

My nisayon

Posted by mynisayon - 18 Oct 2011 03:09

hi. I just wanted to introduce myself and tell a bit of my story. I'm a married guy with kids k'nh and I have been struggling with this stuff since I was 12. The past 5-6 years have really been more of a challenge. Prior to that period, I would fall but I could always get myself out of it and be clean for months and even years. I started masturbating before I even knew what it was. Over time I was able to really stop and I felt a tremendous connection with Hashem. Somehow I always felt that dealing with tayva was my avoda. So when things were going well I felt that connection and when things weren't going well I felt like I was waiting for lightning bolt to strike. Over time i've learned not beat myself up too much when the falls happen, but i still feel like garbage. B'h until about 5 years ago things were pretty much under control but now I feel like I don't know where to turn. I want my special relationship with Hashem back. I know reading this u r thinking. Get a filter, start the 12 step program and u'll be fine. But there is something else. I do have a special nisayon. My issues are with same sex attraction (SSA). Since I was 12 my interests were guys with only a very little attraction to girls. In yeshiva it was torture and I fell at times but it was under control. I never wanted admit that I might be gay and I convinced myself that if I got married it would be fine. Well I was young and maybe not that smart. I have a wonderful family that I love very much but it did nothing to solve the issue. For the past many years I have struggled with this alone. My wife or for that matter anyone else knows nothing. Coming clean in this forum is a first for me. I can't begin to tell you how difficult it is harboring a secret like this. Everyone thinks they know the true me. I learn, I am respected but no one even my own family knows nothing about my issue. Its an awful feeling. At this point I couldn't bring it up to my wife, it would cause too much pain so I try dealing with this alone. My connection to Hashem is most important to me. Without that connection I could never have happiness and that's what keeps me going.

Ok so those reading this may still wonder why ssa lust is any different than any other lust. In my case at least its very different and those who suffer from ssa may get it, but those who don't may not. Let me explain. I have two types of triggers. One is seeing things or thinking things that will trigger me. That's no different that a regular guy who sees an attractive girl in the street. The way to deal with that is shmiyras enayim and gedarim. In the past when i was younger that was the primary trigger and I used these methods to keep it at bay. But in my the last five years as I was in my mid thirties approaching 40 the other trigger became the primary trigger. These triggers are emotional triggers. The feeling of being alone is a trigger. The feeling of not being able to be myself is a trigger. I feel like i'm an actor starring in my own movie. The feeling of knowing as i get older that I will never satisfy my desires is a trigger. The not being able to fully accept my situation is a huge trigger. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed and that feeling leads to porn and masturbation. Of course then I feel disconnected and the cycle starts again. To better understand, picture a normal guy being told he could never be with his wife again. I think his reaction may be the same.

I can't seem to be able to get beyond these "emotional" triggers. These triggers are voids and

unfortunately with these voids comes pain. If there are any ssa guys who have successfully dealt with this, please let me know how. That said I need to clean up my act. I'm hoping by being open about whats going on it will somehow help. On yom kippur I resolved to get beyond it. I sometimes wonder how things would have turned out had I not had ssa. honestly I don't think I would have a porn issue by who knows. Does that mean i'm an addict? I'm not sure. Well that's my story. I'll do my best dealing with my situation

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Re: My nisayon
Posted by Serene smile - 18 Oct 2011 18:33

Welcome here!

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Re: My nisayon
Posted by kidushashem - 18 Oct 2011 22:55

Welcome!

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This is *the* place to be.

B'Hatzlacha!

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Re: My nisayon
Posted by 5shekvow - 19 Oct 2011 06:54

90 day journey and music? music helps me so much. i go out and only listen to music when im out. not hip hop and rap, but justgood old music.

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by alexeliezer - 24 Oct 2011 18:48

OurNisayon,

A belated welcome to the forum! Good to have such a choshiva guy with us for the ride. You are very impressive. Despite this lifelong struggle, you have managed to live as you know you should. You work on your relationship with HKB"H and connect. You are in a heterosexual marriage and are a father.

And you're fighting the fierce mental battle so many of us struggle daily with. Suffering silently. Feeling alone even though surrounded by loving family and community. Because they don't understand you or even really know you. Because you dream of something you can't have. And as you get older and resemble more a middle-aged man than a boy, you're coming to the realization that you will never have your desires and fantasies fulfilled. And so you turn to that great, counterfeit, comfort -- fantasy, P and M. Where everything is as I want it, and I can have whatever I want. If only for a few intense moments. If only in my mind.

