

Hello All.

Posted by installed - 14 Jun 2010 14:52

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Hey,

I'm a religious 26 year old male and I stumbled upon this site and I'm glad (and saddened) that there is such a large community working on their addiction. I was born in a modern home and went to university. I know how terrible the sin of watching pornography and masturbating is but to be honest, I got used to it and I don't feel any remorse anymore (although in the back of my mind I know that it is terrible and wish that I could stop). Also, the fact that society views it as normal and healthy makes things worse.

At work, I'm viewed as the Orthodox Jew and people constantly ask me questions about Judaism which makes me feel like the biggest hypocrite because they view me as a practicing Jew while I'm constantly violating the most basic commandments. I'm also dating now and feel like I'm deceiving the girls I'm dating. Especially when I tell them how important religion is to me.

To cut a long story short, I would like to stop. However, I'm not quite sure where to start. I was thinking that stopping to view pornography and stopping to masturbate at once may be impossible. I was therefore thinking of stopping to view pornography for a while and just masturbating and once I get used to that, to continue with limiting my other habit. What do you think???

Just as a side note, if any of the site administrators see this message, I would like to thank you for setting this site up. I would also like to make a suggestion. As a newcomer to this site, it is very difficult to know from where to start (there is endless information thrown at you) and it may be better to set a page that addresses new visitors.

Anyway, better get back to work...

Thanks.

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Re: Hello All.

Posted by Haleivi76 - 14 Jun 2010 16:00

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Dear Installed,

I think it entirely appropriate that as a newbie myself, it would be helpful for me to be the first to reply.

Firstly welcome. The first thing you will notice is that having taken the brave step of making your voice heard on this issue in this community you will get a huge amount of help and support from other members. Although we are all 'anonymous', there is a very real sense of caring and friendship brought about by mutual respect. Not that anyone here is proud of what we have done, but respect in the sense that it takes quite a bit of bravery to admit that a problem like this exists and just acknowledging that really is the first step to recovery.

So well done for taking this first step.

It can be daunting, especially when you have been doing something for a long time, to even contemplate stopping it. The fact that you know it is wrong does not seem to help in stopping. Nor does the shame, or the sense of hypocrisy. If you are to succeed in beating this addiction, it will take a lot of determination on your part, and a lot of help and support, which B'H you will get here in spades.

My advice to you (take it from someone who has the T Shirt) is to absolutely try to resolve this before your dating gets serious. If you go into engagement or marriage in this type of situation it can/will only get worse and you will feel even more stuck in a rut and disappointed with yourself. It's great that you are trying to do something about it now.

In terms of your methodology, I understand that you feel it might be better to try a gradual approach, and I understand why. I'm not sure if all on GYE will agree with me, but for what it's worth, here is my opinion. The reason why the 90 day plan works is that you get a real sense of achievement from getting through each and every clean day. Every time you can add another tick to your chart, you have a right to feel that little bit better about yourself and feel that you are getting that little more holy, closer to H" and approaching the goal that all on here set themselves.

I don't think stopping watching p\*\*n and keeping on with m\*\*\*\*ing will work in the same way. After all, it probably works as a bit of a vicious circle. You watch p\*\*n, it makes you want to m\*\*\*\*ate, you m\*\*\*\*ate and it makes you more interested in the p\*\*n. Either way, this process works because you start to train your mind to think in a different way and to see purity as more important than transient physical pleasure. To do this and be succesful, I believe that you have to go 'cold turkey'. I know it will seem impossible, going from something you have done so regularly and gotten used to etc. but as people wiser than me have said "You only need to get through today" and it works.

Don't get me wrong, it is far from easy; but as days go by and you unlearn your bad habits it will get easier and easier. As your sense of accomplishment grows you will start to believe that you can do it. Let Go and Let G-d.

In a certain sense, who am I to talk - I am only 4 days clean! But please believe it when I say this (and don't think that I am being caught up in the emotion when I say this) I already feel more in control of this habit 4 days in than I did on Day 1 and genuinely believe that I will be more and more in control with each passing day.

So be brave, try it - we will all be in this together and PG, we will all be hugely succesful.

