

I cannot believe I am here

Posted by remaininganonymous26 - 12 Jul 2023 01:06

I am writing this with tears in my eyes. I do not know where to start, and frankly, my English is not the greatest. I am having trouble believing that I am here- I would never post something so personal on a public forum (and what is a good guy like me doing on GYE?)- but I believe this is for my best so here it goes!

I guess I would like to share my story and hear if anyone has any advice. Sorry for the long post

I was always a curious person since I was young. I remember beginning my journey with p and m, which began probably 12 years ago. Although I have never watched pornography, I have always struggled with reading sexually charged literature. I guess I justify that it is not really pornography...but it slowly developed into an addiction. Over time, it came to the point when I have been searching the internet and looking at not tznius things. I still do not watch pornography, but I believe I have a lust addiction, specifically to reading sexually charged material and purposely going on websites with not tznius pictures on them. I see my lusting progressing, and I am terrified that real pornography is the next step, and I am jumping into GYE now to stop the behavior before it gets worse. I have tried to stop for about a year and a half already, and once did 90 days free of lust but I fell a few days later. This summer I decided I am going to really begin to stop it once and for all! I have extra time, and I hope to successfully complete the Flight to Freedom program and develop a solid flight plan to begin my journey to kedusha. I was mikabel that even if I die as an addict, after 120 I will look at Hashem and say I did not die without giving it the best fight I have! And I hope Hashem is reading this post, knowing how hard it is for me to write, and crying tears of love and yearning for my neshoma.

This struggle for so long has gotten to me, and any chizuk or advice is appreciated.

Just a question for the forum- I noticed that my two triggers are stress and boredom. When I am bored I randomly search things online, which usually leads to seeing inappropriate photos or videos. Sometimes the online searching is without conscious awareness (if you get what I mean). Does anyone have a strategy for how to stop this searching before it takes a turn for the worst?

Thank you tzadikim! I am jealous of each and every one of you and I hope one day to look at future GYE participants and say you can do it too because I did it!

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by Eerie - 14 Jul 2023 17:49

Well said, Reb Chaim. I would say it's hard to answer for you personally, because we don't really know you well, but many, many people have broken free and now live what you would call "normal" lives. They don't find it hard to keep fighting, although there are always nisyoinois of different levels. They don't need GYE on a daily basis, and the fight definitely gets easier. And your story may very possibly end up looking like theirs.

The way I look at it is that the first tekufa here is like D-day. The Allies needed a foothold on continental Europe from where to launch battles against the axis. Enter D-day. The tremendous effort that was invested in it was not that now the war was over, rather that from now we can deal with the enemy from better perspective.

Many of us are battling for a while with these issues, we have messed up, we have taught ourselves bad habits, we have learned to folloe our animalistic desires. And when we come here we learn to work on ourselves, on changing our perspective on sexual behaviours, and this gives us an even playing field, a way to fight the YH from a healthy place. Yes, we'll keep fighting, but it will be from a place where you'll be fighting like a healthy person does.

As far keeping the steam, connect to people. HHM is a good place to start.

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by remaininganonymous26 - 16 Jul 2023 03:46

Thanks for the chizuk!

I am sorry for my ignorance, but what is HHM?

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by redfaced - 16 Jul 2023 12:00

[remaininganonymous26 wrote on 16 Jul 2023 03:46:](#)

Thanks for the chizuk!

I am sorry for my ignorance, but what is HHM?

HashemHelpMe - Someone on the forums who has somewhere between 36 & 48 hours in a day , and dedicates all of it to helping everyone on the forum. He's helped an unimaginable amount of people here , by giving tips, chizuk and most importantly time, on the phone & in person.

here is his profile link which includes his contact info

guardyoureyes.com/forum/profile/my-profile/userid-15301

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by remaininganonymous26 - 03 Aug 2023 22:41

B'H I am going along well in my journey, and hopefully next week I will hit day 30!

If I can ask everyone for some advice- recently, since I have been more careful with guarding my eyes on the computer, I noticed that watching my eyes on the street has been more difficult. Even when I don't take a "second look," I have short fantasies. Usually, I can stop them quickly, but I still feel guilty. This is probably normal for what I am going through, but does anyone have any advice or chizuk? Thank you!

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by redfaced - 03 Aug 2023 23:43

[remaininganonymous26 wrote on 03 Aug 2023 22:41:](#)

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This is the YETZER HARA trying his hardes to trip you up when he knows that you are this close to overpowering .

He's Going full nuclear on you.

The good news is that this is only temporary ans youll bezh find that as you move further along the fantasies start going away

Hatzlocha!

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by chaimoigen - 04 Aug 2023 17:24

[remaininganonymous26 wrote on 03 Aug 2023 22:41:](#)

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Mazal Tov on being close to a special milestone of 30! Chazak ViAmatz, that is major!

