

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 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 chancy - 19 Dec 2023 17:26

[foolie wrote on 28 Nov 2023 18:17:](#)

[chancy wrote on 28 Nov 2023 18:02:](#)

[chaimoigen wrote on 23 Nov 2023 02:08:](#)

Coming late to the party here.

Eerie is Dobby, considering each of us to be Harry. "Harry Potter is greater than Harry knows!!"

Bright is Hermione, he knows the right thing to say and right answer every time.

Grant is Professor McGonagall

I've always taken identified with Lupin a bit. (You haven't seen me when I don't take my potion)

BennyH is Sirius, clearly.

Blimey! Redfaced is RON!

And no one has stated the obvious about HHM being the Sorting Hat. He puts you in your place, and can help you pull out a magical weapon to vanquish the Dark Lord.

Are you JK Rowling??? YOu are spot on.

IM still waitng on your verdict on who i am.

Luna is not bad. But im not **that** weird i think.....

The votes have been tallied. The election has been certified. Verdict is in you are **FRED**

If you desire to abdicate your position as Fred, a suitable position as Percy is still available for a limited time only!

I need to add what ive only just discoverd.....

@Foolie is without any doubt "Moaning Myrtle"

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by foolie - 19 Dec 2023 19:18

[foolie wrote on 23 Nov 2023 02:24:](#)

Thankfully Foolie remains a Foolie and not a Harry Potter character

At the risk of being completely gauche I will quote myself and point out that if anyone was

paying attention I clearly stated that if I'm going to be a compared to a book character it's
Peregrin Took not Moaning Myrtle

Just saying.

And for all you of who are going methinks he doth protest too much, to you I say in the language
of the hippies whatever dude

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by bright - 19 Dec 2023 19:30

Et tu Brute?

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chaimoigen - 20 Dec 2023 01:19

[foolie wrote on 19 Dec 2023 19:18:](#)

Just saying.

And for all you of who are going methinks he doth protest too much, to you I say in the language
of the hippies whatever dude

THE DUDE ABIDES!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 22 Dec 2023 16:27

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I've been meaning to do some housekeeping here, but was laying low in the forests of Albania.

Sorry to disagree, dear chancy, but foolie is Severus Snape.

"?Clearly, Life sucks and then you die, Mr Potter..."

And Gevurah Shebyesod is hereby Stan Shunpike. (His idea, actually. Bloody brilliant!)

"Take 'er away, Ern!!!"

The Monster Truck...is actually the Knight bus.

"ERNIE! LITTLE OLD LADY AT 12 O'CLOCK!"

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 03 Jan 2024 03:57

Dear Friends,

I just want to share some thoughts. I can really use some chizuk...

Yes, it's true that I am approaching 200 days, b"n, I have a lot to be grateful for!!

These past few months, I've had my ups and downs. I've been through stress, loneliness, anger and many other triggering emotions.

Yet somehow, I felt a certain peace, a certain pride in being a GYE member. I am growing, changing, I am on the path to holiness!

Even though I've had many slips, it still felt like I had a certain clarity.

Not so as of late...

Recently, I am undergoing unique stresses and turmoil. And I have found a slow and steady collapse of the pride, the paradigm of growth I so tenaciously clung to.

Dark and twisted thoughts, my old, comfortable friends, hiss within my mind...

Women are beautiful. I objectify and fetishize them. Can I *really* live a life without feasting my eyes on the beautiful sights, as I have for so many years?

Stop this nonsense! Who are you really fooling?

I allowed you to play your silly games for a bit...but now, it's time to get back into my hot, vise-like grip of endless lusting and cravings, an endless pursuit of empty pleasure that will never ever fill me up, never ever truly satisfy...

I have found myself lately muttering the dirty things of the thousands of scenes I've watched.

I am slipping into yuish and despair. I knew it wasn't really possible!!

My davening is virtual nonexistent, my learning the same, as I sit with hollow eyes over the Gemara, frozen, re-reading the same lines again and again without comprehension.

Yet here are many heroes. You **all** are. You inspire, encourage and emphasize. You are all a beacon of light and hope to me.

I'm just not really feeling that vibe right now...

I don't think I'm in danger of falling just yet, but this attitude is scaring me. I am fearful of how close I am to finding my old self again. I sure don't want that...

