

Love to hear your words of inspiration - here's me
Posted by fightaddiction2 - 09 Apr 2013 18:31

Hi GYE,

First, a great thanks to the people behind this site, as well as Arutz Sheva for the ad that led me here.

Second, let me share a bit about where I'm coming from.

I grew up without knowing that m'ing was wrong. I started m'ing probably around the age of 9-10, was shown p**n by classmates around the time I was 12-13, and only in my late teens or early 20s did I find out it was wrong. (At least, that's how I remember things.) This was a difficult realization, having grown up outside Israel, where I absorbed Western culture, which encourages promiscuity in all shapes and forms. I also participated in that, sometimes even with pride, something of which I today am ashamed of and regret. I'm sharing this because I feel it's important to be as honest with myself as with you, and not hide things in an attempt to make myself out to have behaved better than I did. Hopefully the embarrassment will help atone for my sins.

On that note, I'd like to point out to Rabbis and religious educators that while it's important to honestly tell people that spilling seed is wrong, it's equally important to give people tools/help to fight their issues. Otherwise you're just giving people guilt, which can lead them to the path of teshuva (the path it lead me), but can also lead only to depression and Heaven forbid, suicide. At a very minimum you can tell people about guarding their eyes, internet filters and GYE.com

A bit more about my struggle - I've tried repeatedly to quit, making promises to G' and the like but returned many times, unfortunately. Recently I had my longest clean period ever, lasting about a year since I got married. As Rabbi Twerski wrote in the PDF on attitudes, marriage doesn't solve the problem (though I found it helps by providing a positive channel for sexual drives). What was more important is that I had a job where I was out of the house on a daily basis, leaving not long after my wife, and getting home when she'd already returned from work.

I had a slip around the end of our first year of marriage where I looked at porn, but refrained thank G' from m. That was about 2 months ago and a week or two. Since then I was fine but

again looked at p**n and began but did not finish m'ing 2 days ago.

On a related note, studying Torah (while leaving the computer off) in the morning for 1-2 hours has been of significant benefit, allowing me to spend the time productively without risking a fall as when I'm alone at the computer.

That said, some observations from my experience that will hopefully help others:

- **Sleep early**, because late nights lead to slip ups. I think the connection is that staying up late is an act against our better judgment, and it's easy to keep saying I'll just read one more article (another act against our better judgment, giving in to what we wouldn't do if we had more willpower), browse one more thing, until we get bored and when boredom hits, we turn to porn. Avoid the whole issue by preparing for bed around 9 and being in bed by 10. If you absolutely can't, then it's OK if you can go to bed by 10:10, 10:30 but the earlier the better. This will also help strengthen your willpower by giving you more energy the next day, and building your self control. Tiredness contributes directly to slip ups, be they tiredness at 3am or the next day ...

- **If you've ever felt yourself possibly addicted to something else, you might want to speak to a psychiatrist.** In my teens I was briefly addicted to online gambling, and for a while I was addicted to an online video game (from reading online, apparently lots of people find certain categories of online video games addictive). Before proposing to my then-girlfriend, I went to see a psychiatrist because I experienced terrible thoughts (including physical violence to myself and others) that just arose in my mind unbidden ... It turns out that I have obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), which explains the thoughts and also makes me more prone to addiction. Looking back, in my own case I believe I suffered from this going as far back as fourth or fifth grade, with better intervals where the thoughts would go away entirely and worse intervals where they were really frightening or weird (I'm straight but had thoughts of kissing my male math teacher).

I share this in case anyone else may experience something similar so that you can see a psychiatrist, too. I avoided it for a long time, fearing that I'd be wrapped up in a straight jacket as someone dangerously insane. As it turns out, the thoughts are the worst part of it and my psychiatrist said -- categorically -- that people with OCD never act on these OCD thoughts/impulses, thank G'. I hope that will encourage others out there who might share my prior fear. There are therapy options as well as medication options.

- **Doing chesed gets you out of the house** and focused on others. I know that this has helped me feel uplifted, proud of who I am, and benefits me as much as it does others... perhaps even more.

- Working at home from my computer made fighting this a lot harder than it might otherwise have been. I don't complain because G' gave me that as a means of earning a living and that enabled me to make aliyah (thank G'!) but working from home on the pc certainly had its disadvantages.

