

Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 16 Feb 2024 20:28

Hi everyone! I've been lurking on the forums for a few weeks now, but I think it's time for me to finally post here. I was inspired by many of your stories here, nodding my head when I felt like I was reading about my own struggle, and shaking it as I read things that made my story pale in comparison. I've held off writing anything publicly, for I have a deep (perhaps unreasonable) fear of being identified. Ultimately though, I think posting here will help me, so here goes.

I'm in my thirties, B"H happily married with a few kids. I learned in the standard yeshivish yeshivas, then in kollel for around 10 years before leaving to go to work. Since I was around 12, when there was internet w/o filters, I've struggled with P & M. My go-to method for the past 20 years always involved heavy reliance on filters, which usually meant I was clean till I found a weak link (there always is one), or got my hands on an unfiltered device. This lead to a lot of despair, which lead to more watching.. you know the drill. Years of watching with no end in sight. Recently, I became aware of the **habit** aspect of watching P, and started to notice my triggers. It's almost always a way to escape stress, and could be something as 'stressful' as not getting enough sleep the night before.

Then I found GYE. I started the Flight to Freedom, only watched the videos w/o doing the work, which initially helped, then led to complacency, then a fall. So I went back to the beginning, and I'm determined to do the program properly. I'm hoping to get chizzuk from fellow GYERs this time around as well. I also would love to get some input on the best way to approach filters. If all devices were filtered and filters were foolproof, I wouldn't be posting here today. My job, (like most in 2024) has me using a computer for many hours of the day. Although I have a good filter (Gentech) as well as accountability (Webchaver), while they slow me down, If I'm determined I can get around both of them. That leaves me with a speed bump at best. Which means I need to work on myself so that slowing myself down does the trick? I'm a bit lost, and would love to hear your thoughts.

Though my story is pretty standard, and many of you here have climbed much taller mountains, for me this is my Everest, and still feels insurmountable. One thing I know though (and I must've told myself this 1000 times), I'm sick and tired of falling, and I want life!

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by notezy - 10 Apr 2024 06:25

My opinion might run contrary to what other say but I would cut back

better to do what you can conconsistently(daily) than more than that sporadically.

Whatever that is for you do...

In doing somthing every day you will subconsciously remind yourself to continue fighting.

Small steps over time...

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by eerie - 10 Apr 2024 17:36

While you do have point, Notezy, the question of "what you can do consistently" shouldn't be an easy question to answer. What **can** you do? Think about it.

Besides, our good friend who wants life didn't say that he can't get to it every day, it's just that he sometimes feels (like so many others do) that it's all under control. Until it's not. And the point we should be thinking about is that the logical part, the one that knows that I need help, should be the voice we amplify to ourselves, so we make sure to take care of ourselves.

Let's all keep trucking!

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 10 Apr 2024 21:32

Well notezy, I am trying to make a point of doing **something** every day, either TBOTG or F2F. Because it is about consistency I think, and yes, trying to do both daily doesn't always work. I do have a tendency to take on too many things, and then tap out when I can't do it all. I'm really focusing on the **habit** aspect of all of this, both with regard to doing the work, and breaking the old habits. For me at least, I think bad habits are the at root of my issues with porn, and hopefully good ones will be key to breaking free. Like R' Eerie said I can't forget that I need help, and that I'm **not** yet under control. And ~~Tom~~ youknowwho, with regard to being tired, I've made (some) progress with a few tools (But please send what works for you my way!):

1. Geyfefe Coffee!
2. I tried yitchokm's suggestion one day and did the SOBER exercise once, I thought it was kind of funny but it DID work.
3. My last fall was at night, when not only was I tired, which lead to lowered defenses, but I was also the only one awake, alone in front of my laptop. So I'm trying to make it a habit, using Downtime, to close my laptop well before then, every night.
4. I think (though I'm not sure about this yet), that one of the reasons I struggle when I'm tired is that I feel like I'm not going to be productive and get work done, which causes more stress. So just letting go a little, and not obsessing over how far behind I'll fall if I'm tired, seems to have helped a bit.
5. Reading TBOTG really has helped increase my motivation
6. In general, whichever tools I've used, because I have, B"H, a few times since my earlier post, successfully pushed away that "need" to act out when I'm feeling tired, I think the neural habit paths (cords?) in my brain have been slightly weakened, at least that it's not as automatic that **tired + laptop = porn**. Not saying it's foolproof, but I've seen that I can do it.

