"Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 12 Jul 2020 13:59

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A few days ago I started a topic in the balei batims forum about how I'm addicted to regular movies. How it takes up way too much time like sometimes till 5am. How I adore them in an almost worshipful manner. How it takes up too much of me.

Well I've just had a rude awakening. You see what I've also struggled with only a few times in the past was exploring regular Hollywood movies that had inappropriate content like nudity...nothing to graphic but enough to get aroused. I have only done this a few times. It only happened on rare occasions and I always got it in check with tricks or a knas etc. I completely got passed it and stopped and haven't done it in like 2 months. And during those months I grew immensely in shmiras einayim in all aspects. I was convinced that I was safe. So the only problem was just my addiction to movies.

Lo and behold out of the blue last night I fell so completely unexpectedly. This led me to view a few inappropriate pictures too. Nothing crazy just something I thought I conquered. Oh well now I really gotta kick my movie habit if it leads to this. I am resetting my 90 day count and will iyh try to stop movies all together. Still gonna watch clean comedy with wife but no more movies by myself unsupervised and at all hours. So my 90 day count will be in regard to movies, viewing inappropriate material and HZ"L (not really a problem but another geder wont hurt). I'm posting here to hold myself accountable.

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Ihavestrength - 14 Sep 2020 02:22

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Grant400 wrote on 10 Sep 2020 01:31**:**

The TAG (Technology Awareness Group) sends out a weekly email. Besides divrei Torah they feature a weekly story. I found this weeks particularly beautiful. I'd like to share it with you guys.

I was sitting in my office, doing my shift of TAG services, when a woman came in to put a strong filter on her phone. She wanted a white list with no browsing capabilities beyond the sites on her list. While her list of allowed sites was very long and inclusive, she nevertheless went for the white-list filter.

Two weeks later, she was back, requesting that I close certain apps. This occurred repeatedly, with her returning and asking me to remove different apps, blocking Facebook, Instagram and the like. Eventually, she showed up and asked me to block WhatsApp. By that time, several

weeks after her first visit, her phone only had a few basic capabilities, such as email and banking; the rest was blocked. Curious as to what had inspired this movement toward more and more protection, I gently asked her if she would share. This is her story.

I have a son who was a good solid boy; he took life pretty seriously and was a good kid at home and in yeshiva. Unfortunately, somewhere along the way, he fell in with a chevra that was really pulling him down. Besides the nonsense they were busy with, they also convinced him that if he was going to be one of them, he had to have a phone like theirs. He caved in, and that started a period of a few months of his life that I would rather not think about. Eventually he came to a point where he realized what was happening to him, and somehow, I don't even know myself how, he began to turn around. At the end of that year, he graduated yeshiva ketana, chose a very serious yeshiva gedola, and took off. He immersed himself in learning and growing, turning his past into a nightmare that he has proven to us we can forget.

A few nights after he left home to the dorm in his new yeshiva, I was walking around in a daze, thinking back about the roller coaster we had been through with him. I blinked back my tears as I hoped and davened that he would be matzliach in his new direction. Aimlessly, I strolled into his room and sat down on his bed. As my hand grazed the edge of his mattress, I felt it brush against something hard tucked underneath. I pulled it out, and found in my hand his old iPhone. My hands trembled as I took a closer look. Written on the smashed-in screen in permanent marker were the words: “wasn't today great without me, why not tomorrow too.”

I must have used up all of my tears as I thought of my son bravely and courageously rising above that which was so close to finishing him off. Rising from his bed, it dawned on me that, while I am not “at risk,” my own phone habits aren't anything to be proud of at all. I actually have a lot to be ashamed of as far as what I myself do with my phone. The next morning found me in TAG, as I began my own crusade to lift myself back up. I know in my heart that a Yiddishe mamme has no business viewing or participating in the things I was doing on my phone. I began my purge, stretching myself to the limit. Whenever I thought I would snap from the pressure my friends were putting on me not to do this, I would go back to my son’s bed, pull out that phone, and fill myself up with all the courage I needed to face the world.

