

Its been 2 years since I was last here...

Posted by WeWillNotBeForsaken - 03 Apr 2011 19:51

Its been 2 years since I was last here. Much has changed since then. Perspective. Belief.

But then again, much hasn't changed. I am still an addict, and thankfully, my life has still not been ruined. I am interested in making yet another effort to overcome my weaknesses. Its interesting how much goes on in 2 years. I occasionally think, what if I had been able to rid myself of my problems back then? Where would I be today? Its nice, but yet extremely depressing to see how so many of the others who had visited this site in 08 have been able to succeed. I am jealous, but I think that's a good thing.

I have come to the realization that there will be several huge obstacles, at least for the time being, to my journey:

- 1) I cannot have a filter on my computer. My work requires access to many sites. I have dedicated my life towards my work and cannot simply change that.
- 2) I watch movies, visit FB, go to many mixed events and frankly do not see myself changing any of that pretty soon.
- 3) It is impossible for me to avoid "triggers" - I would have to live the life of a hermit.

That being said, I feel that the fact that I even visited this site again shows that there is yet some hope for me.

Oh well, Day 1, take 1753, here we go again...

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...

Posted by Reb Yid - 08 Apr 2011 01:45

Wow!!

This is getting really intense!!

First to Dov.

Yes. I did misunderstand you. And I do appreciate your clarification. And once again, I agree with you, and your original post makes much more sense now.

As far as I can see it, I don't think the main issue here is the Hashkofa issue that seems to be offending some people. (I also strongly disagree with it, but I don't feel like it is relevant to discuss.) To me the bottom line is this: As long as you are still in denial, as long as you are looking for excuses, as long as you are not willing to be honest and stand up and do what's necessary to fix yourself, you are wasting your time and you are only fooling yourself.

I have heard about the comparison to alcoholics many times, but it really is not the same at all. Alcohol is alcohol is alcohol, and even a tiny taste of alcohol is bad for an alcoholic. My addiction is not women – its porn. To be comparable it would be like me viewing only a few minutes of porn, or only beginning to masturbate.

I happen to prefer the comparison to overeaters anon. Of course nobody will tell you that to avoid overeating you must never eat again. Good luck! Rather it is the bad kind of eating - snacking, stress eating.... - that must be stopped. So of course having contact with women does not mean you are giving in to lust. And no, you do not have to be a hermit in order to avoid lusting and porn. However, there must be an extreme effort made to avoid relationships with women as much as possible in order to overcome the problem.

You talk about how it is easier for you to stay away from porn when you have a female companion. That makes sense. You could also say that it is easier to stay away from smoking cigarettes when you breathe in the second hand smoke of others. That also may be true. But the question is: By taking in the second hand stuff, are you feeding your addiction in a less extreme way? I think absolutely yes. To break an addiction, you can't feed it!! You must break it!!

I had a tremendously eye opening experience since I joined GYE. I have always had a very loving and sensual relationship with my wife. Even with my issues, it drove me towards my wife instead of away from her. I always assumed that obviously being with my wife was helping me

to stay clean. In fact, the need for porn was much less when my wife was "available". And then, after joining GYE, it hit me. All of the physical attention I was giving to my wife, while it was temporarily protecting me from the bad stuff, was actually feeding my addiction!!! I had to train myself to change the approach I had with my wife, in order to enjoy it, without it making matters worse. Now, I have just as wonderful a physical relationship with her. But since my outlook, attitude, and focus have been altered, it is actually helping me overcome my addiction, instead of feeding it.

I guess my point is this: If even something HOLY AND BEAUTIFUL like a loving marriage can cause problems for an addict, it would be difficult to believe that a relationship with a female who is not your wife - even if it is only a casual one - would be anything but extremely dangerous. Just because it may be protecting you now, doesn't mean it is not hurting you in the long term.

I'll end my very long and winding drasha with this. If you truly believe that your female friends are not going to be a problem for you, and that it is not Halachically forbidden, it would still behoove you to take a hiatus from such relationships for a period of time while you work to empower yourself to overcome your need for porn without the crutch of female friends. If after succeeding for an extended period of time you feel you'd like to go back to your old way of life with girls, give a try and Hatzlocha. Maybe you will be right and it will be fine. But to continue with that stuff, and hope to overcome lust.....