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by chaimoigen - 10 Apr 2024 21:34

Here's perhaps a slightly pointed piece of food for thought.

A few posts ago you mentioned that you were starting to notice a pattern. It's not just that you fall when there happens to be a hole in the filter, but rather that in stressful situations you find yourself **looking** to fall. This means that you have unfortunately (like so many) have developed a habit of **utilizing** P&M as a **tool** to deal with stress and certain kinds of discomfort. It may be that not only are certain situations triggers, but maybe it's even deeper- maybe P&M has become a **solution** to some of life's problems. Not the problem itself.

If that's the case (and I'm not saying it is), then the challenge isn't merely to find ways to keep motivated to change. The change might involve facing up to the question of if you are really ready to deal with not having this **solution** anymore....

These were painful thoughts that helped me a lot. Maybe they will help you....

You've got my heartfelt best wishes and a warm hug! Keep in touch,

Chaim Oigen

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 10 Apr 2024 21:41

I wholeheartedly agree with your pointy portion of porridge. Porn is a favorite tool of mine, subconscious though it may be, for dealing with stress.

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by chaimoigen - 11 Apr 2024 04:40

[iwantlife wrote on 10 Apr 2024 21:41:](#)

I wholeheartedly agree with your pointy portion of porridge. Porn is a favorite tool of mine, subconscious though it may be, for dealing with stress.

A very wise rebbe of mine once told me that awareness of a problem is at least half of the solution.

I used to think, in certain difficult situations, "now would be a good time to take a break and find something interesting and benign on the internet as an outlet". Recognizing that thought for what was truly driving it , and what it masked was a big step.

Thinking about how I want to be able to deal productively with those difficult situations in a different way was another whole step...

Hang tight, friend.

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 30 Jul 2024 17:35

Hello all! I'm back. I know you all have been awaiting my return (surely!). So to make up for my absence, here's a long-ish post (yay!):

The truth is, in the past few months since my last post, I have tried all sorts of tools: F2F videos, Reading TBOTG, etc. And yet, I kept falling. Not sporadically, but consistently. Posting about that, at least to me, was downright unattractive. So I was quiet. Tried reaching out to some of you, but halfheartedly so. One thing I have been consistent about though, is reading the forums. So much popcorn was eaten! So many interesting, inspiring individuals, struggling with the beast and bearing their souls. It made my heart both ache with the pain of those falling and feel the joy of those flying high. But as for me...

What I came to realize, obvious as it is in retrospect, is that I, perhaps like most, care intensely about what others think of me. This has been both the catalyst for amazing growth in my life, but also been holding me back, specifically in this area. "How can I reach out for help, or post about my falls? After all, on the outside I'm this top guy, whose day is packed with sedarim, who people think of as a ??? ???? and even a ????? ????! Even on the inside, I think I am these things too!" Etc. This mindset, the #I'matopguy mindset, has probably held me back my whole life when it came to getting help in general, and for sure in inyanei kedushah. So even on GYE, as an anonymous wantner of life, I never really wanted to reach out or post as someone who seemed to be failing at life. Until..

I highly recommend James Clear's Atomic Habits for everyone's summer reading. It's a wildly popular book that makes understanding habits, both good and bad, very easy, and provides helpful tools for how to create good ones and break bad ones. After I devoured the book, I came to understand just how deeply routed in habit my porn-binging was, 20 years of the same pain/stress = need to escape = watch porn. It was a habit unfortunately developed before I knew it was wrong, and waaay before I had the tools to deal with it. Now, reading the book itself did NOT cause me to stop falling. But, I realized that the '4th law of behavior change', which is to make bad behavior *unsatisfying* was crucial. Particularly for me, to quote James directly "**An accountability partner can create an immediate cost to inaction. We care deeply about what others think of us, and we do not want others to have a lesser opinion of us.**" This method of making a bad habit unsatisfying jumped out at me. For if this was a driving force in

my life, to hide and not ??? reveal my flaws, couldn't I harness it in the other direction, and make falling cost me my precious capital?

