

The first step is the hardest.

Posted by longbeach - 21 Aug 2011 18:48

I go on the internet and look at things I know I should not be looking at.

All it takes is one tiny slip and WHOOSH, down the slide I go. For hours on end.

Where does this come from? When and how did these thoughts and desires originate?

More importantly, I have to ask myself, "What am I looking for in there?" I would never participate in these activities, I would be too ashamed...

When I was younger I had one goal, inspired by my rebbe, may he rest in peace, to be an "eved Hashem." It burned inside me, it gave me purpose, it fired my prayers and pushed me along in learning.

Then life happened. Among other things, I married the wrong woman.

How do I know?

She renegged on important agreements we made before we were married, but I tried to "be a good husband," maintain "shalom bayis," etc...but in time I came to realize everything was about her...and her needs and wants.

Soon we had a family, but even the childrens' needs and wants had to fall into her definition of what "she wanted them to want." She undermined my attempts to learn, so I left the yeshivah. I acquired a great chevrusa, for one on one learning, but soon we "could only learned at my house." In time that fell apart. So I listened to shiurim at home...I became more and more isolated. When things did not go "her way" she became distant; until she needed something. I kept telling myself things would get better.

Nothing was ever her fault.

My marriage ended, on the advice of my Rav, who told me things would NOT get better, but I should wait until after the kids got older. So I waited. It was a very lonely time. She has her get, and the civil divorce is in the works. Now the older children, with whom I am in contact all the time, do not even speak to her. The younger ones openly express their negative feelings toward her. Everyone is in therapy, but her.

Am I blaming her?

Yes, at least partly.

Is it fair to?

No, she was a factor, but I must acknowledge that I am responsible for my own choices

and decisions

and actions.

But I still do not know how I ended up coming down THIS path. (I am sure my isolation is a factor, and I am struggling to overcome behaviors that contribute to it.) It is a path full of emptiness and lies, it denies the awe and grandeur of my Creator and his Torah, it belies everything I believe in and hold true. The hypocrisy of "my secret" and time wasted are eating away at my soul, my life, my ability to communicate with the G-d of Israel who has been so good to me in so many OTHER ways.

I guess I just substituted one addictive ESCAPE behavior (the internet) for another (drugs or

alcohol). The effect, as described by Rabbi Twersky, is the same. You escape for a while, but when you get back, nothing has gotten better and, frequently things are worse.

I am looking at the TaPHSic method, and plan to start my 90 day calendar this week, in the hope of starting a new year in the middle of my climb out of this pit. I fear falling because I have fallen and fallen and fallen again and again...

I hope the TaPHSic method works, and I am trying to come up with workable "before I fall" strategies and , G-d forbid, "after I have fallen" strategies that are realistic and work for me.

It is amazing to read how many of the ideas here apply to me, the regret, the decision, afterward to never do it again, the stumbling.

It is wonderful to read about the successes, small and large, and to know that the 12 Steps work for so many people.

I am scared, yet hopeful.

G-d, give me, and everyone who needs it, the strength.

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by Yesod Tzadik - 21 Aug 2011 19:00

Firstly let me give you the official GYE welcome pack.

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!

We're all in the same boat here, *Tzuras Rabim Chatzi Nechama*
[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: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 22 Aug 2011 05:12

Welcome aboard, I feel for you and I hope you will find the methods and tools that will work for you and help you climb up.

Aleh V'Hatzlach!

Gevura!

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by gibbor120 - 22 Aug 2011 14:12

WELCOME! As they say, the only direction to go from here is UP!

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by heuni memass - 22 Aug 2011 14:31

Long Beach Welcome,

First of all - by now I am sure you know you are not alone in this struggle. Your story is in no way a easy one. To say I understand what you are and went through I cannot. But one thing I can tell you -there is a way out. You do not need to stay stuck in this forever! we all come with a different story but the effects are very much the same.

With that said- Please look at the hand book follow advice.. and most of all stay connected.. Post away your struggles do not keep it "a secret" As the saying goes- **we are only as bad as our secrets.**

All your resentments and what you are dealing with is in no way a easy one. If I may suggest

you read the book called "garden of emuna" I am not a book fan at all, however, In your situation(and most of us that come with a story) I think there is no other way out other then learning how to deal with your other issues side by side. To try to overcome a addiction while bathing in resentments.... it will only double it or make it totally impossible. The 12 steps is a great way to learn how to cope with hardships in life as well along side the issue of addiction because it all works hand in hand..

Once again- your at the point of no return now - hop right on and Jump right in.. chose your truck that you would like to ride in.. And start trucking.

It seems to me that you do talk to hashem in a close relationship manner.. Keep it up -he does listen and is listening to everything..

In admiration- hm

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by longbeach - 24 Aug 2011 02:44

Just checking in on Day 3...marking my calendar and committing myself to posting here as the first step in any times that I am tempted to go awry.

Several years ago I tried to "rely" on a very close friend to help me with this issue, not telling him what I was doing on the internet but telling him I was wasting a great deal of time on line (which was true) but not telling him the whole story. I asked him if I could just report to him every day and tell him how long I spent on the net (between us GYE members I was going to include both more legitamate time spent and much more problematic time spent in the total). I did not reveal anything of what I was doing but just asked him if I could report in and tell him how much time I spent each day, in the hope it would help me "cut back." I felt that if I had to be honest with him about the total time ((but not the content); and that was the commitment I had planned to make with myself, to be totally honest with him about the time,) it would help me curb my urges to go where I should not have.

