

Looking for direction

Posted by hunjy1 - 11 Nov 2013 10:56

I am new to GYE, but I wish I had found it much earlier. after just a few days of reading through some articles and posts I already feel like things are changing for the better.

I guess I'll start by telling my story (hopefully in short). I am a yungerman learning in kollel for a few years now and I doubt anyone who knows me suspects me of my dark secret. I grew up in a more modern family and was exposed to small amounts of inappropriate material on the internet when I was still young. I was good with computers and I guess I was curious. well, after that I got turned on to learning and went to yeshiva and really thrived there. but as much as I grew in my learning and in other areas, I would still somehow "fall" here and there. it really made me depressed to be living this sort of double life but I still convinced myself that each incident was isolated and I didn't realize how severe my problem was. my addictions are for websites with explicit pictures and videos (it's embarrassing to even write that but it's actually my first time ever openly admitting it in any way, so it also feels good to finally let it out).

I think the rest of my story is somewhat standard... got married thinking I would never relapse (and didn't for a while), "accidentally" ended up finding those old websites, and looking at them and being motzie z"l r"l.

I always wanted to seek guidance but was never brave enough. now that I have found GYE I believe I can really overcome this. my main problem with beginning the process is that I'm not sure how to classify my addiction. when I'm being pulled by my y"ch to lust, the temptations are so strong they are debilitating. I may find myself staying up until crazy hours, not being able to focus on my learning, not taking care of my responsibilities properly, and not treating those around me the right way. and of course looking at the websites and...

but the taavos aren't always there. in fact I sometimes go months at a time without an incident (although there are things I'm sure that I do subconsciously because of my addiction). so I don't think making these fences or shvuos will help me. I already have a pretty good filter set up and I desperately want to stop. of course there are cracks in the filter. and I've also found that I don't need all that much material to get my lusts going. the biggest issue is my smartphone which I had blocked all internet apps right away when getting it and my wife has password (she doesn't know anything about my addiction). but I "accidentally" found a way to get to internet through a different app and it's not so simple to block it.

sorry for not keeping short but when you're drowning it's hard to be precise. I can't face myself anymore and even though i'm not lusting right now I know the y"ch will sneak up on me eventually. please help me if you can. any thoughts on what to do next and chizuk would really help. thanks to all the members of this site and it's staff for being here for each other.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by gibbor120 - 09 Dec 2013 20:55

[Dov wrote:](#)

But what do we say for guys who struggle with the desire for some porn and masturbation once in a while and are certainly *not* addicts? They are the majority, I think. Should they be ignored - or worse, should they be told they 'have an addiction' just because their rebbis have no clue how to help them?

I personally think, most of the same tools that help addicts can help non-addicts. I realize an addict has reached a place of desperation and cannot help himself any more, but most of the 12 steps apply equally to a non-addict. The major difference is the desperation and **need** to rely on G-d for an addict. However, learning to live with G-d, which is the crux of the steps as I understand them, should help a non-addict as well live a ~~lust-free~~ lust-reduced life.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by Dov - 10 Dec 2013 23:02

Agreed...sort of.

I think it is no good messing around with pretending one is powerless against lust, if they really are normal. A normal (non-addict) Jew is able to 'lust like a gentleman'. Meaning, he can struggle with fantasies, occasionally give in to them and sin, do Teshuvah, and live a sane life. That is what Teshuvah is made for. Normal, occasional, failure. Not for nothing do Chaza"l teach us of a yetzer hora, etc.

Sure, some of the wisdom of 12 step recovery and addictions psychology, etc., will be a great help to anyone struggling with a habit or desire. There is a lot of crossover. But to say that such people are truly powerless? I cannot accept that Chaza"l and all the mussar sforim about fighting the YH are really irrelevant nowadays. I do believe in a yetzer hora and in a healthy Jew's place in fighting and subduing it in some fashion, for most Jews.

But *for addicts*, the denial that we **are** ill and failures at 'lusting like a gentleman', leads us into a terrible, ugly mess that we do not usually get out of. We really make a royal mess of things and

cannot accept life, cannot accept ourselves, get sick and tired of it all, and often make those around us sick and tired of it all (and of us), too. I really see the 12 steps as a *fantastic* tool for those people. I am one of them. Part of my davening each day is thanking Hashem that I did not get lost in the poison of trying to 'subdue my yetzer hora' so far. An acceptance that such is not my cheilek.

And being clean for years and years is really irrelevant to me. For what else am I to do: experiement some more? I have experimented enough for twenty years as a frum Jews acting his brains out. Should I try to lust a little every year on my SA anniversary - just to see if maybe by now I have been cured of my disease and can now 'lust like a gentleman', sin a little, do teshuvah and move on just like everyone else can?