If only it were real.

You're at a crossroads. A reality check has taken hold. This is good. But you feel empty. What to *do*?

You're right -- do get a filter and start working the steps. You can find them on the GYE homepage -- mouse over materials and click on 12 steps. Commit to letting go of lust. I think where SSA guys have more trouble is that you're more emotionally invested in your fantasies to the point where they are perceived as unfulfilled *needs*. Stop giving them so much respect. At this point, they're nothing but a hindrance to true happiness, true living, true connection with your wife.

You have ingrained your lust for young men upon your mind with repeated fantasy/masturbation to the point where it's all just one big need. Make no further mistake. It's lust. It's not you. It's not a need. It's an addiction. Treat it like one. Daven a lot about it. In every shmona esrei. Keep in touch with us here. We'll try to keep you grounded in reality.

It's just lust. You can beat it. Avoid being alone. Avoid boredom. Set a weekly date night to connect with your wife. Shower her and your children with love.

Commit to giving up lust forever. But take it one nisayon at a time. That's all we're ever asked to do.

I'll shut up now and see where you are.

Alex

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by gibbor120 - 24 Oct 2011 19:03

WELCOME! There are a number of guys here with SSA. Our nisyonos are different but also the same. Stick around and grow with us.

Here is the official welcome.

Welcome to our community, you have finally come home!

GuardYourEyes (GYE) is a vibrant network and fellowship of Jews of all affiliations, struggling to purify themselves and break free of lust related behaviors. For the first time, there is somewhere to turn to for help in these areas. We're all in the same boat here. *Tzuras Rabim Chatzi*. Once you've arrived, there's no turning back. Everyone here will just grab a hold of

you and pull you up with them!

In the last couple of years, the GYE network has helped roughly 1,000 Jews get back on a path of sanity, self-control and healing and has touched the lives of thousands more. GYE has become known throughout the Jewish world as the number one address for dealing with these challenges which have reached epidemic proportions.

The tools of our recovery program were developed with guidance from the best experts in the field, such as Rabbi Dr. Avraham J. Twerski, and through the personal experience of hundreds of Jews who successfully broke free. We use a unique approach that recognizes that there are many different levels in these struggles.

Our network is comprised of a website, a pulsating forum, phone conferences, daily Chizuk e-mails, support hotlines, therapists, live 12-Step groups and a program of recovery for all levels of this struggle/addiction.

All our work is free of charge and we zealously protect the complete anonymity of all our members.

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

1) See the "[GYE Program in a Nutshell](#)" (*Right Click the link and press "Save Link/Target As" to save the PDF file to your computer*) that can help you quickly identify at what level of the struggle you are at, and which tools and features would help you most at your particular level.

2) Install a strong filter (see [this page](#) for more info). It is hard to break free of this while having all the garbage within a mouse click away. The filter gabai at filter.gye@gmail.com will hold the passwords for you. We also highly advise installing "Reporting Software" such as webchaver.org to give you some accountability.

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

4) Join the [90 Day Challenge](#). Scientific studies have shown that it takes 90 days to change the neuron pathways created by addictive behaviors in the brain.

5) Post away on this forum, where hundreds of yidden like you exchange chizuk and post logs of their journey to recovery. You will internalize that you are not alone, and you will learn the techniques and attitude that work for so many others.

6) Join our free anonymous [phone conferences](#), led by an experienced sponsor.

7) If you need more general guidance, write to GYE's helpline at gye.help@gmail.com or call the hotline at 646-600-8100.

8.) Download and read the "[Guard Your Eyes Handbook](#)" (a hard copy can be purchased for cost price [over here](#)). 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, "The 20 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!

The second part, "Attitude & Perspective", detail 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...

Our souls cry inside of us, but we have accustomed ourselves to block out that cry. Today we can begin to be who we really want to be.

We are here for you.

www.GuardYourEyes.org

GYE E-Mail Helpline: gye.help@gmail.com

GYE Phone Hotline: 646-600-8100

Help us help others: [Donate Here](#)

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by alexeliezer - 25 Oct 2011 17:30

Since you're being so quiet, let me add one more thought:

SSA is condoned by society. People march in pride of their sickness. So you get conflicting messages: your conscience (neshama) tells you it's wrong, and society tells you it's as good as can be. And you see people all around living what you dream of. Trust me, they're all popping antidepressants.

