

It's Time To Step Up...Here's My StoryPosted by Avraham613 - 20 Jun 2012 03:39

I have been on and off this site for around 3 years now. I have utilized many of the tools here but never really got involved in the forum. Over the last few weeks, I have posted for the first time asking for some help. I received some great feedback and was encouraged to come clean and introduce myself as honestly as possible. So here goes...

Unfortunately, my story sounds similar to many of those I have read on the forum. I am currently 25 years old and married with one child B"H. I have always considered myself to be a very sexual type of person. As far back as 11 or 12 years old, I remember myself being attracted to inappropriate pictures. The environment that I grew up in, never really emphasized any importance to "look away" so I enjoyed what I had available to me. My parents (both amazing people), never thought twice about giving me my own laptop when I was around 14 or 15 so I, like any other innocent teenager gladly accepted. At times I tried to blame my parents for allowing me this accessibility when my struggles increased but I know now that Hashem wanted me to grow up a certain way.

I quickly began to use my laptop for very easy access to p***. If I remember correctly, I looked forward to getting into bed at night knowing that I had my favorite part of the day awaiting me. There were no filters, no one watching and no one even using that computer except for me. I would look at pictures and videos for hours on a nightly basis which always ended with being Mz"l throughout those highly impressionable years of 14-18. The environment I grew up in and the Yeshiva I went to never really spoke much about the dangers of the internet at that point.

Along with these nightly "adventures" came a total disregard for Shomer Negiah. Again, where I was in school (yes, a Yeshiva day school), the amount of girls one touched was an honor, not something to be ashamed of. I truly believe that these two factors, the internet and the constant physical contact with other girls were the main source of my future struggles.

Baruch Hashem I had a sincere desire to go to Eretz Yisroel for a year (or more) and become more serious about my Yiddishkeit. I went to Yeshiva in Israel for 2 years and almost completely cut out any form of inappropriate material. I loved (and still love) learning a lot, got very serious and made very drastic changes in my life over those years. I became Shomer Negiah from the day I stepped off the plane in Israel even though I had a girl friend at the time. She gladly agreed to my plan (although this was a major change for us both) and B"H neither of us ever slipped from that day onward.

I became known as a very serious learner and a real shtark kid. My parents had their reservations because this was not how I grew up but warmly accepted all of my changes. When I returned home from Israel (with the same girl friend), I placed myself in a great environment in order to succeed in my learning. As I got back to America, I continued learning very seriously. The problem was that when I went back home (for weekends etc.) I began to get that same feeling that I knew all too well. I remember the first time I slipped after all my work and changes. It was devastating and I promised myself it would never happen again. Unfortunately, that one slip turned into weekly slips. Every weekend it became routine to come home and go straight to my computer that I had not used all week in Yeshiva. It would kill me that I would spend my

weeks learning every spare second I had and just give it all up on the weekends. I felt this growing contradiction within me but could do nothing about it. The addiction began to grow even more than it was pre-Israel in some ways. Now, I had an image to maintain. Suddenly, I found myself searching desperately to form online discreet relationships with random girls just to relieve the inner stress I was feeling. On one hand, I longed for my previous High School lifestyle, but on the other, I loved being frum. More importantly, I loved the way others perceived me and was not willing to give that up. A secret life was the only solution. I tried what I could to avoid those weekly occurrences but to no avail. I continued learning shtark but was constantly nichshol.

I cried many time to Hkb"h to help me get over this issue so I could be completely engrossed in my learning and Avodas Hashem but I kept slipping. This continued for a few years until I was around 21. That girl friend I had since High School and I never split up. We continued to grow and learn together. She made the same types of changes I did. She was always supportive of my learning and growth while she continued to grow on her own. We decided to get married early (being shomer negiah with a girl friend can only last so long) and I was ecstatic to finally resolve this issue once and for all through marriage. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think the issue would continue once I was married.

