why the addiction? I have no idea. Obviously it's strange for a normal male to not like porn at all, but it's strange to be addicted too.

I think a lot of it has to do with the way I grew up. I live with my mother and stepfather when I'm home, which isn't much these days. Maybe, just maybe my addiction is more than just a corruption of the normal male sex drive. It is also a corruption of the need for love and to be loved. It is a fleeting attempt to plug the hole in my heart where love goes. You see, when you grow up without ever being in a home with both of your birthparents, and without seeing or feeling any hint of affection between your parent(s) and stepparent(s) in the way they look at each other or speak to each other, without ever receiving positive words, encouragement, and warmth, or any kind of clear direction in life, and instead seeing your parents fight and yell at each other like children and receiving negative criticism for everything you do, then you develop incompletely and awkwardly. You have no self esteem whatsoever. You hate the world. You hate yourself. Some people turn to drugs. Some just kill themselves. Others channel their rage into hard work towards breaking free of the chains of the home and eventually saying "look at me now, no thanks to you. I told you so.". And others turn to porn. I have chosen these last two.

Ever since I was old enough to understand how messed up my home was I wanted to break free from it. I am absolutely obsessed with being the best husband and father I can possibly be, because I know the pain and the suffering--the absolute hellish anguish--that comes with a broken marriage and a broken home. I don't want my kids to go through what I did. I don't want my wife to be unhappy the way my mother is. It's not her fault either. I want to be everything my stepfather isn't. I am mature enough for marriage, which has been on my mind lately, but there's at least one giant monkey wrench stopping the whole thing. First of all, I am absolutely terrified that this addiction will not be abated simply by getting married, and I'm sure it won't be. I fear that it will rise up again and challenge my marriage. But more fundamentally, living with this problem is living with a character duality. I appear to be a decent guy to most people. I'm not the frummetest guy ever, but I try my best to be a good person and to avoid making enemies. People like me. I learned in Israel for two years after high school. I am intelligent, and I suppose I am at least moderately good looking and I keep myself in shape. So, on the surface I would appear to be an all around good guy and a "good catch". But I have this dark side that no one knows about. And that, combined with the way I grew up, makes it very hard for me to have any kind of normal relationship with people. I just don't open up people. I guess partly because I am

inherently distrusting of them (upbringing) and partly because if I let people into my little world they may see me for what I really am. Of course, you can't live that way forever and eventually I'm going to crack. Secondly, **how can I marry someone with all those images burned into my eyes and my brain?** Won't it seriously detract from my relationship? It's like I will have an emotional relationship with one woman but a sexual relationship with hundreds (actually probably closer to thousands). How will I do it? I have never even kissed a girl nor had a girlfriend but at the same time it is as if I have been with thousands of them. What do I do?????!!! Would it be hypocritical to want to marry a virgin after all I've done? Wouldn't it be unfair to her in some ways?! There are many other issues that I need to address before I can even think about marriage, but this addiction is one that has broad repercussions, with regards to marriage and many other aspects of my life. It is perhaps the most fundamental of them all. If I fix this, then it might be easier to fix the other problems. Maybe. But I won't talk about them here (if I do, people might find out who I am).

So after rambling like a madman (I am usually very terse), it comes this: I must stop this behavior. Rationally, I know it must be done. But there is a part of me that says no. And there is a part of me that wants to push me down that road, that ends with being on the other side of the camera (at least with regard to the general behavior, not necessarily literally). But I know that is wrong and I know it won't do anything positive for me.

So, how do I start stopping?

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 02 Jun 2009 04:43

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Not Bad!

I normally hate puns even though I have a bit of a knack for them, but this one is the best I've ever seen.

I like it.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 02 Jun 2009 04:57

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Thanks - I never did share that with anyone. Remember, though, that it's a pun with a purpose (maybe that's why you liked it!).