Interestingly, Sexaholics Anonymous sees it our way. Here's a quote from their handbook (emphasis mine):

(BTW, SA.org is a great website. I went there right after I discovered GYE)

What is Sexual Sobriety?

In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those

outside of Sexaholics Anonymous. Sexual

sobriety for sexaholics of our type means no

sex with ourselves and no sex with any partner

other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety
definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's
partner in a marriage between a man and a
woman. Sexual sobriety also means progressive
freedom from the many forms of sexual
thinking and stimulation and lust that enter our
lives. This freedom is found by remaining
sober and by using our Twelve Steps and
Twelve Traditions in our daily lives

Your turn

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by mynisayon - 26 Oct 2011 00:36

Thanks for the welcome!

Alex thank u for making me feel one of the guys. Trust me while on the outside I looked like one of the guys I never felt that way inside. Its great to see that I'm not alone and that others take out the time to post cuz they care. Its also great hear that the loneliness I sometimes tell myself is SSA exclusive, is not. Living the double life creates that feeling and SSA and non-SSa guys get that feeling. At least here that loneliness goes away..

Thank you for the advice. Ur right! When i am with my family nothing else matters and they r my keys to get out of the mess I'm in. Recenty was having a tough time but went on a family vacation and it magically made me feel great. Date night is an idea I need to implement.

But.. I think I still need some clarification. There is something bothering me. I really feel bad writing this. Everyone went out of their way to help. I am touched by the time it took to respond to me. I need to be honest about my feelings so here goes...I hope I don't insult anyone .

Homosexuality is not the result of any addiction or because of extreme perversion. This is the way i'm wired. No different than the non sex addict who wants to marry and have sex with a girl. Hashem created the attraction between man and woman so that they would be together. Take away that component and it doesn't work out well. The gemara says that a guy should marry at 18 to avoid sin. My point is that attraction is normal and healthy. Of course it can lead to addiction which is not normal or healthy but attraction by itself is normal.

Like the gemara says someone who doesn't have an outlet will sin. I'm in the same boat. I have no outlet and I give in to p & m. I'm not addicted as I can go months without it. I am however lonely and that triggers it. I think 12 steps are great for addicts, but it can't make a homosexual person a heterosexual. Its much deeper than that. That is why SSA guys are emotionally connected to this issue.

To better understand what i'm saying. Picture being forced to be married to a guy. That means no real sexual outlet. No emotional connection. I don't think 12 steps can fill the voids. It may make u non-sexual but does that make u happy?

I would love to be convinced otherwise. It would give me way out of this. So please try!

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by Dov - 26 Oct 2011 01:27

Dear mynisayon,

I think Alexeliezer was making a different point altogether. It is not that the 12 steps addresses the problem we yiddin have with SSA, for you are right - homosexuality is not an addiction any more than heterosexuality is.

He may have been trying to say that your *obsession about other males* is something that the 12 steps responds to. That is **lust**. And can be a disfiguring and destructive thing whether to opposite or same sex people.

Now, if the fact that you feel attraction to these types of people is the only and entire problem that you feel you have, then I agree with you - what do you need the 12 steps for, at all? But if your obsession about men, women, animals, your own hand, or whatever...is distracting you from life and vexing you, then recovery of sanity and freedom **from the obsession** may be in order.

You would likely still remain a man with attraction to some sexual aspect of other males. But you would be free of obsession, be"H.

Hatzlocha!

Love,

Dov

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 26 Oct 2011 03:18

Welcome to the forum Mynisayon.

Your nisayon is mine too, our stories are so very similar.

The thoughts you bring out in your second post, and what Dov had to say about it, are very similar to my line of thinking as well. Namely, that the SSA component and the lust component can be two separate issues. In my case, once i resolved to change myself, I was able to stop acting out and I can mostly control my fantasies and get rid of them when they come. I think i have convinced myself that I don't NEED this. But i still WANT it, and when i get triggered by seeing people it hits me hard and and have to fight to pull away every time. So I don't see the SSA going away completely, but if i can get it down to the same level as a normal healthy non-LA person's attraction to women, and not react any more strongly than they would to their "triggers", then i guess I will have to live with that.

