

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

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by obormottel - 24 Jul 2012 14:53

You too, have a great sober day, just like yesterday.

Mottel

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by JustKeepGoing - 24 Jul 2012 18:44

[Keep wrote on 24 Jul 2012 05:06:](#)

From what I understand that the havah amina will always be in our mind, we just work 1 hour at a time to keep it from becoming a maskanah.

I enjoyed that.

Keep it up Avraham! Im gonna read some of those stories b'li neder bc of you

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

Posted by Avraham613 - 25 Jul 2012 02:47

I mentioned another big success I had last night. Here it is:

I came home from playing ball and my wife was already sleeping. It was early, only about 9:15 PM. Not only was it early and I was basically free to do what I wanted but my wife also accidentally left her computer (which is ALWAYS locked) on and ready for use. I made up in my mind that this was the perfect night to go out to a strip club. There was nothing at that point that was gunna hold me back.

I showered (cold water of course, gotta keep halacha as I prepare to go to a makom znus right? go figure) quickly and got ready for my long awaited night out. I went on her computer to get the address of the one that wasn't too far and definitely not too close. I got the address and called up to confirm it was open.

The guy that answered the phone just sounded like the lowest, dirtiest, piece of garbage I have ever come in contact with. Every question was answered with a ton of attitude and obnoxiousness. I hung up the phone and just sat on my couch and thought. And thought.

I looked up and saw all of the pictures around my house of me, my wife and my son all smiling together. I thought about the guy I had just hung up with. I thought about spending time with him and people like him and then waking up in the morning to my son jumping into my bed.

I knew I was in the middle of an intense battle between both my Yetzers. I knew that whichever road I chose, I would look back to this night as a major pivot in my life.

I took a deep breath, and shut the computer (automatically locking it). I locked up my house, got into bed, smiled at my sleeping wife, thanked Hashem for stepping into the rink with me, and went to sleep.

I woke up this morning feeling better than I ever have in a very long time. I was flying all day today. I am smiling right now as I write this.

Thank you to everyone for all your chizuk and help.

Without you....this post would have been very different.

Layla Tov,

Avraham

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by JustKeepGoing - 25 Jul 2012 04:28

Beautiful

Keep going in the right direction. Its remembering what will be AFTER acting out that always helps, focusing on what I get with this and what do I get with that. I saw this concept so much in your post, It was very.. refreshing and enjoyable. Thank you.

Keep GOING!!

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 25 Jul 2012 14:24

Dear Avraham613,

Thanks for sharing that powerful story. It was so well written that I felt I was there with you, and I was moved to tears on the positive outcome B"H. Living through this experience, and sharing it, should give you (and all of us) tremendous chizzuk for the future.

Hatzlacha

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by obormottel - 25 Jul 2012 14:33

Avi!

I second JKG's in that it helps a great deal to "watch the movie till the end." I am glad to learn that you beat the Evil one this time around.

Also, did you try calling the management of that joint to complain about the rude bastard they have answering phones? I'm sure they would appreciate customer feedback, afterall he turned away a client with his rotten attitude.

I hate it when people are rude and obnoxious to me when all I'm trying to do is to give them my money.

On a bit more serious note, I get a feeling you haven't been completely honest with us.

You've been around the forum and GYE for over three years, if I recall. I find it hard to beleive that you've never gone to a strip joint or a massage parlor. Your toying with these ideas despite your participation here, shows (to me, anyways) that the "issues" you're trying to work on run much deeper than you're portraying.

So my question is: Is it fair to assume that you feel that it's just an inclination that you're battling? Afterall, you're a young, red-blooded male, and which young man doesn't obsess over going to places of ill-repute?

I've gone to my share of strip clubs. I remember being anxious about going, worrying about a "bully" attitude of security and doormen. I remember finding out that I overpaid for a particular service, and feeling taken advantage of by a working girl.

How dumb is this?! By default, those places take advantage of their customers. In most cases, patrons of such places are addicted and cannot stop going. There is no reason to be nice to junkies, or to provide "an excellent customer service". You have no choice but to go back, and there is plenty of us, ill men, out there, for them not to worry about a non-returning customer.

So while your victory last night is precious, because you takke didn't go anywhere, I think that it is insignificant in the larger picture, simply because you are not making any investment into the future.

Are you ready to concede that the pull you feel towards these places and activities does not come from a healthy place?

Are you willing to get well or are you just putting this on hold, till you find a friendlier pimp?

And finally, what fences are you putting in TODAY, on the heels of last night experience, so that next time you get an idea to go straying on your wife, you won't take it as far as showering, looking up a place, calling them, preparing the money, preparing an excuse for the wife, etc?

Mottel

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by alexeliezer - 25 Jul 2012 14:45

Wow!

That was a major turnaround. Baruch Hashem!

Hopefully you'll get to the point where you intercept these hava aminos at an earlier stage -- as soon as the initial thought comes.

Glad to hear you're still on track.

Have a great clean day.

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by mifatfait - 25 Jul 2012 17:32

Avrohom,

Beautifull story. I'm also still struggling for basic sobriety, I find that the most important thing to take away from these types of successess is like you wrote: that you "thanked Hashem for stepping in the rink with me". It's soooo important to realize that I'm just a sick addict that Hashem is helping to get better. Somehow when I feel that all the way in my heart it gives me an inner calmness that I can't feel when I'm stuck alone with my own kochos. I saw once in the White Book that the yesod of all the 12 steps is humility, for us that means also to feel dependant only on Hashem - not on myself.

All the best!

