

Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by benporasyosef - 11 Mar 2025 18:09

It all started with a Lego rocketship. More specifically, the Lego rocketship my grandmother bought me for my seventh birthday. That's the earliest memory I have of playing with my private part. I would lay in bed with my hands under my body and fantasize about being that Lego rocketship. For some reason the flames always seemed to come out from my private area, and my hands mimicked the oscillating motion of the flames dancing from side to side.

In fourth grade my parents told me that my teacher had reported seeing me touching myself in my private area (on top of my clothes) under my desk. I knew then that what I was doing was weird, but had no clue of the activity it referenced and why it was so wrong. I didn't like the feeling of being caught, so I started to become more secretive and careful whenever playing "my rocketship game."

In sixth grade a well meaning friend asked me if I knew how babies were made. "Yeah," I immediately replied, "I always wondered how non Jews could think there's no G-d. Don't they know that Hashem miraculously makes only married women become pregnant?!" My friend laughed, and then made some motion with his finger and a loop made by the fingers of his other hand before walking away. I had the feeling that I was missing something, but was too shy to ask my parents. So I Googled it. What I read after that Google search was still confusing to me, so I turned to Google Images for extra clarity.

I don't remember exactly when I put the two together, but I do remember lying on my bed touching myself and suddenly being struck with the epiphany that the pleasure I felt from touching myself was what was being described by Google. I combined the two - touching myself and searching Google Images - and soon experienced my first time ejaculating.

For years I continued masturbating without giving it any thought other than avoiding getting caught. Eventually I got a smartphone. While it didn't have a browser it did have YouTube, and that only entrenched me further.

At some point early in High School I heard a couple shovavim shiurim and figured out

that it's assur to masturbate. By then the few times I'd gotten caught had trained me into a pathological liar. The restrictions on computers in my house trained me how to bypass filters. In other words, I was a skilled masturbater: skilled at finding content and skilled at hiding my actions. Now I had to stop all of that? Give up and forget about all those hard earned skills? What about the escape, the content, and the high that I got from masturbation?

Unfortunately I didn't have a Rebbe then who I could talk to about these issues. I began to feel a whole new, much deeper, kind of shame from struggling with these temptations. Around Elul and before Yom Kippur I'd make an annual pledge to quit, which was usually broken already before Sukkos. I just didn't care enough to seriously try to quit. All I had motivating me to stop were negative feelings like shame, guilt, and a little fear of divine retribution.

When I got to beis medrash I started giving a little more thought towards permanently quitting. What was once a bad habit or guilty pleasure became a struggle, a battle, and the source of a lot of self hate and depression. Second year is when things got serious.

I don't remember how it came up, but a friend of mine and I discovered each other's struggles. It was the first time I opened up to someone else about my secret past. Our Rebbe then was a very intimidating and intense person, and for some reason we decided to go talk to him about our problem. That conversation lasted over an hour, and answering his question of "why are you here" was one of the hardest things I've done.

My friend immediately quit, but for me it still didn't click. I flirted with week-long streaks until Chanukah when I decided to make a new push. I had found an incentive program offering \$500 for 100 days clean, and that was enough motivation to get me to stay clean for a long time. However, I still wasn't really into quitting.

I still watched inappropriate videos on YouTube, and even saw pornography for the first time when I was home for bein hazmanim. I knew where my line was that I could watch these things without technically breaking my streak.

After 185 days "technically clean" a promotional email for a reality TV series sent me back to day one. Years of shame and negative self talk caught up with me and I entered a dark depression. That night I called the suicidal hotline and some random lady reassured

me that Jesus would forgive me for my sins, so I stayed alive. I began to accept that I could never change. Why keep fighting a losing battle? Surely “Jesus” would forgive me when I eventually came around and did teshuva. I found myself researching prostitution options and outside clubs. My learning and self esteem were in shambles.