And I get that lonely feeling too, of being different and nobody else knows it. and sometimes it's so depressing, and it makes me want to be loved in a way that I cannot get from my wife, and is totally separate from the wonderful relationship i have with her. And I know I can never have it, and that just makes me feel worse....So I throw that on Hashem, and I daven and try to feel that love from Him. And I beg Him to take away the wanting what I can't have, and to be happy with what i do have. And I tell myself that the things i want are not who i really am, they are something outside my true self, that I can give it up and not be empty at the core. I know it, but I need to FEEL it....

Hatzlacha and Keep On Trucking!

Gevura!

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by mynisayon - 26 Oct 2011 03:45

Gevura,

Wow that was beautiful! What u wrote really resonates. I think your approach can be helpful and thats probably what Alex and Dov were referring to. The voids will be there but there isn't much we can do about them. Only Hashem can help us deal with them. For me the first step is to accept that Hashem gave me this huge nisayon for a reason. That helps deal with some of these "voids". This is our handicap and we have to accept it like anyone else who is handicapped. We have 2 choices. We can obsess about our situation and be depressed or move on and make the best of things. The latter sounds better for me But if it was only that

easy....

I agree its key not let these feelings lead to any obsession and that is where the program can help. I still think that SSA is way more complicated but I do see the approach. But in this case its really not fueled by lust its more emotional. More controlling the emotions that lead to lust. Still need to think this thru

Thanks guys!

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by alexeliezer - 26 Oct 2011 19:26

Dov and Gevura -- so glad you're here with your keen perceptions.

Between mynisayon and Gevura I'm coming to a new understanding of SSA. I think I finally get it. Way before puberty I was attracted emotionally to girls (mother was emotionally unavailable). I got along with them much better than boys (still do). As I passed through puberty, I got into M ASAP. Then I began fantasizing about girls. You know the rest of the story. So it's reasonable to expect that if you're emotionally attracted to boys, you'd follow the same pattern. I get that.

But SSA is not the norm and using the reproductive system with the same sex just doesn't make sense. It *can't be* what it was intended for. The Torah shebiksav forbids it on pain of misas beis din. So I've always felt that SSA is a psychological (psychosexual) disorder, classically to do with one's relationship with their parents. However, since we're all gilgulim, maybe you've come to this world to be misaken this, and were therefore destined to have SSA, as people with SSA tend to feel.

I (of course) agree with Dov that the obsessive component, and the acting out is a manifestation of lust addiction, no matter what the triggers are. And going long stretches without acting out doesn't mean you're not addicted. Because you keep relapsing when your raw self control gives way. That's addiction. And I venture to guess those clean streaks were still full of fantasies and inappropriate gazing, which is still the drug. Check out the SA website and you'll

see how many of the criteria you meet. It's comforting.

Even with your unfulfilled void, you can connect with your wife much more than you currently do. Emotionally and sexually. But only after you're in recovery from the lust addiction that got tacked on to your pekel (that's *package* folks). Because in humans, the reproductive system doubles as the ultimate bonding tool. I've just recently started to work on this, rather than just releasing my lust in the bedroom. It's amazing and new and it's going to take time and work. It's physically more pleasurable, which was quite a surprise. I would encourage you to take a look at Yechida's Reflections in the baalabatim's forum. Your wife yearns to connect with you. There is a void that she *can* fill.

Nachon?

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by gothika - 26 Oct 2011 23:00

[kidushashem wrote on 18 Oct 2011 22:55:](#)

Welcome!

There are plenty of people here who struggle with SSA and you will find them soon enough. There is no one who came to GYE and couldn't find people to identify with.

This is *the* place to be.

B'Hatzlacha!

Hi mynisayon.

I was about to go to bed but I just had to drop a quick line of support and give my thoughts on this matter.

First of all, I have SSA too. There I said it.

Now a few months ago this is what I believed:

"I am clearly attracted to men, and currently not at all in any way shape or form attracted to women. I know that some part of me clearly desires to find a man, and live a life together with him. First of all, I would be physically attracted to him, so our relationship won't just be a "mechanical" act. Second, supposedly I have these attractions and they haven't gone away in years, and so I don't see them changing. However I firmly believe in Judaism, and that prohibits mishkav zachar, and so I can't be with a man, so what I will do is marry a woman, and then just somehow ignore my impulses for men, and somehow make everything work."

