

Having a Rough Time of it

Posted by musicman - 17 May 2011 17:06

Hello. Thank you for this community. The total amount of zchus and potential for good that this website contains might just be reason enough for the Internet to exist in the first place.

That being said,

My story:

I'm 24 years old, happily married, with a 2-year old son and one on the way (IYH September). Like many here, I started on this sad and lonely road in high school, although I remember being "curious" as early as 4th and 5th grade. It's only been downhill ever since. I'm at the point where I'm giving in almost every day, if not twice a day. I don't justify it in any way, and I never have. I've just always considered the nisayon too string to tackle, and I've been too embarrassed/terrified to reach out. And I'm never happy afterwards. Many times, I'm on the verge of tears.

Here's where my situation becomes interesting. I do IT (computer work) for a living. It has been my passion, my hobby, and my outlet since almost before I can remember. I was fascinated with computers and technology since I was basically a toddler, and I have been lucky enough to make a hobby that I've cultivated since childhood into a very decent living and parnassah. My comfort zone is in front of a computer screen, and I regularly spend 7+ hours/day in front of my dual 22" screens (at work, and my laptop at home). I have a BS in Computer science and I'm working on my masters degree in the same. I am an editor at an esteemed and popular tech news website, and I basically live and breathe computers and technology. I carry two smartphones, and I may be getting a third from work. I have a vast network of close, personal friends, and I don't even know what they look or sound like. As the Internet is my lifeline, my home away from home (and even while I'm at home), I feel very strongly about solving this problem without limiting my access. I know that's a tough sell, and I know filtering is one of the most basic and vital steps to recovery, but I really don't think it's the right way for me. There are other reasons why I shy away from the idea, though.

It's a known fact that you can't cover your traces on computer. being trained in Digital Forensics procedures, I know that more than most. However, the same training allows me to hide things where I'm positive nobody outside of a trained professional will no where to look. I can anonymously bypass most filters, and cover my tracks. The computer nerd inside of me sees a

filter as a puzzle, and bypassing it becomes an end unto itself. In my 8-or-so years of "activity", I've only been caught once, and that was in 10th grade, before I knew what I was doing. But that's not all.

My wife is totally clueless to any of this. She not only has no idea that I'm even dabbling in illicit behaviors, sometimes only a few feet away, but I'm pretty sure she's extremely naive to the idea that this is even a problem for people in general. The topic has come up in conversation with friends/family, and the look of utter disgust and contempt for people in the news caught with illicit materials or behaviors is like a dagger in the chest for me. In my own experiences in my social circles online, I've found that the idea of pornography and acting out is as normal as eating and drinking, just like smoking was 60 years ago. In fact, I know there are sites that specifically discuss the benefits of regular "acting out"!!! (hard to believe, but trust me, it's there) While I'm pretty confident I won't get "caught" by my wife, I do know that should it ever happen, that will be one wound that will take years to heal, if it ever does. For the same obvious reasons, I'm extremely hesitant to come out to her with my problem, especially after hiding for so long. It's not about pride. If losing pride was all it took, I'd be out of this hole in a jiffy. I'm honestly terrified of the consequences of disclosure. I've got a good life right now. It's a busy life, a many times stressful life, but I'm surrounded by good people, I'm able to make a parnassah, and the idea of risking the harmony I've been blessed with is anathema to me. Installing a filter is kind of a "Shtika K'Hodaah" concept for me; it's an admission that there's a problem to my spouse, and I don't think I nor she is ready for that.

I've come a long way in other personal areas in my life over the past 5 years. I went from being a Chronic Fatigue Syndrome-riddled adolescent, quite literally doing nothing for 1.5 years straight, to getting a college degree, making a parnassah, finding a spouse, having children, owning a house, having a productive and meaningful day where I manage to go to Shachris and learn once a day, starting another degree, becoming active in my community, getting in shape, and overall doing a pretty good job of things (if I may say so myself). There have been ups and downs (getting laidoff on my wife's due date was a classic), and as I approach my 25th birthday, I really really want to get this monkey off my back so I can live the next 2.5 decades of my life looking forward at opportunity instead of looking back at my failings.