I switched Yeshivas for third year and was ready for a clean slate and a fresh attempt to change. I got rid of my smartphone, stopped listening to non Jewish music, and jumped into my learning. I discovered a talent and love for learning which I never knew I had. Things were looking up, until I realized my “kosher dumb phone” had an unfiltered browser on it. I immediately went to get it filtered, but the filter company said my phone model was the only type they couldn’t filter. How convenient. Pornography that night. Masturbation the night after.

All the high flying feelings and motivation disappeared, replaced by depression, insecurity, and overwhelming urges. When Rosh Hashana came around I cleaned up and even got rid of my “kosher” phone in place of my smartphone. At least I couldn’t watch porn on it. I got back into my learning and managed to proactively be clean through Yom Kippur and Sukkos.

On the last day of bein hazmanim I fell again. Coming back for winter zman I knew something had to change. My devices were well filtered, but the images and videos etched into my mind were more than enough for me to continue to act out. I was getting desperate and anxious about my continued struggle, but had nowhere to turn.

I heard about GYE through the Meaningful People Podcast and decided to check it out. I signed up for a mentor and started watching the videos to learn about the different tools. Admitting and opening up that I need help from someone else showed myself a commitment for real change, and that was a big motivation to try harder to break free. I made it 34 days clean - like really clean - and then found myself on a Motzei Shabbos outside a strip club.

The urges were too strong. I figured I'd at least make it "worth it" and was looking to hire a prostitute. I was back at the club the next night and this time went in and got a quick look around before I was kicked out for being under 21. I drove to a different club and a dancer happened to be outside taking a smoking break. I actually got out of my car and walked towards her, only to find she had already gone back inside. I was sitting in the parking lot waiting to hire a sex worker when I got a call from my GYE mentor. He got me out of there fast. We had a long conversation and he convinced me against sexual

interactions with other people. But those urges just kept getting stronger.

I realized that my strongest response against acting out was the argument that it just wasn't worth it. The counter argument though was all my fantasies and the drive to take my sexual activity to the next level. So I decided to make a compromise with my yetzer harah (don't try this at home). My red line was physically touching a woman sexually. I had done everything up to that level and could therefore argue that those actions weren't worth it. Well... almost everything.

A week after visiting the strip club I used my new credit card for a sex talk-line and had "one last go." That was the deal: I gave in to that fantasy but had now done everything imaginable short of physically interacting with another person, and so "now I could stop myself" by saying it just isn't worth it.

After I hung up I spent two hours in my car filling out the entire GYE Three Circles program. I remember the desperation in her voice to keep me (paying) on the phone as I was hanging up, and I actually internalized for the first time what I always knew intellectually: that the porn actresses, prostitutes, and phone sex workers only wanted my money. The fantasies were all based on an illusion.

That following Sunday was the first day of shovavim. The images and sounds from the strip clubs and the talk-line made that next week very hard, but I persevered. The next 30 days were a lot of "white knuckling" and wishing I was allowed to give in.

Eventually I got around to reading The Battle of The Generation by Hillel S, and it was a big help. However, as he himself writes in the book, old habits which are decades old don't die from reading a couple pages. The images and urges kept coming at me and at times I felt like I would explode.

The past 57 days have been a rollercoaster, and I'm trying my best to keep holding on. Sometimes I feel clean internally with no desire to pursue my urges. Other days all I can think about are my fantasies and how to realize them. It's been a long journey, but I'm slowly seeing positive change within me.

I don't know what the fight has in store tomorrow, but I know that it's worth it to keep fighting.

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by jollylemur95 - 16 Mar 2025 03:41

No words I can say to express my awe at your amazing gevurah.

Certainly no words for your incredible honesty to your self!

Please keep inspiring!!!!

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by eerie - 17 Mar 2025 05:08

Wow, wow, wow!!!!!! It looks like GYE has a new hero joining the ranks! UNREAL!!!!

BPY, you are amazing! Keep doing what you're doing, stay in touch with your mentor, and keep realizing that it is ALL garbage in one way or another. And that your wife is not your only option for this, rather it's a whole different thing, which beH, with all the work you're putting in you'll be

Keep it up and keep inspiring us!!!

