

My Story, Being Honest For OncePosted by ilovehashem247 - 22 Sep 2022 01:20

Hello, Friends.

My name is iLoveHashem247. I am a married man with a supportive wife and three wonderful kids. Looking at my life from an outsider's perspective, you'd think I have it all. I own a renovated home on my own private road with lots of land, run my own business with which i support myself, am fortunate to be able to learn many more hours a week than i work, and am a popular and recognized member of my community - and I'm not yet 30 years old. But all this comes with a price tag - a lifelong struggle with addiction, mostly with marijuana and risky sexual encounters.

I had girlfriends in high school before becoming BT, and had shmirat habrit challenges, like most teens. I struggled with SB and engaging in sexual activities at massage parlors but was able to be clean for at least 6 months before marriage. during my wife's pregnancy with our second child, i unfortunately reverted back to my pre-BT habbit of recreational marijuana during the stress of a second pregnancy (the first one outside of the shana rishona "infatuation zone"), which in turn let down a rabbit hole of other issues... i had recently been visiting massage parlors, not for the sexual experience (i do not engage in any "happy endings" anymore, rather when i do succumb it is for the exhibitionism that i can indulge in without making a massive chillul Hashem). I am also very disappointed to admit that i had a sexual encounter with a shiksa who picked up a business card i had left at a restaurant i ate in, she sent me lewd photos and we met up one time (sept 12, '22) where she performed oral sex on me.

I am struggling to break out of these addictive patterns - i have recently filtered my home office desktop, my work laptop, and my smartphone i use to run my business (main issue was watching movies and free "live cams"). The crazy thing is tha tl am a person who has made such amazing changes in my life - in many ways, I am the kind of person i look up to and always wanted to become - but it is the sticky residue of my past life that I'm having such a hard time getting rid of.

I am sick of who I've secretly become and the double life i am living.

I want to be fair to myself, honest and equitable with my wife, and and terrified of the shame i will face when standing before my Creator on my day of judgement.

Well, that was deeply revealing and I have revealed to you, fellow strangers, that which i have not even revealed to my wife. To be fair though, i have been fully open with her regarding the guarding of eyes and marijuana addictions, but have never ever discussed the massage parlor or infidelity.

HELP!

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by Foolie - 07 Jun 2023 18:35

Good Luck

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by Dov - 07 Jun 2023 19:32

Yep. Exactly the way it is. This is a beautiful post, thank you for being here, friend.

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by Dov - 07 Jun 2023 19:35

[??? ???? ???? ??? wrote on 05 Jun 2023 03:03:](#)

[iLoveHashem247 wrote on 05 Jun 2023 02:10:](#)

What difference does my understanding of Him make in the reality of things?

If I worship a G-d of my understanding, then that is not Judaism. That would be ILH-ism and a made up religion.

I think your understanding of G-d makes a big difference in the reality of things. I am not referring to the theology of G-d, but how you, in your own life, receive or experience G-d.

Here are some ways in which I have received G-d in my actual experience over the years:

- "G-d who I can turn to in a time of distress"
- "G-d who loves me for who I am"
- "G-d who demands that I learn Torah at every free moment,"
- "G-d who punishes me for looking at pornography and masturbating."
- "G-d who thinks I am a sinner."
- "G-d who thinks I am righteous."

Again, you are not necessarily going to change your beliefs or intent when you say Shema Yisroel, but it is a worthwhile exercise to think about how you are actually experiencing G-d in your life.

My post just above was referring to this post, by you.

And, thanks again ??

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by Dov - 07 Jun 2023 19:38

[iLoveHashem247 wrote on 07 Jun 2023 18:16:](#)

Finally accepted that I am an addict. I said so in public at the AA meeting last night.

Not sure how that applies to alcohol, perhaps I am an addict to addicting things perhaps when I

can't get my fix, and I am not working on it, I reach out to escape to other things...

