

How porn saved my life

Posted by kosherman - 03 Oct 2022 03:14

I know it sounds weird [especially on this type of forum] but I think it is true. Porn and masturbation saved my life. I know you'd expect that it would be ruined, but let me explain by telling you my story. Well before I begin let me tell you a little about me. I am an older single who went to yeshiva for many years and values learning though I am worldly. I wouldn't say I am yeshivish [mainly because I don't like that label] I watch movies and have the internet [including a smartphone]. I went to college and currently work, but I am still involved in yeshiva, trying to learn daily, daven with a minyan, and value the frum lifestyle.

When I was younger I was extremely depressed. I didn't recognize that at the time but I realize it now. I felt like I had no one; not parents, siblings or friends. I truly felt alone and that no one cared about me.

At home growing up, I faced what I see now as verbal abuse. (No real physical abuse though both my parents did hit me I never felt physically abused.) My father had/has an anger problem and there was always a fear of crossing him wrong. It was really easy to set him off and there was a fear that he would physically lash out [maybe a little physical abuse]. I really believe he hates me. (That is a long story for another time.) The put-downs were constant. I was never good enough and always did something wrong. [Also it didn't help that I was a rambunctious child.] My father would (and still does) react passively aggressively and overtly aggressively. [It's kind of funny because now my mother always asks why I don't come home more often like I should want to come home and also when I do come home I still face the same abuse. You would think it is obvious, but the human ability to blind ourselves is astounding.] My mother, though she was nice, also suffered from anger issues and was also overwhelmed dealing with her children as well as my father. There were times she would lash out and yell at me as well, though she was more caring [never felt like she hated me] but not healthy either. It took many years to come to terms with the abuse. I remember a rebbe telling me you're not going to change them and needing to remove myself from the relationship. [Sounds really harsh and it was, but it was correct.] It was/is really hard and painful giving up on the relationship with my parents. Yes sometimes they are nice and show care but I know that in the end, they will always put me down. [If you have children, realize that when they are young that is your time to build a relationship with them because when they are older they may not want the relationship anymore. Sorry, I just felt the need to insert some child rearing advice.]

My siblings would try to stay out of the splash zone (my father's wrath) and growing up I never was really close to them growing up, though as we have gotten older I have become closer with them. In my younger years unfortunately, they also contributed to some of my torment. I am second to youngest and my younger brother is quite a few years younger and was given different treatment than the rest of my siblings [okay yes a little bitter but who doesn't have a

little sibling rivalry?]. The sibling right above me had issues [Anger issue, wonder where he got that from?] and while at times we were close we also fought. None of my siblings were ever there emotionally for me to run to. At times they would gang up on me with my father to put me down. [Honestly, I don't really hold it against them. It was a good way to keep the heat off of them.] We never discussed what was going on, and even now it is taboo in the family to talk about our issues, especially the way we were raised. Some of us siblings have had some conversations around the anger and the putdowns, but never discussing the long-term consequences that the abuse has had on our psyches [and for sure never label it as the abuse it was/is].

At school, I was an outcast (I would rather not try to explain, also didn't help that I was extremely guarded and defensive) I faced bullying in my younger years in school and never really made close friends (even after the bullying stopped). I eventually went away to high school where I got help and started to overcome my issues. [Today I'm a much happier person with friends and am a decently well adjusted human.]

So what does my story have to do with porn and masturbation and how did it save my life? Well, porn and masturbation were my safe place while growing up. I began to use masturbation and porn before I was 13, I don't have the exact age [it was quite young]. I would get screamed at and put down then go masturbate and make things bearable. I would fantasize and escape from the hell I was in for a little bit. It made life almost bearable [usually sexual fantasies they were the best]. It is interesting I never blamed or questioned Hashem I had my outlet. (Chazal says for every sickness there is a cure well I had mine.) When I was younger I did not even understand what I was doing let alone that it was "wrong", which may explain why I never have suffered from real guilt around porn and masturbation. Looking back if I didn't have it I don't know if I'd be here. I might have turned to drugs, dangerous activities, or just ended things. (I know I wasn't healthy, I since went to therapy and dealt with many of my issues [or at least to an extent there are scars and at times these wounds do reopen.]) To illustrate how bad it was, the first thing I ever really davened for was to die. (I've been informed this is not something a healthy child should pray for.) Porn and masterbation looking back saved me. They were my safe place without it, I do not know where I would've ended up. It was the one thing I could really rely on and it didn't let me down [as opposed to everybody and everything else (at least that's how it felt)].