Submitted by a TAG coordinator.

I like this story. I will also say that it is a bit extreme. I have smashed many phones in an effort stay clean, but it was not successful. Also, the framing of the her son's bad few months as a "nightmare" to be forgotten is somewhat naive. It is likely that this boy will continue to struggle in some form. Even without phones there can be a struggle in this area. I think it's important for us to not be freaked out by such events as "nightmares," but instead to face reality and do our best to confront our challenges with courage and conviction. This may involve accepting the fact that there will always be some level of struggle.

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 25 Sep 2020 14:23

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Here is this week's TAG story I think some of you will appreciate:

I am a rav who, unfortunately, knows the darker side of the internet saga all too well, since I am often consulted about different “internet cases” that come up. I usually deal with adults, but sometimes I meet with teenagers and boys, as well. Iwant to share an experience that left me heartbroken for the scores of children growing up in today’s age of

distracted parenting.

A few days ago, a rebbi from a local yeshiva called me up and asked if he could send me a

boy from his class. The child’s father who is a longstanding member of my kehilla had all but disappeared into his phone, and the family was starting to fall apart. The boy was badly in need of guidance and chizzuk.

The boy came over, and in a choked voice, described a situation in which his father, who had recently caved in and allowed himself to participate in several different social media platforms “for business purposes” had become so attached to his phone that he simply ceased to be present for the family. The boy unburdened himself about how much he missed his father, and how the fabric of the family was slowly disintegrating.

After being mechazek the boy to the best of my ability I realized that it was my responsibility to approach the father and urge him to change his behavior. As you can imagine, there was no way that this conversation would be simple and when the father entered my study, I was still wracking my brains for an appropriate conversation opener.

In a flash of memory and inspiration, I said gently, “Reb Dovid, I think that many years ago you may have inadvertently said a sheker in public, in front of all the rabbanim of the town!” In response to the puzzled look on his face, I continued, “Do you remember what you told the Kohen who asked you at your son’s pidyon, ‘Which do you prefer – your child or the money?’ It seems like now years later when faced with the terrible nisayon posed by your smartphone which you need for business the answer is not so clear…

Reb Dovid studied the floor for a while and then said quietly, “The Rov is right. I will get rid of the device.”

TAG Tech Tale

Submitted by: A local Rov

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 26 Sep 2020 17:39
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Beautiful story, I just don't believe the ending...

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 27 Sep 2020 00:39
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wilnevergiveup wrote on 26 Sep 2020 17:39**:**

Beautiful story, I just don't believe the ending...

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by YeshivaGuy - 05 Oct 2020 14:26
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@Grant400, How you been brother?

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 05 Oct 2020 17:47

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YeshivaGuy wrote on 05 Oct 2020 14:26**:**

@Grant400, How you been brother?

I'm doing wonderful B"H thank you for asking. You are too! You are truly an inspiration and a role model to everyone here!

Here's an update:

I haven't watched any movies or TV shows alone for almost 90 days already. My shmiras einayim is at the highest level it ever was since I can remember and I have the strongest filters on the market. B"H!

Now my fingers are gonna run wild:

Sometimes when deciding to actively make a change it can feel overwhelming. When I decided not to watch movies or TV shows for 90 days it was incredibly overwhelming. I mean, I was seriously addicted. But as time passes the desire lessens. (There are difficult moments here and there, but overall it's easier). People feel discouraged because they judge how they are going to feel months down the line, with how they feel now. It can seem insurmountable and mindblowingly painful, "How can a survive this pain for x amount of days, or forever"? but the truth is as time goes on the perspective changes with it and it does get easier.

