

New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.

Posted by reconcilingmyself - 27 May 2011 06:27

I am having a strange feeling as I write this... Like so many other attempts to stop acting out, I am filled with optimism... But at the same time, in the back of my mind.... I am thinking... Mah nishtanah... But I am hopeful that I will be able to share my pain and my shame and that maybe I will be able to lean on you to help me be stronger.

I grew up modern orthodox, have an amazing wife and beautiful child, and I love them with all my heart.

I have always struggled with the pull to look at things that poison me, I have seen so many things that I can never unsee, and I am so angry at the way those images and scenes know how to implant themselves in your mind at all of the worst moments.

I have tried to be honest with myself, and fully admit that I have an addiction. I have sought and found wonderful help from therapists. I have admitted my problem in detail to my wife, who is supportive. And have been able to go long stretches without acting out. But I also become lulled into feeling like I have beaten this, and I always fail, which leads me into a spiral whereby I feel so low that I repeat and have to start over as if none of that progress ever happened.

I suppose everyone has their poison, I was always drawn to pornography, would intentionally walk past a strip club or adult store,..... more often than not I would resist, and would let my addiction convince me that I was strong, but I always stumbled eventually, and the climb back from the starting line always seems so daunting that I would let myself just do it once more..... Then I'll be better... Then I'll stay with it.

In hate the pain that I cause my wife, I want to be that Father that my baby sees when she looks at me and tells me she loves me.

That feeling of disconnect between who I am to everyone else, a respected Frum, learned businessman, and this hidden lie of my other side sickens me.

I know I need support, I won't remove this curse unless I can share, but I couldn't bring myself to go to a live meeting, I am just too embarrassed and afraid. I am so hopeful that this community can save me.

A friend of mine jokingly told me to check out "the funniest site"; [Moderator's Note: name of site removed] I will never forgive him.

That site, and another like it, literally caught me like a drug. They anonymously match you . . . with a complete stranger. And unlike "passive pornography" the stranger on the other side is alive. The excitement of someone performing for me, was literally like a drug. It would mostly be perverted men . . . But the possibility that the next click would be a young woman, who would do whatever you asked made me nearly unable to stop clicking. I would click through dozens and dozens of people for the bizarre hope that I would find a pretty girl next. It is/was crazy since this was so rare, and all the other images, which I have no interest in anyway, just passed before my eyes, making me numb to the absolute perversion.... The excitement and expectation would literally make it so that it was physically hard to pull away. I would tell myself that I would never do it again.... It even led to my having HZ on Yom kippur night, such shame and disgust with myself. But somehow.... even when I was going 6+ months clean, I would be alone or sad and I would fall again. these sites, in my eyes have taken a terrible thing to the next level and introduced newer stronger temptation in me.... To such an extent that the previous things that I would have been tempted by seem dull.

I've spent thousands on therapy, and it has helped me realize so much about this disease and how it works, but I have finally come to understand that I won't be able to beat this one day at a time without the strength of friends to help. Therapy is not a permanent solution for integrating abstinence into my life for the long term.

I am grateful, hopeful, and humbled. Please help me, I truly am powerless on my own.

[Moderator's Note: Minor details removed to avoid giving other addicts new ideas].

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by TheJester - 27 May 2011 09:16

Hello and welcome! You most certainly have come to the right place - you will get nothing but *Chizzuk* and support here.

Welcome to our community, you have finally come home!

Once you've arrived, there's no turning back. Everyone here will just grab a hold of you and pull you up with them!

[GYE Program in a Nutshell](#): *(Right Click the link and press "Save Link/Target As" to save the PDF file to your computer).*

'Guard Your Eyes' offers a unique approach to helping people by recognizing that there are many different levels in the struggle for "*Shmiras Ainayim*" and "*Shmiras Habris*". After studying the experience of hundreds of religious strugglers over the past few years, we put together the suggestions and recommendations that we feel are best for the various levels. We divided the tools, features and services that GYE offers into 8 different levels. This "[GYE Program in a Nutshell](#)" can help people quickly identify at what level of the struggle they are at, and which tools and features would help them most at their particular level.

Here are some quick things you can do to help you jump straight into recovery:

1) Make sure to install a strong filter. It will be almost impossible to break free of this while having all the garbage within a mouse click away. See [this page](#) for one good filter option, along with instructions on how to install it best – and give away the password to our "filter Gabai"... See [this page](#) for another 20 (or so) filter ideas and information... We also **highly advise** installing "Reporting Software" such as webchaver.org to give you some accountability, because filters alone are usually not sufficient and they can often be bypassed.

2) Join the [daily Chizuk e-mail lists](#) to get fresh chizuk every day.

