

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 Dov - 15 Nov 2013 04:08

[hunjy1 wrote:](#)

But before I face off with "captain kirk" I wanted to throw out to the forum some questions about myself.

-Am I a total faker, or was I sincere when I thought I could be?

-Do I have to throw out my old self completely to change, or are there parts of me that I can still hold on to?

-Is everything I have worked on until now worthless? Were all my tfillos just a masquerade? Were my mitzvos without any thought of l'sheim shamayim? Will my torah still protect me when I'm sober enough to connect to it, or do I need to start from scratch?

But how can I first become real now, I'm already in the middle of a life... even if it's messed up in a lot of ways, some things are good....A fake life of fantasies and self gratification is the worst life imaginable, but some things are best left as is. No?

Sorry to do this after your torture of reading the 'Captain Kirk' post, but can you please just read that one was in? It goes together nicely with the Kirk one and is called the 'Nuclear Reset Button'.

Hahaha!

In the meantime, you got (we all got) so much great feedback in the posts above!

Each of your questions (please take this super nicely) sounds like what a lot of my recovery friends call their 'mental masturbation'. Not the sexual kind of masturbation, but emotional and mental. Like someone above suggested, what business is it of yours (or of any of ours)to

assess the sincerity of your past prayers and avodah? Just pray sincerely now. That's obviously all that matters. It's *G-d's* place and *only* G-d's place to assess your madreigo. *Needing* to figure it out can just be ego...actually, it probably is. Blech, we need no more of that, right? It's '*spiritual staring in the mirror*' and does you and me no good, at all. I bet you know what I mean, here: You may have noticed some bochurim staring in the mirror a long while to 'adjust their _____, but ends up as a yeshivishe self 'beauty pageant', no? "Is my hat straight, my hair ok, my jacket just a *touch* 'shtotty'?" It's just vanity, no?

Now back to us and our madreiga issue: Why should vanity be OK just cuz it's spiritual? Enough with it. Feh! I sure don't need it and you don't need it. Let's just be concerned with the work we have now, or as Hashem asks us in the Sh'ma and Torah over and over: **Hayom.**

ties'...well, it starts with checking the t'filin shel rosh

If you insist on 'knowing' where you stand with G-d...guess what? You will try, try, try, and then after 120 will die like all the rest of us, go up there - *and be shocked with the real truth, anyway!!* So let's let go the death-grip a little bit at least on knowing what label to put on our foreheads (good, bad, ugly, whatever), and just serve *G-d* instead of ourselves, today.

Ok, that was just an intro.

You'd probably rather continue suffering in secret. But one day the pain will be greater than the comfort of secrecy and you will be ready. Pdaini was at that point and felt like he had to tell his wife - but found out it may not be so...is he sober now? yes, I think he is clean a good while and certainly getting much, much better even though he did not tell her. Then why *is* he doing better? Because he opened up to real, safe people who understood his struggle because they have it and yet are clean a good while.

It's not the eitzos we get by opening up with real people but the honesty we give, that saves us from ourselves.

Of course a fantasy life with good parts is fine to choose, if you want to! It's your choice! I, for one, am not a religious tahara zealot who will cry tears over your sperm. I consider it 100% your choice - for not a single person can *ever* convince another to **really** change. But when it isn't working for you anymore, recovery (in some form) is here. And there is nothing to fear from getting real with safe people.

And your wife is probably a very *poor* choice of a confidant, at this point. There are guys here whom you can call and talk to (I am included), and who use their real first name here (as I do). And there are others who are not using their real names, but clean, too. You can find a few to talk and open up with, chaver.

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by hunjy1 - 15 Nov 2013 12:36

Ok... I feel like opening up to someone will help me. I think I'm ready to talk anonymously on the phone. What's the best way to go about that? I mean practically, like how do I decide who to call etc...
Lose the chicken, man. The beef is better.

I'm getting anxious to change already. I know I haven't done much to make actual changes in myself (although opening up here was therapeutic). And I know that these things take a long time and I need to make slow progress. But still it's hard to be sober and still be such a loser at the same time. I know, that's life, at least for me now... but still longing for the day I can feel like a changed man.

Thanks for all the chizuk, advice, and even the gentle pushes. Hope to meet you all one day on the other side of the recovery line.

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Dov - 15 Nov 2013 12:46

First, is there no one in your life who you consider a safe, wise person? Have you opened up to no one about this yet? A good rov, a smart and loving parent?

I PM'd you.

But what about the prople you know?

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by SIB101854 - 18 Nov 2013 05:06

Welcome aboard! Once you start posting and receiving the chizuk emails, you will see, as I have, that you are in the same boat with many, many Bnei Torah who are confronting the same issues.

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Pidaini - 28 Nov 2013 13:46

HOW's it going, pardner?

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by hunjy1 - 28 Nov 2013 21:28

Thanks Pidaini for checking up.

The reason I haven't updated is because nothing has changed, for better or worse.