I understand that trying to progress down the road to recovery without a proper filter is almost pointless, but I feel like I have no choice. There simply has to be way.

After reading a good portion of this forum, I'm confident I've found the right place, and just writing my first post feels like such a huge weight off my chest. I could leave the site right now, and feel like I've already made progress (I won't, don't worry).

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it

Posted by heuni memass - 17 May 2011 17:37

Hey mr music- welcome!

You need to answer the question to yourself and to the ones that you are asking for help. Do you really want to stop this? and how important is it?

Ask yourself real questions- is it just a feeling that i want to change or do you feel you **cannot** continue anymore like this? and if the later, would you be willing to make changes in order to change or do you want to continue life and it should change on its own?

I am not trying to pressure you in anyway- however your post sounds like you dont feel like this is life threatening. Am i wrong?

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it

Posted by Kedusha - 17 May 2011 17:59

Welcome MM!

If a person wants to recover, his attitude needs to be that his recovery is the most important thing, and he will do whatever it takes to achieve it. Having a filter is a relatively minor sacrifice. It's not an admission of anything - there is no one (at least no male), addict or not, who can afford to be without one.

It sounds like things are going relatively well for you in other areas of your life. Halevai it should continue, but isn't now the time to grab the bull by the horns and give yourself a new start, using the many tools that GYE offers?

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by Me3 - 17 May 2011 18:27

Dear MM

In truth many of us can bypass our filter if we try hard enough. So what's the point? The filter is a backup mechanism, for that momentary weakness where we just click, most of the time the "k9 Blocked" screen is enough to bring us back to our senses so that we remember why we put in the filter and we don't attempt to bypass it.

But this only works if we are following some sort of program to help us overcome our lust/porn problem besides for the filter and not relying solely on the filter to keep us clean.

There's really nothing wrong with telling your wife that you are really disturbed by the kind of material that is showing up more and more on so called mainstream websites, and you want to install a filter so you don't even have the temptation to follow the links. It's really your Yetzar Hara (addiction) telling you that your wife will react with contempt and disgust that you should even think you might be tempted. Because she will not react that way, she may think you are being overly cautious (ironically) but that's all.

Wishing you much hatzlacha,

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by alexeliezer - 17 May 2011 18:42

Music, welcome to GYE! Posting here tells me you are ready to put this scourge out of your life. You'll need to do whatever it takes. You can try to do things your way if you can succeed, but know that there is a proven approach which you might need to follow if things unravel (and it includes filters). I hear what you're saying about your issues with filters and I'm not gonna fight you on this. There's plenty of soft-core stuff and other sites that no filters will block that will do

the trick in a pinch. So I'm gonna share something that worked to keep me away from internet pritzus even before I discovered this site (and therefore was still a hopeless addict). But it comes with a warning label. It's downright dangerous in the wrong hands. It's not advice and it's certainly not for everyone. You'll have to decide if it's for you. It's called a vow. I would verbalize a vow not to search for, or intentionally look at untznus images on the internet until _____. I started small, and gradually increased to many months (e.g. "until after sukkos"). Of course, not yet using the Steps, I typically fell soon after the expiration date. Sometimes I even looked forward to the expiration date. But I never broke the vow. It happens that I discovered this site, and started true recovery, during the tenure of such a vow. For the first time (now over 2 years ago) I was able to continue not looking after it expired.

A vow is a very serious thing. Violating it must be out of the question. The beauty of this particular lashon was that it left me an out. If I was truly overwhelmed with my need for porn, I could obtain it the old-fashioned way (in print). I never did. To quote a line from a secular source regarding keeping a vow: "If we don't have our word, what do we have?"

Music, I have a good feeling about you. I know you're going to find your path out of this. Stick with this site. There's so much good going on here.

