

**My New Life Starts Now**Posted by startingover13 - 24 Nov 2011 21:20

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Hi all,

I'm new to this website and so I'd like to introduce myself. I figure I'd give you my basic life story. I apologize if it's a bit lengthy (totally fine if you have no patience to read it all) and if it goes a bit off topic, but at the end of the day, so much of where I've ended up began with my "lust addiction." Okay, here goes:

I spent about 8 years in yeshiva after high school. For 5 of those years, I was learning in a very prominent American yeshiva. During my years in yeshiva (at least most of them), I was pretty much as "shtark" as they come. I learned yoimam valayla and all I imagined doing with myself was learning for a long time until one day maybe I would be forced to go into chinuch. As shtark as I was, I always struggled with this "lust addiction." It was my #1 nisayon as a yeshiva bochur. There was a few year period when I really had it relatively under control. By under control I mean I could go for maybe 2-4 weeks without shefichas zerah. And whenever I would sin, I would get extremely depressed, mad at myself, run to the mikvah, take on nedarim, and often times it would lead to me having a bad day/week/month in terms of learning and general yiddishkeit. To a large extent, as my lust addiction went, so went my entire avoidas Hashem, and general mood. I would roller coaster up and down in yeshiva - going two weeks learning non stop, then being depressed for two weeks and not wanting to do anything Jewish (though for the sake of my reputation, I kept up with the basics). Now, while my lust addiction certainly played a large part in all of that, I do want to stress that there were certainly other factors involved as well - including the way I think (nothing too crazy, I just sometimes feel like I don't function the same way as everyone else), some people who I associated with, etc. I have an extreme personality, and if I'm gonna do something, I have to do it all the way. So when I would be sinning, I subconsciously felt like I might as well just live my whole life without G-d.

My roller coaster ride kept getting more extreme - the lows were getting lower, but unfortunately the highs weren't getting higher. Over the years, I just got less and less shtark, all while still trying to maintain my outward image as an excellent bochur. I spoke to some rebbeim over the years, but never got into too much detail with them because I was too embarrassed. Eventually, I switched to a yeshiva closer to where I grew up. Bad move. Then I left yeshiva entirely (I think I was about 26 years old). I can't tell you how exactly it happened, but to make a long story short, I somehow ended up pretty much completely "off the derech". Again, there were certainly other factors besides my lust addiction, but so much of it had to do with that. I was getting older, had been dating for a long time, and still wasn't married. Everyone knows how hard that can be. My lust addiction got so bad that eventually (over a number of years) I didn't even think about it anymore. It just became part of my daily routine. I stopped even caring in the sense that I didn't even try fighting it. Eventually, it even spread to actions with

girls (though thankfully I have a pretty tame personality, so I didn't do nearly as many ma'asim geruim as I might have if I had been born with a more confident personality). Unfortunately, slowly, over time, my entire avoidas Hashem was out the window. I started doing some of the worst aveiros imaginable, even outside of my lust addiction (think things like kashrus, shabbos, etc.). On the outside people thought I was still frum (with a couple close friends struggling themselves being the exceptions), but people had certainly seen that I had changed. Now, understand that I didn't grow up in a very yeshivish family. My family is frum, but very modern. So it was easy for me to revert back to a very modern lifestyle. I started dressing differently (jeans, etc.), talking differently, and pretty much living a non-religious life, while trying to appear at least minimally religious on the outside. I still got set up with some very frum girls, but felt that I had no shaychus to them anymore. I went back to school, where I am now (don't want to say what kind of school as I'd like to keep myself as anonymous as possible). Without getting into hashkafa, that was a bad move for me. I associate with goyim all day, and I went from bad to worse (actually, this is the era in my life where aveiros that I'd never thought I would commit started happening).