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by MAALIN BAKODESH - 25 Jul 2012 21:16

These pimps one would call for services are all a bunch of nasty bit**. But our lusting doesnt stop bec. Of it. That is what i call "sick"

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by obormottel - 26 Jul 2012 01:13

[MAALIN wrote on 25 Jul 2012 21:16:](#)

These pimps one would call for services are all a bunch of nasty bit**. But our lusting doesnt stop bec. Of it. That is what i call "sick"

exactly the point I was trying to bring out. Thank you for that.

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Avraham613 - 26 Jul 2012 01:28

Thank you all for your beautiful feedback.

M.T - I am thrilled my story helps others, that gives me more chizuk than anything else...honestly.

Mottel - I was eagerly awaiting your brutally honest response. I am unclear though, what you are alluding to when you say " that the "issues" you're trying to work on run much deeper than you're portraying". Where are you going with that? Please clarify.

Also, in terms of making investments for the future, my davening is totally different than it ever

war before. I have never been so honest with G-d, telling Him straight out that I WANT to be nichshol tonight after Maariv and I am begging him to make sure that I don't do anything stupid that I will regret. I have 2 partners that I text and even call regularly before and during my struggle that before 1 1/2 months ago, I would never even think about doing. And, i post more on this forum over the last few weeks than I ever have over the last 3 years.

So yea, there have been major investments and serious steps towards my full recovery that I am extremely proud of. 2 months ago, I would have been out that door very quickly. Are there other types of investments that you think I should be taking at this point?

Thanks,

Avi

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Dov - 26 Jul 2012 01:39

Sweet how seeing reality for real and living in it as it really is, helps so much. Beautiful story.

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by obormottel - 26 Jul 2012 02:25

[Avraham613 wrote on 26 Jul 2012 01:28:](#)

I have never been so honest with G-d, telling Him straight out that I WANT to be nichshol tonight after Maariv and I am begging him to make sure that I don't do anything stupid that I will regret. I have 2 partners that I text and even call regularly before and during my struggle that before 1 1/2 months ago, I **would never even think about doing**. And, i post **more** on this forum over the last few weeks **than I ever have** over the last 3 years.

That's progress, I say. That's great!

So yea, there have been major investments and serious steps towards my full recovery that I am extremely proud of. 2 months ago, **I would have been out that door very quickly**. Are there other types of investments that you think I should be taking at this point?

Yes. For starters, being more honest with yourself, G-d, and us here, fellow travelers. Which leads me to:

I am unclear though, what you are alluding to when you say " that the "issues" you're trying to work on run much deeper than you're portraying". Where are you going with that? Please clarify.

I'm glad you asked. This is a very important question. Not even so much the "toichon" of it, as the fact that you had to ask.

Let me say it as I see it. You seem to have been taking my loving kindness in stride, as a grown man. Here comes:

From your initial and follow-up posts one would infer that the "problem" you're trying to battle here is watching porn and masturbating. That you have fantasies about sex-workers, but that you've never strayed from your family.

But when one says "couple of months ago I'd be out the door", to me it means two months ago he's been out the door. I'm not critisizing your choice of drug - G-d knows I've done some of it in one form or another - but I think that it's important for you to face "the exact nature of your wrongs" and admit that you are a user of a very powerful drug called lust. Now, some of us used this drug with prostitutes, while others were home-locked junkies of porn and images. But unless we were ready to honestly tell ourselves AND other safe people what exactly our issues were, we could not begin to recover.

Nobody knows who you are. Could you honestly tell us the true nature of your addiction?

And then, once we realize it is an addiction, we can start by taking necessary steps so that we don't nurture the thought of going (back) to the strip joint all day from shacharis, and with all that tension come home, run for shower, phone, computer, because the only thought on our minds is acting out. And then G-d needs to step in to the rink and send us an angry pimp and a feeling of insecurity.

One fence I would suggest is to call someone first thing in the morning every day to renew your commitment to sobriety for the next twenty four hours. It does wonders for me.

Ok.

Your turn.

Love,

Mottel

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Re: It's Time To Step Up...Here's My Story
Posted by Avraham613 - 26 Jul 2012 03:16

To tell you the truth, I have no problem with being even more open and honest.

Unlike many, the nature of my "drug" is not necessarily masturbation or even porn. I almost never (thinking back a few years now) have a serious desire to view pornography and masturbate. Granted, when I was younger I did this on a regular basis, but in my more recent years it has not been the source of my struggle (at least I don't think).

What I struggle with now (the last 2 years probably) is this strange desire to develop these dumb inter-personal relationships with random girls. B"H I was never able to form anything serious. I never met anyone online that I kept any form of serious relationship to. I just have a taiva to chat with other random girls online and "experience" them at a strip club or something of the sort.

I never acted out with a girl that I met, never spoke to any more than once, maybe twice and definitely never developed any form of an emotional connection with them b"H. I don't even have a desire to masturbate when I talk to them. I have fell over the past 2 years and have gone to a strip club twice (over a year apart) and felt nauseously disgusting after both times (both prompted major clean streaks, the biggest I've had).

I feel that the desire to speak to other girls is seriously drawn back to my younger years when I spoke to and had relationships with a different girl every week (literally) and get a thrill out of meeting new ones.

To sum it up, it hasn't necessarily been masturbation that kills me (although admittedly, I have slipped a few times), but this desire to speak to other girls. There is no filter or accountability when going to a strip club which makes it very easy. It is only because of Hashem that I have only gone twice (the last time being December 2011).

So, I guess that gives everyone a better picture of the nature of my addiction.

Hope this is what you meant Mottel.

Thanks again,

Avi

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