Sorry if you thought this was the end of the story. There is more.

Later in life as I got healthier I started to understand it was "wrong" and started to resist. While I was in yeshiva I was decently successful [extended streaks of no pornography and lesser but still streaks without masterbation] then I would go home and just immerse myself in porn and masturbate. It was a cycle. As I have gotten older and more technological [smartphone,

computer etc.] it has gotten harder, and I have had varying degrees of success.

Then I entered shidduchim, well to be honest entering shidduchim wasn't the issue, it's that I have not left. At first it was okay, I got rejected [big deal been through worse did I mention my parents] but I was fine. As the years have gone by I am no longer fine. Most of my friends are married and many have multiple children. (Just side note: shidduchim have been unsuccessful not because of my childhood trauma or porn and masterbation it is more the intersection of my background and personality that creates issues [well some of the personality probably is an outgrowth of the trauma but I am a decently well adjusted human being.] I have spoken at length with rebbiem and friends about the dating issue [and they aren't like dude you need help]. If you would like to hear more about my dating, hopefully the book will come out when it's over.)

The loneliness has started to really get to me. I talk to people, learn, work, yet I am missing having a family [something I have never had]. As the years have passed and the loneliness has built up, I have started to really give up on getting married. Being lonely and nowhere to turn I have resorted back to old habits and restarted the defense mechanisms of using pron and masterbation to cope. I have stopped caring and fighting to resist watching porn and masterbating. When I am lonely and down they are still my safe place [and still work].

Well recently it has gotten even worse. The porn and masterbation are just not enough. I want more. [It has not helped that I have entered the "real world and been exposed to the things that occur there.] I have started to fantasize and plan ways to get more including begining to act on it [more means like actual sex or just not being shomer with a real girl.] I have started to explore different ways of getting to this goal. I have started chatting and speaking with women through various means [sorry for being vague it's intentional]. It is embarrassing to admit but I have gone so far to exchange explicit pictures with a lady I met online. Doing this has made me realize that having sex is very attainable and I am not sure I want to stop. I know it is "wrong" and will hurt my future [like if I ever found someone to marry]. I feel like this is a big boundary to break and that if I will break this boundary I am not sure where I will stop. Up until now there has never really been a person on the other side to bear witness and be involved. I am not sure if I will really remain frum if I continue down this path.

As I have started down this path it is almost yom kippur and the seriousness of what I am doing has started to hit me. There is a part of me that would like to continue, it is fun and it feels good, but I know at the end of the day this is not who I want to be. I value my relationship with Hashem. Right now I am in pain and it is hard to remember what is really important.

Porn and masturbation have never really negatively impacted my life. Yes, I have wasted time and have neglected things because of porn and masturbation, but I have been able to keep myself in check. I know it is "wrong" [an avaira] and would rather not do it, but to be honest I have stopped feeling guilty. Even the new found behavior hasn't really caused me guilt. So why am I writing this? Why am I looking to stop and give up the one "good" thing in my life? Well it is almost yom kippur and I decided I need to change. [Yearly yom kippur ritual tells me I'm going to do better in this area with various degrees of success.] Well this year just promising myself I won't continue watching porn and masturbating is not going to work, especially with my new found coping mechanism. I feel the only way to ultimately anchor myself is that I need to get married [yes I know it's risky with a porn and masturbation addiction, but that is a long conversation]. Until then I need a way to hold myself accountable so here I am telling my story. Hopefully using this site will help me be accountable to myself and motivate myself to overcome my challenges. Writing this confession of sorts is my way of trying to not give up. To tell my story and show Hashem I am still trying, despite everything I am still here fighting.

Thank you for reading. I am really humbled that you took your time to read my story [if you just skipped to the end I don't blame you it is kind of long.] There is more to my story and plenty got left out [some to preserve my anonymity (sorry a little guarded, daddy taught me well). If you have any questions or comments please feel free to reply and I will try to respond. Have a gmar chasima tova and a gut gebentsht yor. May we break free from our urges and our tefillos be answered this yom kippur.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by fdtgd8 - 21 Mar 2023 01:08

Hey Kosherman, I just read your story. I want to congratulate you for making a choice to go in the right direction, by deciding to join this program.

I am very new to this site (a few days) so I've been checking things out, and your story stood out to me considerably (This is my first post on the gye forum)

It's honest, and raw. The truth is life can be very challenging; and looking around realistically it can be easy (at times) to say: after all the violence, and abuse that is in the world can masturbation, and porn really be that bad?! If anything sometimes it seems like porn and masturbation, could be a good thing, considering some of the other negative activities (violence, self-destructive behaviors, etc.) we could be doing instead.

