

New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 26 May 2009 17:22

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 the.guard - 31 May 2009 21:21

Ok, now you are starting to get into the spirit of the GYE community!

Many of us here started at anywhere from 8 years old and up. And many of us were addicted for decades. And yet we are free today. Join an SA group and meet guys there that were far worse

off than you, and who are clean for many years.

Especially a guy with your kind of determination, you can beat this! Feel free to post every day on the forum. Many people do that. But the 90-day-chart is updated only once a week meanwhile (we may soon have a system that is automated).

You can send me the password if you want, and I can even make changes when necessary. See [this page](#) for more info on how to do this.

And see [here](#) for getting a partner...

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Dov - 31 May 2009 21:32

Dear BruceWayne -

Hi and thanks for your insightful posts and the responses they generated. In the course of your posts and venting you touched on a few things that mean a lot to me. I will try to focus on addressing what seems to be your main issue, and hope to be useful.

But before I go there:

Have you decided if feel you "seriously need help" because of a religious sensibility/preference, or because of a *personal*, existentialist/survival problem that your lusting behavior poses for you? You have not made that clear yet. The distinction is key, because as long as you know it's all really about morality/religion you can always opt out by playing "the faith card" or deciding you just do not care. Many of us do that for a time. That kind of leeway is not the bedrock of recovery from addiction that AA writes about as it has little if anything to do with the first step, at least as I and my sponsor experienced it.

On the other hand, if you have found a **personal** need to stop that has nothing whatever to do with "learned morality" or w/anyone *e/se's* will, then I'd say I relate to you deeply. I'd also say that the answer I and others have found in recovery might very well work for you, too.

To put it another way: is your problem really that you just can't submit yourself to G-d's or your society's will? If it is, I understand and you seem to have gotten somewhere with the moderator on that (red herring that it may be), and have some decisions to make...**OR** is the issue that you are aware of your **own** will, perhaps your will to survive, to live with what **you** define as "integrity", stay out of jail, to be able to have a healthy marriage, to be a good Jew, whatever, but have become convinced by your frustrating behavior that, as you are now, you are unable to live consistently w/your own bottom-line aspirations? You see, there is no escape from those, no card to play. Now we'd be getting somewhere with recovery based on the 12 steps.

Well, which is it, friend?

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Re: New Guy

Posted by London - 31 May 2009 22:51

Dear Bruce

I want to share my experience in recovery which it seems we have in common, but I am off to bed now so will post tomorrow, however you asked what should you do if you are tempted at 1am, I live in London, and have many numbers for guys in the states who I can call during the night if I am struggling, I would be happy to give you my number, please contact me via email binyomin25@hotmail.com

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 31 May 2009 22:57

I guess it's a bit of both but it's primarily the latter. I don't see how I can live with integrity this way. I don't see how I can be a good husband. I don't even see how marriage would be appropriate for me the way I am now. If somebody came to me right now and said he had the best girl in the world for me, I would say I'm not interested. I don't care if she went to Bais Yaakov, is drop-dead gorgeous, has an IQ of 150, has a well rounded secular education to compliment her religious training, and is the sweetest, nicest, person ever. It just wouldn't be right for me and it wouldn't be fair to the girl. I see myself at the brink of losing control over myself. I see myself at the brink of failing my classes (or at least doing subpar for my standards, which is pretty much straight A's).

The real epiphany came a couple of weeks ago when I clicked on a link in a forum that did not have a description attached, and it turned out to be an extremely disturbing pornographic video that would probably be illegal in most places. I watched all 10 minutes of it because I was too shocked to do anything. Shocked at the content and shocked at myself for sitting there letting it run, shocked that I had sunk that far. I don't think I'll ever forget that video. I didn't derive a single bit of pleasure from it either. Thankfully, it has since been removed from that site (yes, I checked), which is NOT a pornographic site. It's a site where people can upload whatever they want, so of course there's plenty of porn there but that isn't the purpose of the site. So that's when I knew I had a major problem. And I didn't want to fall even farther and get to the point where I would watch more videos like it and actually enjoy them. I didn't want to go from there to even worse things. I saw myself potentially transforming into a monster--a rapist, child molester, murderer, porn actor, porn producer, adulterer or "adulteree", general criminal, WHATEVER--all because all of the porn that I have seen over the years, some of it very messed up stuff, had completely warped my mind and desensitized me to every kind of emotion there is, especially mercy and compassion. Combine that with an intense personality, a natural propensity to anger easily, pent up anger and frustration at the world, and a naturally mischievous mind and you've got a recipe for disaster. For the record, I've spent years working on managing my anger. I never blow up at people. I never curse at people and I've never hurt anyone. But there are so many times I would love to. I just let it sink somewhere inside and then channel it later towards something productive. Actually if you were to meet me, I'd come across as a very mellow and easy-going guy. But that took years to develop. I used to channel my anger towards competitive sports but I don't have that anymore. It's a problem.

