

New to the site- when is it an addiction?

Posted by Sagewannabe3 - 03 Aug 2011 02:03

Firstly,

I'd like to introduce myself to the group. I never really considered myself as having much of an issue, although I think that might be completely subjective (as I mention below) I REALLY hope that through this forum, group and with Hashem's help I'll get rid of these bad habits!

I've visited this site numerous times and find it very helpful. I had a couple of thoughts/questions I wanted to throw out there.

I didn't grow up all that religious so I had exposed myself to a lot prior to becoming frum. What's considered a fall? Is it completely subjective? For one person his struggle might be a daily struggle of shmiras habris while for someone else it might be a once a week struggle of shmiras anayim on the street?

Are those both considered struggles? Are they just equal but different?

At what point does a person say, "I have a real addiction that I need to address"? or "I'm a healthy man with a yezter hara and of course my yezter hara wants to me to look around when I'm walking in the hot summer, but perhaps its not an addiction"? Just some thoughts I wanted to share and throw out... Perhaps you have some ideas to share.

Also, what is the goal with this behavior? To get rid of the habits? Or get rid of the desire? e.g. - if someone is "successful" on this site - do they no longer have daily struggles? or are their daily struggles the same, but they just dont fall prey?

Thanks to all, and wish me luck!

Sagewannabe3

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?

Posted by ninetydays - 03 Aug 2011 03:11

Hi Sagewannabe3 -

It is good you are coming to this site. From your questions it sounds like you view viewing porn and masturbating very differently than myself and many others.

To answer your question let me put it like this.

Say someone likes to gamble. He has blown all his money and has borrowed thousands of dollars to gamble it away. Would you ask the question what is considered gambling for him? Can he go to a casino but not play poker? Can he play slot machines but not above \$5? I guess you would agree that since he has the addiction he needs to keep away from anything relating to gambling to stay healthy. The same is true for alcohol and drugs.

We are all (if we are straight and healthy) predisposed and born with a desire for women. In a way we are all born addicted to them. Does it make sense to look at an immodest women and take it no further? That is tantamount to a alcoholic taking one drink of vodka before putting the bottle away. Inevitably his predisposition will get him to drink more and more and more.

Same with women. The first glance if not treated immediately will get us to look again and at worse pictures etc etc.

What is considered a fall? While it is wrong to look at pictures and videos a fall occurs when one actually masturbates. This can be a bit misleading because gazing upon a women in its own right is a fall. But you are not off the cliff that you need to climb back from until your actually masturbate.

But the most important thing to know is that all looking is wrong. Don't think it is ok until a certain

point. It is not.

And finally welcome to GYE. Please post and partake in what GYE has to offer.

Best!

ninety

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?

Posted by 1daat - 03 Aug 2011 05:37

Welcome 90! These are great questions. Soon someone will send you the "Official Welcome Package". These questions are talked about in the GYE Handbooks. So I'll leave you to them

Summer is here, and for all of us that brings Shmiras Eynaim to another level (or not). Up till summertime it hasn't been that difficult. In the last few days I noticed something. When I see something pritzus, too much of this, too little of that, even if I don't take the second look, I notice a rush in my chest that's way too familiar. So to answer your question for myself only, yes, the desire hasn't gone away. In fact, the longer I'm clean, the more reactive I seem to be becoming--It takes less to trigger me, and the trigger feeling is more intense than when I was indulging all the time. It's sort of like I've been off sugar for a couple weeks, and even slightly sweet things taste very sweet to me.

Moving on...So I get triggered, and I don't look again, and I do what works for me to get back to peaceful. Now, some time in the next couple days, what I saw comes flashing back into my head. The yetzer is a genius. And there's the rush again. And it's only a memory. An imaginary image of something I saw, for an instant, and held onto for days. You want to know if looking can be a problem? I can't say for you. Only for me. Yes!

I read in Tanya a discussion about how even for a beinoni, a very high Yid, that improper thoughts come even during davening, even when (or especially when) kavannah is strong.

Much success.

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?
Posted by ben durdayah - 03 Aug 2011 06:45

Hi Sagewannabe!

To gauge if you are an addict or not and what level of addiction you may or may not have, it is helpful to consult "The GYE Program in a Nutshell" (link below) where the various levels are outlined.

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!

Eli ben Durdayah

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?

Posted by YMG - 03 Aug 2011 12:42

Hi Sagewannabe3, and welcome to the forum!

The reason you're getting different responses to your question is because there has never been any way to put this to the litmus test.

Basically - what I mean to say, is that despite all the cute "checklists tests", there's no way for anyone to take any data and actually say "if x then y".

Therefore I conclude that all diagnoses remain *subjective* - as they're only based on personal experiences - and *everyone has a different point* at when *they'll* consider it addiction.

That's why you can get different answers...

So since this is down to *opinion*, here's mine:

I think it's an addiction only at the point where you start saying, feeling, and believing it's an addiction.