So 2 weeks ago, I reached out to HHM. Why? Because everyone says to. Also, in a way, HHM seemed to be like less of a peer and more of a father / Rebbi figure, which in my mind made me a bit less inferior. (Think Dumbledore). I was not disappointed! Such a warm, caring individual, who made sure I understood what a good person I am, while also firmly telling me how I am going to stop watching porn with such confidence that I truly believed it. But for me, schmooze aside, the main thing has been the accountability. Every night, before I go to sleep, I check in. There's nothing like it. It both keeps me on track and also ensures that I go to bed at a decent time, at the exact time when, if I was feeling weak, I would be slipping into porn..

So, while I don't think the battle is won, far from it, but for me this has been a huge first step in simply breaking possibly my deepest-rooted habit. I can only join those who have posted before, on an almost daily basis, and say "**Reach out to R 'HHM!'**". Accountability has done wonders for me, and makes me think I can actually do it! I would also love to speak with any of you should you wish, for although we haven't met, I feel we are already dear friends. I don't think I'm qualified to give advice yet, but I cherish the warmth of a fellow fighter! After all, it was the warm hands, hugs, and words that greeted me when I made my first post that caused me to stick around in the first place. So please reach out!

Humbly,

iwantlife

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by proudyungerman - 02 Aug 2024 05:33

My teyeire, dear friend, your username says it all.

KOMT, KUTGW, and, best of all, celebrate your progress this Shabbos with some bourbon!

Warning: Spoiler!

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by Muttel - 02 Aug 2024 05:45

Wow, what a post! I'm (relatively) new here and haven't had the chance to encounter your thread until tonight. I'd be thrilled to get to know and speak to you! Your trials, travails, and yes, failings, ring so close to home for me.... Your successes too though! It's so heartwarming to see another hero and warrior bite the difficult bullet and reach out to HHM, absorb the confidence he's given so many of us, and realize the ability to succeed is in **us**!

This is the magic of GYE and I'd love to get a taste of your flavor of avoda!

Hopeful to get to know you,

Muttel

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by yiftach - 06 Aug 2024 16:23

Just don't disappear on us again...

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 06 Aug 2024 16:51

Iy"H I have no intention of doing so! This time is different, I hope, because *A + *F = *LHT.

*A = Accountability

*F = Friends (I've been meaning to call you too, just super busy!)

*LHT = Long Haul Trucking

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 09 Aug 2024 00:10

Definitely not a poem

I first joined GYE, 'bout 4 months ago,

Intended to look around, but mainly lie low,

Was drawn to the forums and thought "Dare I post?"

“Nah”, thought I back, “I’ve got nothing to boast!”

Did a bit more reading, came to realize my mistake,

These threads run the gamut, from victory to heartache,

Inspiration, contemplation, a Grouchery to boot,

Posting comes in all flavors; my hesitation was rendered moot.

“Ok then”, thought I, “Maybe a post is in order”,

I laid out my story, iwantlife, the Fresh Boarder,

One thing I promised, I absolutely never would do,

Write a post in rhyme, for that was taboo.

It seemed so pointless, just a way to flex,

The writer's poem-making muscles, just for effects,

And yet it seemed strange, "Why? " I wondered,

Were there sooo many poems, more than a hundred.

And then a few days ago, when exactly - I don't remember,

I had just spoken with a certain holy GYE member,

There and then I felt my heart burst with great feeling,

A song of hope, freedom, of possible healing -

A feeling so new, it left me without breath,

An emotion so deep, of life over death,

This song had no words, pure spirit of the soul,

And that's when I understood a poem's role.