Thus far is what I used to believe. Strictly speaking, it could work. I could have a marriage with a wife, and she would never even need to know about what goes on inside my head when I see that attractive man over there, and how I actually find him more attractive than her.

However, after doing a lot of thinking over the last few months, and reading some books on the subject, and looking at the arguments for and against SSA being a born this way thing, vs a psychological cause, some of my opinions have changed.

First I have to start with what has not changed. So not that any of the previous forum posters/heilige yidden need my haskama, I just want to make sure we are on the same page.

[kidushashem wrote on 18 Oct 2011 22:55:](#)

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B'Hatzlacha!

I agree with this, I was mystified and amazed and excited above everything to find out that I wasn't in fact the only Jew who had this. I know it sounds silly for me to have thought that, but I honestly thought that I was very rare, as it turns out, the estimate is that anywhere between 3-10% of men have SSA, so that left no more room for my elaborate "pity parties" that I would frequently host for myself ;D

I was not in fact alone, and it was about time for me to start connecting with others, and taking a good look at my options, and give up my right to perpetually sulk about having SSA

[alexeliezer wrote on 24 Oct 2011 18:48:](#)

OurNisayon,

A belated welcome to the forum! Good to have such a choshiva guy with us for the ride. You are very impressive. Despite this lifelong struggle, you have managed to live as you know you should. You work on your relationship with HKB"H and connect. You are in a heterosexual marriage and are a father.

And you're fighting the fierce mental battle so many of us struggle daily with. Suffering silently. Feeling alone even though surrounded by loving family and community. Because they don't understand you or even really know you. Because you dream of something you can't have. And as you get older and resemble more a middle-aged man than a boy, you're coming to the realization that you will never have your desires and fantasies fulfilled. And so you turn to that great, counterfeit, comfort -- fantasy, P and M. Where everything is as I want it, and I can have whatever I want. If only for a few intense moments. If only in my mind.

If only it were real.

You're at a crossroads. A reality check has taken hold. This is good. But you feel empty. What to *do*?

You're right -- do get a filter and start working the steps. You can find them on the GYE homepage -- mouse over materials and click on 12 steps. Commit to letting go of lust. I think where SSA guys have more trouble is that you're more emotionally invested in your fantasies to the point where they are perceived as unfulfilled *needs*. Stop giving them so much respect. At this point, they're nothing but a hindrance to true happiness, true living, true connection with your wife.

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I'll shut up now and see where you are.

Alex

So I agree with Alex in this, he has listed all the great tips for dealing with any type of masturbation issues, and then clearly pointed out that regardless of what SSA comes from, our minds hype it up into a need, that we must have it, and even though we can't and time is running out, I still need to get that pleasure. This is giving them WAY too much chashivus, and importance, and its just really quite a scam on the yetzer harah's part.

Its not a need its lust, and lust leads nowhere. Give it a night to have whatever it desires, it will ask for ten more, give it ten more it wants a thousand more. There is no end to it. The only need is to starve it, and then it will leave you alone, at least enough to function normally.

The way to do this is to enforce solid filters on internet, no having the password etc, this is all important, vital really, in dealing with this addiction. [alexeliezer wrote on 25 Oct 2011 17:30](#):

Since you're being so quiet, let me add one more thought:

SSA is condoned by society. People march in pride of their sickness. So you get conflicting messages: your conscience (neshama) tells you it's wrong, and society tells you it's as good as can be. And you see people all around living what you dream of. Trust me, they're all popping antidepressants.

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freedom from the many forms of sexual
thinking and stimulation and lust that enter our
lives. This freedom is found by remaining
sober and by using our Twelve Steps and
Twelve Traditions in our daily lives

Your turn

I love this quote its so true. If you look in the gay world, the amount of complaining, and backstabbing and one-night-stands, and lack of any healthy long term relationships, it all just shows that it is an unhealthy desire for something that is never being met, and will never be met in such a format.

I used to believe, and some immature part of me still believes that I need this type of relationship. Believe me I know just how much it hurts to deny myself the possibility the thought, even the fantasy of ever getting to just find that guy to hold me, and to be with me, and to appreciate me, and to do other things that I don't want to specify.