Not clear on that yet

But just like porn or M or drinking, or drugging it is an escape from facing the realities of my life

I grew up with everything other than the free will to make my own decisions

Currently on my way for an intake to get a therapist and deal with the source and root of all that troubles me

It's so great to finally get something related to the help we really need. I pray your intake therapist is honest, objective, and most of all has siyata diShmaya.

I presume the AA meeting you attended was an open one, rather than a Closed AA meeting where only alcoholics are invited.

The question you are mulling over of how it applies to alcohol, is unclear to me. Care to explain what you mean?

Thx

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by iLoveHashem247 - 07 Jun 2023 20:24

[Dov wrote on 07 Jun 2023 19:38:](#)

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Thx

Amen

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the question regarding alcohol is

“Am I addicted to weed and turn to alcohol when I can’t get my drug of choice, or am I an addict in the general sense?”

as in, whenever I am feeling like I am overwhelmed with my life I turn to something that will numb my pain with a preference for one drug, but not discriminating when I can get my hand and others. I never have, nor am I interested in using opiates or cocaine, or other such hard drugs.

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by Shmuel - 07 Jun 2023 20:38

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Dont know if this answers your question...

I have heard from several fellows in SA that when they got sober from lust they found no need to turn to alcohol or other drugs. They have explained that they were actually turning to these substances to cope with all the shame and unmanageability their sexaholisim has caused them.

Dont know if/how this would apply to you or if it is helpful but thought i would share...

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by iLoveHashem247 - 07 Jun 2023 21:54

[Shmuel wrote on 07 Jun 2023 20:38:](#)

[iLoveHashem247 wrote on 07 Jun 2023 20:24:](#)

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So I’m not sure if that strengthens or we can do the points. On the one hand, I could say that nobody is an alcoholic alone, rather whoever calls himself an alcoholic, or for that case, even a sexaholic is in reality an addict.

or, perhaps you can say that based on someone’s main escape mechanism, that would be what defines the nature of the addiction, but the approach toward resolving the underlying issues will be the same

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by Dov - 08 Jun 2023 00:29

[iLoveHashem247 wrote on 07 Jun 2023 20:24:](#)

[Dov wrote on 07 Jun 2023 19:38:](#)

[iLoveHashem247 wrote on 07 Jun 2023 18:16:](#)

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The first step of alcoholics Anonymous does not read "powerless *against* alcohol." Instead, it reads "powerless *over* alcohol." And it's not a word game, but very specific and clear. Even more important, it's honest: what defines an addict is what effect the drug has on the person when they use it. Bill W asks this question of inquirers, in his big book. (I paraphrase) "Can you drink alcohol successfully? Then you aren't an addict." He refers to it as drinking like a gentleman. Normal people, non-alcoholics in other words, can drink successfully. They never wreck their lives by starting to drink. Because they don't end up having to overdo it. But alcoholics drink when they're really not supposed to, when it does them harm. They waste time drinking when they have no time to spare. They start drinking when they can't really afford to get drunk and end up drunk anyhow. The people in their lives go through hell because of their drinking. They destroy their integrity one piece at a time because they have to hide their drinking and lie about it. It's not something they can do and keep living normally, at the same time. And the same thing applies to sexaholics. Even if a sexaholic person (such as myself) is an otherwise good, frum person: He or she cannot engage in erotic adventure successfully. Practically every time the sexaholic tries to do that, trouble ensues. Either the person deepens their double life because of the hiding and lying they need to do, or they go way overboard and frequently surprise themselves. "Last time, right after it came out, I felt so sure I would never *ever* do this again... How the hell did I end up back here again...or worse?" A sexaholic tries to do teshuva, and it never works for him or her. Every time the sexaholic tries to do teshuva, they end up on a super high, a high that really only makes them bored when things are normal! And leads back to a feeling that they need more sex adventure, eventually. (I posted about this on

guard your eyes nearly 15 years ago. The post was called 'the nuclear reset button', and guard reposted it many, many times in his chizzuk newsletters, of old). Teshuvah only works for normals. It does not work for addicts. In the end, it just ends up *reinforcing* the cycle after a brief respite. Oh well. Chazal already told us *Derech Eretz kodma laTorah*, and they were right. Recovery is before Torah and anything like religious avodas Hashem - It's referred to in the second step as 'sanity', for this reason. And it's not the same thing as sobriety, at all.