Now, my yeridah started probably when I was around 24 (though I always roller coastered even before that). This past year is the tekufah when it got really really terrible. At the risk of identifying myself to anyone who's somewhat familiar with my story, I'll tell you that I'm now 28 (it's ok, one of the things im trying to work on is being more open with people and not caring what they think of me). I want you to know that throughout my entire yeridah I was never happy. G-d was the first thing I thought about when I woke up in the morning, and the last thing I thought about at night. I cried myself to sleep many nights. I didn't like where I was and always thought that eventually I'll do teshuvah cuz I can never live my life like this. But I was just stuck in such a terrible rut that I couldn't get out of. I was pretty much misyaesh. I figured that everything would be solved once I got married. Both in terms of my lust addiction and in terms of just having the stability to be able to live a frum lifestyle again. But of course, who could I marry in my matzav? Frum girls were too frum for me, and the modern ones, while I may have had more in common with them, I could never see these girls raising my children. I knew I had to change myself, but I just couldn't get out of the rut. I knew the emes so clearly, that nothing in this world will bring me happiness except torah and mitzvos, but for some reason it just didn't translate into action.

This all changed this past Shabbos. Unfortunately, I recently fell so low that I have even "gone out" on Shabbos. Going out on Shabbos (and eating non-kosher while out) was an absolute all time low for me. But it happened. When I woke up Shabbos morning, I was on my computer surfing the web. Somehow, I came across a video of my old Rosh-Yeshiva delivering a shmooz about Shabbos. He told over the famous story of the Chafetz Chayim crying "shabbos" to a yid who opened his store on Shabbos. I was so moved by the story and I just broke down crying. I ran to the local beis medrash and learned for hours straight (something I hadn't done in years). I will tell you that since this past Shabbos, I haven't been able to stop crying. Something in my brain just clicked and snapped me out of the rut I've been in for so long. I cry over the things I've done. I cry over what I threw out - how great a talmid chacham I might have become if I had taken a different course. I cry to Hashem to forgive me and to help

me do a true teshuvah. Everything changed for me this week. Though I have a long road ahead, especially considering the situation I'm now in (including the chevra I'm with now, the big TV in my apartment, etc), I once again view myself as a ben Torah. I want to come back and I look back at these past few years and can't believe I did all those things. I was sitting in school the other day and looking at all the goyim that I know and thinking how they're lives have nothing in them. And I have been a part of that for the last couple years. I don't know how I got here, but I am soo determined to come back. I spoke to a rebbe who I haven't spoken to in a while and we set up to talk soon. He's very perceptive, understanding, smart, and a huge tzadik, and I think he'll be able to help me set up a plan to get back on course. I started davening and learning again, and I can't imagine ever eating non kosher again or breaking shabbos, or any other aveiros.

Ha. That's funny. Of course, I know myself so well that I know eventually I'll get off this high of initial inspiration and everything will turn into a nisayon again (including things that didn't used to be nisyonos). That's where the real test will come in. But I'm determined to succeed. I don't want anything now except to be a ben Torah again (and maybe to get married soon :-)) Now, I recognize that a large part of my success in my new journey starts with my lust addiction. It's going to be sooo hard. Even on this cloud of inspiration that I'm on now, I've already caved once. But I'm still determined. This addiction, I feel, can make or break everything. I need to get it under control or I have no chance. But how can I do this? Yeah, now I'm feeling great, but soon, my life is going to catch up to me again and I'll be right back to my old ways! I really want it to be different this time. But I've fallen into such a bad matzav that I don't know how it will be possible! Let's see... I go to school with goyim, and have actually become good friends with a lot of them (though I have always felt that I have no real shaychus to them). They always go out partying, always want to go "pick up girls", and always talk about prust things. I'm a serious people pleaser, and I want everyone to not only like me, but to think that I'm just like them. So what am I supposed to just tell them all to take a hike, I can't be friends with you anymore cuz I'm religious now!? What else... I have a roommate who's barely frum. Yeah, that's a pretty big deal. When I was at my lowest point I took him in, and I can't just kick him out now. I have a huge tv, I love movies, and I'm on the internet like all day. Okay, but I found this website and it's amazing. I'm really going to give this a try. A lot of the suggestions are going to be very hard for me - like stopping tv and movies - that's a big deal, even though I do want to do it. Facebook - another big deal - I love facebook but its probably the biggest trigger for my addiction. I just installed a filter but I can't bring myself to part with Facebook quite yet. I know I will have to eventually, but right now, it's almost like I just wanna see how this goes and if I have to get rid of it, eventually I will (i know, that's a dangerous move to wait). But I'm going to try to implement as many of the tools from this website as I feel ready for right now.

