

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 shikas/tic 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 - 30 Nov 2023 01:53

[Bennyh wrote on 30 Nov 2023 01:22:](#)

Do I need to now watch Harry Potter to discover who Sirius is?

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by Bigmoish - 30 Nov 2023 04:42

[youknowwho wrote on 28 Nov 2023 20:59:](#)

Dear Friends,

I've wanted to share some thoughts that have recently been vibrating in my mind.

Sometimes, as I wander and peruse the vast libraries of GYE, I bump into old threads of years ago, names like kugel, cholent and schnitzel, to name just a few. And the many other great users of the past.

I don't know why, but sometimes it leaves me with a lingering sadness.

I often wonder, where are they now?

"Last visit date, Jan. 2019".

Are you okay? Are you still clean? Are you still so vibrant and full of the courage, spirit, fight and depth you've brought to the dusty and endless pages of GYE?

What about your wives, kids, and other people you've written about. You've shared your struggles, your trials and your triumphs, and now you're gone...I hope you know of only happy tidings.

It also gives me newfound appreciation for the old hands still on board, who are still here, trucking on, as they have been forever, continuing the holy task of inspiring and helping people who struggle in this dark and difficult challenge.

I don't know why I feel this way, maybe it's a weird kind of nostalgia. A certain morbidity. I don't know why I'm sharing it, but I think maybe because it makes me think that I too will one day be gone, and all that will be left are the endlessly long pages of posts and threads...what *difference* does it all make?

It makes me think of the mortality and frailty of life. The transient nature of our stay on this Earth. Kind of morbid, I know, that's how I sometimes think.

These thoughts sometimes drive me to act out and numb those feelings.

But one thought gave me solace, and leaves me happy and encouraged...

There is no doubt, that all these posts, comments, connections, chats, friendships, thank you's...and the rest of it, there's no doubt that **it makes a difference**. The difference it makes is as *real* as the people who read them.

Every little bit of light you can bring into someone's darkness, is building another world of eternity.

And perhaps when Moshiach comes, these infinite pages of GYE, so full of hope and light to many a lonely soul, will proudly be read out to the whole world.

Try sending a PM to some of them, they may not be so hard to reach.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chancy - 30 Nov 2023 16:39

[chaimoigen wrote on 29 Nov 2023 20:08:](#)

Chancy,

?Your words are deep and beautiful, like a deep, clear mountain stream.

Thank you.

I think perhaps you may be Neville Longbottom. He knew suffering, and struggles. He faced death and worse, in the eye. . But in the end, 'twas he who conquered both his fear of friends and you-know-who, and vanquished the serpent....

I love it! from now on im Neville Smallbottom!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by Healing - 30 Nov 2023 17:45

Gosh! What a thread – I will IYH return in the near future with 32oz coffee and read every word slowly.

Dear youknowwho, I'm truly impressed at how you expressed yourself in your first posts on this thread – so real and honest. So raw.

Wow you really put me back in the Hoshana Raba mode...

Brother, what you've done is phenomenal! My heart truly hurts reading about the confusion, abuse, and trauma you've experienced. But the way you've worked on yourself is stunning.

161 clean days doesn't come from drinking 32oz coffees. It comes from hard and exhausting

work.

Kudos to you for making these changes in your life, its not easy but you are a wonderful person that has made wonderful progress.

Keep it up, never give up, keep climbing,

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by eerie - 30 Nov 2023 18:53

My Dear friend, Reb YKW, I loved your post. So much heart, so beautifully expressive. Your in the league of the great Rosh Yeshiva, Reb CO Shlita. You are an inspiration to me and to all the people coming here!

I know I'm changing the topic a little, but if I may. As an educator, maybe some people will think I'm nuts, but I talk about death from time to time. I will remind my charges from time to time that we are here for a visit, and then we'll go up to Hashem, and we'll reap the rewards of what we worked on. First of all, I think it helps them deal with their mortality and mortality in general in a healthy way. It's not something I get worked up about, it's something we can mention, we can remember, and it's not taboo. We talk about it in a nonchalant way. As per Rabbi Miller, we also gain that we remind them (and ourselves) that there will be a day of reckoning. Never mention gehinnom in regards to them. But from time to time mention that "the reshai'm that did this massacre" and the like are burning in gehinnom, and Hashem is punishing them etc.

I hope I'm right that these students will come away able to talk about death without it putting them into freeze mode

Either way, please keep posting, sharing, and inspiring!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 30 Nov 2023 19:51

Friends.

It is through a shimmering veil of dampness that I read these responses.

I really appreciate all your kind words, it strikes a chord so deep within me, I wasn't even aware that place existed.

Thank you.

[p]Just one thing needs to be adjusted. Reb Eerie, I think comparing me to the venerable, brilliant and holy CO is a mistake of epic proportions. This is true on **many** levels, some that we know, and some that we'll never know, but the latest proof is the sheer genius of comparing you to Dobby, which is something you will not be zoche to understand in this Gilgul.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 30 Nov 2023 19:54

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 30 Nov 2023 20:18

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Posted by youknowwho - 30 Nov 2023 20:23

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 30 Nov 2023 20:26

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 30 Nov 2023 20:36

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Thank you.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 30 Nov 2023 20:38

Friends.

I really appreciate all your kind words of support, it strikes a chord so deep within me, I wasn't even aware that place existed.

Thank you.

Just one thing, Reb Eerie I think comparing me to CO is a mistake, his sheer gadlus in

comparing you to Dobby is incomparable!

Another point. Chancy/Neville, as I started reading your post about upper and lower Gan Eiden, bodies and souls, I suddenly noticed a curl of wispy smoke above my temples. It seemed to be originating from my ears... A faint smell of burning flesh pervaded my nostrils...

Then, it hit me.

My brain had caught fire.

So, I think I'll need to store your post away for a different time, I hope you won't mind!

A good thing about all the talk about death is that we seemed to have summoned Big Moish from hibernation, a big shoutout to Big Moishe's path to taharah!

So long for now.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by eerie - 30 Nov 2023 23:57

I was comparing your talent to write to Reb CO. And btw, you guys still owe me an explanation. What on earth is a Dobby? And what's it got to do with me? I remember when my friends were reading Harry Potter, I couldn't bring myself to get involved. I still don't think I missed much, besides for reading some English woman's utter fantasy and folly, but I do wish I knew what Reb CO meant.

Dear Rosh, is there a piece of Reb Chaim that explains this? Reb Baruch Ber? Reb Shimon?

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously

Posted by youknowwho - 01 Dec 2023 00:40

[eerie wrote on 30 Nov 2023 23:57:](#)

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Dear Rosh, is there a piece of Reb Chaim that explains this? Reb Baruch Ber? Reb Shimon?

We need Reb CO to explain the virtues of Dobby, but rest assured, its a compliment!

You are not missing out on anything, no worries

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Ahhh, thanks for clarifying, for one glorious moment my ego got ahead of itself!