3) Scientific studies have shown that it takes 90 days to change a neural thought pattern that was ingrained in the brain through addictive behaviors. Did you join the [90 day chart](#) on-line? Sign up [over here](#).

4) Post away on this forum! You will get tons of daily Chizuk and support. This disease can't be beat alone. It works best when you **get out of isolation!**

5) GuardYourEyes also offers many free anonymous phone conferences where you can join a group of other from Yidden, along with an experienced sponsor. See www.guardyoureyes.org > Tools > Phone Conferences for many different options. Our conferences are taking place every day, morning, noon and night... Joining a phone group would be a tremendous step in the right direction for you and help you learn freedom from this addiction. Not only will you learn the secret of the 12-Steps – which is known to be the world's most powerful program for beating addiction having helped millions world wide, but the daily call will be another way of GETTING OUT OF ISOLATION and connecting with others who are going through what you are.

6) If you need more general guidance, write to our e-mail helpline at gye.help@gmail.com or call our hotline at 646-600-8100.

7) Download and read the "[Guard Your Eyes Handbook](#)". This handbook outlines the GYE approach in detail, and makes our network much more effective and helpful for people. **The handbook has two parts:**

A) The first part, "**Attitude & Perspective**", details 30 basic principles to help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle. Here are some examples: Understanding what we are up against, what it is that Hashem wants from us, how we can use this struggle for tremendous growth, how we can deal with bad thoughts, discovering how to redirect the power of our souls, understanding that every little bit counts, learning how to bounce back up after a fall, and so on and so forth...

The second part, "**The 18 Tools**", detail suggested tools and techniques, in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this addiction, and continuing down through increasingly earnest and powerful methods. No matter what level our addiction may have advanced to, we will be able to find the right tools to break free in this handbook!

May Hashem be with you!

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by the.guard - 27 May 2011 11:30

You are right. Rabbi Abraham Twerski always tells people that even the best therapist can not help addictions without a powerful support group. On GYE you can find such a support group, whether it is virtual, such as on the forums and chatrooms (coming soon), or on the many phone conferences throughout the week, or we can try and refer you to live SA groups...

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Dov - 27 May 2011 14:24

[ReconcilingMyself wrote on 27 May 2011 06:27:](#)

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I would walk past a strip club or adult store - ***more often than not I would resist, and would let my addiction convince me that I was strong, but I always stumbled eventually,*** and the climb back from the starting line always seems so daunting that I would let myself just do it *once* more..... *Then* I'll be better... *Then* I'll stay with it.

I hate the pain that I cause my wife, I want to be that Father that my baby sees when she looks at me and tells me she loves me.

That feeling of disconnect between who I am to everyone else, a respected Frum, learned businessman, and this hidden lie of my other side sickens me.....But somehow.... ***even when I was going 6+ months clean, I would be alone or sad and I would fall again.*** these sites, in my eyes have taken a terrible thing to the next level and introduced newer stronger temptation in me.... To such an extent that ***the previous things that I would have been tempted by seem dull.***

I've spent thousands on therapy, and ***it has helped me realize so much about this disease and how it works, but*** I have finally come to understand that I won't be able to beat this one day at a time without the strength of friends to help. Therapy is not a permanent solution for integrating abstinence into my life for the long term.

I am grateful, hopeful, and ***humbled.*** Please help me, ***I truly am powerless on my own.***

OK, so I love you. I see myself in you so much and know your pain, for it is mine. Yet I am free today if I allow Hashem to make it so. And yet, it doesn't feel like a spooky miracle, because I did and do a lot in order to get out of His way and let myself remain sober one day at a time. So far.

Now, though things are not all perfect and smooth by a long-shot, every single department of my life has been transformed into *better* than what it could possibly have been while I was acting out - and even better than what I ever wished it *could* be. Today, rather than being in invisible chains and plagued by self-disgust and drowning in confusion, I have all the opportunity and all the help I need; a G-d who is *my very own* for a change; a marriage that is imperfect - but 100% real; calm most of the time; and lots of hope. I never had any of those things before - none of them. And I also no longer live with the torture you described that one day my 'loved ones' will eulogize a different guy than the one quietly laying in the coffin...for they could never really *know* me. The whole me, the real me. It was just too dirty, of course. But they'd say a nice *hesped* on the man they *thought* they knew...

The rest in the next post...

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Dov - 27 May 2011 15:59

I highlighted some of the stuff you wrote above in order to make a point that many others never seen to accept, but you seem ready to.

Some folks seem to just love saying, "Once an addict, always an addict." They innocently think that it is a good insurance plan and warn everybody that they must remember that they are doomed.