Anyway, that's why I'm here. Because I don't want to turn into a monster. I know somebody who has a criminal record and many years ago (like at least 10) I found a large stash of pornography that belonged to him. He's married, too. The only reason we ever crossed paths in the first place is because we are related. Needless to say I don't have anything to do with him and I'm ashamed and embarrassed to be related to a lowlife like him who doesn't even want to stop his ways. But to me there is at least a subconscious association in my mind between crime/general immorality and porn. I don't know if such an association is real, but that's how I see it.

I just don't want to turn into a depraved, under achieving, lowlife.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by bardichev - 01 Jun 2009 03:08

dearest sweetest new guy bruce

You can and you will be helped.Listen to everything Dov writes he is calm intelligent experienced and a voice of reason.

my experience is alot different than his so is my healing different.

If you need a good "virtual" pat on the back let me know.Post away I read almost everything this site beside that it helped me turn my life around .It replaced all other internet activity.

Wishing you much Hatzlacha be cool take it one day at a time.We need you to join our ranks to beat y"H forever.

humble & happy

bardichev

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Kedusha - 01 Jun 2009 14:30

Hatzlacha to you, Bruce. You can really succeed! Please keep us posted with your progress, one day at a time.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by London - 01 Jun 2009 15:09

[BruceWayne wrote on 31 May 2009 22:57:](#)

Because I don't want to turn into a monster. I know somebody who has a criminal record and many years ago (like at least 10) I found a large stash of pornography that belonged to him.

He's married, too. The only reason we ever crossed paths in the first place is because we are related. Needless to say I don't have anything to do with him and I'm ashamed and embarrassed to be related to a lowlife like him who doesn't even want to stop his ways. But to me there is at least a subconscious association in my mind between crime/general immorality and porn. I don't know if such an association is real, but that's how I see it.

I just don't want to turn into a depraved, under achieving, lowlife.

Dear Bruce

What you posted regarding your relative who you call a "lowlife" really touched a cord in me. There is a Gemorah I am sure the Talmedai Chachomim will quote the source, which states that if someone notices a fault in his friend he has this flaw within him too. The reason it touched a cord in me is because you currently see yourself as a lowlife too, and that's why you write about your relative. In trust your relative is very sick and you should pray for him, perhaps you can let him know about this website. Bruce, you are very sick with an illness called addiction, the medication is contained in the GYE Handbooks work the tools till you find what keeps you stopped. You are not a "lowlife" you are sick trying to get "well", you are not a "bad" person trying to do "good".

You write that you see yourself on the brink of failing classes this is classic unmanageability that is the first step of recovery, accepting that you are powerless over the addiction and that your life has become unmanageable as a result. I too struggled with my religion vs my addiction, but came to realise this is just another tool of my addict side to keep me in the sickness. We read in the SA meetings at the beginning that "the sexaholic has taken himself out of the whole context of what is right or wrong". I was told to leave the debating society, I am too sick, for me porn, masturbating are lethal for me I need to STOP & stay STOPPED, recovery for me is the most important part of my life without exception. Without recovery my life is as you describe a depraved existence trying to gratify a never ending craving monster that has no boundaries no respect for anyone or anything.

Bruce, from your posts it seems that you are still young, you have a really holy and special soul that is crying out for help, read the posts and see how many of us waited until we were married many years with children and only then got into recovery. You have an opportunity that I would die for to have this awareness at such a young age I admire you and hope and pray that you will

take action to stop this deadly cycle of addiction.

Keep coming back

London

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Ano Nymous - 01 Jun 2009 17:07

Hey new guy!

I was going to weigh in on the philosophy debate, but then decided against it. Let me just offer a little personal encouragement. From what I have seen and experienced myself, anyone can do this if they are really determined to do **WHATEVER IT TAKES**. I've been clean almost 28 weeks, and I started at age 12 and became addicted very quickly due to my strenuous home environment. If I can do it, I'm sure you can too. I can see the determination in your posts, and if you turn that determination into action you will succeed. And one last thing: Just for the record, I read every new post on this forum, as do many other members (and the great Guard of course).

