

Ok Here it goes - My story

Posted by aamallen - 01 Dec 2011 16:29

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I have been on GYE for awhile now but never posted before.

I have been involved in P&M basically since the internet came out. I grew up in a frum home but was exposed to Movies, books and other less than wholesome outlets. Once the internet was available I was hooked on P and never really gave much thought to the evils of it or M for that matter.

Once I got married though I had a sense that I needed to stop but was too self absorbed in being important both professionally and jewishly to think that a small matter like shmiras habris could be important - after all I had work to do - busy changing the world professionally, doing kiruv and many other "noble" activities. I was one person on the outside and another when I had time alone with the computer.

Pretty soon however, my wife caught me in the act via the computer and I had a lot of explaining to do. I remember during the explaining I was still not entirely honest with her and not letting her on to the full extent of the problem. As it often goes after a couple of days I was right back at the computer doing what I shouldn't have been.

This continued like this for 4-5 years of our marriage. After the birth of one of our kids and a long post birth niddah period things got particularly bad and after getting caught once again my wife laid down the law - see a rav or counselor or else. Ironically, every time I "feel" I always told myself that its no big deal - I can stop when I want if I really wanted to. Classic Addict lying to himself and believing that its all up to him.

I saw the Rav and bared my story - completely ( or at least mostly) - we had some good discussions and it was helpful for a time but within a few weeks I was partly back and then all the way back to where I had been previously. The only difference was now I tried harder to cover my tracks and with the invent of laptop computers it became easier.

All along I was the frum Jew on the outside - excelling at work and in the community and even giving shiurim etc.. but no one knew the truth about where my thoughts lay.

This patterns continued - with occasional bursts ( a few weeks) of clean behavior - mostly during Elul and Yomim Noraim but no significant change.

As I progressed professionally I started to notice that around the times when things were particularly bad from P&M I started having lots of "bad luck" at work and at home - subconsciously I knew Hashem was sending me a message but I couldn't face the music and would blame others - especially my wife for my failures.

Needless to say my intimate life with my wife suffered from all of this in more ways that I can explain - predominately because I always saw the time that we spent together - as what was coming to me - What I deserved rather than what I could give to her.

In the last two years some very helpful rabbanim especially Rav Shalom Arush and the Garden of Peace have helped me to understand how vital it is that I put an end to this addiction - or at least start to treat it with more respect . To that end - Baruch Hashem I have maintained some extended periods of clean behavior on the order of months rather than weeks. I can't tell you what a difference it is to feel "clean" and have the monster that is the addiction hidden away somewhere. Unfortunately, because I haven't kept my wife up to date on my failures I couldn't enjoy with her my successes but I think she has sensed the difference. One very helpful comment that one of the Rabbim gave me was

[b]Even if your wife doesn't know what you have been or have not been doing Hashem will make it clear as day in your face and she will sense it

This is 100% true and I think would help any addict to realize how much his wife knows even if they are not directly informed.

The one critical mistake in this recovery that I made was thinking that as long as I didn't look at "real P" I was ok. Looking at facebook pictures or questionable You Tube videos was ok because there was no real nudity- WRONG - just triggering yourself over and over again even on a " low level" just sets you up for failure. More importantly your mind is on the gutter even if you are not actually swimming in it.

Of course these "low level" offences set me up for the big fall and I almost knew it was coming - but now - I think because Hashem expected more of me - the fall manifested itself in every aspect of my life - professionally I suffered - financially I " all of the sudden" found myself in overdraft. And the worst and most humbling I found myself unable to "perform" in the bedroom.

My wife realized that this could only mean one thing. My embarrassment was so great and yet I almost went down the path to solve my issues with pills and bandaids (literally) rather than treating the source of the problem.

My brilliant wife said to me - Hashem is sending you a message do you really want to ignore it by taking a pill and pretending you didn't hear the sirens ??

Then I went to shul for mincha - as I turned on the radio on the way home the news station had an interview with a psychologist about how some people think that all of life's problems can be solved with a "pill" = Wow - Hashem is speaking to me I thought !!!

The I realized some important things

1. Although I had not reached rock bottom I was getting close
2. There way no way I could "solve this problem on my own.
3. No other challenge in my life was as important as this one - nothing - no professional - nothing
4. Hashem loves me so much he gives me direct messages and gentle knocks on the door when I step out of line - I am so lucky to be sitting in his beautiful succcah of Shechinah !!!!
5. There is nothing about quitting an addiction that can be part-way - just like alchol or smoking - one cigarette or one drink is WAY too many no matter what the alchol content might be !
6. My life had reached a watershed - either I was going to live it the right way or I was going to flush it down sink

I pray I can keep the faith and emunah that has guided me this far and keep the deamon buried - I know it will always be there and that I am truly an addict - but I also know that hashem loves me and wants me to succeed

may we all be zoceh to live life as it was meant to be lived !!!!

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