I know now that all those needs that I am expressing are LEGITIMATE needs. They are, but my brain currently believes that it is going to get those needs fulfilled through sex. They won't. And worse, the needs **deepen** through sex. Sex is just lust, but behind the SSA is a real need for respect, and mutuality, and acceptance from another man. [dov wrote on 26 Oct 2011 01:27:](#)

Dear mynisayon,

I think Alexeliezer was making a different point altogether. It is not that the 12 steps addresses the problem we yiddin have with SSA, for you are right - homosexuality is not an addiction any more than heterosexuality is.

He may have been trying to say that your *obsession about other males* is something that the 12

steps responds to. That is **lust**. And can be a disfiguring and destructive thing whether to opposite or same sex people.

Now, if the fact that you feel attraction to these types of people is the only and entire problem that you feel you have, then I agree with you - what do you need the 12 steps for, at all? But if your obsession about men, women, animals, your own hand, or whatever...is distracting you from life and vexing you, then recovery of sanity and freedom **from the obsession** may be in order.

You would likely still remain a man with attraction to some sexual aspect of other males. But you would be free of obsession, be"H.

Hatzlocha!

Love,

Dov

As for what Dov says, I agree completely. Homosexuality is no more of an addiction than heterosexuality, and it could very well be ones own hand, whatever, the brain is addicted to an unhealthy behavior, and that is called an addiction. And if its distracting you and vexing you from running your life, then its now an unhealthy addiction and should be dealt with accordingly.

However I want to add further that due to fundamental differences in what is behind heterosexuality, and homosexuality, the latter results in a particularly potent formula, since behind SSA is a real need to find acceptance from a man, and also a need to somehow absorb his essential masculinity, that one may perceive that they don't have. and I feel that besides for dealing with this as an addiction, it is also sign of a real unfulfilled need for legitimate things, and if you were to also deal with these underlying things, you might in fact even find that your paining hunger for that other type of relationship, the one that is separate from what your wife and kids give you, will diminish or perhaps even go away entirely. depending on how comprehensively you deal with it.

That is why I felt the need to speak up now, because I feel that although everything raised on this page is very valid, and it is a lust taking over your life, I don't think that it is as simple as a void that can never be filled.

It can stay that way, and one can still live a happy marriage and life, if one keeps their unhealthy addictions at bay, using filters, and not getting down over past failures at keeping clean, everything that GYE stands for, (read the handbook for the full picture) but nevertheless I feel that it does NOT need to just be a void inside us that we ignore. We (the holy yidden on this page that have SSA) can get that fulfillment by dealing with the underlying needs of the sexual attraction to other men, in healthy ways, such as having intimate, non-sexual relationships with other men, and various other methods, including some types of reparative therapy (see this book for more on what I mean. Also feel free to contact me for more details.

I guess this became more than just a "quick line of support".

But now I must get to bed.

Goodnight everyone!

Nebula

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by 1daat - 27 Oct 2011 05:46

Dear My nisayon. Your story, and very importantly how you tell it just breaks my heart. I understand the gnawing depth of that bleak silent loneliness and longing. I know what it is to feel stuck with something that I need with every fiber of my body, and know that I can't have it. That's how I felt about cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin, and every manner of normal and perverted sex.

But what's different about ssa is it's about love, it's not just about lust. The lust component is the same, hetero- or homo- as Dov said. But the longing to be embraced and to embrace a man that we love and are loved by, is something that feels as natural as loving our children. We are not whole without fulfilling that longing in reality. And yet we can't, or, better, we've decided not to.

This leaves us feeling the loss of a beloved, G-d forbid, but for example, again, Chas v"chalila, like if we lost a child. A piece of ourselves would be torn from us. And there would be no repair. We would suffer that piece of ourselves that was missing forever. To give up on ever

having a real relationship with a man is like giving up a baby's need for its mother. It's like giving up on what would make us feel most whole.

OR SO WE IMAGINE. The reality is no more like what we imagine it, than what heterosexual couples imagine married life will be like. The relationship is enormously fulfilling at first, and then becomes test after test of our selfishness and self centeredness, etc.

We can never get enough of what we can't have.