I was right..... in the beginning. I had no desire to look or doing anything I shouldn't and was completely submerged in doing what I knew I was supposed to. Unfortunately, those initial feelings began to slowly go away while those old, unwanted desires crept back in. Now that I was not learning night seder in Yeshiva, I had plenty of time at home with my computer. I hated myself for "cheating" on my wife in that way. I felt so guilty for looking at other women but felt completely powerless. The thrill of meeting other women discreetly over the internet (even just to schmooze) was too powerful for me to stop on my own. All my wife ever did was smile and be that perfect Kallah any guy could ever ask for. I couldn't continue hurting her like this....even if she didn't know.

My wife and I always had very open lines of communication and I felt that I could truly tell her anything, so I did. I told her about my struggles, what I used to do every night in High School (some of this stuff she already knew from previous conversations but not to this extent). I never told her that I tried to form dumb online relationships with random women because I felt it would hurt her too much. She was completely understanding, never judgmental and wanted to do anything she could to help me. Randomly, she would ask me if I looked at other girls because I didn't get enough satisfaction from her. I would cry deep down for giving her those insecurities after convincing her that it was just my "addiction" and had nothing to do with a Chisaron in her. I thank Hashem for giving me such an amazing wife.

Over those years, I decided I wanted to become a Rebbe. I wanted to devote my life to guiding kids growing up in a similar situation that I did, trying to prevent them from making certain choices that I might have made. My wife was all for it and we have been in this together for a few years now. Only because of GYE have I made the progress that I have. It brings tears to my eyes that I can count the number of times I was Mz"l this year on one hand. For me, this was unheard of. Recently, I saw a post on the forum about someone that struggled with going to inappropriate masseuses. I am not going to lie, I have been feeling those taivas lately myself. But when I saw the cycle he suddenly found himself in (and b"h is getting out of) I decided I cannot let myself fall into that world....who knows if I will be able to get out like him? I do go

through swings of taiva and am trying very hard to work on avoiding those vicious cycles. I have strict filters and accountability on all computers that surround me. I have acted out on occasion this year and felt horrible about it, especially when I am preaching to kids the opposite. But, I have come to realize that my clean streaks never go to waste and I just need to get back up and keep going. Any slip I ever had always ended in disgust and despair. If I can focus on the result without having to go through that torturous process, I know I can prevent many falls iy"h. I thank GYE and everyone here for all your help and support and look forward to many more years of Kedusha and Tahara.

All the best,
Avraham

=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by geshertzarmeod - 03 Jul 2012 18:20

[Avraham613 wrote on 03 Jul 2012 00:08:](#)

I am happy to say that I finally broke the ice.

I spoke to someone over the phone for the first time during a struggle.

Even if it was only for a few minutes, being able to hear another perspective on the matzav was beautiful and something I never experienced before.

I never invited someone else into that part of my life....but it was awesome.

Shkoyach Gadol to all you tzaddikim.

Iy'h we will continue to fight this together.

Avraham

Congrats on the breakthrough!

It's an amazing feeling coming out of the closet, isn't it?

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Avraham613 - 03 Jul 2012 23:15

Ha - interesting way to put it but yea.

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by addictioncounselor - 04 Jul 2012 13:21

i like how in your first post you put the word "addiction" in quotations.

if you are really addicted (lashon #1), or an addict (lashon #2), that's okay!

in the vast realm of recovery experts, there is dispute about whether it is better for us to say "i am an addict" (12 step facilitation view) and to strongly identify yourself with the disease model of addiction, or to say "i am charlie brown, and i have an addiction (he used cocaine heavily after snooie died). both ways have pros, cons, twists and turns, and each person must make the right mixture for himself with his sponsor or therapist.

the main thing is to be happy with how God made you and to appreciate the individual challenge and tafkid he gave you.

i see your'e doing well, i just wanted to clarify that.

ac999

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Avraham613 - 05 Jul 2012 00:52

Chevra -

Unfortunately, I had a bad fall last night. I was doing well and took positive steps I never have before in my life. But last night I fell probably worse than I have before in my life as well.

I am taking the fall somewhat with the proper perspective of trying to stay positive and get right back on track. But I'm not gunna lie, I am still kinda depressed about it.

