

Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 22 Sep 2023 14:39

Hello to my fellow GYE warriors!

I figured I'd give it a shot at introducing myself a little bit, as I've read many threads here and value the growth and journey of all the amazing people over here!

My original goal when I got to this website a few months ago, was to deal with my addiction to porn and masturbation. It was getting way out of hand and it really disturbed my quality of life.

Thankfully, I have hit 90 days and I am shocked and amazed at how this was even possible, I had already written myself off to be a porn watcher and chronic masturbator for the rest of my life!

This is no doubt due to joining this website, reading the forums, chatting, and connecting via email/phone to some wonderfully amazing people here, and I want to finally say a **huge** public thank you to you all!!!

I owe my newfound life to this place, and I hope I can continue staying away from p & m.

Due to the fact that I have been clean from p & m for a while, I will leave that part of my life out of my story (for now) and perhaps revisit it in a later post.

What I would like to address, with as limited details as possible, is that I have been struggling mightily with cleaning up the rest of my act while also struggling with my religious identity.

For a good period of my life (not from birth) I was involved in an extremist, abusive and controlling group.

Thank Heaven (and I praise Hashem for this every day) I am done with that.

But it resulted in a massive religious identity crisis, which I am still struggling through.

I wanted nothing to do with religion, I am numbed by many aspects of it. The pain in some areas is almost visceral, like being scalded when getting too close to a hot fire.

Certain things about our way of life are too painful, and I just dissociate from it.

What does this have to do with GYE and addiction?

Well, the truth is, that although I am free of p & m for a nice while, there are other things I have experimented with as I have gone through my journey.

I started watching movies, and saw hundreds of them, and many were literally soft-core porn

films.

(I must say that thankfully, I don't remember when I've watched a movie last, probably a half a year, but it's not so much "b'sh*tah," I just haven't got the brain space to put myself into a good emotional movie)

I started finding meaning in non-Jewish music. What can I say? I enjoy it, and nothing really moves me like that, I identify with the lyrics and passion. I'm not talking about outright prust music, but certain genres appeal to me and I cannot go back to Yiddish music, I have tried to and didn't hold for more than a few days.

I also started browsing YouTube as a mindless escape, and very often a clip of inappropriately dressed women pops in and I just watch it without feeling too guilty about it.

From a religious point, I understand that this is against the Torah, but I have no strength to care. I am close to Hashem, I talk to Him every day, and I feel that Hashem understands my struggles, my exposure, the sexual abuse and religious abuse that I have been through, and that He loves me unconditionally.

But from an addiction standpoint, If I truly want to "clean up", I know I can't be staring at shikshas/tic toc dances etc.

And I'm not even *talking* about the frum woman aspect, which I'm sure many people can relate to, I fall a lot with peeking glances at hot frum women and of course I should not be doing that, it's feeding the beast!

I know that addiction to porn and masturbation is like addiction to a drug, dopamine. I know that if I continue "feeding the drug", even in small quantities, I will not achieve full recovery.

But I am just so mixed up with it all, it's so hard to kick, and religious ideas don't talk to me. I don't want to identify as an Ultra-Orthodox Jew, I wish I could leave it all behind.

As part of the backlash of what I've been through, I've delved into Jewish history and have read stuff from non-traditional (read: non censored) sources, and I'm scared to death of the path open before me...I see corruption, dysfunction, and abuse and a load of BS in our "system", and coupled with the experience I had been through, it makes me want to run away from it all!!

If not for my wonderful wife and children, whom I love so much, I probably would have long ago left it all behind for a new life.

I feel trapped in my religious identity, not sure how to find solace and clarity, how to find a steady voice in my head to see through all the BS and serve Hashem as a true servant as I'm sure He wants me to be.

I feel trapped in the loop of feeding the little monster in my brain and I sometimes feel so alone and sad because even ideas, insights, and encouragements make me crazy.

I am sorry for sounding negative and embittered, but I'm just pouring my heart out, and maybe just by writing about it, it will feel better.

In any case, I hope to continue documenting these little ups and downs, and I look forward to continuing to be part of this amazing forum!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chaimoigen - 09 Aug 2024 01:38

My absence from these pages caused me to miss your last couple of posts, Tom.

Here's a warm hug, and a hand on your shoulder. I'm glad that you can feel the growth and goodness and your extraordinary progress in **living**, even while the scarlet thread of pain still punctuates the fabric of your interior landscape.

Let's put it like this: "It seems that you have been, at last, looking in the right places".

I know you're gonna get to where you want to go. Let it go slowly. You cannot speed the growth of a fruit tree by over-watering. You are a towering tree, splendid, majestic and broad. You will yet fully flower and blossom. .

Faith, Tom.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chancy - 20 Aug 2024 16:15

YKW,

I love you

Always

Chancy

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by freespirit - 20 Aug 2024 16:22

Well you deserve a lot of credit for going cold turkey on masturbation. How did you do it

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by Muttel - 20 Aug 2024 18:02

[youknowwho wrote on 08 Aug 2024 18:25:](#)

Had a spat with my wife the other night, felt pretty horrible after that. Going through a lot of stress right now. Did what I had done as a mind-numbing escape for many, many years...masturbated.

?I've been feeling pretty dejected. This is not what success looks like.

It sure doesn't *feel* like success...

I've been clean for almost a year and in recent months I've been failing again. I'd always

feared not being able to fully get up again after breaking a long streak and those fears have been realized.

Then, something really eye-opening occurred.

I happened to be sifting through my wallet. Through those dusty crevices that I never think about. A wallet spring cleaning, purging the things I no longer needed.

