

Just Broke 6 months of Sobriety

Posted by Chevlei Mashiach - 09 Mar 2016 09:06

Hi,

I am sure there is already a thread which addresses this topic, but I could not find it by searching so I would like to hear from and get chizuk from anyone who has had a similar experience and has some insight on how to deal with it make sure what allowed it to happen will not happen again.

Basically, my story is I was habitual viewer of internet pornography from pretty young. It started out with some exposure and wonderment when I was maybe 10 or 11 years old and progressed and continued through high school. I watched all kinds of images and videos on the television and worse the internet and via peer to peer sharing applications. I was pretty much in denial when I was in high school since I had heard many guys in modern orthodox Yeshiva high schools speak of viewing porn on the internet. I also rationalized that I only did it occasionally (like once a week).

I went to Yeshiva in Israel for 2 years and I was clean for those 2 years. I became very extreme about arayos. I would look down when walking in the street. I was scared to even see a girl who was dressed from head to toe lest I find her attractive. I was a baal gaavah. I felt like I was like a gadol in this area and felt that there was no way I would ever return to the type of things I did before going to israel.

I went to college and slowly chutz laaretz started to eat away at the holy bubble I had tried to encircle myself with. Initially, I was extremely careful about internet. I had k-9 on my computer and I was very strict about the types of sites I was allowed to visit. I felt I had cleansed myself so much that I had no taavah for the shmutz. I felt my yiras shamyaim was so strong that I couldn't possibly return to my aveiros.

I was good for a few years in college after Israel. I think I started giving in little by little after starting to shidduch date. Looking at shidduch resume pics felt wrong. I felt unclean looking at a picture of a girl, even one I would prospectively date, b/c I derived hanaah from seeing a picture of a pretty girl, and I had not done that before shidduch dating since Yeshiva in Israel. After a while shidduch resumes were 99% about the picture, even though the dates never ended up being good (once there was some commitment the girl's beauty was less attractive to me).

At the same time, something changed inside me. All the znus and gashmius started to taint the purity I had gained in Yeshiva and started to tempt me. Just noticing girls in the street, in textbooks etc. ate away at my innocence. I noticed myself having a harder time with shmiras einyanim in the street. My yiras shamayim cooled down and it bothered me that I started to have a noticable yetzer hara for znus. It started out small. I checked facebook pics of girls from my high school and rationalized that there was nothing wrong with it, even though there was 0 tachlis to it and I knew deep down that it was feeding the same taaveh that originally brought me to porn, albeit in a smaller measure. This is how the yetzer hara eventually transitioned me into cheating the K-9 filter (which was very doable) by looking at google images of girls, originally celebrities that were partially clothed, but shortly later to nude pictures. It bothered me that I needed a filter to hold me back bc I felt my yiras shamayim alone should deter me (since it once did, and I told myself, in my gaavah, I was such a holy person). After a while I was looking at pictures and cheating my filter. I stopped relying on my conscience to stop me and only my filter, which resulted in me trying more ways to cheat the filter (as if getting through the filter was almost like a hechsher). Things get out of control to the point that I was back where I started before all of the cleansing I did in Yeshiva.

I was still in denial that I was addicted and I felt I could stop if "I only tried." For a while I tried to stop. I was able to for a few weeks, sometimes months at a time, but I always ended up back in the same place. Between my dating issues of not liking any girl I dated and relapsing into watching porn videos like I did in high school, I sought out a therapist. Talking out my issues and coming clean about the problem and facing the fact that I was addicted helped me stay clean for a while. After a year of therapy (for not just addiction but other dating issues as well) I found a girl that I started dating for a while. After 3 months of dating I acted out for the 1st time in a while. I trained myself to tell myself that acting out was literally poison for me and I now had even more to lose than before with a serious girlfriend. This mentality helped for a while. Then I was clean for another 6 months (during which I time I got engaged BH to this girl, who is great btw), and I forgot that I even had an issue, bc it became much easier to stay away from acting out. But after a very hard and frustrating day, I felt a pull to act out, which was very strong that I hadn't felt in a very long time, and I felt ill prepared to deal with it. Telling myself that it was poison just didn't feel as real as it once did, bc I forgot how much bad it had done to me and how poisonous it was to my life. So telling myself that it was poison didn't have such an effect. I wasn't strong enough to resist it and I felt I jsut couldn't walk away without the satisfaction I was looking for. I was struggling internally, trying to remind myself of how bad it is and how dumb it would be for me to do it, but in a moment of weakness, I just suspended all of those thoughts, and in very hefker manner just gave in to the taavah. That was it. And here I am writing this begging for an eitzah. What do I do? I can't allow this to happen ever again. I am about to get married and my kallah knows almost nothing about the issue (she does know that I am careful in my use of internet and which movies I will see, but she has no idea that I was recently in a crisis with this) and I feel that telling her could ruin everything. I need to deal with this and make sure that it never happens again. Please help!! What can I do now that I have not done that will address my issue and assure that the mistakes that happened won't happen again.

Thank you and tizke l'mitzvos,

Chevlei Mashiach

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Re: Just Broke 6 months of Sobriety
Posted by cordnoy - 09 Mar 2016 10:57

Welcome and Mazel tov.

you should ask advise from a therapist, mentor, Rebbe, Mashgiach, someone who knows you.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Just Broke 6 months of Sobriety
Posted by Workingguy - 09 Mar 2016 13:29

You write in a beautiful, thought out, heartfelt way. Don't forget that it was one slip and that you've been very successful over the past six months.

I think talking to a therapist is a great idea. You can't guarantee or even assume that this will never happen again, but you probably want to find out how to use something else to deal with things when they get stressful.

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Re: Just Broke 6 months of Sobriety
Posted by pischoshelmachat - 09 Mar 2016 15:17

Hi CM,

I can only imagine how painful it must be to slip after 6 months but I can also only imagine how good it must feel to be clean for 6 months.

Clearly you are doing something right by seeking help now when you are young and have a wonderful life ahead of you. I can tell you that it will not go away on its own, only through hard work. And it is so nice to see you are prepared to do what it takes.

Unfortunately, I am not qualified to advise you. All I can say is that you can and will beat this disease and everyone here will applaud your successes and help support you in case you are feeling weak. We all derive great encouragement from each other which is itself extremely helpful in beating this disease.

Mazel Tov on your engagement!! May you build a beautiful Jewish home that will radiate the warmth and light of Yiddishkeit!

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Re: Just Broke 6 months of Sobriety
Posted by markz - 09 Mar 2016 15:42

Welcome

I felt everything you wrote as if it was me talking....

I recommend you checkout the GPS (see below) and reach out to someone - Cordnoy is a good address

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Re: Just Broke 6 months of Sobriety
Posted by Chevlei Mashiach - 03 Apr 2016 19:01

Thank you everyone for all of the helpful and supportive responses. BH I am back on track and clean for 3 weeks. lyH we should all be zoche to grow closer in our avodas Hashem and purify ourselves.

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Re: Just Broke 6 months of Sobriety
Posted by BenTorah.BaalHabayis - 04 Apr 2016 03:40

That's wonderful to hear. Keep up the good work!

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