Been there, done that.

I see I am still outgrowing the things that made me act out in the past. I also see that stealing even a little bit of lust starts to change my insides back to something like what they were like way back when. So I have emunah p'shuta that I do not have the capacity most people (whether they are frum Jews, non-frum Jews, or goyim) have, to 'lust like a gentleman'. Having the wonderful weapon of Teshuva and G-d forgiveness against selling myself down the river is no nechomah at all. I am not interested in 'Teshuvah', but in living sanely *today*. So I stay sober and I work recovery. Probably till I die...probably.

Maybe I *will* get cured of it and not need it any more. Seriously. I haven't the hubris to crow "Once an addict, always an addict!" - for 'always' is (b"H) not my business. "We can only speak for ourselves," right?

The curse of addiction. \

Nu.

Such a curse, I can live with.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by hunjy1 - 11 Dec 2013 00:26

Thanks to gibbor and dov for their insights.

So I think for me right now, attempting to figure out if I am powerless isn't getting me anywhere. So I will try the conventional mehalech *again*, but this time with help from the GYE tzibur. If none of that works I will probably feel hopeless and then understand what it means to be powerless. I hope that doesn't happen but I will try to be honest.

I found some great threads posted by battleworn and others. I need to build a relationship with Hashem. I have been learning shaar habitachon and that really gives a whole new perspective on everyday life with Hashem. But for something a little more tangible, was thinking about starting with tfila. Not sure. Any suggestions?

Just a thought: I often feel one of those davening hisorerus squirts when I get to the words l'maan lo niga larik v'lo neileid l'bhehola. I think that it was out of fear of being punished for my horrible ways and because I felt I had ruined my chances of fulfilling my potential. Now I will view these words as a bakosha from Hashem that I should overcome this challenge and through that to fulfill my potential and bring light into my dark world and that of others.

yehi ratzon shenishmor chukecha ba'olma hazeh, v'nizkeh v'nichyeh, v'nirash tova uvracha...

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by Dov - 11 Dec 2013 00:27

[hunjy1 wrote:](#)

[Dov wrote:](#)

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What's the answer to that question?

Also, I am willing to speak to someone, I was just also working on the 12 steps but got stuck at step one. I know I am powerless against lust, but I'm not up against it right now. Should I still be surrendering and praying for sanity? I feel like doing that would be avoiding the issue a little. I wanna really change myself (not through fighting yh). Is there something else I should be trying?

Thanks for feedback

I wrote the comment you quote above in response to a post SIB101etc wrote. And the one above is a follow up to that.

But I have great news: The answer to that question probably *does not matter* in your case! Answering it is all theoretical. Who needs all the thinking and 'figuring it all out'? Not you probably, and certainly not me.

And regarding step 1, I want to suggest that you just look at yourself and your own situation after writing it all down. Not typing, but in your handwriting itself on paper. Seriously that's the only way I do stepwork, and others have also found that the heart expresses itself subtly differently that way than with typing.

Write out, in longhand, all the ways you have acted on your lust for the past years starting with the very first time, through till the very last one. For some it is not a great idea to do this work at night right before going to sleep. But whenever you do it, if it is very triggering, then you know

you are writing porn for yourself - that is not what I am referring to. This is about not explaining why or exactly how, but rather just writing *the facts* down - and AFTERWARD reading through it all yourself.

And then sharing it with a safe person who understands this stuff because they are either a shrink - or an addicts in sober recovery.

All this is before 'figuring it all out' or even figuring if you are an addict or not, whatever. This is a way to get to clarity before all that.

And if the sharing it with another is impossible to you now - can you wait to decide or even to *discuss* that question or issue with anyone (even with yourself!) - until after you have written it all out for *yourself*.

Taking real actions - not thinking - changes the way we see things.

Is this doable chaver?

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by hunjy1 - 11 Dec 2013 00:36

I guess we posted at the same time. Thanks for great practical advice. Sounds doable and like a good place to start.

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Dov - 13 Dec 2013 05:58

[hunjy1 wrote:](#)

Thanks to gibbor and dov for their insights.

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I found some great threads posted by battleworn and others. I need to build a relationship with Hashem. I have been learning shaar habitachon and that really gives a whole new perspective on everyday life with Hashem. **But for something a little more tangible, was thinking about starting with tfila. Not sure. Any suggestions?**

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yehi ratzon shenishmor chukecha ba'olma hazeh, v'nizkeh v'nichyeh, v'nirash tova uvracha...