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by benporasyosef - 21 Mar 2025 03:11

I just had a real hard fall. I feel like such a hypocrite. I had all the answers written out and all the right advice in my long essays. 67 days clean. Now back to zero.

I know you're all gonna say it's not zero and whatever, but it doesn't feel that way rn.

I went back to Target and this time went all out on different dating sites. I just spent three hours

and blew \$100 chatting with women who are most likely AI robots. I was so sure I was gonna hookup tonight, and wanted to end my shmiras habris story with a bang before turning 21.

My zman was going so strong until that idea popped into my head. Now I've been ditching chavrusas, coming back late, and my friends are getting suspicious.

What's worse is random people have my phone number and pictures of me now. I gambled ruining my life for what ended up to just be same old porn and masturbation.

Davening Mincha on Purim one week ago I promised Hashem I was done with masturbation, and I felt so confident I was finally free. What happened to me? Why did I do this to myself?

I know I'll wake up tomorrow and brush myself off from the guilt and start again, but I'm no longer so sure how to answer the question of "will I ever be free?"

While all my friends are taking advantage of one of the last Thursday nights of the zman I'm in a parking lot 5 minutes away feeling like a failure and a hypocrite. I should be there with them.

How did I get sucked into this filth? Who's to say I won't get sucked in again? I can already hear my mind telling me what I did wrong and how I could try again and actually hookup. I know it's wrong, but I want it so bad.

Just feeling deflated and burnt out from life's challenges.

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by amevakesh - 21 Mar 2025 04:09

Ouch! That's gotta be painful. But you know what you've got to do now. It will require a lot strength, but if you can muster up the fight in you to get back in to it, then that's what separates the men from the boys. You're in a very vulnerable position right now, and the YH will tell you that there's no difference between one fall or more. There's no streak anyway, so the heck with it, might as well fall again. But realize, he wants those feelings of despair more that he wants the original fall. If you get back up right away, and stay strong the next couple of days, then You've delivered a knockout punch to his face. Don't worry so much about the future, think about today. Today you've got to be clean. Then tomorrow, you'll tell yourself the same things. We've got faith in you!

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by lamaazavtuni - 21 Mar 2025 04:22

Oy oy my friend don't throw in the towel , we've been there feeling like chrep after doing well, slowly starting to see light out of this miserable abyss, then BAM WHACK KABOOM were back at it with a fevor we didnt know existed in us even before we started this journey of trying to get clean. My tayeraeh yedid hang in the feelings will pass you'll get back to reality that yes you are a little stronger and a drop more capable of dealing with this damm yh. Beshaim hashem naaseh venatsliach !!! We're in this together

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by jollylemur95 - 21 Mar 2025 13:50

My friend!

I know exactly what you feel like. I have been there many times.

I can say it is not true. You are not worthless and the 67 days were and still are huge. But you **know** that. The problem is you do not **feel** that way.

That feeling is totally understandable.

I have nothing to say other then here is a long, compassionate hug. And another one and another.....

Imcha Anoichy Btzara.

May there only be good, happy, and fulfilling days ahead.

Good Shabbos

P.S. I still have in mind to call you. I just have been very busy.

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by chosemyshem - 21 Mar 2025 13:59

[benporasyosef wrote on 21 Mar 2025 03:11:](#)

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Gam ani maskim I'll have words of encouragement hanal.

But if you're noticing your acting out is escalating (even if there's breaks in between) and feeling like you're putting yourself in danger, perhaps a call with Dov is in order. I believe his email wequithiding@gmail.com or just message GYE and say you want to discuss with someone if 12 steps may be right for you.

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by vehkam - 21 Mar 2025 16:01

[benporasyosef wrote on 21 Mar 2025 03:11:](#)

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Call one of the chevra. You can email me too.