Good luck and Y'yasher Koich for starting.

If you ever need a chat or chizuk, give me a shout,

Haleivi

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Re: Hello All.

Posted by ur-a-jew - 14 Jun 2010 18:01

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I agree with everything that Haleivi76 said. You have gotten over one of the biggest hurdles. Admitting that you have a problem and taking steps (by joining) to solve that problem. You will be surprised how much easier it will be for you to quit cold turkey now that you have a community of people who understand what you are going through supporting you at every step of the way. As you will see in the Handbook, there may be situations where you just can't quit completely that a recommended tool is to conquer the problem in parts. See Tool#7 (I assume that because it is tool#7, it is not a first option). While the task may seem daunting initially, keep in mind the focus is on one-day at a time and we all can stop for one-day. You will be pleasantly surprised how one day at a time can add up.

With respect to the question where to start, the best place to start is by reading the The GuardYourEyes Handbook. At the same time I would suggest that if you haven't sign up for the daily emails since they provide tremendous chizuk. Also if you read the handbook in print, the emails will allow you to go back and click on the many links in the handbook.

Finally, post and provide chizuk to others. When you busy showing concern for others you don't have time to focus on your own lusts.

Welcome and we are all here supporting you.

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Re: Hello All.  
Posted by trying123 - 14 Jun 2010 19:50

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Welcome...

Re. Gradual vs. Cold Turkey: It has been debated quiet a bit... I don't do well with too much at once and it tends to backfire and I find myself right where I started.... Gradual works best for me. I think you can work on one element at a time it works for me...

I don't think it's hypocritical that you want to be good and do a lot of good but at the same time struggle in some areas... It's called being human and it's the nature of the game...

My goal is to move forward and try to actualize the goals I believe in... My ideals are high but

things sometimes get in the way... I'm in the process of working on those things... Why is that bad...? Why is that Hypocritical? Is there anyone that never sins? are we all hypocritical?

Perhaps yes... But if so join the human race....

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Re: Hello All.

Posted by bardichev - 14 Jun 2010 19:55

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[installed wrote on 14 Jun 2010 14:52:](#)

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Thanks.

installed welcome aboard

feelin like a HYPOCRATE is classic YH (yetzer hora) modus operandi

read bardichevs battle

i discuss it there in many places

its also a fun read

KEEP ON TRUCKING!!!!!!!!!!!!

BARDS

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Re: Hello All.

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 14 Jun 2010 22:39

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Installed, welcome home. This is a good place to be. It's a place where you'll hear from and interact with Yidden from all walks, all with one thing in common: stopping lust addiction.

For whatever reason, we're all here. What it's time to do is deal with our circumstances in a healthy, holy way. For a Yid (and all humanity, really), it means turning to G-d.

You ask about the drive, the will, to stop. I suggest you deepen your devotion and learning. Not to say you are undevoted and unlearned, just to say that as we draw nearer to G-d, we are strengthened, encouraged and have a better mind for dealing with our assailer, the yetzer hora. It isn't extreme to follow G-d and continue in a holy lifestyle. Stand or fall, you'll be a much better person for it. Once you realize something isn't working for you, it's okay to drop it. There is a reason Chazal enacted the fences we are urged to live by. They protect us from our worst.

Do you know what is extreme? Playing with fire. People who play with fire often don't really care if they get burned. That tells you about their character and integrity. Don't judge yourself by their eyes. You aren't like them at all. And you don't want to be like them, either. A friend once told me, Never be ashamed in the performance of a mitzvah.

Your fortunate in that you have an opportunity to work on this and, be'ezras Hashem, be one day rid of it. Don't be afraid to tackle it head on, realizing the gravity of what's at stake.

Again, welcome. Glad you made it. Hatzlocha rabbah.

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Re: Hello All.