Sadly he responded that he did not feel he wanted that responsibility, that kind of "duty" as a

friend. (I dread to think of how he would feel today to find out not only what I was doing but that the request I made would possibly have made such a great difference in my life...). Of course, I cannot be sure it would have made a difference, but I always look back on that conversation and wonder.

I am telling you all this because I feel very strongly that just being able to proclaim my number of days and my thoughts to SOMEONE will make a big difference. Also, I want to be able to discuss, or at least confess my "slips" and falls (chas v'shalom) because in relating them I will both have to reflect upon them and ADMIT them to someone.

I hope that the Ribbono Shel 'Olam will give me the strength and courage to log on and express my thoughts and feelings on the board when I am tempted.

I really feel that a great deal of my internet wanderings were in response to my feelings of isolation and disappointment in my situation and that, in some very shallow way, I was looking for some kind of "relationship" or "connection," despite the false nature and hollow facade on which they would have been built. Just knowing I can post and share my feelings and thoughts gives me chizuk because I now feel that someone is there to help, support, and hear me. I feel so much less isolated, despite the anonymity of the forum.

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by 1daat - 25 Aug 2011 01:12

Well I CAN relate. Relationship where there are no apologies, marathon shmutz sessions.

But I think maybe we are alike in another important way. Speaking for myself, I have always looked for the answers to the "why" and "how" questions. I even became a therapist thinking if only I could figure this out, I'd be able to stop, to control it. If only I understood myself more deeply. After decades of personal therapy, there I was, every night, fallen into the dream of what the computer promised. Nothing helped.

Then I found this site, "somehow" (B"H). I stopped with the questions. The questions kept me in the problem, not in the solution. I started posting, asking, getting a filter, doing the handbook, started watching the eyes. And slowly slowly things changed. 180.

hatzlocho my friend

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by longbeach - 26 Aug 2011 01:12

I think you have a good point. What do they say, work the program and the program works...?

As I said, though, I really feel that just having somewhere to call out, reflect, feel that someone listens and cares makes a huge difference for me. Just the idea that I will have to come here and come clean and leyt others down gives me a certain strength that I can tap into..

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by Yossi.L. - 26 Aug 2011 01:17

From both your posts you seem regretful of "what couldve been"> Dont think about what couldve been, think about what a wonderful future you are sarting out towards. Be proud of yourself that you have the courage to post

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by heuni memass - 07 Sep 2011 20:39

longbeach hows it going?

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by longbeach - 16 Oct 2011 04:11

...been out of touch for a while...stumbled and fell...trying to talk my way back in..Yomim
Norayim, and all that...

...teshuvah, does it work if you think you want to succeed but really feel you will fail?

How does that fit in?

And then, when you fail and look at yourself in the mirror, what do you say?

"Better luck, next year, Reb Yid!"

Is that what it is about?

Where has my d'veikus gone? Will it ever come back? What went first, I wonder? Did the lack
of deveikus allow me to go astray or did going astray lose me my sense of d'veikus?

Did I try to take oo many steps too soon? Or do I just need to give it time and patience....

Not too sure right now, in the "ashes of defeat."

...whatever that means...

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by Holy Yid - 16 Oct 2011 07:38

I welcome you back. It hard to come back after being a way for a while. you made a big move.

I wish I could offer some advice but I do not know much about what is going on in your life.

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by longbeach - 16 Oct 2011 13:21

Holy Yid:

Thanks for the response.

Unfortunately there is a great deal going on in my life that I am unhappy about. One thing I did realize last night after posting, though, was that I am isolating myself more and more and making all kinds of excuses to do so. I had told a friend I was not going to a succah gathering because there was someone (one person) there I particularly do not want to see. However, I now am now thinking that by not going, I am empowering THAT person in my life.

Here is what I am thinking right now:

1) He is not zocheh to have that much power in my life..he wronged me, I did not wrong him. This is true about many of the people I avoid. Most of the time, as far as I know, I am pretty good about approaching the people I have wronged and apologizing. I have a lot of difficulty dealing with people who deny their own culpability, not only when I am involved but also when people I care about are involved.

2) The last thing I need right now is to become *more* withdrawn and isolated. I see that as a big issue in what is going on in my life. I have withdrawn for too long from too many people and

events, often to keep myself away from a *few* people I do not want to deal with, but then end up feeling alone and isolated, and those are the times I am most likely to log on and "escape" into the internet. As a result I also have missed out on seeing people I want to see. (These are the people I need to see, to stay "human" and connected and offline.)

3) A vague new thought is arising right now...if I cannot deal with other people's imperfections how can I deal with my own, and vice versa? If I cannot face them, how can I face myself? I "know" I am not perfect, but perhaps I need to deal with imperfection and accept it in everyone, as part of honestly accepting it and dealing with it in myself . I do not yet know where I am going with that, but I will continue to look at it.

Perhaps what is happening at some level is that I am so disappointed in myself that I am allowing myself to give up (just as I have given up on others) because somewhere deep inside I do not feel I am worth the effort to "save" because I have "failed." Just as I have come to feel that certain other people are not worth my effort because *they* have failed to live up to my expectations. I avoid them and I avoid dealing with my own issues as well. Time to mull it over...

Anyway, it is good to be back...I really ned to be here.

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by Holy Yid - 16 Oct 2011 16:49

I am impressed you are so self aware.

I think you know what can help you, being more social.

I encourage you to call up an old friend today and maybe even find a social event to go to.

Please tell us how it goes.

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Re: The first step is the hardest.

Posted by Yossi.L. - 16 Oct 2011 20:02

I think number 3) in your list really sums it up. If you focus there then it'll probably lead you to the other...

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