- **Look to find someone who cares about you who you can talk to.** Sometimes even best friends didn't understand my problem so much or weren't inclined to listen... but other people are. My parents didn't know how to react when I told them about my problem, though they were supportive of my efforts to quit and my use of an internet filter.

My wife has been phenomenally understanding and I admit to her when I slip up, something I started doing even when we were still just dating. She comforts me in those moments and reminds me that it's an addiction I'm dealing with, which helps me get perspective. That said, she was concerned that I'd be comparing her to other women after my most recent slip up, and it felt horrible to see that I upset her. She's the love of my life and anything that upsets her also upsets me, all the more so if I'm the cause. So protecting her from harm and protecting our relationship is an additional motivator. I pray that G' will take away this lust and these addictions so that our marriage will always be strong and so that I can do His Will.

In any event, I think it's important for me to keep sharing with her when I slip up since it's a way of keeping myself accountable, as well as being honest and not hiding stuff from my wife. Though I wonder if I should share this with a rabbi instead or someone like that? I'd like to also look at the reporting tools that send a list of suspect sites to a third party.

Lastly, I'd love to hear any words of encouragement and your own personal inspiring experiences, observations etc. How do you avoid the trap? Who have you spoken with? Which tools, attitudes etc shared on the site have been the most useful to you? I read in the attitudes PDF that addressing the causes of all this means improving midot. Any practical advice on this?

I'm 25 and have been trying to quit for years ... I really hope that one day I'll have addressed the root of this and be able to proudly say that "once [I was] an addict ... [today I am] no longer an addict."

(Yes, I know Rabbi Twerski's PDF says once an addict, always an addict. I don't happen to find that very inspiring, nor do I take comfort in the analogy to someone lacking an iron deficiency who can just take iron pills:

- Someone who has suffered from this addiction (or anything really) doesn't want to hear that they'll always be at risk of suffering from it again.

- And the analogy to iron deficiency is poor because one is born with iron deficiency, while p**n addiction is something I developed myself.

Even if my environment was bad and has lots of blame to share, I still had free choice.

And even if as the Vilna Gaon might put it, I may be the gilgul of a soul who needs to correct this trait, such that I was really born with this problem (like someone born with iron deficiency), I still have free choice.

G' doesn't give us challenges that we can't overcome, and I pray to Him that He will save me from this and help me to overcome this challenge. If someone were to share this w Rabbi Twerski, it might be helpful for future versions of the PDF.)

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Re: Love to hear your words of inspiration - here's me
Posted by the.guard - 09 Apr 2013 19:16

What Rabbi Twerski means is that by doing it over many years we have developed certain pathways in our brains which will always be there. That is actually important to know because, as people with this condition, we need to be extra careful. We can be clean for 20 years, but if we open the door to lust even a little bit, we can quickly fall back into the old patterns/pathways. So being an addict for life is not a downside. It is a bonus. Because we know that we cannot AFFORD to lust, even a little bit. We must avoid it at all costs or we can get sucked back in.

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Re: Love to hear your words of inspiration - here's me

Posted by gibbor120 - 09 Apr 2013 20:30

You seem to have a pretty good handle on it. If I could just add to what guard is saying. A person can be born with diabetes, or a person can develop it from poor eating habits. Both need to take insulin and both can't go back to being non-diabetic. But, it's really not that important right now. Being sober TODAY is important. Don't worry NOW about whether or not you can be a "former" addict (many years from now) or not.

About using your wife as an accountability partner. I don't think it's a good idea to tell her everything (you seem to be finding that out). I don't think it's a good idea to tell her nothing (you don't want her to wonder what you are doing behind her back. She needs to feel she can trust you). I honestly don't have a good formula for this, and struggle with it myself.

Keep posting and KOT!

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Re: Love to hear your words of inspiration - here's me

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 10 Apr 2013 17:05

Hello Fightaddiction2,

Welcome to the forum. What you mentioned about finding someone to talk to (who can relate to all this), that's something you'll find a lot of here on GYE.

I second Gibbor--the wife is not exactly the best accountability partner. I've definitely been through this and have learned the hard way. From time to time there are things I need to tell my wife but then, one of the klallim of Loshon Hara comes to mind as very apropos--tell only as much as you need to in order to get the job done.