Thank you all for listening!

Youknowwho

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 03 Jan 2024 04:03

Excellently written - Patience buddy - keep doing what you are doing; we slowly elevate ourselves more and more.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by chaimoigen - 03 Jan 2024 04:20

This is painful to read, friend.

Would you care to share a bit more? Why are you feeling a collapse of the ideals and paradigms that you have recently adopted? Why the sense of Yiyush?

It doesn't feel like you are feeling the darkness creep up on you **because** of the inevitability of a fall and the futility of resistance.

Rather, it seems that you are saying that **because** you are feeling the creep of darkness and despair, you are **therefore** "losing" your tenacious hold on the (incredible) progress you've made this far. What is source of the darkness??

Hang tight, Tom. The snakes are real, but you can control them, with help from Above.

You are far stronger than you know, I think.

Here with you - take my hand. You'll make it, I swear.

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Posted by bright - 03 Jan 2024 04:21

[youknowwho wrote on 03 Jan 2024 03:57:](#)

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Thank you all for listening!

Youknowwho

I feel you talking in my voice, or is it the other way? Whatever. I really feel for you. What helped me in these situations was reaching out... As far as the spiritual freeze Imk when you get an answer to that im still looking. BTW I dont know who.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by Bennyh - 03 Jan 2024 16:54

[youknowwho wrote on 03 Jan 2024 03:57:](#)

Can I *really* live a life without feasting my eyes on the beautiful sights, as I have for so many years?

Yes you can.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by yitzchokm - 03 Jan 2024 20:37

It might be disappointing that you are facing a struggle. You have a long history of success and you should be able to make it through this struggle as well. Exercise, Connection, Urge Surfing, and finding things to do that I enjoy (behavioral activation) got me out of situations of stress and despair. When possible, it is worth dealing with the stressors themselves and resolving them. You might also find speeches of Rabbi Elimelech Biderman or someone else very useful. It might be worth reading TBOTG so you are well prepared if you have an urge. Keep up your good work. We are rooting for you.

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by hehochma - 04 Jan 2024 03:27

[chaimoigen wrote on 03 Jan 2024 04:20:](#)

You are far stronger than you know, I think.

You are far stronger than you think, I know.

Life has been gettin' tough and it can make a man's brain go wild -

Keep Monster Trucking -

You are my inspiration!

Rooting for you!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by adam2014 - 04 Jan 2024 11:38

First off, Hang in there; you know that many people are pulling for you. It is scary but very eye-opening to see someone with your track record still struggle like I do, a person who has trouble going three days.

This post taught me that it is a long road ahead and there is no "quick fix"... You are a role model, and you are a teacher, but you are also a man with the same problem all of us here have. The YH is a crafty patient foe. It doesn't quit easily. It will wait in the shadows for as long as it needs, but you are stronger, and you will fight back and ultimately defeat him!

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Re: Trying to clean up while struggling religiously
Posted by youknowwho - 04 Jan 2024 18:25

Dear Friends,

After such a morbidly despondent post, I owe it to you all to give an update!

You all wrote such beautiful things.

I am doing **much** better, directly due to the chizuk, support and care that you all gave me.

I can't tell you how much it all means to me, to have friends here who understand this struggle all too well and offer their time and support.

I also spoke to some friends on the phone. I always marvel at how people have time and emotional space for others, it's so amazing!! But I want to let you all know...I appreciate it.

Back on track, with pride!

I've been told **I can do it**, that **its worth it**, that **its possible**. I take it from you and ONLY you, no one else!

You, friends, who have stared down this struggle in the face and triumphed.

You, friends, who have chosen life over living death.

I've had many friends in my life, friends who have called me "family", friends who spoke much about love and fellowship.

But when I started expressing doubt, questions...when I left the community behind, suddenly, I wasn't family. Suddenly I was the enemy. It had always been about "us versus them", I just never realized that. And now, I had joined "them".

Not so here. I think it's safe to say that a friend made on this website is a true friend, a deep bond of unconditional, nonjudgmental friendship, through sharing in a common struggle. And friends here genuinely care about you as an **individual**, your life, general wellbeing, **everything**.

Here's to hope, strength, friends and a life made worth living.

Here's to GYE!!!

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