We're sometimes self fulfilling prophecies - and when we tell ourselves that we have no control over our lusting, it's my belief that *that's* the point where we relinquish our control, becoming an addict.

For me, a lot of my having recovered from addiction has to do with the fact that I stopped saying, feeling, and believing it.

That's my experience, and I hope it helps...

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?

Posted by the.guard - 03 Aug 2011 18:34

There are many levels of addiction, and many different types of advice for the different levels. That's why we created the "GYE in a nutshell" that someone posted a link to above, in the welcoming post.

As far as the 12-Step program goes, an "addict" as defined by AA standards is someone who

(1) knows he **must** stop (2) but he **can't**.

So... someone who knows he **must** stop and he **does** stop, is not an addict.

And... someone who doesn't feel he **must** stop and he indeed continues acting out, is also not an addict.

Only someone who knows he must stop or he's **finished** - and yet he can't stop no matter what he tries, such a person is a real "addict" who is "powerless" and he is ready for step 1 of the 12 steps.

Somehow, the 12-Step program seems to work best for such people.

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?
Posted by struggler - 04 Aug 2011 01:14

I think the frequency of use needs to be factored whether one is considered an addict. One needs to consider both from religious prospective and general /secular prospective.

There are more learned people on this site, but from what I know from religious prospective things are very clear, spilling seed even one time is an issur Toratah & punishable by kores. Just looking at the women lustfully is issur Rabban. However, I am unsure where it's in Gemora, but it talks about the fact that Sahndrin made it so that lust for avoda zora went away & it did. Then they tried the same things for sexual things & world stopped functioning, so they restore it. So having desire for women are not a problem, so one must try to avoid looking at the women lustfully and no masturbation.

From general /secular prospective, I doubt that non-frum therapist would say occasional looking at porn / masturbation would be a problem / addiction. I cannot find now, but same where on this site there is a webpage that list of different levels of addictions (frequency of use) & tips on how best to approaches to help oneself to try to resolve them.

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?
Posted by Dov - 04 Aug 2011 01:33

If you know inside that you can relate to a gambling addict who frets away all his money and goes in to debt for what he is not even sure (how did I mess up again!?)...if you know you can relate well to the alcoholic who wakes up to discover again that he drank too much last night and got tricked by alcohol yet again.....if you know you can relate to the drug addict who feels absolutely sure that he simply *needs* to have his fix....then why not say you are an addict?

Another way to know you are an addict: if you follow in the footsteps of other addicts for about a year and it really *works* for you...then you *know* you are an addict.

But if you just find yourself looking at porn and masturbating sometimes, or even worse than that, but know that you can stop (for six months or so) without a miracle or help from another person....in other words **you find that you can succeed yourself if you simply try hard enough, then you are *not* an addict.**

What's the truth about you?

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 04 Aug 2011 02:50

[struggler wrote on 04 Aug 2011 01:14:](#)

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Just to set the record straight, MZ'L is not an Issur Kores, but Misa B'yedei Shomayim (a little less severe but still up there with the big ones).

As far as the gemora you mention, it concludes that they were compelled to release the Yetzer Hora for Arayos, but they "blinded its eyes". This is explained that they removed the YH for incest, which till today is not as prevalent as most other forms of lust.

Gevura!

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?
Posted by Dov - 04 Aug 2011 03:19

Specifically to what Struggler posted for us, here is some feedback some may need to hear:

Whether it is an issur Torah or not is completely irrelevant to addiction and recovery as I and others I know experience it. If it is punishable by kareis or misah bidei Shomayim, or just malkos....if you know that, do you stop? You do? Great! If you do not, then we need to consider an addiction and a totally different derech aliyah.

No matter how frum and ehrlich we hold ourselves to be, we usually do not see habitual porners actually learn how to stop until their behavior affects them right here and now.

As Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai blessed his talmidim (and they were tanno'im, mind you): "Halevai you should act as though Hashem was like a *person* seeing you." He explained to the disappointed talmidim that in a practical behavioral sense, they really do *not* have the degree of emunah they *think* they do.

Same with us frummies who learn with mesiras nefesh or are just decent frum guys....and then are on the bathroom floor masturbating to the sweet porn images of shikshas in our brains as though they were goddesses. We are messed up.

And the goyim who do that are just as messed up, if they are doing it habitually, too. If we are hiding this behavior, it is to protect our ability to keep doing it - it is precious to us. So we do it with 'tzniyus'. Goyim, Yidden, frum, frei, married to yiddishe women or married to shikshas R"l....all the same in this particular point of powerlessness - and the refu'ah is *exactly* the same.

Not powerless? Then open up a Yesod Yosef, read of all the punishments, and see if you stop for a year and progressively feel free of it. If you do, great! That is the way it is 'supposed' to work. But not for addicts. We are sick.