Now, some of you might be thinking "why is he confessing his whole life here?" I know, maybe this isn't the right forum. I apologize if that's the case. It's just that 1. I can't just talk about my addiction without putting it in the context of the rest of my life and showing you how big a part of my life it's taken on; and 2. This is honestly the only forum on the internet where I feel like I can open up about not just lust addiction, but all my other yiddishkeit struggles.

Some of you might also be thinking that "this guy needs a therapist." Well, let's see - I'd estimate I've been to about 5 therapists over the years. And they've all been highly recommended and supposed to be really good. Some of them helped a bit, mostly trying to get me to see that I'm not such a bad guy. But there's no therapist in the world who will make me feel better about myself so long as I'm not living as a ben torah. So yeah, I definitely have some psychological issues to work on, but at the end of the day, I promise you, if you knew me you'd know that I'm such a normal, not crazy guy. Guess you have to know me to fully believe that. Just somehow I got stuck in a really bad matzav. You're also probably saying that I need a rebbe - well I already addressed that because that's for sure true. Meeting with him next week. Definitely need that support in my life. And I'm going to try to be as open with him as possible.

Anyways, I apologize for such a long post, just once I start talking, I can't shut up. Everything just came pouring out. And I really hope I can find some support on this forum. I could use it. Also, if I don't make my struggle public right now, I will have no accountability to anyone and will fall very quickly. And if anyone wants to reply, don't feel like you need to solve or even address all my issues - I'm not expecting that. Just looking for fellow yidden to listen to my soul crying out. And I understand that this forum is specifically for lust addiction, so it's cool if you only focus on that. After all, that is a huge part of my life and I know it will be the single most important test during this new tekufah of my life. I really want to get it under control before I start dating again. Maybe if I do, the Reboino shel Oilam will have rachmanus and me and send me my bashert. But either way, I need to do this for myself. Alright, I think I'm done now. Thanks for listening! (for those still here at least).

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by kidushashem - 24 Nov 2011 21:24

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Hey dude, I just starting reading your story and I wanted to post that I already love you!

You've come to the right place and you're on the right track to success.

Just keep on posting whatever you're thinking.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Love,

KH

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by kidushashem - 24 Nov 2011 21:45

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and now I finished your post. What a post!

I loved your story, it's one of the best ones I've ever read on here.

Startingover, from a lot of the stuff you wrote, like "I'm a serious people pleaser" and a few other things, I gather that perhaps one of the things you need to work on in conjunction with everything, is self esteem? I'm not a psychologist by any means, but I identify a lot of what you said about yourself as symptoms that I contend with on a daily basis. I'm working a lot on my self esteem. I have problems telling people "no" and standing up for my needs. In fact, I usually put other people's needs before my own under the guise of being "selfless". I used to think I was just this great tzaddik (and everyone else thought so too) until I realized that I just had no backbone and that I was letting people trample all over me.

I think that you actually hinted to this when you wrote "it's ok, one of the things im trying to work on is being more open with people and not caring what they think of me".

I'm writing all this just to let you know that I identify with you and that I've gone through some rough times and would be very happy to exchange chizuk and life lessons with you.

