

I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 10 Oct 2021 22:32

Hi, it's my first time posting

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I decided to check out GYE a little over a week ago, and I wish I had known about this years ago! I thought I knew about the options to help someone in my situation, and I thought there was little chance for me to really change. Here's my story and some thoughts I've gathered from GYE so far

I'm in my 30's, married to a wonderful, supportive wife, a beautiful Mishpacha, and I've struggled with masturbation since around age 15. Though I had over a year clean when I was a Bachur in Yeshiva, by speaking with my Rosh Yeshiva daily, eventually that became weekly, and when I thought I didn't need it anymore, that stopped and the issues returned. As many have stated already, though I thought it would end after getting married, it didn't.

For the most part, I've always been fighting and never gave up. I, Boruch Hashem never turned to real pornography, and my acting out was limited to the little I could find to stimulate myself - books, thoughts of women I saw, Youtube (I only had internet access after I got married). For the most part, I was strong enough Shelo Bshaas Maaseh to create good barriers and limit what I could get caught up with. (no smartphone, password protected computer at home - which worked most of the time). In more recent years, I started looking for women to seek out, flirt with, with the hope? fantasy? that it could go somewhere. Though it almost never amounted to anything more than looking, maybe a few words exchanged, I was often walking around with an urge to act out with no strategy to deal with it. I went to a therapist at some point for a couple of years, but he was focused on understanding the cause of acting out (shame etc.) so while I did get a better understanding of myself it didn't help any of the behaviors - he gave me no strategies for working on them, and I was left with the impression that other than enrolling myself in a 12 step program or the like, the only thing I can do is continuing to fight on my own - using the basic strategies of cheshbon hanefesh, mussar, Knas systems, and never giving up the fight.

I had seen ads for GYE, but I never viewed myself as "drowning in shmutz" and didn't think there was anything out there other than more therapists and 12 step programs. Like I said, I never turned to hard core pornography, and I've lived with the battle of both success and failure in fighting my Yetzer Hora. (Parenthetically, I never really viewed myself as a Rasha or terrible person. I felt that though the things I'd done may have been the worst Aveiros in my life, my successes and work I'd done to fight were likely the greatest things I had done, and who knows whether I came out ahead.) I had discussed my struggles with my wife, and she has been very understanding and supportive. Though I never really shared details, I was committed to being honest, and shared with her whether "things" were going well or not. The scariest thing for me

was the possibility of having an affair and wrecking my marriage and my life, but other than the fact that I was constantly looking for that, I hadn't really gotten too close. A few years ago I reached out to another Rebbe (who I thought was knowledgeable in the Sugya) asking for a reference for a therapist, and he said he didn't really know anyone, and perhaps it's simply a Nisayon that all men deal with and it is what it is. (Granted, I didn't disclose to him the full extent of my problem). So I thought this was just something I would have to live with.

As far as 12 step programs, I thought that would require me to expose myself to possibly meeting someone I knew (I have a position of some prominence locally, which makes it more worrisome to possibly bump into someone). Additionally, I always felt I can "basically contain it", and my limited knowledge of 12 steps is that it requires a kind-of total life overhaul, which I didn't feel I needed or wanted.

If you're still reading - thank you!

Then I discovered GYE - and it seems from the short time that I'm here that there are so many other strategies available to use, the forum, partners and mentors to connect with and gather Chizuk from, and other methods such as SMART recovery.

I'm looking for information or Chizuk from - anyone - and what I think would be particularly helpful is someone who has had experience with something like "seeking out women" etc. and anyone who can be helpful with the SMART recovery program.

Thanks for listening!

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Captain - 11 Oct 2021 03:23

There is an entire section of the forum about Smart Recovery. Please check it out.

Also please get in touch with DavidT. He can help you with more info. I'm sure he'll be around soon.

Also please download the great free resources below in my signature.

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by starting - 11 Oct 2021 03:25

Welcome

Your struggles are totally normal yet so important to address and battle

What has helped me to channel my desires more towards my wife is a shiur by Rabbi shafier called the fight part 5 (May be part 6, I don't remember for sure). The series is to help people with these struggles and I recommend you listen to all of them. They can be found on the audio section of this website or hopefully someone will post the links which I can't do from my phone.

The point is to learn that what your wife looks like, is what you desire and all others are to be seen as, I don't know, maybe like animals or something.

Another thing that helps many is to daven for anyone that you get a desire to, to realise that they are people with real lives, feelings, bills and struggles etc

Hatzlocho

If anyone can post a link to 'The Fight' please do

-edit- just noticed @captain replied. The links are in his signature

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Captain - 11 Oct 2021 03:27

[starting wrote on 11 Oct 2021 03:25:](#)

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by DavidT - 11 Oct 2021 14:34

Welcome Avrohom!

You've come to the right place and with the help of Hashem you'll keep on growing and becoming stronger and better.

I'm happy to work with you on looking into SMART recovery as a tool and support for yourself.

The first concept in SMART Recovery is the **Stages of Change**.