I wish you the best of luck and Hatzlocha!!!

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 08 Apr 2011 06:41

[WeWillNotBeForsaken wrote on 08 Apr 2011 00:25:](#)

Whenever I spend time and talk with women I find that in the long run my lust for porn or masturbation actually diminishes. Why would I need to look at porn when I have a female friend that I can just spend time with? I wonder if anyone else has ever felt this way?

To me, it sounds like this: "I don't need to act out! (Because I am acting out)" So I'm not mas* because I'm looking at p*rn instead, or vice-versa. And, if you're spending lots of time talking with female friends and the thought of s*x doesn't cross your mind, although you have a problem with p*rn and M*st, then, maybe you are deceiving yourself (which happens to be an addict's specialty, second only to deceiving others).

--Eye.

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...
Posted by the.guard - 08 Apr 2011 10:25

[WeWillNotBeForsaken wrote on 08 Apr 2011 00:42:](#)

"??? ?? ?????? ??? ?????"

Guard, as you mentioned, clearly the issur is only if I'm looking at a woman and thinking "oh my, she's beautiful, I want to sleep with her." However, as I have learned, when normal men (although granted I am not in the category of normal) talk to women, believe it or not, this is not what they are actually thinking. And in fact, this is not what I think either - rather I occasionally think "How nice is this that I am talking to a woman like a real person instead of masturbating to a slut on a screen."

"listakel Derech z'nus" doesn't necessarily mean "oh my, she's beautiful, I want to sleep with her." Rather, it means looking to enjoy.

But anyway, I think that for people who struggle with lust, what Dov wrote above in comment #7

is very important. Did you read that well?

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...

Posted by laagvokeles - 08 Apr 2011 12:38

[WeWillNotBeForsaken wrote on 08 Apr 2011 00:25:](#)

I believe that it is the sexual repression that is so prevalent in Orthodox Jewish communities that have caused some of our problems in the first place - it was always so "assur" for me to look at any women that the urge just built up inside of me.

this is such a delicated sensitive issue....

but i just know one thing, to look to enjoy a woman it dos not depend in comunitys, its the bible who does the repression

True that there is the extreem chasidic or brisk or chazon ish that would try really not to have even a single split sec look at a woman ?????? ?????? , that i hardly believe u belong to them...

And then there is regular litvish that when they pay in the grocery "theyr toiro" lets them look into her (with no znus intentions)

but as mencioned above to look to enjoy, or to speack for to have a good time no community lets....(besides the one in manhattan in the 5th ave.... ??")

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 08 Apr 2011 13:28

There's sexual repression--be around triggers all the time and hold yourself in! That's hell and people get really messed up by it (and within some circles, this is what they think it means to behave according to halacha).

Then, there's being totally uninhibited. That leads to other problems, but not to the problems led by having feelings and desires and then holding them in.

I think, what authentic Judaism actually promotes is NOT TO BE AROUND TRIGGERS. Which isn't repression. You're not supposed to get yourself all excited in the first place. If someone is struggling too hard not to look at women and it's so difficult and it really bothers him, it could very well be that this person is, for one, spending too much time hanging around with women.

--Eye.

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...

Posted by Dov - 08 Apr 2011 18:35

I'll share a great story from the Brisker Rov, zy"a:

An Israeli politician came to him for an aitzoh - he was desperate with many problems causing a big political hole for him that he could not get out of.

The Rov told him this story:

A bal-agolah was getting old and told the townsfolk he will retire soon. They told him he cannot retire until he gets a suitable replacement. This young, aspiring ba-agolah (I really laughed hard when I heard that term, for here was the Brisker talking to a politician...but that's another story) came for his fa-herr. The old guy asked him what he would do if he got the wagon stuck in a

deep hole.

The young guy answers, "Well, I'd turn the horse around and reattach him over here, then pull the wagon out." The old guy asks, "and if *that* doesn't work?"

The young guy answers, "Well, then I'd get the passengers out and they'd help." The old guy responds without batting an eye, "And if that doesn't work?"

Sweating, the young fellow answers, "I'd take everything out of the wagon and try again with everybody!" - to which the old fogie responds, "And if *that* doesn't work?!"