The heartache of being without, is the heartache of being without, not of being without *something*. Being without is a horrible loneliness, that we have to endure (or not) by ourselves. There is comfort in others, for sure, but that deep ache of being without is so unique to each of us, that we can never really fully explain what it's like for us. Empathy is very hard to come by. It is often said that the emptiness is our neshamah's longing to return to oneness with Hashem. I feel I know both of those experiences, and for me they are different forms of the same thing.

The only thing that's ever worked for me is to grieve the loss. I cried and cried for a long time. I had the ache pinned to different things at different times--a family that had no use for me, my kids turned against me, my physical ugliness, my being abused as a child, etc., etc. But what I was shown is that I just ached and ached so deep that nobody could ever possibly understand or love me that deep down.

It never occurred to me to turn to Hashem. I turned to all the stuff I said earlier. I came to GYE after being arrested and getting in all kinds of professional trouble. I found that Hashem not only could go that deep with me, but that my individual unique solution to the problem was something that He revealed and unfolded for me. It doesn't matter what that is/is becoming. What matters is that you can cry out from that depth and that He will be/is close.

One last word. As a bit of real sanity has been restored for several days, I have been able to tell my family about my life and the deviant stuff I've been into. No more secrets. It's something that took many years, with much professional guidance, and after talking about it on GYE a lot. It's not something to look forward to. It may or may not be appropriate for any particular individual. I tell you this only to tell you just how far His miracles can take a person.

I live with the ache. But now it's part of who I am. I'll never have the mother I have always needed. I will never have a brother who only holds me with respect rather than in contempt. I will never have my fantasies come true that I believe will make me feel complete and whole. I have to grieve the loss of all of these, and live with that loss, as if it was a part of me that was lost. And then I've been looking around at what reality DOES have to offer, even though nothing in reality will ever fix my owey. I have found that what reality does have to offer is, nonetheless, plenty good enough. All my ruptured family relationships are in repair. Several months ago I was talking with someone about relationships I need to make amends about, but that it would probably not be a good thing for them if I were to initiate something like that. Well one of those people from thirty some years ago got wind of that conversation and called me a couple weeks ago to tell me that not only did I have nothing to make amends about, but that she had been thinking about calling me to tell me how well her life had turned out and how important I had been to helping her get on that path.

Much will be revealed.

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Re: My nisayon

Posted by mynisayon - 27 Oct 2011 14:59

Thanks everyone for checking in with their thoughts.

Alex- I'm glad u r getting up to speed with SSA- hey maybe thats my purpose in having it lol. I agree its not a natural condition but its also something totally out of my control. I either was born this way or it appeared at a very young age. I remember thoughts when i was 6 or 7. While sex bonds a wife and husband, its effects are limited when the guy is really into other guys. That said does help increase the bond nevertheless.

Nebulamud- I see u understand some of what I'm talking about. BTW u should have invited me to ur pity parties. It would have saved me the effort lol. B"h I've been working hard on not pitying myself anymore. The only way out of this is to accept my handicap and realize hashem gave it to me for reason with my best interests at heart. Do I understand it..no! But I try to tap into the bitachon.

I am very familiar with reparative therapy. While i don't think its a cure I do think the idea of having real needs are very true. The idea of getting them met in a healthy way can be a tool to

manage the feelings I talk about even though its no cure for the issue at hand.

1daat- I'm sorry things have been so tough for you. The idea of accepting things is very helpful. A lot of what u said is very true.

Ok now my take on things - I think an SSA guy may have sexual addiction and he may not. The "voids" i feel in my life are not an addiction but I can see how in some folks it can become an addiction. Obsessing about the "voids" seems to be more of an emotional component than an addictive one but I am not sure. In my case I don't think I am addicted at all. Let me explain. The idea of me meeting a stranger for sex is abhorrent to me. While porn is an outlet at times, it really doesn't draw me so much in because I am looking more for a relationship and connection than sex. If it was another frum guy who related to my struggle I would be fulfilled even without the sex ..maybe. A good looking goy wouldn't do it for me. I think for me living a life where I can not be open with others is whats killing me. My whole life since I was 12 has been about hiding this part of me. I would make sick jokes in high school about girls to "throw everyone off". If someone would make a gay joke I would wonder "do they know?" I just want to be myself. I can't be open with my own wife...

So maybe the idea of finding others who I can be open with would go a long way to helping me cope with this...Any thoughts?

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