In the sincere interest of helping you work out what's best for you I will now swing the pendulum back the other way. Not al tzad that you are an addict - for that's probably irrelevant at this point - but just to tame our beloved black-and-white thinking. I do this here a lot and it has helped me and many others arrive at the truth...usually somewhere in the middle-ground of all the 'philosophy'. Here goes:

Your plan is sincere, but let's remember that you didn't come here because you were just trying to be more ruchni. Rather, you were habitually using porn and masturbating yourself - so what really brought you specifically *here* was too much preoccupation with sex on demand, too much fooling yourself and others, and doing too much holy but useless 'Teshuvah' - and the fact that with all that, you are still here, desperate *again*. And I relate oh so well to all that!

So.

Have you ever sat back and wondered **why** success has eluded you and so many of us? Surely just trying the same things again - *'but better this time!'* is a mistake. But *why* is it failing? You asked for a suggestion to make your spiritual pursuits more tangible. So here is my tangible suggestion:

All the things you mentioned here are done in your own head and heart - all by yourself. All alone.

Sure, sure, some interaction with other real humans *is* technically included under the broad rubric of your ruchniyusdikeh hopes and plans you listed above - and I am certain you *do* believe in mitzvos ben odom lachaveiro. But using other people to do Hashem's Will is not what I mean. There is a *reason* that your basic effort revolves entirely around inner battles and your attitude toward Hashem.

It's because isolation is what we know. We 'get into mussar and chassidus or whatever, and use Torah and religion to validate even deeper isolation. But this time it becomes self-righteous isolation. We end up feeling much closer to Hashem - *and* more crazy. That's not what you want, is it?

We have searched alone for porn, we have masturbated alone, we 'fought it' alone - *and we try recovering/getting better alone, as well.*

The common denominator here, is taking the luxury of *remaining in the comfort of our own heads*. Being the ultimate and sole arbiters of our 'madreiga'. Many of us have been doing that for years and know no other way. And 99% of what people call 'the Torah's solution' is assumed to be in the mind. But that path just ratifies isolation - our best friend! Going it alone seems to be the only thing we believe will make all things possible.

Think about it. Few of us see this at all. But in recovery, we discover that there are relationships - and then there are real relationships. Torah clearly creates and even *defines* spiritual growth by real actions and real relationships. If you do not see examples of that, I can give a few, but
[In short, Kibud and mora av v'eim are not defined by how we feel about our parents anywhere. They are clearly defined in terms of

behavior. And the reason the relationship we have with our parents is [i]on the ben odom laMakon side [i]of the luchos is because the real relationship we all develop with our physical parents is what creates our real relationship with Hashem. (I posted elsewhere at length about the life cycle and how it is designed to create a relationship with Hashem)].

Just because you may be taking a step back from the addiction thing and the 12 steps (and I agree that it may be a good idea for you to step back) does not mean you cannot *learn* from the successes of the addicts. And the main thing addicts learn to do from the very start is this: run from the comfort of isolation.

Ruchnius is great, and there is a **ton** of room for inner work in recovery, to be sure! But even if you are not an addict, I suggest that the *ikkar* path you will find all the goodies you are looking for is through making real relationships. Bringiong more realness into the relationships you already have. Find safe, trustworthy people you can talk to without feeling they'd look down at you for being weho you are and having done what you have done. Opening up to real, safe, successfully recovering people and telling them all the truth about your shameful sexual escapades and your desires that keep coming up and bothring you and especially exactly what's doing with you today, is a great place to start! Shame is the enemy.

But that is only a start. For in the process of making those *recovery* relationships, you will most likely discover that many of your *other* relationships (in family, home, yeshivah, work, etc.) have never really been as *real* as you thought they were. Including your relationship with G-d.

Yes, it may sound funny, but our relationship with G-d is not nearly as real as we often think it is. As frummies, we refer to that as 'the madreiga of our emunah is lacking'. But we see that tanno'im had that problem, too.

Rabban Yochanon ben Zakai blessed his talmidim - who were tanno'im!! - that they should feel about G-d watching them, the same way they feel about *people* watching them. They were insulted and let him know it. And he said 'Too bad. You ain't there yet, brothers.' He said people take other people far, far more seriously than they take Hashem.

The way out of that is not more time sitting on a mountaintop - nor more time sitting with a chovos halevavos (though they may help a bit, we have already done plenty of those!). The way out is through **people**. The 12 steps are first about starting to correct the way we interact with other people, then about rectifying all we may have done wrong to other people, and only then

about connecting up well with our G-d.

We addicts first find our G-d in the 3rd step. But we admit we really don't have a serious and proper relationship with Him yet, till we first take real actions to take our relationships with His people (that is *all* people) seriously and properly.