The way things seem now I would say that I would never go back to my "old" ways again. I don't feel that strong pull now, urging me to go look at the wrong websites. I'm not interested in ppl walking in the streets (it helps that it's winter).

And because I feel this way now, the thought of doing those things makes me sick.

But... I have been like this before. Somehow, someway, some trigger sets something off in me, and for a short while I become like a complete drunk with no control. I look where I shouldn't, I think what I shouldn't, and I do what I hate(z"l).

How do I fight battles now when there's no enemy in sight?

No answer here, but I will say a nice vort I just heard b'shem the mashgiach r' yeruchem. He says there are 2 yetzer haras, one within a person and one outside of him. The inner one can be fought and defeated (to an extent). But the outer one is impossible to go battle with. Even for healthy frum yidden. So don't even try, just stay away!

I know that addictive problems can't be solved through standard mussar/teshuvah tactics. But we can see what we are up against and how important it is to stay away. Because no matter how tough we think we are, we can't win certain battles.

May Hashem give us all the strength and foresight to stay safe and clean. and to learn from our mistakes and eventually to grow.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by hunjy1 - 28 Nov 2013 21:42

Actually, I shouldn't say nothing has changed. I learned a lot from reading material here on GYE and from the forums.

One thing that really improved was my approach to intimacy. I never realized that I was expecting things from my wife because I had crooked desires and a need for lust. I decided that I wouldn't use my wife as a way to let off steam or anything like that. but I would try to strengthen our relationship and to give to her.

I even shared some of these thoughts with her. Obviously not too much because she doesn't

know about my issues. But I tried to relieve a lot of the pressure she was feeling. We try to be together at least once a week and I always thought that I was being generous with that. So I told her not to worry if it doesn't happen as often, I can wait for when she's ready so it will be special for her too.

She was touched (also a little curious) and it really has made a difference.

Thanks to all for opening my eyes in this area. This is a special community.

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by hunjy1 - 05 Dec 2013 00:31

Hi all, just coming up for some air... been reading a lot. Mainly about the 12 steps. Just a question for the oilam.

I'm a little unclear on the whole powerless thing. Is it possible for me to admit that I can never fight y"head on and win, but still believe that I can be "normal"?

I'm not asking to be able to cheat a little here and there. I just wanna know if I could be like the guy next to me who never got involved with this stuff and doesn't dare go near it.

True, that until now all the mussar and kabbalos haven't helped so I need a different game plan. So I'm willing to open up to someone safe and start doing some real work... just not sure if I totally relate to the 12 steps (so far).

Am I in total denial or are there different approaches here?

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Pidaini - 05 Dec 2013 02:10

There is this great saying "normal is the setting on a washing machine"

What does normal mean? whatever it is, sure, you're normal (if you're a washing machine), and powerless.

I first opened up, it is for sure helpfull even if you don't necessarily have a plan for where to take it afterwards. One reason it is so helpful is because they can take the facts and see the truth without their brains screaling at them not to do it, unlike ourselves, where we have our minds shouting "don't so this!!! You're ruining my fun!!!!!!!!!"

If you are thinking of opening up, better do it now rather than when you are completely ready (because that will mean another fall!!)

Whatever it is,

Hatzlacha Rabba!!!!!!

KUTGW!!! KOT!!!

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by gibbor120 - 05 Dec 2013 02:54

[hunjy1 wrote:](#)

So I'm willing to open up to someone safe and start doing some real work... just not sure if I totally relate to the 12 steps (so far).

Why not join an anonymous 12 step phone conference? The 12 steps don't make sense to anyone at first. Opening up will help whether or not you do the 12 steps. If you are willing, don't

wait, go for it!

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by SIB101854 - 05 Dec 2013 06:43

I think that there are different approaches because we all have different psychological make ups , and what works for one person may be viewed as over the top by someone else.

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Re: Looking for direction
Posted by Dov - 06 Dec 2013 03:36

Psychological makeups are one thing, yes. But it sounds like you are discounting the power of people *just being chicken*. Most guys who do open up, look back at the time they were still hiding and admit that they were always saying '*that's just not right for me*', or that it might be right but that they were '*just not ready for that yet*'...for years and years. It was just lost time.

You are 100% right! But our shame is a huge factor, to be sure. So why chalk up a guys hesitation to open up, to 'self-knowledge'? Though we cannot often see it, it's usually just *fear*, rather than insight, that holds us back from getting the real help we need. Not 'good sense', not 'a need for privacy', but just fear-based shame.

Most often, it is precisely what a guy feels he must *not* do and is crazy - that he *needs* to do and is wise. I think that *comfort-level* is a bad tool for guys who have been struggling with awarding themselves orgasms on demand for years and years, to figure out what's 'right' for them.

I know my chicken well, had it for about 15 years and still struggle with it at times today. But it's where today's recovery starts for almost every one of us.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by SIB101854 - 09 Dec 2013 02:10

I agree-you have to confront your addiction and then find the tools that work the best for you.

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Re: Looking for direction

Posted by Dov - 09 Dec 2013 09:35

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?

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