Many people here have written about experiencing the same thing. we become so much more sensitive to inadvertent exposures, and they trigger us more. It seems to be a sign that you are on the right path!! It will get easier, imyH.

The simple explanation, I think, is that you are becoming more sensitive to what you see. After denying yourself the kind of exposure online that you had become accustomed to, your brain is feeling (**temporarily**) a greater urge to get the dopamine rush it had become accustomed to. Withdrawal. And as you work and focus on not giving in, on avoiding those experiences, you will experience greater sensitivity to them. They mean more, and have a lot associated with the experience.

On a deeper level -

A rebbe of mine once told me a very profound thought in the name of one of the great Mashgichim:

"If you squeeze the top of a balloon, the top gets smaller, but the bottom will swell up bigger. The trick is to undo the knot and let a little air out of the balloon at a time. [But not enough that it flies out of your hand and zooms around the room like crazy- my addition]"

When we have developed a desire and need for a negative experience, merely stopping the negative **actions** will not yet suffice to effect the internal and complete change we are working towards. So internally we still want it, and that drive may come out in a different place.

Merely holding off and counting days doesn't necessarily do it.

We need to figure out how to "let the air out of the balloon". To make change!

There was a great post from Dov and Cordnoy about this a while ago

see here

Not sure if I can paste it right

The first part is Dov

Second is cordnoy, I think.

My comment about how I understood it is last

[quote="chaimoigen" post=398250 date=1688131004 catid=4]

[quote][p]'Holding our breath' is a totally different experience than recovery offers. This story illustrates what 'holding breath' is:

The Steipler zt"l was once on guard duty in the Russian or Polish army on Shabbos - and his coat was in a tree, so it would be assur for him to take it down and use it! He decided to stay in place the entire shift without his coat. But it was terribly cold and driving him nuts. How could he stay put?!

He told himself that he could withstand the cold for just a minute (or hour?)...and he did! When that minute was over, he told himself that he just proved that he can tolerate the bitter cold for just a minute. So here before him is: a minute! He then waited a(nother) minute. When it was over, he thought: here before me is another one of those minute-thingies. I can definitely hang on just a minute! So he held on, and tolerated the cold for just a minute.

Etc, etc, and the entire night passed! Amazing. Beautiful.

AND THAT IS NOT AT ALL WHAT 'ONE DAY AT A TIME', MEANS! For what the Steipler did was a gimmick. A mind game. And it worked for him, for one night or day...it may work for more than one day - it may even work for a lifetime, who knows? And if I could stay sober that way for a lifetime, I would probably not take it. It would be gehinnom, would keep me good-and-miserable/crazy, and would generally...suck. I would surely eventually run to lust again just to get out of such a stupid (but kosher!) life. Yup.

But: the Steipler could not have actually held his breath all night using this gimmick. Correct? After a few minutes (about 2-3), a human knows he must breathe, period. So what would you do if someone told you he would give you a million (yep, a million!) bucks if you held your breath for two hours? Would you breath deeply and go give it a try? Silly, of course not. Why suffer for no reason and nothing in the end, anyway?

People who are not sincerely giving up lust for today are just sitting ducks. They are just holding their breath and 'holding back' one day at a time. It does not work. Eventually they will have to breathe. And Hashem knows this. It is a twisting of the meaning of 'one day at a time'.

I know they will say 'vatishlach es amosoh - she sent forth her arm' and all the sweet, encouraging droshos on that. But for an addict, it just does not work here! And in the meantime, the marriage and family are brutalized. Yuch.

[A nasty little digression :pinch:

When B'nei Yisroel (on Rosh chodesh Nissan) went to take the korban Pesach (in four more days!) Hashem writes: "

[i]The point is clear and resonates deeply. I had never "gotten" it before.

Where were we?It's truly amazin' that my conversation with Dov today and one we had ten years ago are so similar. Read the follow up posts as well.

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But I doubt that such things will work for most people in the long run - and certainly not for addicts. For when the day comes that they desire it again as strong as ever, they will be 100% convinced again that they can't live without it, period. Back to square one. But surrender one day at a time really does work for alcoholics and others, all over the world.

Surprise!

There is one exception to this idea, and it is an important qualification: There are surely some who do the TapHsiC, or 90-day wall thingy, or counting the days, etc...holding their breath all the way - and it works! Because they did experience abstinence from their prize, after all, and did not die. Amazingly, their penises did not fall off. And abstinence sometimes makes it clear to the person that he does not, in fact, really need it at all!