In the process of doing all that, we gain a thing we never really had: Self Honesty and real spirituality.

If there is anything I have learned from recovery about ruchiyus, it is that I can't start with honesty to Hashem. It's just more pretend, like the porn is. Fantasy and the power of porn is the sweet, pretend-relationships, right? Honesty with Hashem only comes a long while **after** I learn to quit faking out other people and myself. And that takes more than a few weeks or months of real work.

Please don't put the cart before the horse, chaver. This work is simple, simple, simple. Honesty with people leads to more honesty with ourselves, and that will lead us to more honesty with our Only Eternal and Best Friend, Hashem. Think about it and use your seichel, get eitzos if you like - and then just do it.

Instead of starting with t'filloh or deep study of yourself or G-d, just open up to safe real people about yourself and your struggles; look a bit at your relationships with others and take the actions of real love and real connection with them. And go on from there wherever it leads you. You do not really run your life, Hashem does. You let Him do that by getting the brain the heck out of His way. As the Kotzker would say: Hashem is *only* found where people let Him in. Our deep thinking and trying to figure it all out and gain his'orerus, is actually one of the main things not letting Hashem in. For it just leads us to more comfy, warm, heilige...isolation.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by Pidaini - 13 Dec 2013 14:23

I am going to be honest, and admit that I

Warning: Spoiler!

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Dov - 15 Dec 2013 09:41

Well, it's not *my* fault if you have nothing better to do with your time...

Hahahahah!!!

Seriously tho - make any sense? Anything you can use there?

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Pidaini - 15 Dec 2013 13:25

[Dov wrote:](#)

Well, it's not *my* fault if you have nothing better to do with your time...

Hahahahah!!!

First of all, it is. If not for you I probably would be doing something else now.....well, I guess it's not better, but it would be something else.

[Dov wrote:](#)

Seriously tho - make any sense? Anything you can use there?

I relate so much expecially being in OINK, I see the difference of with and without other people!!!

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Only a little bit.....like from the paragraph "So." and onwards

Re: Looking for direction

Posted by ???? ?????? ???? - 16 Dec 2013 00:17

[Dov wrote:](#)

I think it is no good messing around with pretending one os powerless against lust, if they really are normal. A normal (non-addict) Jew is able to 'lust like a gentleman'. Meaning, he can struggle with fantasies, occasionally give in to them and sin, do Teshuvah, and live a sane life. That is what Teshuvah is made for. Normal, occasional, failure. Not for nothing do Chaza"l teach us of a yetzer hora, etc.

Sure, some of the wisdom of 12 step recovery and addictions psychology, etc., will be a great help to anyone struggling with a habit or desire. There is a lot of crossover. But to say that such people are truly powerless? I cannot accept that Chaza"l and all the mussar sforim about fighting the YH are really irrelevant nowadays. I do believe in a yetzer hora and in a healthy Jew's place in fighting and subduing it in some fashion, for most Jews.

I would like to understand

isnt the "???? ??"?; ?????? ??"? ?????? ?????? ?? saying that Hashem gave the "????"? the power over the human power & the human being is powerless over the yth"r and the only way to

win the yth"r is with God's power and we the ????? ????? r keeping taeching us that we cant get Hashem's power when we r in selfseeking motives?

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Dov - 16 Dec 2013 00:18

Hey, thanks for the chizzuk again. Hatzlocha using that stuff and enjoying the OINKers, too.

BTW, any idea how good old Obbermottel is doing?

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by ????? ?????? ????? - 16 Dec 2013 00:24

[Dov wrote:](#)

BTW, any idea how good old Obbermottel is doing?

if u wrote this 4 me I didnt got u, sorry

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Pidaini - 16 Dec 2013 01:16

Nope, No clue.

I just saw his signature on the old forum and loved the line!

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 16 Dec 2013 01:59

[Dov wrote:](#)

Hey, thanks for the chizzuk again. Hatzlocha using that stuff and enjoying the OINKers, too.

BTW, any idea how good old Obbermottel is doing?

I'm in touch with him by email every now and then. BH he is doing ok.

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by MendelZ - 16 Dec 2013 21:15

[???? ?????? wrote:](#)

[Dov wrote:](#)

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Beyadcha, that's how I see it too. But its not the only way. I think that for normals there really is a mehalech of avodah that doesn't require one to see himself as powerless, as Dov said. I don't much care for it but it seems to be valid for some people. I believe the tachlis is serving Hashem from a real sense of dependency on Him because that's the truth anyways. But until we are there, we can also serve Him from a place where we see ourselves as separate and hence rely on our "own" strength. Does that make sense to anyone?

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