Love,

KH

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by startingover13 - 24 Nov 2011 22:25

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KH - yeah, no doubt you're right. Serious self esteem issues. But not in the traditional sense. First of all, I view myself as an awesome guy (at the risk of sounding gaivadik). I know I have a lot of amazing things about me (together with my faults). So it's not that I view myself lowly. Rather, I just can't stand up for what I believe in around other people. I have this need to just fit in with everyone. To make them all think I'm just like them, and to not expose my "true" self. And yeah, that for sure comes from low self esteem. But again, not the traditional notion of feeling worthless or anything like that. Ugh, I sometimes try to explain this to people but I'm not sure if they always chap the difference - do you get it?

Anyways, thanks for your post, I really appreciate your support. I'm glad to hear there's at least one person who can relate to that part of my struggle. And for sure, would love to stay in touch and offer each other chizuk. Thanks man!

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by mechazek - 24 Nov 2011 22:39

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just read your post so excited for you.

you mentioned that you allways felt different a little I had that to.and ofcourse all the rest of the acting out.Hatzlochah

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by Kollel Guy - 25 Nov 2011 01:23

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Hey Starting,

Nice to see another neshama making its way over to the place where it can reconnect with H-shem.

Look, you have a lot to work *out*, but even more to work *with*. Remember, you are always bigger than your nesayon. Don't let yourself be scared off by something which is weaker than you. You have the power and the tools to make everything right.

I see you realize clearly that you only have one life, and that you have to live it right the first time. What you need to realize is that it's never too late. It's not just a cliché Breslov thing to say, it's really true. You can make yourself into who you want to be - today! Because ultimately, who we are is our effort to keep the Torah and our care for its boundaries. Once you start on the journey toward healing - you are healed. You just have to keep at it, and realize that success IS the continuation of effort to achieve it.

Good luck, and don't forget to be happy, because it is the thread which keeps everything you strive for intact.

KG

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by Dov - 25 Nov 2011 04:16

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Dear friend starting over (whatever your real name is),

So nice to read your story. The pain I cannot have pity on you for, cuz I have had my share and understand - as I assume you do - that we *chose* this trash for ourselves. It seems to have been the path we **had** to take, for whatever reason, shocked as we are at how far off we strayed...it's certainly scary.

But you see you are on the way back, and your hope for a better future - a life with real stuff filling it - is so sweet, so precious to see. I too, inherently believe that life is supposed to be a big and a beautiful thing. And I am ready to fight for it. Even if the 'thing' I will need to fight most, is **me**

It's interesting - you wrote about how you ache to fit in, to be accepted by those around you.. In the literature of SA, a famous passage is: "*The only way we knew to be free of it was to do it.*"

*"Please connect with me and make me whole!" we cried with outstretched arms. Lusting after the Big Fix we gave away our power to others. This produced guilt, self-hatred, remorse, loneliness, emptiness and pain, and we were driven ever inward, away from reality, away from love, lost inside ourselves."*

I think that expresses a lot of what you have lived through.

But since the ending is so good, and also relates well with much of what you described, I'll finish the quote:

*"Our habit made true intimacy impossible. We could never knew real union with another because we were addicted to the unreal. We went for the chemistry, the connection that had the magic, **because** it bypassed intimacy and true union. Fantasy corrupted the real; lust killed love. First addicts, then love cripples, we took from others to fill up what was lacking in ourselves. Conning ourselves time and again that the next one would save us, we were really losing our lives."*

I find these words like water on parched, bleeding lips. When I needed it most, they helped me see that I was really not alone, at all. I came to recovery convinced I would take my secrets to the grave. So incredibly alone even with sweet parents, a loving wife, a good family and a nice community...yet inside I was totally alone. I even had a great G-d - but was even isolated from Him. For no matter how aware I felt of my faith in His existence, I felt sure we were on very different 'pages'. As you wrote, you thought you'd live your "entire life without G-d."