The addict's problem is not drinking/using the drug as you keep implying in your posts. The defining thing *isn't* that the addict keeps using and can't seem to stop. That's only what gets our attention that something's wrong. Everybody has temptation and many (even non-addicts) have very poor willpower. Many normal people are immature and just don't know how to say 'no' very well. But what distinguishes the addicts are: 1- he or she cannot successfully drink/use, because using the drug has a different effect on them than it has on others. The only solution to that is complete abstinence from the drug. There is no other answer. An alcoholic who comes to Step 1 has admitted that he cannot moderate his drinking. He gives up on every being able to learn how to moderate his drinking. He knows, finally, that he can never afford to drink ever again and surrenders alcohol. Same with a sexaholic exactly. A sexaholic realizes that engaging in erotic adventure is just not going to work for him or her. Whenever he or she engages in a little erotic adventure for any reason, it ends up taking over his marriage bed, bathroom time, study time, etc, and it will be done to an excess he cannot afford...until that same horrible bottom is hit yet again. We need support from other real live human beings who are sober, in order to succeed with this. I am clean for 26 years and go to meetings on a regular basis where I meet many other people who I've become friends with who are sober for many years, as well. In the beginning, those associations are absolutely essential and there's no way to do that by Zoom, on the phone or any other nonsense. I need real people that I can see otherwise I don't believe it's possible. And no matter how powerful Hashem is, He never gives us the power to use lust (erotic adventuring) successfully or for the alcoholic to drink successfully. We remain powerless and never get that power at all. Hoping to get the power to be able to drink a little bit ever again, means the alcoholic hasn't surrendered alcohol at all, yet. Same for the sexaholic. If I'm hoping that one day Hashem gives me the power to be like most normal people and purposely excite myself a little bit, watch a little bit of porn, etc, all that means is that I have not surrendered my drug yet. I'm powerless and over the drug. Not **against it** mind you, but **over it**. That's the only point of Step 1, and that is all powerlessness really refers to.

2- We have fallen in love with using the drug and obsess about it in our minds and hearts when we are bored, too happy, too sad, worried, etc, and need a reprieve from that obsession. For this we need a miracle. And as Bill discovered and wrote about in his Big Book, so have we sexaholics found out, that: Hashem *does* grant us a daily reprieve - if we really have surrendered our drug and sincerely want to let go of any mental obsessing about it - and that reprieve is contingent on our maintenance of our spiritual condition - which brings me to the third problem an addict has:

3- We hate way too much of life. Too many things destroy our inner peace. We are, in some things, insatiable, unsatisfiable, entitled, self-centered, and arrogant. Of course, non addicts have these same problems, too. All the mussar sforim are full of these things. But addicts seem to need a little bit of a different approach to reach the place where they make peace with G-d's

will, in other words with life on *life's* terms. Reality is a tough one, for us. We tend to need a spiritual approach that most normal people don't really need. We need to connect to something a bit higher than most people need to connect to, otherwise we're down in the cesspool. Others don't quite have that experience. And that's what steps 2-11 are mostly about.

Have you ever wondered why 11 of the 12 steps don't even *mention* alcohol? Why there is no place anywhere in the Big Book of AA *any* instructions or suggestions at all for how to quit drinking? None. And none of the 12 Steps work on quitting drinking.

Step 1 addresses the first problem alcoholics have, above. It's the surrender step *regarding the drug*. Steps 2-11 address the second and third problems above. They are the Steps *regarding real life*.