Posted by ur-a-jew - 14 Jun 2010 23:38

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I think you will find that these days you can find jewish music to suit any style. If your goal is to stay clean (which obviously it is otherwise you wouldn't be here) then you have to avoid lust triggers. Your post appears to recognize why these are obvious triggers. Since I have started my journey I have given up my daily routine of borrowing a co-workers NY Post because I recognized that I can't try to fight the Y"H while at the same time inviting him into my life on a daily basis. Sometimes I miss my daily gossip dose but I don't find my life lacking as a result of this decision. Use you're new found time to post on GYE it will change your life, listen to a shuir there are thousands available for free online (email me for links). Finally don't look at it as if you are restricting yourself. You're not. Instead, you're freeing yourself from the hold that a Lust Addiction has on you and personally I would prefer to remove that hold all at once. Good luck on the journey.

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Re: Hello All.  
Posted by Elya K - 15 Jun 2010 00:57

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The AA book has a chapter called "For the Agnostic" which explains that while this is a spiritual program, you define your own Higher Power. At first this Higher Power can be someone in the program who has experience and can help you work the steps.

Let me ask you a question. Did you ever view yourself as someone who would eventually be addicted to porn? I didn't think so. So why can't you imagine yourself going to those meetings or working this program? Maybe your not having the personality for it, is exactly what you need to change to get sober?

We have all masked our feelings for so long and numbed out with fantasy and masturbation we don't even know ourselves. And once you stop you'll begin to discover who you really are. Is that worth the gamble? Ask the hundreds of thousands of alcoholics who were skeptics and are now sober. Yes.



If you G-D forbid had a serious illness would you take the doctor's medicine or say, "I'll just do this on my own - and even though I'm skeptical about G-d maybe something or someone will save me.

Meetings are the medicine of this program. Sponsorships and talking out your problems with people that understand.

Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Do you know what that is?

Insanity

You're at the crossroads to make a choice in your life. Like the Road Not Taken, Sobriety (Happiness, A purpose in life, a clearer picture of who you really are) or Insanity (fantasy).

Aren't movies and TV and songs just fantasy? You don't have to completely shut yourself off and worry about 90 days. Just work on tomorrow and then the next day and look at movies and TV that are consistent with your values, that won't trigger you to act out. Otherwise you're just kidding yourself into thinking you can do this alone.

Elya

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Re: Hello All.

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 15 Jun 2010 11:57

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[installed wrote on 15 Jun 2010 00:29:](#)

Thanks for all your replies (ur-a-jew I definitely hear what your saying). But I'm still wondering if my 90 day journey is possible without:

**a) Feeling a connection to God.** I believe that religion is important and I hope to build a religious home one day but I just have a hard time believing. I listened to many shiurim and even read the translation to Moreh Nevuchim which gives a more rational approach but deep down I have my doubts. For example, when I daven shmonah esrei, I feel as if I'm talking to the wall and when I hear shiurim that talk about connecting to God I just tune out because I just don't feel it. I even went to Discovery at Aish (which is extremely interesting and highly recommended) but I'm still a skeptic.

**b) giving up secular music/tv/movies.**

I can probably give up b for a while but I have no way of controlling a.

Any thoughts?

Installed, why exactly do you have such a hard time believing in G-d? I read you mentioned you don't "feel" anything... is that due an intellectual position that you hold or something more primal?

A belief in G-d is the first of the 613 mitzvos, per the Rambam and Chofetz Chaim (and probably

many more). Maybe we can help you rekindle, reconnect your belief to G-d. In the interim, take the right steps to limit your intake of triggers. Even if you are not immediately triggered, there is a desensitizing effect which is very harmful for persons like ourselves.

Best wishes and hatzlocha rabbah.

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Re: Hello All.

Posted by briut - 15 Jun 2010 14:01

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Gee, I wish I had something rich and meaningful sounding to offer. I know I don't. But I still wanna give a little chizuk that it's possible to make lots of progress on this site even if you're not full of big fluffy emunah the way the others speak. (Do they actually live in this emunah? Do any of us? I don't know.)

Thought One:

Sometimes, living my life "as if" can have some power. Live "as if" I DID really believe. Live "as if" I WERE really a model parent. Live "as if" whatever.... It's not a hypocritical thing, because modeling that behavior seems to be helpful in making it real.