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Dov - 01 Jun 2009 17:20

Dear BW -

Yeah to London, one of the most frequent causes of failure at actually getting better is forgetting. It would be quite natural for me to consider myself fixed up as soon as I turn my back on the first temptation! "It's been three days - I feel better!! I *am* better!" You'd think that after a *year* of not screwing up all of us would just figure we are OK. In fact, the overwhelming majority of people I have met in recovery rooms over the years use a revolving door approach for a while, then finally disappear. Strangely, the "last gasp" is often when they start giving advice to others in meetings instead of sharing, I guess because they are now better. They also use "you" - the straw man - a lot when sharing, rather than frankly opening up about themselves directly. Fortunately, some do not. They retain faith - and it really is exactly faith - that they are **not** OK yet. This means I **still** cannot expect to act in the same ways I did before and expect to remain sane/healthy; cannot use lusting behaviors and remain in control of them (or myself); can't lie my head off and stay sane in every (or any) other respect, etc.

You do not appear to be of the revolver ilk. In order to actually keep getting better, I need to stay **an addict** in recovery. I try to say: "when I lose my temper/lie/act out, I do xyz." I can't talk like I am all better, lest I actually believe it. It sometimes makes others think I am still doing that stuff, still just as sick. Too bad. The gemora puts it most beautifully: Better I should appear a fool in the eyes of my fellow man for a short time (like a lifetime, for example) than be a fool in the eyes of the Almighty forever. Hatzlacha and stay in touch.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 01 Jun 2009 20:56

President Lincoln (I think) once said that is better to be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt. Kind of similar idea, I guess, kind of like those revolving door people you talked about where it's apparent from the way they talk that they have fooled themselves into thinking they are better. Silence is a good thing for a person. Don't chazal say that?

London-- I am 22 and still single, so I guess you're right that it's good for me to be tackling this now, but I still wish I had actually realized that it was a problem much earlier than this and that I had taken care of it years ago. Maybe I wouldn't be so crazy if that were case, and maybe things would be normal enough for me to not be single at this point...

It's just so frustrating to see all my friends my age in relationships and getting married, without all the problems that I have. Their lives are so much more normal in so many ways and they have the tools to create successful relationships. I never had an example to follow. It's like their minds are so much clearer and their hearts and souls are so much more at ease. They are at ease and comfortable with themselves, which allows them to share their lives with others. But me--I'm confused, frustrated, I'm uncomfortable with who and what I am (if I can even define that) and I downright can't trust people. I just can't. It's frustrating that I want to be like they are but I can't even if I wanted to. Never. I just don't have the tools for it.

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Re: New Guy

Posted by Dov - 01 Jun 2009 21:29

If you start on this road **now** you will not even believe what you will achieve in even one (1!) year. As I was told (and found to be true): "If I told you now, where you will be in a year, working this program seriously, you would simply not believe me."

PS. Between friends, it gets a little easier to just give up on regrets and **go for it** when I realize there is really no other way out, no? And my worst choice of all is: keep doing whatever got me

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Re: New Guy

Posted by London - 01 Jun 2009 22:39
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Dear Bruce

You are now at a junction in your life, and have 2 paths in front of you, you can either carry on the acting out path with devastating consequences or you can start on the recovery path. If you choose the recovery path (which I hope you will) this is what the founders of AA write in the promises of those who get recovery:

"If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

Self-seeking will slip away.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

Alcoholics Anonymous p83-84"

I can tell you from my own recovery which I am not half way through that my life today bears no resemblance to when I was in the heat of active addiction. It is very easy for us to look around at our peers and feel self pity about our lot - I used to do this regularly but it got me no where, Hashem has a plan for me I do not know what it is but it included my addiction and recovery. The same applies to you, you are young you have your entire life ahead of you stop looking around at you friends who knows whats going on behind closed doors, one of the tools I have learned in recovery is gratitude, I have a daily gratitude list which I give over to a friend in recovery, without knowing you and from reading your posts I can think of many things that you should be grateful for. My only hope is that you will take the tools of recovery as suggested in the GYE Handbook and work through them thoroughly and honestly till you find what works for you to get recovery and those promises mentioned above will materialise in your life before you know it, I have seem the transformation in my life and in the lives of countless other people in reocvery who are prepared to do what it takes to get well.

Keep coming back.

London

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Re: New Guy

Posted by the.guard - 01 Jun 2009 22:57

Dearest Dov and London, I can't express enough how fortunate we are to have your wisdom -
and experience - on our forum!

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Re: New Guy

Posted by BruceWayne - 02 Jun 2009 00:23

OK, London.

Just for kicks I'll call you out on it: What can you see in my posts that I should be grateful for?
I'm curious to know if you can get any of them right or if you can show me something I never
thought of.

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