Any questions? I have privately messaged you before that talking this over on the phone will make a lot more sense than writing back and forth. There's just too much more detail to explain and too much more to talk about in terms of *application* of any of these ideas, to do this justice in writing. So far, that hasn't happened. And so far, you've gone to alcoholics Anonymous meetings instead of meeting other chronic masturbators, in person, in meetings. Maybe I'm wrong about that. I'm just basing it on what I see you wrote above. Popping into one meeting and making a grand admission is something, but it's only the barest start. Sexaholics Anonymous meetings are safe for serious people. What changes and makes the big difference when we actually meet our peers who do the same things we do and admit it openly on a regular, ongoing basis, isn't that we get to finally face other people. It's that we finally face ourselves. Until then, we rarely do face ourselves truly, no matter how honest we think we are. Maybe I shouldn't have thrown that last bit in because it might be an annoying thing to hear. But I'm happy to explain what I mean by that. Just not here in writing. It would just take too much time and wouldn't get clear in the end, anyhow.

Hatzlocha ??

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once

Posted by iLoveHashem247 - 08 Jun 2023 01:23

Hi Dov, thank you for the detailed response!

I've been going to AA daily for two weeks and plan on going every day for 90 days at least. I've gone to SA before but I did not feel like it was the best forum for me as it did not address the main area of my "addiction struggles" which are more substance related. Nor did I feel it was an appropriate forum for me as there were discussions of acting out in a way I never would have imagined and put all kinds of ideas in my head that would not have been there otherwise. Not so with AA, where I am able to identify and relate to the attendees' struggles and challenges on a personal level to a greater extent.

Ultimately the struggles and the acting out overlap, but I feel that for me and for anyone else, the appropriate venue is the one which addresses the MO that resonates with one's acting out the most.

I believe that SA, AA, OA, and "fill-in-the-blank-Anonymous" are all excellent programs. But just like the diagnosis of the addiction must be a self diagnosis, so too must the decision of which forum to make use of be self-directed, as the person that knows himself best is oneself.

I am fortunate to have mentors who know me and my family pretty well, and have guided me throughout the process of overcoming my addictions and other challenges. These mentors (including my personal Rav who I've known from shortly before my marriage) have guided me through the process of gaining clarity on to how to treat, and within which forum to treat (and just as importantly where not to). I have learned to trust the guidance of those who I've become close to and upon whose guidance I have relied.

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by Dov - 08 Jun 2023 01:40

Yep, writing sure isn't the place to discuss this. I said my peace above, some points that you bring up are very well-known concerns. Self-diagnosed? Definitely that's a thing. The only person who can decide and admit that they aren't able to use their drug the way normals can, is the person themselves. I absolutely and totally agree with that, If that's what you mean. But your entire definition of an addict as a person who can't resist it and fight it without help, is literally missing the main point of 12 steps recovery. It's the way most Rabbonim (and even many therapists) approach addiction as a problem - the problematic act or behavior that needs to be avoided is their focus. I'm not certain if most of what I wrote above about what powerlessness really refers to is even registering yet. But yes, the approach you're referring to in most of your

posts is indeed what GYE is all about: learning how to finally resist it and stay clean. Which is not wood alcoholics Anonymous is about. Sure, you'll get a different message if you hang around with people with a few weeks or months of sobriety, but practically all the old timers will , for example. I

know a bunch of roshei kolel and significant talmidei chachomim who've only discovered sobriety after understanding what he's talking about and taking action. I would love to speak with you Rov directly and get a chance to share my experience and hear his so that we can both learn from each other.

speaking a different language, bH. Try listening to Sandy Beach's talks (Sandy is it fair for me to ask if you have a sponsor? Usually getting a sponsor who has at least a few years of sobriety, is what separates the ones who want to get better from the ones who want to just learn what they can from the 12 steps and do it their own way. A lot of people need a very slow and gentle approach. Taking things step by step and staying basically within the comfort zone is the only way they can possibly make it through this challenge. I respect what you've done until now and have no way to know what's best for you. All I can do is share some ideas. I'm very happy for your wife to have a person who is trying and I'm happy for you to have a wife who is patient. ?? You're very lucky man.