In truth porn, and masturbation, are very destructive on a spiritual level! We must pray to HaShem that he help us cleanse our souls so that we can see this, and that we have the strength to avoid these sins!

Before reading your post, I just finished reading Chapter 1 of "The Battle of the Generation" (which I found referenced multiple times on this site) so it's fresh in my mind. The theme of that chapter is "Succeeding despite difficulty is the point of life." Basically there is much more merit in a success if it was very difficult to accomplish. I think that really fits with your story because you have had to deal with many challenges since your childhood, and continue to deal with them.

HaShem choose the challenges he gave you for you specifically, he did not give them to me, or to somebody else, because you are the only one who could handle them.

I want to finish off by saying you are a warrior, and you are very strong! Don't even for a second think of yourself as a victim, or weak, that is nonsense. HaShem is guiding you on a powerful mission that only you can accomplish, and you've already made it very far to get to where you are at today. Stay focused on your power, and keeping moving toward the positive life you are meant for.

There is no question it is a battle... the only way you lose is if you stop fighting.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by excellence - 22 Mar 2023 15:18

Dear Kosher man, just read through your whole thread. Truly incredible but extremely painful. Pls stay here, keep posting and maybe try partner/mentor program.

Love,

Excellence

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by bright - 02 Jun 2023 06:34

Wow! You went through a lot! I feel for you!

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by kosherman - 13 Oct 2023 16:08

And I am back...

So, it has been a while since my last post and a lot has happened in my life. Not sure how much I am going to get into it only that I am still struggling with Porn and masturbation. After all my loneliness I finally got married this past year. I thought that would help with my addiction but sadly it has not [not shocking though...]. The lust for porn and masturbation are very different desires than marriage relations, and the lust for P & M remains strong even after marriage. [Though the desire for anything outside of P & M has seemed to fade guess that was too new to stick B'h.] There is something very pleasurable and relaxing about P & M, especially as that has been my defense mechanism for stress for so long. [Yes I can recognize my own patterns]. So what brings me back here what do I hope to gain? Honestly, I am not sure. I have tried so many times to quit why try again, why will this time be different? Yet I guess deep down I am a hopeless romantic [which worked for the marriage thing...shockingly] so I guess I am here to try again. Is there a plan? No, not really, I figure to start trying to post when I am bored and feel urges. Try using this forum as a way to release stress. [Hope I am not too obnoxious, though at the rate of one post per year not sure it will be that bad] Great plan? No, but it's something...right?

Porn and Masturbation have been a big part of my life and have gotten me through some really hard times. It will be really hard to say goodbye to these old Frenemies. Through all the painful years they have always been there to help me through, always there to pick me up or distract me from the pain. But, now it may be time to say goodbye. I have waited for too long and always gave myself some excuse. I have nothing. But as I sit here I have so much and so much

to be thankful for. Hashem has given me so much and given me other ways to cope so it's time to set aside these coping mechanisms despite it being so difficult.

But why give them up if they have been so great?

I don't have a full answer to this question. I think I have decided to give them up because they don't benefit me. Yes, they feel good at the moment, but they distract from the real good in my life. Whether taking time from my wife, work, learning, or sleep the addiction has become intrusive. I used to have more of a need to waste time now I don't have that luxury. I have also noticed how my using affects my relationship with my wife, how I act towards her, and don't give her as much attention as she deserves. Lastly, I know it's wrong and not what Hashem wants from me. He has given me so much good and while there is no repaying Hashem it's kind of obnoxious to use all the good he has given me to disobey him.

Ok, so I have a reason to give up the P & M and plan [sorta] what can go wrong. Welcome to my journey, stick around for the next installment maybe it will be sooner than a year.

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by bright - 13 Oct 2023 17:43

Sounds like you have lots of reasons... Have you reached out to HHM?

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Re: How porn saved my life

Posted by eraygrand - 17 Oct 2023 02:31

I read through your post. Firstly, Mazel tov on getting married. Two quick points from my personal experience, stuck on P&M for almost 40 years and now BH over 200 days clean.

1. You have to start by making it difficult to access via filters, webchaver..... I don't think it's possible to have the willpower to stop when it's been a major part of your life for so long and the emotional attachment that you have to it.
2. Find some realistic short term goal, maybe 30 days, and see if that makes a difference

in your married life (not just the bedroom). Seeing an improvement in your relationship with your wife will provide another tool in your fight especially since you waited so long to get there.

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