There are six main stages of change in addiction recovery: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and termination. Although people can move through these stages in order, it's also common for people to go between stages, forward and backward, or be in more than one stage at a time. However, observing the stages of change as a sequential cycle helps to visualize how change occurs, as well as how addictive behavior can be treated and managed.

1. Precontemplation

In the first stages of addiction recovery, a person usually does not consider their behavior to be an issue. Perhaps they've not experienced any adverse consequences as a result of their behavior, or they're in denial about the severity of their behavior and the consequences they've experienced.

During this stage, a person's addictive behavior is generally positive, maybe even pleasant, and hasn't led to any negative consequences. At this point, they aren't interested in hearing advice to quit or being told about potentially harmful side effects.

2. Contemplation

Contemplators have realized that they have a problem. They may want to change, but don't feel like they can fully commit to it. In this stage, a person is often more receptive to learning about the potential consequences of their behavior and the different options available.

But they're still contemplating. They haven't yet made a change by committing to a specific strategy. The contemplation stage can last for years. Sometimes, they move on to the next stage, or they revert to precontemplation.

3. Preparation

A person is committed and ready to take action. They might meet with a health care professional to assess where they are and determine options for a long-term treatment plan.

4. Action

Real change—that is, a change in behavior—starts at this stage. For many people, the action stage begins in a detox or residential treatment center where clinical and medical professionals can navigate a person through the early stages of recovery.

In this stage, a person will engage in treatment that addresses the underlying causes of addiction. Individual and group therapy help a person better understand addiction and themselves, and alternative, complementary therapies promote holistic wellness, bolstering recovery. The action stage will also equip a person with healthy, effective strategies for coping with stress and triggers that help them progress through the maintenance stage without experiencing relapse.

5. Maintenance & Relapse

It takes time and effort to sustain any change. In the maintenance stage, a person begins to adapt to their new substance-free lifestyle. As they build momentum, reverting to old habits gradually becomes less of a threat.

However, substance use disorder is a chronic disease. As with all chronic diseases, the risk of

relapse will always be present. Despite acquiring the skills and tools in the action stage necessary to avoid relapse, a relapse may still occur. But it isn't a sign of failure or weakness. It's possible to become sober again—it just means more specialized treatment is required.

6. Termination

The ultimate goal for the stages of change is termination: when a person with substance use disorder no longer feels threatened by their substance of choice. At this stage, they feel confident and comfortable living life without substances and fear relapse less and less every day.

The stages of change may seem intimidating to someone who is contemplating or early in recovery. But knowing what you can expect can help you advance through these stages more confidently.

Once you internalize this concept, we can move on to the next phases of the SMART recovery program.

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by excellence - 11 Oct 2021 20:28

Welcome on board,

I relate to a lot of what you have written. You have certainly come to the right place. GYE can send you a copy of the smart handbook. This place is full of the generations greatest and most hidden Tzadikim.

I recommend the links in my signature!!!!

Wishing you much success and growth,

Excellence

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Ish MiGrodno - 11 Oct 2021 21:19

Welcome!

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?Another excellent starting point is to read more GYE threads; this forum is full of amazing and relatable stories..... You will identify with both the victories and struggles.

So happy that you joined this warm chevra of bnei aliyah!

?With feelings of brotherhood from Grodno ~ IMG

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Captain - 12 Oct 2021 03:19

[Ish MiGrodno wrote on 11 Oct 2021 21:19:](#)

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Markz has some great links to these in his signature. Hopefully he will pop by here so you can see it.

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 12 Oct 2021 04:29

Thanks to all of you for your replies and support!

I've read a number of threads and personal stories of growth and it's certainly inspiring to see such an incredible Chevra. each individual's long journey together with the fact that you are all working together to help each other is uplifting to witness.

I'll definitely check out Rabbi Shafier's lectures - thanks Starting and Captain.

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 12 Oct 2021 04:34

Does anyone have any Eitzos that have worked for you for maintaining inspiration and vigilance? My problem has been that after some time (could be a couple of weeks to a month) my focus wanes and then the acting out builds slowly until I'm back where I started. I'm nervous that even if I do 90 days or even more, at some point I'll become confident and not maintain the same focus. Does it mean posting here regularly? Checking in with someone daily or weekly? Let me know what's worked for you. Thanks!

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 12 Oct 2021 04:50

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Excellence, I started reading through your thread. I share so many of the same steps - but I think in a much less severe way. Great Bochur, perfectionist attitude, not much love at home - other than through accomplishments. In my Yeshiva I think there was much more awareness of the topic, and at least from age 21 or so, I got the sense that many others had similar struggles, perhaps less acute than mine though. I'll have to take a look a little later to read the rest of your thread and comment on some of your observations.

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Zedj - 12 Oct 2021 05:12

What has helped me is

1-posting regularly (trying to post at least once a week)

2-keeping accountability daily (texting)

3-keeping in touch with chevra on the local GYE chat

4-keeping in touch with some chevra off of GYE altogether

The longer i was clean the small seemingly non triggers became a trigger. So over the course of time i had to up my game.

I think if you have a plan and are on top of your game you will be in a place you never thought you could be.