...the young guy doesn't know what to say and admits, "I don't know what I'd do."

The old fellow says, "Well then you can't be the new bal-agolah."

Before the young guy leaves, he says, "Nu sir, I really got's tah know (he-he): What would **you** have done in the last situation?"

The old bal-agolah answers: **A good bal-agolah doesn't get himself into such a hole to *begin with!***

We addicts - if our sobriety is indeed precious to us - need to avoid triggers, of course. Hashem is helping me here. That's why I do not have a TV and do not look in 'news' magazines. It took me over 2 years to learn how to go into a normal library or bookstore (even with my kids) without getting distracted by all the schmutz there. I do not *intentionally* look at my privates while I go to the bathroom, and never touch myself *for pleasure*. I do not look in a mirror at my body unless there is something wrong, c"v.

Yet I do not walk about in fear that I might "chas vesholom" see my privates in the bathroom, or that I may "chas vesholom" pass a strip bar or dirty video store. If I do, I do - big deal. I'm busy,

no? Maybe I daven for the people there, maybe not. I've got more important things to think about, believe it or not. Neurosis is not a very good solution for addiction, obviously. "Easy Does It" is the name of the game here.

We need to daven for siyata diShmaya in this - and explicitly speak it out to Him (best after *writing* about it for 2 minutes) - because what **Reb-eye** is bringing up is a serious problem. Balance is very hard for many of us (especially 4 me).

And if I have second thoughts about checking it out - or *wishing* I could check it out - I make a phone call to another recovering pervert and share the truth. Then we both laugh our heads off about it and I go on - "back to the supermarket...what was I getting there again?"

But we are not afraid of them, either, should they present themselves beyond our control. We swallow our pride and get the help we need.

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...
Posted by WeWillNotBeForsaken - 10 Apr 2011 23:00

Reb Yid:

Thank you for taking the time to respond.

"To me the bottom line is this: As long as you are still in denial, as long as you are looking for excuses, as long as you are not willing to be honest and stand up and do what's necessary to fix yourself, you are wasting your time and you are only fooling yourself."

Like you said, I think all of us need to introspect and see who is actually in denial.

"So of course having contact with women does not mean you are giving in to lust. And no, you

do not have to be a hermit in order to avoid lusting and porn. However, there must be an extreme effort made to avoid relationships with women as much as possible in order to overcome the problem.”

I seem to have missed the connection. Why presume that we must all “avoid relationships with women as much as possible in order to overcome the problem?” As you said, the problem is porn – not women (unless of course we are interpreting relationships differently).

“By taking in the second hand stuff, are you feeding your addiction in a less extreme way?”

Again, once we are getting into analogies, second hand smoke still contains the nicotine and other chemicals that damage the lungs and blood vessels. I maintain that talking with women is more like the patch or meds to help one quit smoking – it is a viable harmless alternative.

“It would still behoove you to take a hiatus from such relationships for a period of time while you work to empower yourself to overcome your need for porn without the crutch of female friends.”

Thanks for the suggestion, however that is not feasible for the work that I do. Secondly as I do not see female acquaintances as a crutch, I see no reason to even try to get away.

“I wish you the best of luck and Hatzlocha!!!”

Thanks! That I definitely need. I wish you (and everyone else) the same as well.

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...

Posted by WeWillNotBeForsaken - 10 Apr 2011 23:01

Eye:

“To me, it sounds like this: “I don't need to act out! (Because I am acting out)” So I'm not mas* because I'm looking at p*rn instead, or vice-versa. And, if you're spending lots of time talking with female friends and the thought of s*x doesn't cross your mind, although you have a problem with p*rn and M*st, then, maybe you are deceiving yourself (which happens to be an addict's specialty, second only to deceiving others).”

Does the thought of sex cross my mind? Occasionally. Any more than when I was not talking to girls and sitting in the beis medrash all day? I don't think so. But in any event, it's in a non-realistic-dream-sort-of-way – something that I will never turn into reality. And so for me, as I believe the lowest point I can go right now is masturbation and porn, anything that takes me away from that is actually going up.

