

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

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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 anonymous.lost.everything - 05 Nov 2021 18:00

Glad to see you celebrating a success, but stay in touch because in some people the plot

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 05 Nov 2021 18:25

[anonymous.lost.everything wrote on 05 Nov 2021 18:00:](#)

Glad to see you celebrating a success, but stay in touch because in some people the plot

thickens from here. I hope that's not your case and that you ride off into the sunset

Absolutely! I have no plans of disappearing.

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 30 Nov 2021 04:39

Day 60! L'chaim!

And thanks to all of you for your help on this incredible journey!

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by committed_togrowth - 01 Dec 2021 04:44

congrats!!

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Re: I just discovered GYE

Posted by Avrohom - 30 Dec 2021 06:47

90 days! It's incredible!

I'm incredibly thankful to GYE and all of the people who have supported me so far.

I would especially like to reach out to all of you who are reading this that have been part of GYE, visit regularly, but haven't yet become posters on the forum. I assume, that for some of you, the reason why you don't post is a combination of feeling uncomfortable posting about yourself, or you feel "Is it worth it? Will it really help me significantly?". Maybe you feel that your problem isn't as big as some of the others here, and you don't need help, you can manage on your own.

All I can say is that before I joined GYE, I thought I tried everything and continued to struggle for many years. Once joining, and working out a diet of things that help (some of which I was unaware of previously, and some that I just didn't know how to find - like accountability) it's been so much easier. I don't think this is a 90 day "spurt". I've changed the way I deal with this in a number of ways, and I don't plan to change that, nor do I think I'm done. So please, take the leap. Give it a try.

I've been trying to figure out how I've been able to make it this far - and honestly, it's been fairly easy for me. I don't know how many people find that they experience a major change just by joining GYE, but that's what happened to me. Here are some thoughts of how I got here so far.

I think there are a few things that have helped me significantly:

- The less the YH is enticed and teased, the easier the fight becomes. As Chazal say, ?????? ??? ?????? ????. I used to think that referred to acting out, masturbating and pornography. I didn't realize how much I was lusting and fantasizing, justifying that I couldn't possibly fight those things, and it was a relatively "kosher" outlet compared to other things. On the contrary, that made it much harder! Keeping the lust alive, keeps the fire going. It blocks us from thinking rationally and strengthens the Yetzer Hora until we feel we must have it, and then fail. Since I started here, I've been focused on not fantasizing and lusting, letting minor thoughts and sights in the street and supermarket go quickly, and the results have been that my urges are much weaker and less frequent. ?
- Accountability - I'm still trying to understand how it helps. I have a mentor who I text and am in touch with regularly, I feel accountable to the Chevra here, and the 90 day counter

keeps track publicly and for myself, so I can't just sneak anything in with no one noticing. (Although people say the opposite of addiction is connection, I don't think that's what's been helping me; I don't think my connections here are any stronger than the many great and honest relationships I have in my life - but I may be wrong) I don't think the accountability for me is a negative incentive - as in, I can't do this because then I'll be embarrassed etc. It's more of a commitment that I have to stand by, a feeling of Achrayus - to myself, the Chevra here and my mentor. And a positive feeling - like fans supporting an athlete - that people are rooting for me and I don't want to let them down.

- I've been thinking it helps in another way too. Once I've shown myself that there's a line that I really do not plan on crossing, and I'm not going to allow myself any leeway (perhaps this can apply to anyone who can stick to their commitments for a significant amount of time) that changes everything. Part of what makes the urges so strong in general, I think, is that there's a sense that I want and will get that tantalizing pleasure that is at the end of a particular road, whatever it may be, whether it be a fantasy or real, we tell ourselves we're going to get it. Much like Pavlov's dogs, we train ourselves to salivate for that imaginary pleasure we hope to get at the end - and that creates a powerful force and urge, even way before we might experience anything, just from the anticipation of it. But once we've made a real commitment, that I will not go down that road, I'm not planning on experiencing that pleasure, and we stick to that commitment, it reverses the effect. We no longer anticipate and salivate. It makes the battle much easier. (Perhaps this is an explanation of #1 as well)
- Information on how the Yetzer Hora operates and how to deal with urges when they arise. Part of this is #1, understanding that you need to stop the YH at step 1 in order to win. It's also a lot of the strategies of urge surfing or externalizing the urge, not fighting it while not dwelling on it. Also, working on not objectifying women, seeing them as real people, and recognizing that lusting is and fantasizing etc. is mistreatment of them.

Overall, these last 3 months have been an incredible experience and life change. Truthfully, I never felt that my life was falling apart, and I felt I have a great marriage. I was scared of ruining it, and I was spending a lot of time doing things and thinking things that were counterproductive, and I wanted to stop as much as anyone - I just didn't know how. Removing those things from my life has helped me immensely. I'm more focused on my family. Intimacy, though I never thought it was a problem, I now recognize was subtly, but significantly, impacted by my thoughts, and now it is an entirely different experience. I can live a life without lies, and with a completely honest relationship all the time, unlike in the past.

Thanks to all of you for your help, and thanks for reading!

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Avrohom - 22 Feb 2022 02:47

Day 142 - I had a slip or fall - not sure which exactly. After some consultation, I decided to consider it a fall for 2 reasons (not explicit pornography or masturbation - but a chatting/dating site with browsing pictures)

1. For me this needs to be a red line - my issue never was real pornography, so I this is exactly the kind of thing I'm trying to stay away from.
2. I could use a refresh (not a restart) to learn from some of my experience the last month or two specifically and restrengthen those areas.

(Disclaimer: for many people, being machmir on a borderline fall - could lead to further falls, I don't think it will in my case.)

Warning: Spoiler!