When I started watching my eyes in the street a few months ago, it was one of the most torturous things (in this area) I ever had to do. I didn't feel as guilty because "it doesn't feel" as bad as other things. Sights are everywhere. Even tznius woman are incredibly attractive, and not indulging in second glances, not fantasizing, not mentally calculating and imagining things when being bombarded with it at impossible rates was something I didn't feel capable of overcoming. I remember thinking that its physically impossible. I said "Hashem! I Can't!", then

after a few days it got even harder! I felt ready to bust, but I continued fighting with whatever strength I had left. Incredibly after a few weeks, it started to get easier and easier. Now its second nature to look away. Yes sometimes there is something that catches me at a weak moment. I may even look twice, or thrice, or...and my mind hops on the express train, but it happens. As a whole the previously insurmountable barrier is now just a small crack in the sidewalk I must (and do) avoid.

All these small changes like giving up movies, watching eyes in the street, stronger filters, seem like small "side" things that a person will worry about "when he's on "that" level", but in truth these seemingly innocent things cause the more serious too. They trigger us constantly causing us to need a release- causing trouble, causing us to be irritable to our spouses and causing trouble in the bedroom, and so on. Like the GYE handbook says, these go hand in hand.

B"h I've learned from my slips and falls and use them as a learning experience and factor them in to the plan in the future.

I remind myself as often as I can why I want to be clean and prepare myself mentally for when I will be caught off guard and tempted, where the worst falls happen, to be ready and not to give in. Preparing for those situations helps me respond properly instead of my brain basically turning to mush and letting a different part of my body be at the wheel.

I'd like to give a big appreciation to GYE and all of you guys for helping, guiding and showing me the beauty of being sparkling clean and that's its possible.

Grant

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 12 Oct 2020 11:05

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Ok. So suddenly my expensive filter wasn't working up to par. I had too much time on my hands. I fought, slipped, lost. Just images, but not very kosher ones. At all. Darn it. I feel like trash.

I will do better.

Grant

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 12 Oct 2020 11:49

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Grant400 wrote on 12 Oct 2020 11:05**:**

Ok. So suddenly my expensive filter wasn't working up to par. I had too much time on my hands. I fought, slipped, lost. Just images, but not very kosher ones. At all. Darn it. I feel like trash.

I will do better.

Grant

Sorry about your fall.

I think you wrote it out of order. Perhaps what you meant to say was "*I had too much time on my hands"* therefore "*suddenly my expensive filter wasn't working up to par."*

Just a thought (I am being a little more critical today then I am used to) you are one of the most active and inspirational guys here and post all around although I don't agree with everything, I don't need to and I respect you. I was wondering if it may be helpful for you to post a little more on your own thread, about your own struggles. It may help.

None of us are perfect, we all have flaws, it may help to be open about them, share them, show us that you struggle just like everyone else (unless you don't, that is).

Keep strong,

Wilnevergiveup

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 12 Oct 2020 15:30

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wilnevergiveup wrote on 12 Oct 2020 11:49**:**

Grant400 wrote on 12 Oct 2020 11:05**:**

Ok. So suddenly my expensive filter wasn't working up to par. I had too much time on my hands. I fought, slipped, lost. Just images, but not very kosher ones. At all. Darn it. I feel like trash.

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Just a thought (I am being a little more critical today then I am used to) you are one of the most

active and inspirational guys here and post all around although I don't agree with everything, I don't need to and I respect you. I was wondering if it may be helpful for you to post a little more on your own thread, about your own struggles. It may help.

None of us are perfect, we all have flaws, it may help to be open about them, share them, show us that you struggle just like everyone else (unless you don't, that is).

Keep strong,

Wilnevergiveup

First off, thank you for being tough, Hashem knows I need it. You write beautifully and have alot of wisdom to share.

Second, it wasn't a "so called" mistake. It was real. My phone doesn't have a browser at all. Last night it suddenly worked. Recently I had a problem with my phone and apparently when it was being fixed the browser became allowed.

About my struggles. I apologize if I came across all high and lofty. I do struggle, I thought I was posting about it but apparently not enough of you feel the way you do.

I struggle with shmiras einayim in the streets, and with viewing inappropriate pictures. I won't cross the line of watching videos. Its something I can't bring myself to do because I'm married.