But I think that's a mistake, and my sponsor was the first to show me that. He told me that we can never say that for others - only for ourselves. If humility is necessary in recovery (which it is), then where do any of us come off making such a pronouncement on *anyone*? Are we suddenly bestowed with godlike knowledge of the disease - or of them? Are we prophets? Doctors? Wise men (or women)? If we feel we are, then I say, "good luck staying sober, brother!" No way. I accept that it is entirely possible for some person out there to be truly healed from this addiction - even if they **are** addicts. Maybe it'll work for them. Surely the 12 steps and meetings do not work for *everybody*!

But as far as I can tell so far, for me, **I will always assume that I am a powerless addict**. I have had so much 'trouble' in my life because of what you described so well: *overconfidence* and wishful thinking. Hashem has given me a good bunch of brains, yet by all appearances when it comes to knowing that I am healthy, I am just plain dumb. Farm-boy dumb. As a result - as a sober person today - I fully accept that no matter how much progress I make, it is truly suicidal for me to assume I no longer need to live by these 12 steps and meet with other addicts as a fellow addict.

[Now, a digression: Let me define what "not needing to live by these 12 steps" means. It means not seeing myself as powerless to [b]use [/b]and **control** and **enjoy** lust - which includes using womens' images, fantasy in my mind, sex fantasy and neediness with my wife, lying about or intentionally hiding or faking *anything* - good or bad, taking credit for my recovery or sobriety rather than seeing it as (an undeserved) daily reprieve granted to me by Hashem Himself, and also no longer needing to see my emotional challenges as lying squarely with *me* and me alone....in other words, I can now blame Hashem and people for my circumstances again.
How pathetic.

As I guess you can see, that would of course be very silly and stupid of me. No longer 'needing'

these things (*by which I was able to remain sober in the first place*) would mean - **for me** - slipping back into a life that *made* me need the nechoma of sweet porn, fantasy, masturbation, strip clubs and other stuff in the first place!

But you may be able to live without any of these things. I have seen so many backslides and so much hubris and stupidity around me in all the others who have failed by the hands of pride, "holiness", overconfidence, that I want no part of it. They are the same ones who still masturbate their heads off but whine about how they need the RMB"M's "Teshuvah gemurah (oso isha, etc.)" to finally, finally be "cured".]

Cured for what, I wonder? For not having to need to struggle any more? For Hashem to *finally really* like us? *Bubkess*. I think that we go halfway because we really want the luxury of feeling we are doing something about our problem - yet keep that 'free pass' (we like to call it 'our) so that we can keep our *really* dirty secrets and keep using them...these guys are almost *never* the ones going to "live meetings". They still protect their dirtiest secrets enough - so they can still act out without too much shame. If they regularly attend and share at the same 'real live' meetings then others there *will know*! How will they still act out and *crawl back*? They feel they are like Rav Shimon bar Yochai going into his cave - but they bring a sandwich along 'just in case'. They *hide* just enough to still protect our precious acting out. And their lust for "teshuvah gemurah" is just that: another lust for something they do not have. It's just *lust*. It has nothing to do with Hashem, at all. Even their *avodas Hashem* is all and only about them and what they get and have and can 'be known as'. How can this lead to sobriety or even to happiness?

I say "they" and "them" - but I know it because **it is me, too!** I took that route for nearly twenty years. I am also that fool! The only reason I have sobriety and have been in recovery these years so far is because I was forced to. I just couldn't take it any more, boruch Hashem. And that itself was a gift from Hashem, it seems. For, as you put it: "mah nishtanah"?

OK. So I bless you - especially if you had the ability to actually read this megillah - to reject any thoughts of being cured. But not because of some 'motto' or dogma - but because you said it *bechirah* yourself about you. Lose all concern with getting healed and instead choose learning one day at a time to honestly and truly live *with* Hashem and *with* his people (all people). You wrote that the connection was missing - this is what recovery is for. Connection (yesod). Thoughts of being 'stronger' are just plain stupid - and in your case, probably dangerous (and certainly *ossur*, if you). And as you wrote, knowledge about the nature of "this disease and how it works" has not worked for you. It does not get us sober. We, like Avraham avinu at the akeida, only change through action. Hashem knew Avraham would do it - but Avraham and Yitchok needed to DO it, and Hashem knew that. We live ourselves into right thinking, not the other way around - trying yet again to think our way out of this just gets us back into the

bathroom masturbating.

