

First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by davethebrave1 - 05 Aug 2022 03:50

Hey everyone,

Here's my first post:

My struggle started at age 12, when I was first exposed to pornography. I grew up modox but my parents were pretty strict on me not talking to girls. I'll never forget the first time I got caught messaging a girl. My parents read the inappropriate convo and I wanted to sink into the ground. I got on my bike and just pedaled. I left for hours (without a phone) and finally came home just before dark. I tried to quickly hide my actions. I'd message any girl I could find on social media, hoping someone would reply. 1 out of 30 would answer, and at 13 years old I had my first sexual experience with a complete stranger.

In high school I went from one girl to another. I watched porn consistently and kept hooking up, breaking up, and repeating. I always knew that this is completely misaligned with my values and that one day I'd be toichoi kvaroi--behaving fully aligned with my values of Halacha, Shomer negiah, etc.

Finally I decided to cut down. When I was 15 I decided I'm not yet ready to be Shomer but at least I'll stop hooking up. It lasted for about a year and a bit and then I relapsed. I reverted to lurking online, meeting strangers (mainly online because no one I knew was interested in this sexual behavior without real commitment), and hooking up. Finally when I graduated HS I was preparing for my gap year Yeshiva in Israel. This was my time to adopt the values I'd always dreamed of solidifying. I had a serious girlfriend and we decided to be Shomer. It worked, and I was focused enough for a few months to not mess up. Started my year in Israel on the right foot. After being Shomer for 6 months, we mutually agreed to break up because we were heading our separate ways (within Yiddishkeit) and didn't see a long term future together.

I decided to continue in Yeshiva instead of going to university, and I reverted back to watching porn but was able to stay Shomer negiah. Eventually I stumbled. I reverted back to lurking on social media and interacting inappropriately with random strangers. I reconnected with old girlfriends and despite being more frum, went back to my old ways of hooking up--this time really hiding it from everyone. I then continued to lurk and hook up with random strangers. I always had one limit which BH I had always kept, no matter the circumstance. But everything else was fair game. It came to a point where I'd keep hooking up and then just get so bored of it that I'd stop and then relapse a short while later. I continued on in Yeshiva, growing in my Yiddishkeit. The more I grew the more I had to hide my behavior, and the more of an imposter I felt.

I reached a point where every week I'd meet someone new, hook up, and the next morning delete everything, delete my accounts, and promise to myself I'd never mess up again. I didn't tell a soul.

For better or for worse I was never caught or discovered, even by my roommates in Yeshiva when I'd leave in the middle of the night. Eventually a close friend noticed that I'd been acting differently (I had been struggling particularly badly at that time) and he got me to open up to him. He suggested therapy, and I was about to start Shidduchim so I decided to man up and tell my parents and go to therapy.

I went for one session and the therapist told me this behavior is normal--everyone was doing it in the 70s when he grew up.

Shidduchim came around. Whenever I was dating someone I was able to hold back from messaging anyone else or hooking up. Eventually I'd engage in the behavior between dating. About a year later I finally met the woman who would eventually become my wife. BH we connected on such a deep level and of course I behaved properly while we were dating. I even opened up to her about my struggle, and after talking it out and explaining it, she felt comfortable moving forward and getting engaged. I thought finally this will relieve me of my struggle. Unsurprisingly, this was far from the reality. While we dated and were engaged and even a few months into marriage I barely even thought about messing up (watching porn).

Eventually, although our relationship was building, I again felt an urge to mess up. I tried to reconnect with people I had interacted with on my old burner accounts and got back into lurking on social media looking for someone to interact inappropriately with. I knew I'd never CHV meet up with anyone. But to just watch porn and occasionally message I couldn't hold back. Not long after this relapse my wife caught wind of what was happening and I filled her in. It was a devastating shock, but we committed to supporting each other in this journey and she was willing to stand by my side. I went another few weeks without stumbling and then would relapse. I'd watch porn or message someone. I began therapy which started to help, and bH finally I had begun to invest real work into this struggle. Fast forward 6 months. I feel like I've been going in circles with this behavior and convincing my wife to forgive me every time. BH I'm making slow and steady progress in the right direction. I've committed to joining Guard Your Eyes in hopes that the comraderie and support will help me fight the good fight and succeed.

If you could relate I'd love to hear from you and connect.

L'chaim to giving this our best shot.

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by frank.lee - 05 Aug 2022 07:30

Welcome!!! You are in a great place to support you in your important life journey.

Hatzlacha!!