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once

Posted by iLoveHashem247 - 08 Jun 2023 03:17

Thank you everyone for your responses and comments

would like to note that I'm using this thread more as a personal journal of my journey to sobriety and mental health

feel free to continue replying and commenting as it adds flavor and insight to this personal journal

please note that I am seeking to pursue my growth journey primarily face to face with the people in the support groups I have chosen, and am unable to delve too deeply into forum discussions

thank you everyone for your presence here

do come back!

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by Dov - 08 Jun 2023 03:42

Woops. No problem. Understood fully.Ciao and hatzlocha and lots of love

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by cordnoy - 08 Jun 2023 03:52

[Dov wrote on 08 Jun 2023 03:42:](#)

Woops. No problem. Understood fully.Ciao and hatzlocha and lots of love

@Dov, I think you should subscribe to another thread or two, even by mistake; this way we could hear your pearls of wisdom regardin' multiple wives, your wife makin' porn videos for husband to watch, gay groom disclosin' to his wife by the yichud room, and the best of all: if one reads a thread on Gye and it is so erotic and excitin' that it causes him to masturbate with ejaculation heaven forbid, does he still need to pay his chopstick-oath of \$180 to Gye, as they were the true culprit for the unzippin' of his pants?

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Re: My Story, Being Honest For Once
Posted by cordnoy - 08 Jun 2023 04:02

[Dov wrote on 08 Jun 2023 00:29:](#)

[iLoveHashem247 wrote on 07 Jun 2023 20:24:](#)

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The first step of alcoholics Anonymous does not read "powerless *against* alcohol." Instead, it reads "powerless *over* alcohol." And it's not a word game, but very specific and clear. Even more important, it's honest: what defines an addict is what effect the drug has on the person when they use it. Bill W asks this question of inquirers, in his big book. (I paraphrase) "Can you drink alcohol successfully? Then you aren't an addict." He refers to it as drinking like a gentleman. Normal people, non-alcoholics in other words, can drink successfully. They never wreck their lives by starting to drink. Because they don't end up having to overdo it. But alcoholics drink when they're really not supposed to, when it does them harm. They waste time drinking when they have no time to spare. They start drinking when they can't really afford to get drunk and end up drunk anyhow. The people in their lives go through hell because of their drinking. They destroy their integrity one piece at a time because they have to hide their drinking and lie about it. It's not something they can do and keep living normally, at the same time. And the same thing applies to sexaholics. Even if a sexaholic person (such as myself) is an otherwise good, frum person: He or she cannot engage in erotic adventure successfully. Practically every time the sexaholic tries to do that, trouble ensues. Either the person deepens their double life because of the hiding and lying they need to do, or they go way overboard and frequently surprise themselves. "Last time, right after it came out, I felt so sure I would never

ever do this again... How the hell did I end up back here again...or worse?" A sexaholic tries to do teshuva, and it never works for him or her. Every time the sexaholic tries to do teshuva, they end up on a super high, a high that really only makes them bored when things are normal! And leads back to a feeling that they need more sex adventure, eventually. (I posted about this on guard your eyes nearly 15 years ago. The post was called 'the nuclear reset button', and guard reposted it many, many times in his chizzuk newsletters, of old). Teshuvah only works for normals. It does not work for addicts. In the end, it just ends up *reinforcing* the cycle after a brief respite. Oh well. Chazal already told us *Derech Eretz kodma laTorah*, and they were right. Recovery is before Torah and anything like religious avodas Hashem - It's referred to in the second step as 'sanity', for this reason. And it's not the same thing as sobriety, at all.