Found a folded up paper, slightly crumpled. In handwritten Hebrew:

"I, YKW, am going to try to abstain from watching porn and masturbating from April 1 until April 7, or pay \$1000 knaas"

It was a quiet place and I had time to reflect. I remembered these little notes well...for years, I was desperately trying to stop compulsively using porn and masturbation, with zero success.

These notes would give me some slight reprieve, until a total relapse not long thereafter.

Then, it was right back to:

- Wake up in the morning (porn in the bathroom)
- Daven (porn in between, if possible)
- Head out to work (porn on my beautiful commute)
- Arrive to work (sneak porn in as much as possible)
- Get some work done (masturbate in the bathroom)

Come out feeling strangely focused, yet **sick** of myself

- Back to work, come home, help with kids, learn for a few minutes
- Maariv, (back to porn, till the "finish line" at 2AM)
- Wife out on errands? Porn.
- Wife in the shower? Porn.

-Wife on the phone? Porn on the other side of the hallway.

I'd follow through on one note, and cross out the dates, adding sad new ones in their place.

Those were pretty dark times.

So, maybe success really does come in different sizes and flavors. For some, that may mean “kicking it”. Yet for some, the struggle continues, and we don’t always manage to stay clean. That does not mean you aren’t a success.

I carefully tucked that sad, somewhat crumpled piece of paper back into my wallet. I want it with me wherever I go. I need it there forever, to remind me of what I was and how far I’ve come.

Success is real, and boy, does it taste *sweet!*

Just seeing this post. YKW, my respect for you just skyrocketed. Such awareness and blunt truth tempered by pragmatic critique.

love it!!

I look forward to finally connecting (will cover my forehead, I’m nervous of a bolt!)

Muttel

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 20 Aug 2024 20:58

[chancy wrote on 20 Aug 2024 16:15:](#)

YKW,

I love you

Always

Chancy

Feelings are mutual!

Though perhaps we should keep it purely platonic for now.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 20 Aug 2024 21:02

[freespirit wrote on 20 Aug 2024 16:22:](#)

Well you deserve a lot of credit for going cold turkey on masturbation. **How did you do it**

I didn't do anything, really.

It was actually a very poorly aimed Disarming Spell towards my lower extremities...

But when you are Voldemort, everything kinda grows back after a little while.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by 138eagle - 20 Aug 2024 21:26

Wow!!

I admire your courage to admit where you fell.

More than that I admire your ambition and drive to pick yourself up and go at it again.

And mostly I admire your ability to notice and appreciate your triumphs!!

Keep Flying!!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by redfaced - 20 Aug 2024 21:49

[138eagle wrote on 20 Aug 2024 21:26:](#)

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I admire your disarming spell

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Posted by youknowwho - 20 Aug 2024 22:07

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On my way over to you (you asked for it!)

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by pinny1 - 23 Aug 2024 02:30

[upanddown wrote on 18 Jun 2024 23:24:](#)

Dear YKW,

What an amazing thread! I read most of your posts and many of the great responses..

You're an absolute star! A huge inspiration!

I very much relate to your struggles. My journey was similar, a very difficult childhood incl sexual abuse and a lot more. I've been angry at the Yeshivish system. Fed up of my Yiddishkeit. Complex Emunah struggles. Disillusioned by so much that goes on in the Torah world. Furious

at Hashem (I've written about it on my threads). Frustrated by this endless struggle of P&M and fed up of fighting it. Eventually I managed 400 days clean! But then I fell very badly again and again. I was ready to give up and to ditch it all. But with tremendous ??? I'm now back on track.. its hard work though... very draining...

Just to share a thought that helps me:

Put Torah aside. Put Hashem aside. Regardless whether I believe or don't believe. There is 1 thing that is a 100% ???? that P&M can't be a good thing:

It's the instinct. That feeling right after acting out. How can it possibly be a 'normal' & correct thing to act out, if right after doing it you feel depressed, upset, frustrated, guilty? Noone brainwashed me that I'm meant to be feeling upset and guilty. Because even when I was a young boy, I felt that way, before hearing about the strictness of the sin!

?? ????? ?? ??? ?? ???? ?? ????? - referring to ???". Because its not the ??? ??? to masturbate. There are more ?????? where this Lashon is used. And I've always wondered, how can you say it's not the ??? ??? to do it if most of the world are doing it? The answer is that the natural instinct is to feel its wrong, but the world tries hard to ignore it. Even Goyim feel some depression and emptyness after acting out - you can Google it!

Why is the ????? ???" not ????? in the Torah? Because its ????? in every persons body! It's an instinct. ??? ??? ???? ??????. Unlike all the other mitzvos.

Keep strong!

??? ????

Upanddown

You didn't explain why you were angry at the yeshiva system. How did that lead to p and m. We're u molested by a rebbe

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by ilovehashem247 - 02 Oct 2024 04:22

[youknowwho wrote on 08 Aug 2024 18:25:](#)

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Falling ain't failing if you're still climbing

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But when you are Voldemort, everything kinda grows back after a little while.

It does seem like it would be hard to masterbate without arms...

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by Bennyh - 15 Oct 2024 20:57

Chaver, we haven't heard from you in a while. How are you doing?

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 16 Oct 2024 02:49

[Bennyh wrote on 15 Oct 2024 20:57:](#)

Chaver, we haven't heard from you in a while. How are you doing?

Everything looks tempting when wife is assur. Even mine verily unsightly cleaning lady. Or even that mailbox from afar, if mine glasses have slid far enough down mine very own quite verily comely nose.

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