Also, to make things alittle less stressful, there is no race to 90 days.

90 days isn't a magic number either, just it's about where you get a pretty good handle on yourself and have been in a number of different situations to know how to react in a productive manner.

#1 rule- Take it one day at a time

BEZH you will get to 90+

In regards to inspiration- writing/reviewing a pro vs con list can be helpful when it gets tough.

After some time here you will become abit of an expert yourself and there is nothing like helping another gye member with eitzos/chizuk. In fact it will most probably keep you on track.

Wishing you much success!

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by bego - 12 Oct 2021 09:10

[Avrohom wrote on 12 Oct 2021 04:34:](#)

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nervouse that even if I do 90 days or even more, at some point I'll become confident and not maintain the same focus. Does it mean posting here regularly? Checking in with someone daily or weekly? Let me know what's worked for you. Thanks!

The reality, is that you can always lose focus. But that's fine. It's the normal part of life.

For me, there are ups and downs. I forget the right way, so I search for it again. Cordnoy is one of my personal heroes here, but everyone has some one they learn from (and everyone is someone that someone else can learn from!)

Right now, I'm struggling. That feeling downstairs that I NEED sex. That itchiness. But you know what, I know it will pass. I know I've been in better places in this fight and worse and that's ok. The aim of the game is to overall be getting better. The trick for me, is even if I take breaks, to keep coming back here every now and then. To comment on posts and sometimes even update mine.

Now maybe, that makes me dry drunk. Thats very possible and I fear that. But I also think it is a part of life that i need to control. Others struggle with other things, this is mine. I dont think it can be "beaten" as it's a part of life. So hang around here, post, read and think. When you see a post that challenges you, take a minute to really let it. When someone writes (as you'll see often) that bedroom issues might not be (!) the wife's fault, even those of us that have worked hard on this, need to stop and say, have I slipped.

Hope that helps.

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 17 Oct 2021 02:31

Hi, It's been about a week since I started posting, I'm now at 16 days since I joined GYE, and I wanted to share some thoughts, observations, and perhaps ramble a bit, so thanks for listening:

I'm trying to identify what I've been doing differently now than I have in the countless times I've tried to stop in the past. I certainly do think it's different, despite not having taken too many concrete steps yet:

- I'm committed to taking steps and now have the information of what those steps are - I started reading about SMART Recovery, did the first few exercises and outlined a basic plan including getting an accountability partner, learning and using strategies to deal

with urges.

- Perhaps the biggest change for me so far is I've shifted from "I want to _____ (really badly want to etc.)", to "I have an urge to _____". Perhaps this is similar to the REBT/ABCDEF idea of changing from must to I prefer - but I think not quite the same. It's more of viewing the urge as an outsider instead of *what I want* (maybe like R' Shafier's "voice within" - I started listening to his audio on this - Thanks Captain and Starting) I went from the conflict being - "I really want to do this, but it's..... (fill in the blank - wrong, gonna ruin your life, not gonna make you happy)" which is a losing proposition which eventually I would cave to, to "Hey, there's a really strong force pulling me to do something I don't want to do" Does that make sense? (perhaps also similar to the idea of watching your urge pass?)
- So far it's only been light urges, but I think that's because in the past, I ignored fighting against the smaller things, or anything that wouldn't violate whatever knas system or commitment I had in place. Ultimately, the urges would grow over time, resulting in a fall. I'm only realizing now how frequently I'm looking to incite myself whether with fantasizing or women on the street etc. I viewed general Shmiras Einayim (on the street/stores etc.) and Hirhurim as "not my battleground right now". (As Chazal say ?????? ??? ?????? ??? - I don't think I applied it to this, not sure why)
- In the past, my focus was mostly on acting out - and not a larger scale plan, so what would happen is I could go a week (or even a few weeks) without falling, but there wasn't any daily fight or plan - even if there was a daily Cheshbon. This is still an issue, and I need to figure out a way to make it a larger, daily battle plan, though what I'm doing now is already a more robust, more holistic approach (even though I haven't worked it all out yet)
- Finding time to focus on this has been and will be very challenging. Between my job and Ke"h large family, my time is very limited, and one of the reasons I haven't reached out to anyone yet to find a partner or for Chizuk is because it's so hard to find time at a normal hour where I can have privacy and Yishuv Hadaas.
- I consider Kabbolas Shabbos my weekly therapy session: This week during Lecha Dodi, I got emotional imagining what Yom Kippur might look like next year assuming I'm clean until then. Certainly a bit different than the past many years. Just thought I'd share.

Thanks for listening!

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 22 Oct 2021 04:19

I was looking in davening today for something relevant to "the struggle". The following ????

caught my eye: ??? ???? ?' ... ???? ???? ? ???? ?

Just as ?' is the ???? ?????, presently, always in the process of rebuilding ??????. So too ?' is always in the process of healing the brokenhearted and depressed. Although the healing isn't complete yet or perhaps not even noticeable, we can rest assured we are a patient under the

care of the Almighty Doctor ???? ???? ?????,

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