I am wondering if these steps that I have taken and the progress I've made (regarding making my recovery real and a priority) is directly related to the degree in which I fell. Maybe the Y"H is working extra hard because he knows I am finally going in the right direction. Maybe I am putting too much focus on my struggles that it is now always on my mind, causing me to act out worse than before.

Is this normal?

I read a recent chizuk email where Dov describes how he tries not to think about his addiction too much. The less attention we give it, the less it will effect us.

Maybe I am putting too much time and thought into this. I'm a little confused.

Anyway.... thanks again.

Avraham

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story

Posted by bzyzgye - 05 Jul 2012 00:59

Thank you Avraham for speaking up, I see i'm not the only one with such thoughts. I found it interesting too that since I started posting on the forum about 2 weeks ago I fell 3 times (today being the 3rd). In the past I made till 70 days clean now I find I don't go by 5-6 days without a fall.

I'd appreciate the responses this would bring from the pros out there.

I try to "keep climbing"

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by E-Tek - 05 Jul 2012 02:02

Well, I'm not a pro, but here's my two cents.

Starting the day I joined the forum, I spent about two months without breaking a week. Previously, even a moderate effort gained me at least two weeks (and as much as two months), not that I did it too often.

So I can relate to the fact that my efforts and focus in this area have been causing me to fall earlier.

By the way, I'm currently 10 days clean- longer than I've done since my first visit here. But I don't feel like it's a big deal. It's simply a result of the work I've been doing in all areas of my life, which is essentially what the 12 steps accomplish over time. Even with my falls, I felt my progress over time- and I still do. It helped, of course, that Mottel kept asking me what I would do differently every time I reported my fall.

Nu. (That's Dov's line.) Don't obsess too much about the fall itself. Try to see where you've made progress, and what needs more work. See if you can avoid the slips that lead to your fall, specifically. But most importantly, move on. Keep going. And in the shprach, KOT!

Hatzlacha, and call me!

Meir

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Avraham613 - 05 Jul 2012 02:23

I just feel like all of the sudden every second of my day revolves around this specific aspect of my life. It was never like that before.

I don't necessarily relate it completely to my increased involvement on GYE, but I'm just nervous.

My fall last night was pretty bad. I texted a few guys immediately after it happened which I have never done before.

I'm just confused/frustrated.

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by addictioncounselor - 05 Jul 2012 07:09

try texting, actually calling 10 people who answer the call BEFORE you act out, texting people after is good, and you get a pat on the back. so now call a few live people before you decide to act on anything silly. THAT is the next step.

pardon me for asking but.....from whereth does thou get access to porn, or chat rooms, or whatever it is that you struggle with?

is it dad's pc and he won't get a filter? is it your pc and you deep down dont want a filter? do you have a filter like k9 but know the password? do you send your webchaver to hugh hefner so it gives no accountability? is the pc even the problem? is it coming from looking out the window at night at the chasuna hall and all the people standing outside?

whare do you seem to get an enviroment of lust material from? please explain

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by obormottel - 05 Jul 2012 07:10

The idea is to reach out before. ...

Keep moving forward.

Mottel

=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Dov - 05 Jul 2012 17:14

[Avraham613 wrote on 05 Jul 2012 02:23:](#)

I just feel like all of the sudden every second of my day revolves around this specific aspect of my life. It was never like that before.

I don't necessarily relate it completely to my increased involvement on GYE, but I'm just nervous.

My fall last night was pretty bad. I texted a few guys immediately after it happened which I have never done before.

I'm just confused/frustrated.

Of **course** it can be related to your involvement with GYE! The problem we have is obviously *increased* when we keep thinking about it all the time. It does not matter *that* much if we are thinking about naked people - or about not thinking about naked people...*either way, we are walking around thinking about naked people all the time!*

In the program we call that 'living in the problem, instead of in the solution'. The **problem** is *fighting and struggling against lust*. The solution is surrender. Giving up the fight...unless you are really winning. But it does not see you are, if you are seeing that you are doing worse, right?

