

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 - 08 Jun 2009 20:39

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[guardureyes wrote on 08 Jun 2009 11:09:](#)

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!

The only problem with that is that I can't seem to go 3 days clean so I can start.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 08 Jun 2009 21:27

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Dov - 08 Jun 2009 22:04

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Myabe you are engaged in research, as you mention in the post above. We all do a lot of research before committing to something big. This recovery thing is pretty big and requires a change in attitude. My attitudes, be they wise or *otherwise* are among my most prized possessions and, "I'd rather fight than switch." (you may be too young to remember that goofy cigarette commercial)

There is nothing abnormal or stupid about what you seem to be experiencing. We all need to reach a point at which any further research is just too costly and will need to be left to "more capable hands" to finish for us, as it were. Then we run, fall, or blunder into recovery. Some of us seem to quietly slip into recovery as though we knew it all along...and, nu, it still works!!

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 09 Jun 2009 00:34

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I'm not sure I completely understood that. But it IS costly. I'm studying for a big exam to get into grad school and when I "act out" the whole day is shot. Quality of studying basically doesn't exist. Not good. But I need to stop this behavior for reasons that are bigger than this exam.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by London - 09 Jun 2009 07:30

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Dear Bruce

In the UK I constantly see adverts claiming 100% satisfaction guaranteed or your money back! I am sure you see them in the States too. Well this program is not offering 100% satisfaction but it does offer you a life! Try it, if it does not work we can refund you all your misery and suffering. What have you got to loose.

I too have this tendency to analyse, but look where my best thinking got me. Sometimes I have to admit defeat, I am beaten as far as this addiction goes and I have to listen to the people who have gone before me and have been successful in overcoming this horrendous addiction. This is what AA's 12 & 12 (the guide to working the steps) says in Step 1 "Who cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness. It is truly awful to admit that, glass in hand, we have warped our minds into such an obsession for destructive drinking that only an act of Providence can remove it from us. No other kind of bankruptcy is like this one. Alcohol, now become the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands. Once this stark fact is accepted, our bankruptcy as going human concerns is complete. But upon entering A.A. we soon take quite another view of this absolute humiliation. We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. Our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built."

A few paragraphs later the 12 & 12 says this:

"We had approached A.A. expecting to be taught self-confidence. Then we had been told that so far as alcohol is concerned, self-confidence was no good whatever; in fact, it was a total liability. Our sponsors declared that we were the victims of a mental obsession so subtly powerful that no amount of human willpower could break it."

Try working the program in bite sizes hour by hour day by day keep posting read the tools in the GYE Handbook, and listen to the suggestions and you will be amazed by how much your life can change in a very short period of time. In my first post on this forum approx 6 weeks ago I was stuck in a rut and could not see any way out, but thank G-d I am now working hard on my program and getting sober again one day at a time and I can tell you that the mental fuzz, the foggy cloud that was my constant companion is slowly leaving the cravings and obsession to act out are also slowly leaving me.

Keep coming back.

London

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 12 Jun 2009 22:15

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OK folks...

It's been a few days since my last post but not since my last fall.

Three clean days are coming: Shabbos, Sunday, and Monday.

Then I'm starting on my way to 90, beginning Tuesday.

I'm announcing this to be accountable.

I can't live this way anymore, as I've said before. Perhaps being held accountable will help me

achieve that.

You know it's bad when you're thankful that Shabbos is pretty much a guarantee of 24 clean hours so that your mind can take a break. And if not your mind, then your body. And the best way to ensure that is to just sleep all day. Sleep the urges into oblivion, for at least a day.

There have been times when I didn't even go to shul because I knew that the young women there would be a trigger. Just slept it all away.

But that's no way to live. Or to sleep.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 13 Jun 2009 18:44

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... Did you see Chizuk e-mail #499 (on [this page](#) at the bottom)?

That was sent out to 540 members. We are all waiting with baited breath to take the PLUNGE!

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 14 Jun 2009 03:47

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I did. I get the emails.

Tuesday's the day.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by hoping - 14 Jun 2009 19:15

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Hey Bruce, we've been wondering where you were

Bruce-

Please keep posting your struggles. We are on a great purpose here and as long as we are focused on improving, everything (even a fall) is part of the journey to Avodas Hashem! So please please keep posting and we will keep reading every word. Thank you for providing us Chizuk through your honesty and determination.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 14 Jun 2009 20:00

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So Shabbos was clean, even though I had to sleep all day to keep from going crazy.

Today is halfway done, which means I'm halfway to 3 clean days.

Update tomorrow.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 14 Jun 2009 20:05

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BTW. Although you need 3 clean days to get up on the 90-day chart, that doesn't mean you start your 90 days on Tuesday. You started already on Shabbos. Tuesday is your 3rd day clean! So MAZAL TOV ON YOUR STARTING and I want to see that it's true what you said, that when you get hell-bent on something, nothing can stop you. Go on, let's see. INSPIRE US!

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 15 Jun 2009 14:27

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Sunday was clean. That's 2.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 15 Jun 2009 15:12

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Remember each day to set a 24-hour goal. At this point, your goal should be to make it onto the chart. Nothing more, nothing less. Once you're on the chart, your goal should be to build on your success, one day at a time. But I'm jumping ahead - let's concentrate on today only.

Of course, there may be times that 24 hours is too long. Under those circumstances, set hourly goals.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 16 Jun 2009 15:59

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Monday was clean. That's 3, which means that today I start on chart to 90!

I'll be making another thread where I'll keep track of that. I don't even care if nobody reads it, but I have to do it as a way to stay accountable.

Update later, probably tomorrow.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 16 Jun 2009 16:38

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Great news! :D

Remember (and I'm talking to myself as well) - it's a wonderful world out there offline! The computer is a tool - use it when necessary, but not 24/6. Yes, I realize that the world offline presents us with tests as well, but not the way the Internet does.

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