And you know what, maybe I am deceiving myself. But if I was I would never know, unless I can be thoroughly convinced of it. Or unless I constantly introspect and think things through to try to ensure that I am actually doing the right thing – otherwise known as *cheshbon hanefesh* – although I doubt I do it in the classical sense. Or unless the wonderful people on this site can convince me otherwise – although if I really am deceiving myself, that would probably be a very hard thing to do. Ahhhhh. The problem with self-deception. Who knows who are the people actually deceiving themselves?

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...

Posted by WeWillNotBeForsaken - 10 Apr 2011 23:02

Guard:

“Rather, it means looking to enjoy.”

I have long learned not to question your methods! However, I would appreciate if you can explain why you think *derech znus* means “looking to enjoy” and not looking with the intent/thoughts to perform prohibited acts?

And I did read what Dov wrote. Thanks.

laagvokeles:

Thanks for responding – however I’m not sure if I completely understand what your thought was. Sorry.

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...
Posted by WeWillNotBeForsaken - 10 Apr 2011 23:18

Perhaps I need to disclose a little more about my history. I am in the medical profession. So what? I have seen hundreds and thousands of naked women. I have performed hundreds and thousands of full physical exams. And not once have I ever had a dirty thought in my mind when performing them. It was “business” and just a task that had to be done in order to treat my patients. From my experiences I have learned that women are not made just for sex and I no longer associate any woman I see with sex. They are regular humans just like us.

What does this have to do with anything? I believe I have the ability (sounds like I’m giving myself a super power! Haha. Or maybe just some more deception?) to look at a woman and not think woman = sex. I can go into a library or bookstore, see the schmutz there and not really be bothered.

Now I think my perspective is great (big surprise), and I don’t think one has to have had my experiences to share that perspective. It just has made it easier for me.

So what is my problem then? I am an addict. I am an addict. I am an addict. At this point in my life I am still an addict to porn and masturbation. And I need the next fix – not because I saw a magazine in a bookstore, but because that’s just what it is – I need to look at porn and masturbate – its who I am, and without it I feel a void. Sure there are triggers, but for me, talking and spending time with a woman is not one of them.

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...
Posted by WeWillNotBeForsaken - 10 Apr 2011 23:19

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Ok, and another small thing... B'H I have made it 7 days!
Re: its been 2 years since I was last here...
Posted by Reb Yid - 10 Apr 2011 23:27

Ok.

I think I got it.

You are saying that your need for porn and self pleasuring do not stem from women. I have never heard of it coming from anywhere else. But as such, I think it would be important for you to figure out what the root of the need/addiction is, so that you can avoid it, and help yourself to stay clean.

For most people on this site, their addiction does stem from women. Seeing them or talking to them or interacting with them has caused triggers and reactions from them. That is why you are getting so much of the same advice that I gave. If however your particular brand of lust addiction stems from elsewhere, then I know that I for one can not offer any solid advice, as I have no experience with that brand of addiction.

I continue to wish you all the best of Hatzlocha, and congratulate you on day 7!!

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...
Posted by WeWillNotBeForsaken - 11 Apr 2011 03:05

My addiction is not "women" - its misuse of my thoughts regarding women (a- I'll probably have to come up with a clearer way of explaining that. b- maybe it is just semantics).

Honestly, I am not here on this forum for advice (although I do appreciate it - weather I accept it or not, it adds to my perspective) - I am here for support and encouragement, which all of you

have been providing. I don't think its really the advice that helps me - its the fact that people going through similar experiences take the time to talk with me about the issue.

thanks

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Re: Its been 2 years since I was last here...

Posted by Dov - 11 Apr 2011 03:19

Dear WWNBF,

I have never yet met anyone who has an addiction to women. If I gave the impression otherwise, I communicated poorly, and it would not be the first time I did that.

So. The problem I and the many hundreds of other guys I am with in SA is LUST. That's it. Whether it is using sex with yourself (what you call masturbation) or using schmutz, the problem as we generally see it is our lust. If you want to understand that so you may gain a better grasp on what bearing that has on the solution, just read the "White Book" from beginning to end. It should take about a week. Pesach would be perfect.

If you insist on calling it something else, that's OK. It may not really matter - rather it all depends on your approach to the solution. That's important. And I also work in health care and have worked with hundreds of women in one capacity or another. What you describe is no chiddush.

Hatzlocha!

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