Be ever more powerless over using, controlling and enjoying lust. How many times do we need to get thrown off the wild bull before we finally admit we can't ride one? Maybe others can - truly - but not me or you. That's the way I am - **less** powerful over lust *than ever*. Growing more ability to use lust would be the opposite of recovery. In recovery, we need no proof of Hashem's power and of His love for us - we are sober today, and that's enough proof, right there. Yet I can still function normally sexually with my wife - that has nothing necessarily to do with lust (but that's an entirely different topic). And fear of women is just plain silly, too. They are not the problem - your lust is. I interact with Hashem's people appropriately without problems - that's obviously what He wants. Most people in recovery who I know find that hiding from women just makes them even more vulnerable to lusting and deifying women and their power. They are just real people, that's all. Like us. OK, enough already.

Hatzlocha. Stay here and post your brains out. And do what you really feel you need - not halfway. Go and do what you *need*, rather than what you are *comfortable* doing. There is a big difference between doing what your heart tells you is 'right for you', vs doing what you feel comfortable doing. Chuck the fear and go for the gold, man. Don't stop now.

Love,

Dov

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Kedusha - 27 May 2011 16:10

Wow!

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by ur-a-jew - 27 May 2011 16:27

Welcome, as you can see already you've come to the right place. Stick around and you'll grow. Hatzlacha

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Me3 - 27 May 2011 16:32

Dov

The "Once an addict, always an addict" phrase to me is a very simple concept. My brain is conditioned to associate porn with pleasure. So that seeing it or the thought of seeing it makes my pulse quicken, my stomach tighten up, etc. I can't train my brain not to make my body respond that way it's a pavlovian response. I guess in theory if I kept a taser near me and everytime I thought of porn I would zap myself I could change this.

(I'd consider doing this for Kedusha if he's interested, though).

Maybe a couple of sober years down the road my body will not respond and my brain will forget it's conditioned response, who knows?

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Kedusha - 27 May 2011 18:10

[Me3 wrote on 27 May 2011 16:32:](#)

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(I'd consider doing this for Kedusha if he's interested, though).

That's a far better option than slipping or falling!

[Me3 wrote on 27 May 2011 16:32:](#)

Maybe a couple of sober years down the road my body will not respond and my brain will forget it's conditioned response, who knows?

Don't count on it.

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Dov - 27 May 2011 18:35

[Me3 wrote on 27 May 2011 16:32:](#)

Dov

The "Once an addict, always an addict" phrase to me is a very simple concept. My brain is conditioned to associate porn with pleasure. So that seeing it or the thought of seeing it makes my pulse quicken, my stomach tighten up, etc. I can't train my brain not to make my body respond that way it's a pavlovian response. I guess in theory if I kept a taser near me and everytime I thought of porn I would zap myself I could change this.

(I'd consider doing this for Kedusha if he's interested, though).

Maybe a couple of sober years down the road my body will not respond and my brain will forget it's conditioned response, who knows?

100% agreed!! Exactly what i mean, in a practical sense. The rule - as a rule - is lacking and unhealthy for me to pasken on *others* - but for me personally to remember myself *with regards to me* - it is a matter of life and death. For today.

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Me3 - 27 May 2011 18:42

Oh for a second I thought you were agreeing about tasering kedusha.

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by alexeliezer - 27 May 2011 18:56

I can relate completely with your lifelong attraction to pornography. And the internet has certainly taken the excitement (and time wasting) to a whole new level. I'm also fairly confident that almost everyone here became disgusted with living the double life you want to escape for good.

I'm clean over 2 years now, ever since discovering this wonderful site. I credit only Hashem with my continued sobriety. But I certainly play my part. I think my success hinges on a pretty extreme level of shmiras eynayim. I really try not to look at women at all, except for family and when necessary in a professional setting (which is every day, and they're young and good looking). No TV, no movies, no mags, minimal newspaper -- avoiding ads with even a woman's face, no kol isha. (I grew up modern orthodox, and all of this stuff was considered acceptable.) This is my way of remembering frequently that I am an addict and therefore at great risk for cracking the glass floor of sobriety I walk on.

Welcome to our world-changing community!

There's no turning back this time. YOU WILL SUCCEED!! :D

Alex

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Dov - 27 May 2011 19:01

That was a very thoughtful and beautiful post from alexieliezer.

As far as tazering Kedusha, we'll have to discuss that privately....

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Kedusha - 27 May 2011 19:45

What does everyone have against Kedusha? Isn't that a wonderful thing to strive for?

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Re: New Here.... I Deeply Want To Be The Version Of Myself That Everyone Else Sees.
Posted by Serene smile - 30 May 2011 02:29

For whatever benefit it may be, I just read the story that started this thread: I was also D*O*W*N from the lust for immorality! ON THE BOTTOM. BH that's not the case today, and like you wish

that your children will see a REAL you, my experience is that if you REALLY do want it that way, then there is absolutley no doubt you will get it that way.. With friends Hashem and time you will no doubt succeed... :-)

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