I remember a moshul about a watchmaker. First customer comes in with broken watch: he says it's no problem to fix it. Second customer, seems to be identical scene: he says it's a lost case. The guy observing all this asks him why. Answer: the first watch was at least wound every day. It didn't keep great time but at least it was in practice, oiled, moving, whatever. The second watch was put in the drawer as soon as it stopped keeping good time. Got hardened, rusty, whatever. Impossible to fix. Nimshal: keep winding the watch even when it's not working right.

THOUGHT TWO:

My wife taught hebrew school and found lotsa kids saying they didn't believe in a god. Certainly not in G-d. She learned one powerful question: "Please tell me, then, all about this G-d you DON'T believe in." And they could give hours of description of Someone they claimed wasn't even real. Which means they thought He WAS real in some way. Which was a good opening to building something stronger in them. Just a thought, but maybe you could post for us all about this G-d you're having a hard time believing in & davening to....

Anyhow, I'll return to my general statement that you don't need to be a ba'al emunah or a talmud chacham to be welcomed here or to make progress here. At least not in my apikorsudige book .

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Re: Hello All.  
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 15 Jun 2010 15:07

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Regarding gradual verses cold turkey.

I liked that point that mas\*\* and po\*\* are closely connected.

But, what a lot of people do, while shooting for 90 clean days, is to be happy with gradual progress. Maybe first they achieve a 2-day clean streak. Then, 4. Then, a whole week... etc. Some people start off having to count clean MINUTES as their goal.

Progress is the main thing.

--Eye.

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Re: Hello All.  
Posted by Elya K - 15 Jun 2010 17:58

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Emunah,

The third step deals with emunah. We made a decision to turn out life over to Hashem.

What does this mean? Every frum Jew turns their life over to Hashem, right? Isn't

that what Yirah is about?

Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Kabbalas Ol Mlachus Shomayim is accepting whatever happens to you - whatever circumstances you find yourself in today - that is meant to be . ACCEPTANCE of that is turning your life over to Hashem. Truly accepting it. Living for today, not worrying about the future, not being absorbed in the misery of the past. Yiras Shomayim alone is not going to keep you sober... unless you can kill your Yetzer Hora, WHICH HASHEM GAVE US... KNOWING WE'RE GOING TO FALL.

We need Ahavas Hashem... loving Hashem in our hearts for the good in our lives. Feeling the gratitude for what we do have... instead of what we don't have that everyone else does have. This is the 10th commandment which leads to jealousy, resentment, anger at ourselves and G-d.

If you want what we have and are ready to go to any lengths to get it there is a simple formula, yet our YH tells us its better if we stay miserable because that's what we're used to. Wallow in sadness - POOR ME - or live a life of Serenity and Peace - in love with Hashem. When we can love Hashem, ourselves and others, the fear of Heaven is so much easier. When we're numbing out... we're keeping Hashem out of our lives. Love brings HIM back in.

Elya

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Re: Hello All.

Posted by teshuvahilaah - 15 Jun 2010 22:47

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Installed, it's great to hear you're hanging in there. A good attitude paves a good way.

About belief in G-d, you mention that you are a bit of a skeptic generally. I imagine this applies to everything. Let me share a few things with you that will hopefully bolster your belief in G-d.

Firstly, strip away from your thoughts the attitudes that skeptics often have. Attitude really has little to do with facts, and these attitudes that float through the air are a means to influence interpretation of said facts. We can set all of those aside, can't we? Great. Now, let's take a look at some facts. Cold, hard facts.

Do you know how limited our sciences actually are? As incredible and gargantuan as they sometimes seem to tower, did you know how many simple questions they simply fail to answer? And I am not talking about questions regarding spiritual phenomenon, I refer to strictly physical, observable phenomenon. Here are some examples.

Science cannot tell us how our universe came to be. The best minds are at a total loss on this subject. There comes a point where the subject of beginnings begs for the invoking of principles that are completely outside the laws of the reality we know. Principles such as infinite regression, where there is no beginning (huh?) or a force outside of our space time which can design and begin the process we know as our reality. Either way, concepts are invoked which run contrary to the principles and laws of the reality we know. So then, what is wrong with invoking G-d? If the skeptics (who are skeptic for love and reliance on their laws) must come to invoke something that completely upends their laws (having no alternative!), why then can we not invoke G-d?