The addict's problem is not drinking/using the drug as you keep implying in your posts. The defining thing *isn't* that the addict keeps using and can't seem to stop. That's only what gets our attention that something's wrong. Everybody has temptation and many (even non-addicts) have very poor willpower. Many normal people are immature and just don't know how to say 'no' very well. But what distinguishes the addicts are: 1- he or she cannot successfully drink/use, because using the drug has a different effect on them than it has on others. The only solution to that is complete abstinence from the drug. There is no other answer. An alcoholic who comes to Step 1 has admitted that he cannot moderate his drinking. He gives up on every being able to learn how to moderate his drinking. He knows, finally, that he can never afford to drink ever again and surrenders alcohol. Same with a sexaholic exactly. A sexaholic realizes that engaging in erotic adventure is just not going to work for him or her. Whenever he or she engages in a little erotic adventure for any reason, it ends up taking over his marriage bed, bathroom time, study time, etc, and it will be done to an excess he cannot afford...until that same horrible bottom is hit yet again. We need support from other real live human beings who are sober, in order to succeed with this. I am clean for 26 years and go to meetings on a regular basis where I meet many other people who I've become friends with who are sober for many years, as well. In the beginning, those associations are absolutely essential and there's no way to do that by Zoom, on the phone or any other nonsense. I need real people that I can see otherwise I don't believe it's possible. And no matter how powerful Hashem is, He never gives us the power to use lust (erotic adventuring) successfully or for the alcoholic to drink successfully. We remain powerless and never get that power at all. Hoping to get the power to be able to drink a little bit ever again, means the alcoholic hasn't surrendered alcohol at all, yet. Same for the sexaholic. If I'm hoping that one day Hashem gives me the power to be like most normal people and purposely excite myself a little bit, watch a little bit of porn, etc, all that means is that I have not surrendered my drug yet. I'm powerless and over the drug. Not **against it** mind you, but **over** it. That's the only point of Step 1, and that is all powerlessness really refers to.

2- We have fallen in love with using the drug and obsess about it in our minds and hearts when we are bored, too happy, too sad, worried, etc, and need a reprieve from that obsession. For this we need a miracle. And as Bill discovered and wrote about in his Big Book, so have we sexaholics found out, that: Hashem *does* grant us a daily reprieve - if we really have surrendered our drug and sincerely want to let go of any mental obsessing about it - and that reprieve is contingent on our maintenance of our spiritual condition - which brings me to the third problem an addict has:

3- We hate way too much of life. Too many things destroy our inner peace. We are, in some things, insatiable, unsatisfiable, entitled, self-centered, and arrogant. Of course, non addicts have these same problems, too. All the mussar sforim are full of these things. But addicts seem to need a little bit of a different approach to reach the place where they make peace with G-d's will, in other words with life on *life's* terms. Reality is a tough one, for us. We tend to need a spiritual approach that most normal people don't really need. We need to connect to something a bit higher than most people need to connect to, otherwise we're down in the cesspool. Others don't quite have that experience. And that's what steps 2-11 are mostly about.

Have you ever wondered why 11 of the 12 steps don't even *mention* alcohol? Why there is no place anywhere in the Big Book of AA *any* instructions or suggestions at all for how to quit drinking? None. And none of the 12 Steps work on quitting drinking.

Step 1 addresses the first problem alcoholics have, above. It's the surrender step *regarding the drug*. Steps 2-11 address the second and third problems above. They are the Steps *regarding real life*.

Any questions? I have privately messaged you before that talking this over on the phone will make a lot more sense than writing back and forth. There's just too much more detail to explain and too much more to talk about in terms of *application* of any of these ideas, to do this justice in writing. So far, that hasn't happened. And so far, you've gone to alcoholics Anonymous meetings instead of meeting other chronic masturbators, in person, in meetings. Maybe I'm wrong about that. I'm just basing it on what I see you wrote above. Popping into one meeting and making a grand admission is something, but it's only the barest start. Sexaholics Anonymous meetings are safe for serious people. What changes and makes the big difference when we actually meet our peers who do the same things we do and admit it openly on a regular, ongoing basis, isn't that we get to finally face other people. It's that we finally face ourselves. Until then, we rarely do face ourselves truly, no matter how honest we think we are. Maybe I shouldn't have thrown that last bit in because it might be an annoying thing to hear. But I'm happy to explain what I mean by that. Just not here in writing. It would just take too much time and wouldn't get clear in the end, anyhow.

Hatzlocha ??

Dov at his very best, every word mind you!!

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