There is no mitzvah or ma'aylo to saying "I am a sick and powerless addict" unless it is 100% true. And the only way to know is by trial and error. Try to stop. If you can't (even though you see misah bidei Shomayim coming), then you can't. You are an addict. It's just the way it is if that's the way it is. No arguing or hashkofah is needed here.

There is a way out. In fact, there are probably many ways out. But doing the same thing (getting frumer and listing off the lavim and pur'anijos) is not it...that was actually how we *became* this way! The obsession of an addict feeds of guilt and fear and G-d-pleasing. As though he were a tyrant making deals with us. That's not the Torah.

If one *is* addictively repeating this behavior, then it is destructive and they will eventually need to stop. It matters not if they are drinking alcohol, having sex with themselves (masturbating), gambling, or obsessing about their emotions. If it makes their lives unmanageable, then the first step applies. And then they probably need the second step, etc.

This is why it does not matter in the least whether a frum guy who is a sex or lust addict learns the program of recovery from a yid or from a goy. It is totally irrelevant because the issue is not 'zera levatola', but being out of control and ruled by obsessions of the mind and allergies of the body.

My peace, thanks.

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?

Posted by struggler - 05 Aug 2011 00:26

[dov wrote on 04 Aug 2011 03:19:](#)

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And the goyim who do that are just as messed up, if they are doing it habitually, too. If we are hiding this behavior, it is to protect our ability to keep doing it - it is precious to us. So we do it with 'tzniyus'. Goyim, Yidden, frum, frei, married to yiddishe women or married to shiksas R"l....all the same in this particular point of powerlessness - and the refu'ah is *exactly* the same.

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There is no mitzvah or ma'ayloah to saying "I am a sick and powerless addict" unless it is 100% true. And the only way to know is by trial and error. Try to stop. If you can't (even though you see misah bidei Shomayim coming), then you can't. You are an addict. It's just the way it is if that's the way it is. No arguing or hashkofah is needed here.

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This is why it does not matter in the least whether a frum guy who is a sex or lust addict learns the program of recovery from a yid or from a goy. It is totally irrelevant because the issue is not 'zera levatola', but being out of control and ruled by obsessions of the mind and allergies of the body.

My peace, thanks.

To respond to Dov, my post was to response to questions from Sagewannabe3 regarding at what point does it become an addiction & what point one could say "successful" in conquering lust. The point I was trying to make, from what I know, for a frum yid "success", when it comes to lust, would be try to avoid looking at the women lustfully and no masturbation & while engaging these behaviors periodically only is a religious problem non addiction. This different from gambling & drinking which some people have brought up earlier. Where occasional engagement in these activities would not be a religious nor addiction issue, but porn & masturbation would be a religious issue. On other hand, another point I was trying to make is that have desires for women on itself is not bad & natural thing. However for all three common addictive behaviors, I think, at least what Wikipedia states, to be considered "medically" addicted one must engage in these behaviors to the extent that they experience negative consequences (which means they cannot stop, because "normal" person would not be engaged in behavior that causes self harm). Of course once one at that point, one needs to be 12 stepping / trucking he is pass the the point what Torah has to say. That was my 5 cents, the punishments were side point & I am unsure what does level of observance and shikshas has to do with anything.

Have a good shabbos!

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?
Posted by Dov - 05 Aug 2011 00:46

Wow, Struggler, that was a geshmakeh tour de force and you said it much more clearly than I could have. Thanks. I wish I got to know you better!

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?
Posted by obormottel - 17 Aug 2011 00:54

[YMG wrote on 03 Aug 2011 12:42:](#)

We're sometimes self fulfilling prophecies - and when we tell ourselves that we have no control over our lusting, it's my belief that *that's* the point where we relinquish our control, becoming an addict.

For me, a lot of my having recovered from addiction has to do with the fact that I stopped saying, feeling, and believing it.

I left shul after davening today in high spirits; i've been clean for almost two weeks now. I said to myself: "Life's great. I'm in control!" And I had to immediately check myself. Me being in control got me to the dark place I have been until now. Hashem is in control. And that is why life's great.

YMG, I just followed your link to this thread from "kids who like jelly beans"
www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=4162.45

This is supposed to be a friendly forum, but I can't help but say: "You're such a pompous a**!" Either you never really been addicted, just self-indulgent, and therefore Tanya p. 14 had a positive, reforming effect on you; or you're still sick like all other addicts and your 200+ day clean streak will come to a crushing halt (R"L) because you never fixed the attitudes that made you lust in the first place.

Then, *suddenly* - I got control!
Just my uneducated, layman's opinion.

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?
Posted by the.guard - 17 Aug 2011 12:12

There's a reason we locked his thread.

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Re: New to the site- when is it an addiction?

Posted by obormottel - 17 Aug 2011 19:12

It has been brought to my attention that I used language that is unacceptable on this forum.

I would like to appologize to all the fine gentlemen of this chevra kadisho for doing that. In the future, I will do my best to bite my tongue before it bites me.

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