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by Larry Bird - 05 Aug 2022 15:29

[davethebrave1 wrote on 05 Aug 2022 03:50:](#)

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If you could relate I'd love to hear from you and connect.

L'chaim to giving this our best shot.

This is an amazing post. This seems to have been sitting on your heart for your whole life. I can definitely relate to that. It's like you don't know any life without it. I often wonder how much I've been held back because of this. Where would I have been had I not indulged endlessly. You are an absolute gabor. And you are quite lucky to have such an eishes chayil by your side. I hope she knows that you are a very good man with a very common issue, not a pervert who took her for a loop. I can't imagine the trauma of having my parents catch me doing this type of thing. Bh my parents led by example without being too intrusive. If they would have been hovering over me I probably would not be where I am right now.

The past is in the past and now is your time to shine. The more you think about your misdeeds the harder it is to grow. Don't let yourself guilt over it. There's no guilt in the tshuva process.

Best of luck to you!

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by ?????? ?????? - 05 Aug 2022 15:52

It's great to have you on board with us. Welcome!

You will be seeing posts on your thread from other married people here on GYE, or you might get messages from them, so be on the lookout for that. I would love to help but I have absolutely no experience with marriage.

In other regards, if you would like, please look at the resources in my signature because they are one aspect of many things that will help you on your journey.

Wishing you much hatzlacha!

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by Captain - 05 Aug 2022 17:52

Welcome!

Please check out these great free resources:

ebook- The Battle of the Generation

Audio series- The Fight

They're very good to start with.

See below in my signature for the links.?

Hatzlocha!

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by YeshivaGuy - 07 Aug 2022 11:19

Welcome home

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by Shtarkandemotional - 07 Aug 2022 14:31

Welcome! I highly recommend the book "the battle of the generation"! I just finished it yesterday and I can say it changed my perspective and gave me so much insight and skills! It's a must read for anyone struggling in this journey. Join me and the username Vehkam tonight

we are starting the book again one chapter each night.

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by AlexEliezer - 07 Aug 2022 18:50

Welcome !

Wow ! That is a very intense cycle you are in.

I've been on this website for 13 years now. The general feeling is that if a person keeps relapsing, then more needs to be done.

I can't keep doing the same thing and expect a different result.

Lust is an addiction just like any other substance.

Recognizing this, and our powerlessness over it is the first step to true recovery.

I know that my life has become unmanageable due to this thing.

Powerlessness means my only hope is to stay out of the ring. Not to dabble or mess with it in any way.

This includes shmiras eynayim everywhere, and deflecting fantasies and images from my brain.

In the classic recovery process, there are 12 steps to recovery. Consider learning about them.

There are many ways to access them, including live groups.

For me, I studied them and worked them in my own way.

Bringing Hashem into the equation is also key.

Try this tefilla, especially when you are thinking lustful thoughts (this might be dozens of times per day):

Ribono Shel Olam,

I am powerless over lust and my life has become unmanageable.

Only You can restore me to sanity.

I turn my life and my lust over to Your care and I ask You to please heal me from this illness of lust.

I don't want to lust.

I only want You and a relationship with You and your Torah and with the wife you have given me.

I surrender my lust to You.

Please take my lust.

Much Hatzlocha,

Alex

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by ColinColin - 22 Aug 2022 23:00

Welcome Dave The Brave.

I can relate to using websites to meet strangers.

I have detailed doing this in my own introduction post.

Please know that behaviour has been wired into your brain.

You crave it.

It is mixed up with adrenaline and dopamine etc.

So you can avoid it for a bit, but the urge will strike when you are bored, or lonely, or hurt etc.

Even when you are tired.

It is a means of excitement, an adrenaline rush, a means of escape.

You don't want to do it, but once logged in you feel powerless to stop.

Just how some people log into social media and find themselves scrolling through pages two hours later, like they are chained to their phone.

The obvious answer is to replace logging in with positive activities.

Learn what triggers you, and respond quickly.

Do something else immediately, and know that the urge to go onto those sites will continue for about 15 minutes, then subside.

Even if you start eating or take a nap, do something else immediately.

And check out Mindfulness.

The ability to recognise the feeling that is the urge, to isolate it as a feeling, not an integral part of you, and to then respond by doing something positive.

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Re: First Post. Can you relate?

Posted by qualitystuff - 24 Aug 2022 19:25

Great first post ! I certainly can relate. The fact that your wife is aware and supportive is a HUGE advantage. Keep her aware and you will have built in support. In my decades of failures and attempted solutions I find support from other like-minded people the most unique and productive tool.

Best of Luck. You are not alone.

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