I also went to about 5 shrinks and about 5 rabbonim. The **shrinks** either told me shtuyot, or nothing at all (one told me using porn a little was fine [he was a frum guy], one told me I needed to learn how to have pleasure in my life, Rav twerski told me I needed therapy [no way could I hide that from my wife, so forget it, I said!], one put me on meds and said twelve steps were a waste of time - finally one said I was ill and suggested I try SA meetings); and the **rabbonim** either told me shtuyot or nothing at all, too (the older chassidishe one told me I must convince my wife to have more and varied sex with me, one told me I need to learn Tanya and then all would be OK, one told me I needed to just quit [surprise!!] - the last one told me I was a sick man and needed help - a year later I was finally willing and got it).

First we stop feeding the addiction in all its forms. Either we are honest with ourselves and open with trusted recovery friends (usually other sex drunks who are sober and doing life better), or



we are going the same way we were all along. So we will end up in the same place. If nothing changes, nothing changes.

We seek out and make friends with successfully recovering people. We take direction from them - not hashkofah or philosophy, but following in their footsteps. We do what they did to get sober and hope it'll work for us, too. One can't become a true expert in this, or they get way too big for their britches. And britches were always a little tough for us folks to keep on anyway!

I found a group called SA opened up about the details of my story, heard others share their entire histories, and found a sponsor to help me work the 12 steps as he did. I found sobriety one day at a time and it has been 14 years and 9 months since I had to engage in sex with myself. That' amazing. And in most cases (but not in all) my teachers were goyim. Along the way I have met many dozens of real, frum guys including chassidim of all types. All share my basic story of a new life.

Just what you are looking for.

Keep posting. Get help. You are precious and worth it.

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by david712 - 25 Nov 2011 04:42

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Welcome buddy. I am on my phone so cant write much but wow there is a way to get there. Look out.

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by 1daat - 25 Nov 2011 05:32

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Welcome Starting. I read your post. It's not too long. It's honest. I had a little better luck with therapy. It helped a lot. But nothing helped with my lust obsession. It took landing here.

I found Dov's post gripping. He would be a good guy to seek guidance from. He knows the path you've been on.

Some guys go cold turkey, some wade in. Eventually you're either an eved or not. not a lot of room for waffling. If you don't get filters all around, you're probably kidding yourself. You may need to find out for yourself if you can have a foot in two rowboats. Post away. Your kind of honesty is chizuk for all of us. Soon the handbooks will come your way. You can definitely do this. Many many Yeshivah bochrin are here on the site. They'll come and support you too.

Hatzlocho

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by Ben492 - 25 Nov 2011 06:02

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Startingover:

I do not think your problems have anything to do with masturbation. And while I do sympathize with your having gone to 5 therapists and not being helped; I personally went to 5 therapists and only one was good. So it seems if we aggregate our experiences, about 1 in 10 therapists is good. If you pm me, I will tell you which one was good.

I think the problem is perfectionism, thinking that you must be perfect, and more importantly, that since perfection is the only thing worth being, if you are imperfect you may as well be terrible.

And you can see that in your swings. You would strive to be perfect, learning all day, and then after a few weeks would not find satisfaction because you were still imperfect, which would manifest in your masturbation (I actually suspect that you may have started feeling down just before you would masturbate, which is why you masturbated, and then went down fast, but that may be wrong.)

Then, you would feel so guilty, that you felt as if you may as well be terrible. So you would be.

Then, you would swing back to perfection. ????

And frankly, I'm afraid you are doing the same thing right now. I think this is one big swing back after your biggest swing the other way.

So what's my advice to you? Well, I didn't give up on therapy, and neither should you, but it is time to move on also regardless of that.

But my main advice, is you need to get in touch with what is driving you here, and that seems to be perfection. If I were you, I'd forget about masturbation-that is the least of your worries. The problem is perfectionism. You need to solve that.

Also, think to yourself: Were you really happy with your life besides for masturbation? Really? I bet if you think about that, you'll find you weren't.