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 08 Aug 2023 00:25

It is normal and expected to start noticing the sights on the street once one has removed himself from the hyper-stimulating screens. The yetzer hara/subconscious wants it's fix, and will do anything to get it. Do not panic. Stay calm. Use the same methods you used to separate yourself from the screen, to now separate yourself from the street. B'ezras Hashem you will learn to ignore the sights that are "attacking" you now. Accept the fact this is part of the process and do your best. The sforim hakedoshim tell us that when one looks away in the street, one is zoiche to have his tefillos answered. Utilize these nisyonos positively. Hatzlacha.

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by remaininganonymous26 - 31 Aug 2023 01:02

I made it to about 50 days, and I just had a fall today.

To be honest I have mixed feelings about the fall. Obviously, a fall is disappointing, and as far as I got, I was not able to make it to the full 90 days. I feel bad about myself, and wonder if I can ever break free. I need some chizuk to pick myself up.

On the other hand, part of me is actually happy that I fell. I feel like I am able to recommit myself to my journey, and it is an opportunity to start anew. Before I fell I noticed myself slacking off, and spending time in the "yellow zone," justifying to myself that it is not **so** bad going on that website. But now that I have fallen, I feel like I have an opportunity to restart, be mechazek, and keep on swinging!

One thing I want to do differently next round is to post my journey every 10 days on this thread. Hopefully, that will help me in my fight.

Any chizuk would be appreciated. Half of me feels like it still needs help and I hope I have the strength to pick myself up and restart!

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 31 Aug 2023 01:07

If one climbs a mountain for 50 days and falls into a ditch, he has 2 choices. One - to lay down and roll down to the mountain's base. Two - to enjoy the view and fresh air from 50 days up while bandaging the scrapes. Which one do you choose?

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by bright - 31 Aug 2023 04:07

[remaininganonymous26 wrote on 31 Aug 2023 01:02:](#)

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Sheva yipol tzaddik. Its part of the process. Learn from your mistakes. How can you prevent the "yellow zone" from happening? Where there triggers that could have been dealt with before? But like HHM said, its part of the hike. You are now a different person. If someone would have told you you would be able to get to a state of doing this only five times a year, would you have thought that possible? Prob not. Take it to the next level!

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by chaimoigen - 31 Aug 2023 13:16

[bright wrote on 31 Aug 2023 04:07:](#)

[remaininganonymous26 wrote on 31 Aug 2023 01:02:](#)

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Get up, keep going on. You're a fighter. You're still in the ring, you can win this.

Keep on trucking. You're a good man.

Just one point to add to all these truths.

Sometimes a person can have a feeling that "let me get the fall over with already and then start fresh". This, too, is a slick trick from that slippery guy.

Contrary to what the Yetzer wants us to believe - you can start fresh even without a fall happening. Sometimes we don't realize what happens until it's too late. And sometimes we realize, even though "still in the yellow zone" that it 'aint great. That's also a great time to start fresh.....

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by remaininganonymous26 - 31 Aug 2023 17:05

Thank you everyone for the chizuk! It really helps!

If I can share something that happened yesterday after my fall- I hope this story will inspire others as well.

After I fell, I noticed my yetzer hara telling me the day is ruined, I can start recounting tomorrow,

but take advantage now for the rest of the day to continue in the fall and enjoy the tayva! This came with an incredibly powerful urge, something I knew was too powerful for me to withstand and overcome. I had no idea what to do, and soon before I would have given in, I quickly said a taphsic shvua for the rest of the day and the next day. And it worked!!!

I did not fall for the rest of the day, and today so far is going great. This may be the first time in my life I do not feel shame or guilt after a fall, but I am actually really proud of what I did and how I handled the situation! If the yetzer hara had gotten the best of me, I would have pushed off restarting a day...and then another day... and who knows if I would have picked myself up. This was my moment of gevura, where I showed myself who I really am!

What I learned from this experience is that the fall is not me. I made a mistake, but I still have all the tools I learned throughout the journey, and I can pick myself up and continue on. I am not a sinner! I am an aspiring baal tshuva, who is beautiful in the eyes of Hashem, who made a mistake and fell. But I am not defined by my mistake! Onwards to another 50 days and beyond!

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by redfaced - 31 Aug 2023 17:08

[remaininganonymous26 wrote on 31 Aug 2023 17:05:](#)

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Well done!

Thats the perfect way to fall gracefully & get right back up!

KOT!

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Re: I cannot believe I am here
Posted by bright - 31 Aug 2023 18:23

[remaininganonymous26 wrote on 31 Aug 2023 17:05:](#)

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Amazing! After a fall we actually have an amazing oppurtunity. To build up our muscles in a unique area. Recovering from falls. This muscle is very important as we will fall in many areas in our life. We are always growing and working on new things. If we build up our resilience this can help us in every area. And in my humble opinion it is what Hashem wants from us to work on after a fall! Great job!

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