Another. Reason has its limits. Every concept, every understanding, is inextricably tied to some axiom which permits it. But who permitted the axiom? Who or what validated it? The answer is... our best judgments and intuitions. Nothing more, nothing less. At the end of the day, all philosophical reasoning, scientific inquiry and, well, everything, hangs by a thin thread, no

thicker than a hairs' breadth. Every axiom on which we rely has been established by ourselves, by our best judgments derived from our limited perspective. And when these judgments and intuitions change (as they often do), the entire system deriving from said axioms teeters, little of it salvaged.

With this understanding we see that humanity cannot establish anything absolute. It can only rely on the absolute, receive the absolute, never establish it. The absolute, being fixed perfectly and not by way of man's best judgment, is beyond the axiomatic powers of man.

Truth is an absolute. Yet man cannot establish it, only rely on it. There is a folk saying that I've read R' Noson of Breslev quote, Truth is its own witness. You see, we cannot even be valid witnesses for truth. We cannot validate it. To do so, we would have to be on par with truth, in order to measure it, understand it perfectly, and proclaim with confidence, It is so! But we just cannot do that. We are simply not on par with matters of the absolute. We can only rely on the absolute, receive the absolute, but never establish it.

I say the above to bring home the point: our reasoning has its limits. Yes, we have much that is (or seems) time-tested and approved, but never forget it has its limits. The theories surrounding gravity held sway for quite a while post-Newton. They seemed perfectly account for the phenomena of the known universe. These were later revised because they broke down at certain measurements, not taking well enough into account certain criteria. Be assured they will be revised again. And do you know what the last revision of all theoretical considerations and thoughts will be? We read it in the Aleinu prayer everyday. When the world will come to accept G-d.

Here is another matter that gets me thinking, though it is in a different vein than the above (it asks, Why? A big no-no in the world of intellectual sophisticates): the very fact that everything in our universe has an impulse for life. Isn't that telling? Everything, like a plant in a meadow, stretches out to live and gain sustenance from its sunlight. Why doesn't everything simply drift to a useless death? Why was it born at all? It was born to live and it does its part to live every moment of its existence. This is a hallmark of our universe. It points constantly to life. For me, this attests to not only a Creator, but a loving one.

We are limited creatures on all levels. Physically, intellectually and spritually. Not only limited, we are utterly dependent, as well. Utterly and completely dependent. Take note of this. In light of our position in relation to things, how much does the skepticism of even the best and the brightest weigh? Very, very little if anything at all.

This is a bit of a long post on a subject better suited to a whole other type of forum.. and it may not even be up your alley, Installed (I hope it is; that is why I wrote it). But here it is. Perhaps it will do someone, somewhere, some good.

That was a great post, by the way, Elya. It did me a lot of good. In my particular situation, I have gotten better through acceptance. Even when I think I have already accepted, I realize that the terrible side of my guilt and shame roars back. But it is always acceptance, and a willingness to persevere born from that acceptance, which subdues it. Hatzlocha rabbah.

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Re: Hello All.  
Posted by Elya K - 16 Jun 2010 00:44

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thanks 8)

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Re: Hello All.  
Posted by briut - 16 Jun 2010 13:29

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You're scared to act "as if" because you'd have only a weak foundation? Well, I know that you realize otherwise you'd have NO foundation. And foundations can grow from a small seed to a large tree. Glad to hear you're willing to try it, and I daven that Hashem will bentsch you with everything you need.

BTW, I remember a documentary on PBS about baal'ei tschuva. A LONG time ago. One of the characters had gotten religious and was keeping mitzvot for NINE YEARS and... didn't believe in G-d. WHY was she doing this? Because she saw that the lifestyle was beautiful. That nothing else made sense for having a marriage, raising kids, being a good person, etc. It took her NINE YEARS of doing like a robot until she finally had an experience that gave her true emunah. So my conclusion from this: maybe you can look at what the lifestyle brings you, even if it doesn't seem to bring you closer to G-d. [As if YOUR perception of this is important compared to HIS perception of where you are. Hmmnn.]



Hatzlacha raba.

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