Pictures feel a little more innocent, although today I feel like trash and feel so guilty I can barely look my wife in the eye. I feel so horrible I want to tell her so I don't feel like a traitor. I know it's stupid and pointless, because it's not something I struggle with on a day to day basis at all, (since I never have access). I know I won't gain anything by telling her and I know she wouldn't want to be told. She would want me just to deal with it myself. I'm also scared that somehow one day she might find out (I'm not tech savy) and it will be worse. I literally can count on my fingers how many times I did such things, because I immediately try to come up with a solution. This was the first time I actually searched explicitly.

Everything that lead me to having access to images I got rid of. I stopped watching movies, already for over 3 months without a relapse. I locked myself out of a device that can't be filtered properly- only my wife has the code. I installed the strongest filters with image painting on a different device which is foolproof (for me) and my phone doesn't have a browser and I don't have ANY apps allowed that can access pictures. I literally had no access and I was doing amazing. Until last night when the browser started working.

This has happened in the past and I immediately gave my phone to my wife and had her lock it till I went to have it fixed the next day. But she was already asleep this time.

I know that now I will be ready for next time, I usually learn from my mistakes, but right now I feel like I cheated. Is it guilt? Fear? Both?

Grant

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by lionking - 12 Oct 2020 16:07

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Hi Grant,

I know how you feel. I've been there a few times as well.

Sometimes I think that being totally cut off from access is a impediment to proper recovery. It gets a person to become complacent that they are foolproof with no need to worry and doesn't reach a person skills how to deal with a situation that presented itself to you, where you got access.

I don't recommend having access just to build up the "muscles". It is too risky.

What I do recommend is working on a program for times like this.

Some people are all properly filtered, but they still crave it or fantasize about it. Does people don't really stand a chance when an opportunity presents itself. The desire is too strong.

The goal is to not crave it or better yet, to detest it.

"It is beneath my dignity to look at these pictures."

"I love Hashem too much to do this"

"Hashem is constantly with me, How can I show him the things my body wants to see?"

"My wife will be so upset if she knows what I just watched"

"How can I face my kids when I act out?"

Etc...

Additionally, some sort of activity is needed to overcome when a challenge hits. For some calling a friend is helpful, others find posting on the forum helpful, and some find the Thapsic method helpful.

Personally for me, I find it helpful to make it a non issue. I don't have a browser on my phone 90% of the time, just to make it less easily accessible. However what really works for me is to try to not be challenged. I struggle only when I am in an emotional down mood or stress. Trying to live a positive life is helpful for me.

Hatzlacha Rabba!

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 12 Oct 2020 16:17

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Thank you so much Lionking. You raise a really valid point that I started realizing somewhat but I wasn't clear until you explained it so well.

I will need to start seriously working on it. It's true I crave it all the time, but I have no access and I just tell myself that i will be happier without it. Truthfully I must start understanding why I DON'T want it too aside from the fact that it won't make make me happier.

Do you/ anyone have any suggestions how to reach such an understanding for real?

Thank you.

Grant

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by lionking - 12 Oct 2020 17:22

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It is an extremely personal decision for each person separately. You need to figure out why you don't want it. For some people, it is the fear of their family finding out. For others, it might be the feeling of quilt afterwards.

Perhaps write down some reasons why you don't want to do it.

Whatever it is, constantly craving is not an healthy approach and is not sustainable. (I once read a study somewhere, that constantly lusting without acting out, messes the brain worse than actual acting out, since it gets the brain in an arousal state, even if the body is not in an aroused state, without the release of the hormones. I might be misquoting something.)

Hatzlacha Rabba

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 12 Oct 2020 18:36

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lionking wrote on 12 Oct 2020 17:22**:**

It is an extremely personal decision for each person separately. You need to figure out why you don't want it. For some people, it is the fear of their family finding out. For others, it might be the feeling of quilt afterwards.

Perhaps write down some reasons why you don't want to do it.

I definitely have such reasons, but those are reasons not to actually do it, not a way to remove the constant craving.