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by musicman - 17 May 2011 19:30

I understand what some of you are saying regarding the filter. I agree that it's an invaluable tool. However, I have positioned myself in life at a point where it simply isn't something that makes to try.

[Me3 wrote on 17 May 2011 18:27:](#)

There's really nothing wrong with telling your wife that you are really disturbed by the kind of material that is showing up more and more on so called mainstream websites, and you want to install a filter so you don't even have the temptation to follow the links. It's really your Yetzar Hara (addiction) telling you that your wife will react with contempt and disgust that you should even think you might be tempted. Because she will not react that way, she may think you are being overly cautious (ironically) but that's all.

While that's true enough, it wouldn't be truthful. And I'm really bad at lying, even for the best reasons.

[heuni memass wrote on 17 May 2011 17:37:](#)

Ask yourself real questions- is it just a feeling that i want to change or do you feel you **cannot** continue anymore like this? and if the later, would you be willing to make changes in order to change or do you want to continue life and it should change on its own?

I am not trying to pressure you in anyway- however your post sounds like you dont feel like this is life threatening. Am i wrong?

I once heard someone say that people start the road to recovery when they hit the "Ich" phase. When they look at themselves and say "Ich". I think i'm there, but not all the time, and that's everybody's problem really? Do I think it's life threatening? of course not, in a cynical sense. If my life was in danger, i wouldn't be doing this in the first place. And in the thick of things, "spiritual life" unfortunately holds very little sway.

[alexeliezer wrote on 17 May 2011 18:42:](#)

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I have a cynical streak (read: YH) that tends to mock that kind of superficial "spoken" willpower, however much I know that what you're saying is emes. It's definitely something I will try, though.

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by Me3 - 17 May 2011 19:39

You're bad at lying? I think you're underestimating yourself, in fact you're living a freaking lie, buddy.

I'm not willing to try and save myself because that would be lying? How noble of you.

Thanks for the Chizuk.
And why is it a lie anyway? You aren't disturbed by what's out there?

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by heuni memass - 17 May 2011 19:56

As me3 said- living a two sided life is living a lie.

You can listen to shiur about every frum jew must have a filter and you can use the excuse that you heard a shiur about it if thats easier. There will be no lie there.

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by Leiby - 17 May 2011 20:02

Welcome Musicman! You can only begin the path to recovery when realize that you have no other option. If you want to continue on with life and just try to stop acting out it's probably not going to work. Recovery is not just about stopping this particular behavior, recovery is not about using a filter (although it's extremely important); recovery is about changing your entire outlook on life. From your post it seems like you think that you have a great life B"H; you are working, learning, davening etc., but you have this one minor issue that's bogging you down.

I can relate to your fears about your wife's reaction, but let me tell you that there is no greater joy then living guilt free and being able to look my wife in the eye without feeling guilty about the lie that I am living.

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by Kedusha - 17 May 2011 20:45

Welcome, Leiby! You sure are knowledgable, especially for someone who's posting for the first time!

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by musicman - 17 May 2011 22:02

[Me3 wrote on 17 May 2011 19:39:](#)

You're bad at lying? I think you're underestimating yourself, in fact you're living a freaking lie, buddy.

I'm not willing to try and save myself because that would be lying? How noble of you.

And why is it a lie anyway? You aren't disturbed by what's out there?

I think that assessment of my comments may be a little harsh. It may not be a rational fear, and it might be an excuse, but it's simply something I'm not comfortable talking about yet, at least with the person who has the most potential to be hurt by it all. So, I try to avoid it for now.[Leiby wrote on 17 May 2011 20:02:](#)

I can relate to your fears about your wife's reaction, but let me tell you that there is no greater joy than living guilt free and being able to look my wife in the eye without feeling guilty about the lie that I am living.