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Re: New Guy

Posted by London - 02 Jun 2009 10:52

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Dear Bruce

Your challange to me reminds me of when I first got into reocvery my therapist asked me to give her a list of 10 things that I am grateful for, and I was stumped I could not think of one, that how closed off my mind was, but as for you here goes:

1. Your'e alive
2. You write you have friends / room mates.
3. You are extremly articulate
4. You are very intelligent - (stright A's)
5. You have found the recovery path at a very young age
6. You are studying
7. You have your entire life ahead of you
8. You spent 2 years in Israel

That's just from reading your posts, I am sure that if I were to get to know you better I could write a lot more. I have found that for me developing an "atittude of gratidue" is one of the

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cornerstones of my recovery, I have so much in my life that Hashem has bestowed on me, but when I am acting out I cannot see His blessings in my life all I can see is what I don't have. There are so many people out there who are sick with this illness and are suffering a living hell, I am so grateful to Hashem that just for today I do not need to live a life like that, that Hashem allowed His Grace to come into me to get recovery. I hear at meetings that recovery is a gift from Hashem, that I can do teshuva / make a living ammends for my past what a blessing. The worst days in recovery are 10 x better now then the best days when I was acting out.

Keep coming back

London

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Re: New Guy

Posted by bardichev - 02 Jun 2009 21:17

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there is a beautiful VORT from the REBBE REB ZISHA zT"l

it says in TEHILLIM .KI HILLEL RASHA AL TAAVAS NAFSHO

(meaning a raasha will praise himself with his taavos explanation not necessary)

Says the heilige REBBE REB ZISHA a person will have FALSE humility in order to feed his Lust.He will keep himself as humble as Hillel to fulfill taavos nafsho.

This is a classic chsidishe vort, enjoy it.

It has a very practical lesson when a person feels insignificant he has no guard to prevent him from doing an aveira because he is insignificant.

I know this is not a forum on religion or a forum on chassidus.If I may say one small statement the BAAL SHEM TOV taught us that EVERYONE IS PRECIOUS.

He is special his avodah is precious his tafkid in life can only be fulfilled by himself.

BRUCE HEILIGE TZADDIK ,TOOT YOUR HORN GIVE YOURSELF A PAT On THE BACK!!!

H&H

bardichev

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 02 Jun 2009 21:37

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I'm not so sure I understand that. Maybe an example would clear it up.

I must now admit that I fell today. I will eventually start a daily log on this site, when I feel ready to take on the 90 challenge, but this is my little corner of the site for now so I have to admit it here, and I have to admit it to stay accountable. It hasn't even been three whole days since last time.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 02 Jun 2009 21:52

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Bruce, three days of saying "no" weighed against one fall - that's not too bad. You have the upper hand, slowly but surely you'll break free. Read the handbooks and stick with us, you can do this. and keeping honest about your falls is the first step.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by bardichev - 02 Jun 2009 21:56

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yes BI"N tomorrow

sheva yipol tzaddik vikom

h&h

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 03 Jun 2009 18:54

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I just printed out the 90 day chart last night. It was midnight and it takes me a while to get to the printers on campus from where I live, so I thought "no, I'll just do it tomorrow when I'll be over there anyway". But the problem is I've been in the same building every day since even before I joined this site and I had told myself the same thing more than once. So I knew that HAD TO GO DO IT RIGHT THEN AND THERE because otherwise, who knows how long I would have pushed it off for?

So now that I have the chart physically sitting there on my desk, I have no excuse not to start filling it in with big checks. I haven't officially started yet, but you will know when I do. I'll start a new thread in the Wall of Honor section.

I'm gonna make it. You'll see.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by bardichev - 03 Jun 2009 19:28

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I'm gonna make it. You'll see.

as they say in am-reyka

YES WE CAN!!!!!!

h&H

b

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 03 Jun 2009 20:36

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Bruce, you will prove to us that you are made of the "right" stuff. I know you will.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by bardichev - 04 Jun 2009 20:52

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Hi Bruce new guy

I posted this in your thread a few days back you asked me for explanation

Here it is

All people have middos (attributes) some positive some negative. Again all people no matter what faith have middos

Only people have middos animals have behavior patterns which we see from chazal that we can learn certain middos from them. Tznius from cats Boldness from a leopard etc.. But only humans have intellect to actually judge cause and affect to see the next move on the chess game so we use our Middos either good or bad to do everything we do.