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by benporasyosef - 24 Mar 2025 03:38

This morning the thought of going back to Target again kept popping up in my mind. My second seder chavrusa was away today so I could have had the entire afternoon free to pursue my fantasies. For the most part I was able to stay grounded and mindful, and talked myself out of it. However, by Mincha the urge was really strong and I knew there was a very good chance if I went back to my room for a quick nap before seder I'd end up in my car 3 minutes later.

So instead I stayed in the beis medrash even though it was technically a break. I learnt about four hours straight by myself. Dinner is about an hour long, but today I gobbled down some food and was back in the beis medrash 20 minutes later. I learnt another three hours straight.

What by Mincha seemed like was going to turn into a horror story of an afternoon became one of my strongest days of the zman yet. It actually opened my eyes to how much more hasmada I'm capable of, and I'm hoping to be able to keep up the increased learning at least for the last few weeks of the zman.

I'm still kicking myself for my fall last week, and the urges and images and definitely still there, but I'm already seeing some bright light. I'm very proud of this win, and I'm hoping to use this pride as motivation in future battles.

Thanks everyone for your advice and encouragement!

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by boardg - 24 Mar 2025 03:48

Keep it up!!! we are all routing for you

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light

Posted by Muttel - 24 Mar 2025 12:47

Wow, impressive!!!!

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by time2win - 24 Mar 2025 13:27

Great job, way to bounce back!

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by struggler33 - 24 Mar 2025 19:37

All I can muster up to say is wow! very relatable situations and that you got out of it the way you did is unbelievable strength!

I've been there done that, and realized that it was all fake, but still continued. It's the struggle of a lifetime, I too hope it gets easier.

You sound very smart, hopeful and you're a real fighter!

From my experience getting married is not the answer to your struggles, but it may make it easier

chances that your future wife knows as much as you is likely Zero percent, and it will be impossible for you to get all you want or you anticipate.

We all need to be re-wired, like you said it's not sex, it's intimacy, being vulnerable forging a real connection, that will make you stronger and hopefully you don't need anything else.

Be strong! and share more!

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Re: Legos to Clubs to Rays of Light
Posted by benporasyosef - 09 Apr 2025 16:48

I've had a couple falls and victories since my last post. B"H the past three days were clean. Not only were they "clean," but I had a few real victories instead of just white knuckling through. I'll share a couple examples.

I woke up Sunday morning feeling a strong urge (no trigger, what's pshat?) and immediately used STAR to ground myself and regain clarity. Then I distracted myself by finding a family member to talk with. By the time I went to shachris the urge was gone.

I had a dentist appointment yesterday. The radio was playing while I was driving and then a song came on and triggered an urge. I caught myself halfway through and switched to an Eitan Katz CD. The urge was gone when I arrived, but I knew I was entering dangerous territory. When I went for my cleaning there was a huge TV in front of my face playing a reality TV show. The whole cleaning was a battle, but I kept my eyes closed for most of it. I spent the time with my eyes closed trying to think of pshat in a Rashi in Kedushin (I got pshat by the end).

When I walked out I saw one of my Rabbeim in the waiting room. I would have felt embarrassed and guilty if I had just been watching the TV, but instead I felt proud and confident and went over to say hi.

Just wanna share one last thought which I heard today. Idk if any are familiar with the YouTube channel "Purpose Over Pleasure." For those who feel safe on YouTube / have a good filter, it's an excellent resource. In a video I saw today he posed the question "is acting out a problem or a solution?" We'd all say it's a problem, but he said it's a solution. Psychologically it is a solution to loneliness or stress in that it takes the negative feelings away, at least temporarily. His point was that the unaddressed negative emotions are the problem. Acting out is a reasonable response to those emotions when left unmanaged. We need to work on managing our mental and emotional health better, and that will help take away a lot of the urges.

I know there's no "magic fix" and I'm not suggesting this is that. I just thought it was an interesting perspective with a practical takeaway. Hope somebody finds it helpful.

As always, thanks to all for the support.

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