I know that's ideally how things should go. Ideally, I come clean, things are uncomfortable and awkward for a while, and then things are better. However, I see things differently. I see it as coming clean about murder. Something like that doesn't just go away after a while. That's how I think it will be like. I honestly don't think my wife is capable of processing the fact that I've been doing this for such a long time. That's based on my own perception of our relationship, and previous moments of "full disclosure" on things much more minor than this. In fact, I think it would actually be a selfish thing to do at this point. It would probably help me feel better, but there's a chance I would be doing a lot of irreparable damage to a relationship that doesn't need to happen yet. I guess you just have to be there. Everybody's relationship is different, I guess.

For now, I think I'm gonna start with one day at a time goals, maybe using the "vow" strategy above. This is not going to be easy, but i'm hoping being part of this community will help tremendously.

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by Me3 - 17 May 2011 22:30

The harshness wasn't meant to be personal, I'm often accused of being about as subtle as a sledgehammer.

Nevertheless, when you're reluctance to talk to your wife even about a filter is directly enabling your addiction or ability to fall, you'll have to excuse my skepticism.

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by ben durdayah - 17 May 2011 22:43

[Me3 wrote on 17 May 2011 22:30:](#)

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No you're not -compared to you, a sledgehammer is the epitome of subtlety...

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it

Posted by TheJester - 18 May 2011 10:58

[musicman wrote on 17 May 2011 17:06:](#)

It's a known fact that you can't cover your traces on computer. being trained in Digital Forensics procedures, I know that more than most. However, the same training allows me to hide things where I'm positive nobody outside of a trained professional will no where to look. I can anonymously bypass most filters, and cover my tracks. The computer nerd inside of me sees a filter as a puzzle, and bypassing it becomes an end unto itself. In my 8-or-so years of "activity", I've only been caught once, and that was in 10th grade, before I knew what I was doing. But that's not all.

Assuming the following:

- A filter is not technically strong enough to make an absolute barrier for you
- The filter need only be strong enough to delay you until you "come to your senses" to have some use

I have the following suggestion/s, which may or may not help you, until you can admit that you really could install a proper filter.

Take a photo of your 2-year old son and loving and pure pregnant wife. Make it your background. Take the photo especially for this purpose, and make a silent promise to them not to continue such behavior, and incorporate as much imagery of their love and devotion to you as possible. Make it your background on all devices.

You must surely be able to manipulate the Windows registry to show text of your choice in your titlebar. Pop in the text "Shiviti Hashem LeNegdi Tamid", or something similar of your choice.

Blacklist a range of sites **yourself** - if you are as good as you say, you should be able to find lists of IP addresses ([like this](#)) and block them at the router level - most routers support this, and ones that do not can be hacked with some firmware tinkering.

A further suggestion would be to do it at the DNS level - [Check this out](#). Nobody would know you are effectively (if not literally) filtering. If you are leery of the possibility of being tracked by this service, others exist, or you could set one up yourself (with your keen knowledge of network routing and clever workarounds).

Whilst not as "in your face" as a "proper" filter... these steps could potentially mitigate in those crucial first few seconds. And there's no challenge to beating your own game, really. That's just cheating.

Disclaimer:

There is a world of difference between someone brought up with limited IT knowledge, and someone who lives and breathes technology like a fish does water. I would not recommend these steps instead of a filter to anyone, particularly people who would not even know how to configure a DNS server, or what a "firmware hack on a router" even is. A solution like this needs a high technical capacity, is not subject third-party to checks and controls, and requires occasional manual intervention. It is therefore highly inferior a solution.

I.e. "Don't try this at home, kids" - it ain't a very good alternative unless you're desperate.

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Re: Having a Rough Time of it
Posted by musicman - 18 May 2011 15:36

[TheJester wrote on 18 May 2011 10:58:](#)
Or just install K9

[musicman wrote on 17 May 2011 17:06:](#)

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These are all great ideas. I especially like the titlebar hack. That sounds like a great constant subliminal message to keep you straight. I'll also definitely look into OpenDNS. I don't know if DynDns has similar services (or if they come with the free account), but I already have a DynDns account, so I'll look there too.

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