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 12 Oct 2020 18:48

Second, it wasn't a "so called" mistake. It was real. My phone doesn't have a browser at all. Last night it suddenly worked. Recently I had a problem with my phone and apparently when it was being fixed the browser became allowed...Everything that lead me to having access to images I got rid of. I stopped watching movies, already for over 3 months without a relapse. I locked myself out of a device that can't be filtered properly- only my wife has the code. I installed the strongest filters with image painting on a different device which is foolproof (for me) and my phone doesn't have a browser and I don't have ANY apps allowed that can access pictures. I literally had no access and I was doing amazing. Until last night when the browser started working.

I know this all too well, it's rough. I spent the most part of the past 2 years closing any loopholes before they became issues and what couldn't be fixed I closed up entirely. Whenever I would find something that my filter didn't pick up, I would go mad, call them up and tell them off for "allowing" it to get through, but as time went on, I learn to accept them as a new challenge from Hashem. I do my best, I really try and I am sure you do too. We can't control our challenges, just our reactions.

You don't have to excuse yourself, I am just trying to help. We all have our challenges I just had a fall too, trust me I know what it feels like. The thing is these things do happen, and they happen again and again and you have to have a game plan.

I unfortunately don't have these issues, I don't need open internet to act out. I am blessed with a heathy imagination and a great memory and that is where I struggle most. As soon as I am triggered, it's code red, it could be a song a place a person and I have to immediately distract myself with something that I know can take my mind off of whatever it is.

Listen, I don't even have a smartphone and my computer's browser is blocked with a white list. Heck I had to ask my wife to open Guard Your Eyes for me and I still struggle.

I don't really know what my point is, I am just sharing that I've had no access to anything for much of the last two years and the game ain't over, so be prepared.

Hatzlachah

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Re: "Just regular movies "
Posted by Grant400 - 20 Oct 2020 00:57

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Update: This past fall is a turning point in my life. I wish it didn't have to come about in this unfortunate way, but I'm still going to bore in deep and mine the precious metals buried deep in this mess.

I always viewed myself as a luster, but I tried my best to control the outcome. The outcome. Because that's what I believed was the proper and only way to do it. I installed filters, I never had my own device with unrestricted internet. I knew that if I did I would crumble like a dry clump of earth.

Wasn't this what everyone always screamed about? Install filters! We can't trust ourselves! Men have raging testosterone, we are beasts of prey constantly on the prowl for our next target.

Message received: I'm a loose swine without control so prevent all situations where I will be tempted. Yichud, harchakos, shmiras einayim, etc. If I would have access, of course I wouldn't be able to hold myself back from viewing terrible videos! I'm a man! We can either think with our heads or our...

So inevitably when the situation arose and I had access because of a glitch in my filter it practically wasn't a battle. I mean my subconsious thought process probably was-I did all humanly possible but nature and the universe did their own thing. I'm not falling, I'm being thrown to the ground. Powerless.

When there are movies with enticing scenes and cast...how can I not fall? App store open? Fall. Fall. Fall. It's inevitable. So, I stop watching movies, I cancel subscriptions, I lock the app store etc. I must keep my distance!

Now I realize my terrible mistake. Yes, Chaza"l placed fences, yes, one shouldn't have internet, if they must strong filters are a necessity. No, of course I shouldn't watch movies with triggering material! I must not stare or ogle, fantasize or dream!

But not for the reasons earlier believed. I am in control. I do have the ability to say no. I am a man, a man with the capability of discipline and integrity. A person with self control and dignity. I am not a beast of prey. I may have one inside of me, but I can be a lion tamer and a snake charmer.

All of these gedarim are only to prevent myself from getting into a street fight. Not because if I do I am a helpless victim, and I will lose, but because why even present myself with a struggle? Why create any chance at all to sustain injury and walk away with battle scars? Now I understand I am capable and powerful and although I have a sophisticated well trained army at my beck and call, I also employ tacticians and strategists to assure my safety and security and prevent a battle from ever breaking out.

Grant

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