ALL people have middos YET we as Jews are the only nation as a whole that have GOOD MIDDOS as part of our DNA.

So let me am very clear non-Jews have good middos too. We have recently seen one of the righteous gentiles of the world save a baby in Mumbai. My Grandmother was saved in the Holocaust by righteous gentile.

We as Jews inherited from our forefathers GOOD MIDDOS DNA. There is no reason to feel guilty about the fact that we got something extra from HASHEM. For we also got a tremendous responsibility from Hashem which is to live a life that one can try to perfect himself and live in a way that he portrays to himself and the world that he embodies good MIDDOS character traits that are similar to the way HASHEM acts towards all the people of the world.

Having said all this Let us take the most important MIDDAAH. Humility. I know it is the most important Middah for The Rambam says in his timeless letter that Humility is the key middah that leads to all other good middos and to Fear of G-d

And to Olam HaBAAh. (Read the Iggeres Haramban it is a MUST!!)

Humility is so key that Hashem says that one who is not humble is as if he is kicking away my feet. Another Gemara tells us and we all know this from our own interpersonal experiences "one who is haughty is not accepted even by his own family". So in order to serve Hashem one needs to go in the way of G-d with humility.

Now there are times that one has to put a portion of his humility aside and build up a BOLDNESS of KEDUSHA.

That is called Raising one's heart in the way of Hashem. One must be proud to serve Hashem Proud to be part of the chosen people. Proud to be able to take even itsy bitsy baby steps to get closer to HASHEM.

One of the classic modus operandi of the evil inclination, is to use humility as a negative attribute. He can convince a person that they are meaningless their lives are empty no one really cares about them they are down. So if you are so not important what big ripple affects will your aveira have. What big satisfaction can Hashem have from little me any how. Self esteem is not SEFISHNESS.

I know I went a bit long. I'm sorry. I tried to fuse some classic ideas from mussar AND Chassidus.

Humble and happy

bardichev

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 05 Jun 2009 17:46

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OK thanks for the clarification. I thought you meant something like that.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 08 Jun 2009 03:36

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OK folks, I have to shamefully announce yet again that I had a fall this weekend. Except this was the biggest ever. I will not go into details. Perhaps it is the final push of the Y'H before I start the 90 day challenge. He knows I'll make it, so he's trying to delay it. Did a good job, too. But when I get hellbent on something I ALWAYS see it through to the end. I don't quit, I don't give up or let up until it's through.

I think another, major part of the problem is that I am confounding this particular issue (addiction) in my mind with my personal religious issues (and there are many as some of you know) when this really has very little if not absolutely nothing to do with religion whatsoever. It's an issue of *addiction*, not religion or *issur/heter*. But when the two get confused, then it's easy to set off a vicious cycle where I fall in one which leads to a fall in the other, and so on.

I can't live like this anymore.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 08 Jun 2009 11:09

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Dear Bruce, you hit the nail on the head. Nothing to do with religion. You can see this in Dov's amazing posts throughout this forum (and in the daily chizuk e-mail lists - see yesterday's

#497). Since you have fallen lower than before, let's call this "rock bottom" - from where you can only go UP.

Is there anyway you could join an SA group in your area? That would be your best bet.

We are waiting to see you succeed. I CHALLENGE YOU TO TAKE THE 90-DAY LEAP OF FAITH.

Jump on the train and don't look back!

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 08 Jun 2009 16:49

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I realized something:

I'm the kind of guy who likes to do a lot reserch before committing to something. For example, buying an expensive appliance. I like to educate myself about things before doing them. In this case, that meant reading through the handbooks before starting the 90 day thing. But that's a mistake. I need to start it as soon as possible and read the books concurrently. Even if I fall along the way it's better than waiting until I've read all that and then committing once I feel I can do it all the way through. It's about taking the first step, not some quantum leap to the end. We are not atoms. Our "energy levels" (progress) are not quantized.

I believe General Patton once said "A good solution applied with vigor now is better than a perfect solution applied ten minutes later."

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