'Let go and let G-d' sounds like chinese, at first. But really, the wages of struggling, are just focusing on it even more. And that is just another way to lose, actually

Success in letting go takes time, takes practice, and takes connection with others who are

actually doing it successfully. I have not met people who have learned how to do it from a *book*.

Get me? You can do this, as long as you realize that you can't.

If you are an addict (which I am not saying you are, just sharing this idea - you take it or leave it as you see fit.)

=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Avraham613 - 06 Jul 2012 14:13

AC999 -

Yes, I do have a filter and I have 2 accountability partners (one of them being my wife) through WebChaver.

I deleted the browser off my blackberry almost 2 years ago.

I don't have any other access porn on the computer. That being said, when all that is cut off, we tend to look for other ways to fill in the gap. This was my problem.

Dov - I realize that I need to let go and let Hashem take over the fight for me. I daven daily that even though I have no idea what the heck that means He should do it for me anyway. My question is, practically, what is there to do in order to instill that mindset? What should I actually be doing in order to surrender the fight to Hashem?

Thanks again for the chizuk.

Avraham

=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Dov - 06 Jul 2012 18:03

[Avraham613 wrote on 06 Jul 2012 14:13:](#)

AC999 -

Yes, I do have a filter and I have 2 accountability partners (one of them being my wife) through WebChaver.

I deleted the browser off my blackberry almost 2 years ago.

I don't have any other access porn on the computer. That being said, when all that is cut off, we tend to look for other ways to fill in the gap. This was my problem.

Dov - I realize that I need to let go and let Hashem take over the fight for me. I daven daily that even though I have no idea what the heck that means He should do it for me anyway. My question is, practically, what is there to do in order to instill that mindset? What should I actually be doing in order to surrender the fight to Hashem?

Thanks again for the chizuk.

Avraham

The concrete things begin with exactly what AC999 mentioned. Taking action to *get rid of our hidden bottles*. You have done a lot of that already. Admitting the truth about ourselves to real people - this forum is great, but not nearly enough for many. Real talk - at least on the phone - using our real voice and our real first name...preferably face to face using our real faces...that is more.

Davening for the women we lust after when we see them, instead of struggling with the 'fight' is another big action to take. The fighting and 'overcoming' are lusts - egotistical spiritual lusts. The egotism needs to go...slowly, even more than the lust does. Much more, actually.

Laughing at the irony and silliness of our 'big' challenges is also is a major thing. It should be funny that a voluptuous woman just jogged by - not a major calamity and spiritual challenge. "Gevalt...funny - of all people for her to wiggle by, He chose me! Hashem's sense of humor!" and I can laugh about it. Thank G-d. Even my wife laughs about it the same way when we are somewhere and someone walks by *ridiculously* pritzusdikly :o 8) :(- the wife and I look at each other and laugh! Not at the person - she probably does not know any better. We laugh at the irony of me - a recovering pervert - being here now... That's far, far better than the old, sick way: *giving this oblivious girl the **power** of turning her into some kind of she-witch with awesome powers of "**lustifying me**".* Gevalt, I wanna hurl. Yeah, of course I am powerless and nuts over lust - I cannot control and enjoy it! But **we give** this particular woman that power by our struggling and making a big stink about it/her. She is doing her job in G-d's Will somehow we can't understand - and we do ours. That's it. Kind of funny, really...

=====
=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story

Posted by E-Tek - 06 Jul 2012 18:15

[Avraham613 wrote on 06 Jul 2012 14:13:](#)

That being said, when all that is cut off, we tend to look for other ways to fill in the gap. This IS OUR problem.

Fixed. We all deal with this.

And Dov, thanks for that.

=====

=====

Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story

Posted by Avraham613 - 08 Jul 2012 22:04

Dov-

Shkoyach for your powerful words once again.

I had a great shabbos and little struggle.

Im nervous that if I go on a great clean streak now it's really only because of the disgust I felt after my fall. Like, I would never be able to go on this streak if I wasn't for what I did last week. This happened to me once right before my biggest streak (this year). I fell really hard and then stayed completely clean for about 4 months (until my most recent struggles) .

Maybe this time around will be different now that I have different tools to use.....I hope.

Avraham

=====

=====