Instead of sharing all your slips and falls with your wife, since she's supportive and wants to help and seems to appreciate that this is an addiction and that you're working on recovery and and seems like she wants to be involved here, it might be more helpful (for the both of you) for

your wife to get involved with other wives of addicts. For starters, there's a separate section on GYE for this. The dynamics between you, though well-intentioned, might actually be enabling the sickness in some way.

As far as hearing our experience, search around the forum. Especially the Wall of Honor section and the Introduce Yourself. That's good for starters, you'll see lots of people's stories and, as the forum has been around now for a few years, you'll also be able to see the changes that recovery has made in people's lives through time.

Sounds like you're putting quite a lot of thought and effort into recovery.

Welcome to the forum, and keep on keeping on posting.

--Elyah

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Re: Love to hear your words of inspiration - here's me
Posted by fightaddiction2 - 11 Apr 2013 15:40

@Guard - I think I see what you mean - the point being to be more careful than others to avoid this at all costs. Because we're more susceptible than others. Ok, fair point. I maintain that it can be phrased differently because the whole iron thing etc. is more depressing than it is inspiring.

@Gibbor - You're right, remaining sober today is more important than what we might hope for 20 years from now.

@Gibbor and @eye-nonymous - OK, I hear you regarding the accountability stuff. But I'm not sure who to speak to. I'd feel embarrassed to share this sort of thing with my rabbi, and am very reluctant to risk losing his respect... I don't know how I could look him in the eye afterwards. I spoke to a secular psychologist about it but I don't think she saw it as a problem objectively. (Though she said something that I read in one of the PDFs here, about telling yourself that you won't slip for the next x hours, and that from time y you're allowed. One of the PDFs said

something along the lines of tell yourself you'll stay sober today and can m tomorrow, with the idea that hopefully by tomorrow the desire will have passed. Is the nuance of later today vs tomorrow significant or not? Were they saying the same thing?) I also don't know if a fellow addict is a good accountability partner since it might give them bad inspiration (an issue on some threads here, by the way, when people get too graphic).

Who would you speak to?

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Re: Love to hear your words of inspiration - here's me
Posted by tocontrolmyself - 11 Apr 2013 19:20

if you speak to an anonymous guy whos done the 12 steps thats a great idea as they wont get triggered that easily.

the truth be told its not necessary to get graphic.talking about solutions,underlying stresses and a new relationship with our all time companion- Hashem is not triggering and thats the direction which will bring us to freedom.

Hatzlocho rabba and all the best!

KOT & KIT

(keep on trucking and keep in touch)!

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Re: Love to hear your words of inspiration - here's me
Posted by gibbor120 - 11 Apr 2013 19:51

[fightaddiction2 wrote:](#)

@Guard - I think I see what you mean - the point being to be more careful than others to avoid this at all costs. Because we're more susceptible than others. Ok, fair point. I maintain that it can

be phrased differently because the whole iron thing etc. is more depressing than it is inspiring.

Inspiration is overrated. Acceptance of reality is far more precious. What would you tell someone with an iron deficiency? It's not that bad, hopefully it will pass... I know someone that doesn't have to take iron pills any more... OR take your iron pills! One thing is for certain, if the fellow doesn't ACCEPT that he has an iron deficiency, he won't take his pills.

[fightaddiction2 wrote:](#)

@Gibbor and @eye-nonymous - OK, I hear you regarding the accountability stuff. But I'm not sure who to speak to. I'd feel embarrassed to share this sort of thing with my rabbi, and am very reluctant to risk losing his respect... I don't know how I could look him in the eye afterwards...

Who would you speak to?

). If he is wise and understanding, you will not lose his respect. I think most rabbonim have heard this countless times. It is a VERY widespread problem.

You can PM people on this forum. Many will give you their phone number. There are 12 step phone conferences....

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Re: Love to hear your words of inspiration - here's me
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 12 Apr 2013 11:05

I'll just second Gibbor about PM people on this forum and get numbers. And tocontrolmyself, that you don't have to get graphic. Frankly, there's nothing you can really say that the other fellow hasn't thought of already. On the other extreme, if you're too vague, it also doesn't help. I've seen a lot of posts, "I fell, what should I do!" There's not enough information there to help the guy at all.

--Elyah

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