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by gibbor120 - 25 Nov 2011 16:27

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. I read your whole post. It is precious. You describe your feelings so well. I also detected perfectionism in your post. Dr Sorotzkin has some great stuff on this topic. It has helped me quite a bit. Here's the link, if you are interested [drsorotzkin.com/](http://drsorotzkin.com/).

Even in the 12 steps, the focus is on the fact that we have a "living problem". We don't know how to deal with life. Lust is not the *cause* of the problem, it is the *result* of it.

I can relate to a lot of what you wrote. Reaching out to others has helped me more than anything I have done in the past. You seem to be willing to do that. You seem to realize that you can't do it alone. That is a big step in the right direction.

Dov's rants have helped me a lot. You can find a lot of them in one place by clicking the Dov "Quotes" link in my signiture.

I wish you all the best! Keep posting and also connecting to real people.

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by gibbor120 - 25 Nov 2011 16:37

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[startingover13 wrote on 24 Nov 2011 22:25:](#)

KH - yeah, no doubt you're right. Serious self esteem issues. But not in the traditional sense. First of all, I view myself as an awesome guy (at the risk of sounding gaivadik). I know I have a lot of amazing things about me (together with my faults). So it's not that I view myself lowly. Rather, I just can't stand up for what I believe in around other people. I have this need to just fit in with everyone. To make them all think I'm just like them, and to not expose my "true" self. And yeah, that for sure comes from low self esteem. But again, not the traditional notion of feeling worthless or anything like that. Ugh, I sometimes try to explain this to people but I'm not sure if they always chap the difference - do you get it?

Anyways, thanks for your post, I really appreciate your support. I'm glad to hear there's at least one person who can relate to that part of my struggle. And for sure, would love to stay in touch and offer each other chizuk. Thanks man!

I can relate exactly. But, I would say that your self-esteem issues are very much "in the traditional sense". If you listen to some Dr Sorotzkin, every person with low self esteem also has an accompanying feeling of grandiosity. He tells one story where the most depressed kid he has ever seen admitted to sometimes feeling greater than G-d himself. Dr Sorotzkin was not surprized one bit. The lower we feel, the greater we need to feel as well.

I also wondered how I could have low self esteem. I have many great qualities that I do not deny. It is not a contradiction, but quite in line with the "norm".

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by gibbor120 - 25 Nov 2011 18:05

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This quote from today's chizzuk email seems appropriate:

Our parsha tells us how Rivka was perplexed. She did not know she was carrying twins. The pasuk tells us "Va'yisrotzitzu habanim bikirbah" The boys struggled inside of her. As chazal explain when she would pass a Beis Medrash the boy would yearn to come out yet this same boy(as she thought) would yearn just as much as she passed by the house of avodah zarrah. Rivka Imenu felt if that was the case "Lama zeh anochi" as rashi explains it was to much pain to bear.

So many of us are that same "one" person leading that double life. We want to be good. We run to the beis medrash. We are trying to be good jews. Yet we find ourselves running and being pulled just as strong to the temptations of life. The pain of that double life is SO SO great that we to say "Lama ze anochi" it is so perplexing and so so hard to bear.

Yet what was Rivka's solution. Va'tailech Lidrosh es Hashem. She went (Literally she walked i.e she took steps) to seek out Hashem. Our solution too will be to take steps to seek out Hashem in a real and meaningful way. Through seeking out Hashem will we have the Power "Oo'liom mil'om ye'ematz, V'rav ya'avod tza'ir" for the good that's inside all of us to rule over the negative.

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 25 Nov 2011 18:06

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wow

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Re: My New Life Starts Now

Posted by startingover13 - 25 Nov 2011 18:19

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[gibbor120 wrote on 25 Nov 2011 18:05:](#)

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Gibbor - ha, I received that email earlier, and couldn't believe the siyata dishmaya that my first email from this site had something so in line with my struggles. Good catch. My only question is that I'm not really sure what it means to "seek out Hashem"... any thoughts?

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