Either way, I'm not broken or disillusioned - I slipped up, I'm still a changed person (for the better) from where I was about 5 months ago, and this should help me identify some of the weak areas that need strengthening.

For anyone who might be in the same boat as me, I'd like to share what I think happened so we can learn from it.

My first 90 days were relatively easy - I was highly motivated and the urges, after the first few days, were relatively infrequent and quickly dismissed. After that, very slowly, it got more difficult. I would compare it to a gambler who lives in poverty due to his gambling problem. For the initial while after quitting gambling - and he now has money to live with, he's ecstatic with his new living conditions and that pushes him to never consider going back to old habits. Eventually though, he gets used to his new lifestyle, it doesn't carry the same thrill, and he says to himself - hey, I can have money, and still get the rush of gambling just a buck or two - and then slowly he

falls back into old habits.

I think I lost some motivation in making sure that the smaller urges weren't acted upon, and I allowed myself to view mildly inappropriate material. Then when a loophole presented itself, I got pulled in.

So bottom line:

1. I'm not viewing this as I'm back to square one - I'm still committed to staying clean indefinitely, and plan to do so, (particularly being careful with things that I consider crossing the line) I see it as, I had a slipup which I plan to learn from (I still plan to celebrate when I reach a year from my starting GYE)

2. I need to remind myself to stay vigilant on the lower level actions and urges - if I don't it will grow and eventually lead to worse - resulting in doing the things that made my life miserable, two-faced, duplicitous and deceitful. The only way I can live, and the best way for me to live is to maintain this standard - it's impossible to engage in lower level inappropriate activity without a- it leading to worse and b- it actually takes away from the depth and genuine nature of my real relationships, and otherwise reduced my quality of life, though in the moment that's hard to see.

3. I need to reach out either on the forum or to my accountability partner when I'm guilty of violating #2 - I neglected to do that this time, mostly to maintain my pride.

I'm not getting down over this - just using it to strengthen my resolve.

Thanks to all of you for reading. It's because of you that I'm able to get right back up.

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Avrohom - 25 Feb 2022 05:34

Doing well on day 4.

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Avrohom - 08 Mar 2022 05:02

Day 15 - or day 157 if you count from my start here and one slip/fall - I was upset with someone

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today, it wasn't the usual trigger - like rejection, feeling overwhelmed and stressed, inadequacy, being upset with my wife - that usually can be a trigger for lust, I simply had a taana on what someone did - and I noticed the dopamine drive increase, lusting to fill that somewhat uncomfortable feeling. I'm not sure why specifically it hit me now more than any other time, but it was quite clear what the cause and effect were.

It gave me more clarity in real time how much of lust can just be to fill or remove discomfort or a void inside.

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 08 Mar 2022 12:01

[Avrohom wrote on 08 Mar 2022 05:02:](#)

Day 15 - or day 157 if you count from my start here and one slip/fall - I was upset with someone today, it wasn't the usual trigger - like rejection, feeling overwhelmed and stressed, inadequacy, being upset with my wife - that usually can be a trigger for lust, I simply had a taana on what someone did - and I noticed the dopamine drive increase, lusting to fill that somewhat uncomfortable feeling. I'm not sure why specifically it hit me now more than any other time, but it was quite clear what the cause and effect were.

It gave me more clarity in real time how much of lust can just be to fill or remove discomfort or a void inside.

We tend to not take care of ourselves emotionally. If you are now recognizing situations that trigger are really just desperate attempts at seeking relief, learn healthy ways to get that relief - be it exercise, having someone to share your discomfort with, etc.

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Avrohom - 06 Apr 2022 04:26

I meant to post at day 180. I'm now at day 186 since starting GYE - been going strong except one slip/fall (no p or m). I've learned, particularly in the second set of 90 days, that I need to maintain vigilance (aside from my accountability partner) by having reminders, posting here, and reminding myself why this is the life I want to live and that I don't want to even go back for a little taste, because it will just grow and make it more difficult.

Also, though I had what I considered a fall along the way, the bigger picture is much more significant to me than the streak. (Yes, SAM, I agree streaks can be overrated, can be used effectively as a tool, but are not a measure of your growth or self-worth)

And of course, thanks to all of you - I wouldn't be here without you!

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Avrohom - 24 Jun 2022 15:40

Does anyone know how to block spam or delete it in a way that doesn't sit in the trash bin (in gmail)? I've used the gmail filter to delete it but it just sends it to trash where it sits for 30 days.

Thanks for any leads!

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Kavey - 24 Jun 2022 16:35

First of all just read your thread and very inspiring! I don't know the answer to your question but I had a similar issue with my Yahoo e-mail containing triggers so I started using my gmail as a primary on my smart phone and only check my Yahoo every couple weeks (had to transition people to the new e-mail) on a laptop when people are around. It helped a lot.

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Captain - 24 Jun 2022 17:55

[Avrohom wrote on 24 Jun 2022 15:40:](#)

Does anyone know how to block spam or delete it in a way that doesn't sit in the trash bin (in gmail)? I've used the gmail filter to delete it but it just sends it to trash where it sits for 30 days.

Thanks for any leads!

There's a thread in the category Break Free called SPAM that explains how to have them get automatically deleted. It's currently on the second page of that section.

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Re: I just discovered GYE
Posted by Avrohom - 26 Jun 2022 03:40

[Captain wrote on 24 Jun 2022 17:55:](#)

[Avrohom wrote on 24 Jun 2022 15:40:](#)

Does anyone know how to block spam or delete it in a way that doesn't sit in the trash bin (in gmail)? I've used the gmail filter to delete it but it just sends it to trash where it sits for 30 days.

Thanks for any leads!

There's a thread in the category Break Free called SPAM that explains how to have them get automatically deleted. It's currently on the second page of that section.

Thank you Captain! - I tried that code - looks like it works for now.

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