You see, my dear friends, here on GYE,

There's something taking place, truly otherworldly,

Whether in person, or even anonymously,

Yidden are connecting ????? ??????.

Our ????? are talking, our deepest desire,

Being revealed to ourselves, our own inner fire,

For moments like these, sometimes prose won't suffice,

For the song of the soul, regular words are imprecise.

I'll end with the words of the great poet Frost,

Who speaks of Roads Not Taken, of opportunities lost,

"Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought -

and the thought has found words."

Humbly,

iwantlife

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by chosemyschem - 09 Aug 2024 14:48

This is great!

I sometimes feel like GYE is secretly just a club for rabbis and kollel people to hang out and write poems (and baal habatim to work on their books).

Keep on crushing it!

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Re: Sick and tired

Posted by iwantlife - 12 Aug 2024 14:55

B'Chasdei Hashem, tomorrow will be my own, personal day 30. And while it **is** quite personal, it's **not** truly my own. It's a most unique celebration of accomplishment that could never have happened without you, without us, the talmidim of Yeshivas GYE (not to be confused with BMG). I would never have made it this far without your warm welcome. Without your texts, DMs, and phone conversations. Without HHM's encouragement and accountability. And yes, without those precious thank-yous. Sometimes clicking that button gives the boost we need, to see just how many people are rooting for us. To push down the YH that whispers to us "You're all alone..", and the many implications of that sentiment. So for all this, I say "Thank You!".

Tomorrow is also Tisha B'Av. So, a bit of a conundrum. How can I celebrate? How should I feel? On the one hand, I'm ebullient, filled with joy. I feel happy, confident. Maybe I even feel closer to Hashem in a way that I haven't been before. (I mean, I even wrote a poem about my feelings! Who does that?) On the other hand, it's a day of sadness, a day of mourning over the loss of a close ??? between us and Hashem, crying over what was and the distance that we now feel. I had a thought over Shabbos, (not sure if it's original or if I heard it once), that I think might help sort this out.

The ??? in ??? says by ???, after being told by the ??? of Yosef's supposed passing: "????? and ??? says "????? – ??? ??? ??? ??? ??? ???, ??? ??? ???, ??? ??? ??? ???." We see from here, that as long as the 'dead' person is still in fact, alive, the pain and mourning simply doesn't fade, as the ??? in ??? explains. It occurred to me, that maybe that's ??? in why we're still in ???, after all these years - because our relationship with ?? **never died**. Instead, it's blocked up with many layers of separation, with ?? waiting patiently for us to peel them away. And so we still mourn, and in our case, knowing all the while that it's within reach to re-ignite our relationship.

Maybe, just maybe, I can apply this to my, and our, struggle. How many years went by, how many minutes, hours, days did I spend lusting away, watching porn and masturbating as Hashem quietly watched? Why did He keep my heart beating, my eyes seeing, my body functioning, as I used His gifts for all the wrong things? And, why did I keep trying to stop, never giving up, filter after filter, ??? after ???, from ??? back to hope back to ???, time after time? I think the answer to this is in fact our greatest hope, our chance to pull through. It's because no matter how many times I thought to myself "This is it, there really is no way out, I'll be stuck as a two-faced husband, father, chavrusa, and frum Yid the rest of my life. I'm hopeless.", Hashem knew that, in fact there was hope, all was not lost, and our relationship

was not dead. And for me it seems, the ????? happens to to be GYE (which **does** rhyme with BMG).

Now this is not to say that I'm "cured". Far from it. ly"H I have many more 30 days to go. ?????? ??????. I'm fully aware that the YH isn't done with me. I'm sure he'll get even trickier. I have a lot to work on. My ?????, in particular. I've basically only been having ????? by ??? ??? and ??? ????? for years, begging Hashem to save me from my lust. The list goes on. But I think, this Tisha B'Av, I can truly, while mourning the distance between us and Hashem, take some ?????, and even celebrate, the fact that Hashem is, and has been, there all along.

Humbly,

iwantlife

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