

my story thus far & thoughts on starting out

Posted by returner613 - 01 Nov 2010 10:26

I am fairly new to GYE and this is my first post to the Forum.

I am a frum married man and have been struggling with this addiction for approximately twenty years (shortly after my bar-mitzva). The word 'struggling' can mean many things; in my case, some of the meanings are:

- the actual sin of MZ"L, the obvious things that precede it, and the **immense** spiritual damage involved
- a constant sense of shame and guilt, sometimes conscious sometimes sub-conscious... but always always there
- brief periods of progress, success and growth surrounded by longer and longer periods of darkness, failure and despair

If I blamed my problems entirely on the Internet - I would be lying. It is true that at this point, I *think* that about 95% of my SA current issues are triggered by internet usage. However, I had this problem way way before the internet existed.

My first MZ"L was a few months after my bar-mitzva. At the time, I thought nothing of it (actually, I remember being sort of proud). After a few weeks of experimentation, I began thinking that there may be something wrong with it; I did recall that my Father had told me not to ever touch myself there (probably some number of months before) but I figured that on a relative scale it was the same level of 'bad' as staying up way-way past my bedtime. How I wish that I would have asked more about it then...

Experimentation gave way to mild habit; I was pretty sure at that point that it was something weird and that I should stop - but figured that I could do that any time I wanted, so no big deal... Then about midway through 8th grade I found out. I was looking at an english Kitzur Shulchan Oruch, probably studying for a test, and found a strange sounding entry in the index. Looked it up - sure enough it was talking about exactly what I had been doing - and I was shocked. According to what I read, I had been engaging in one of the worst possible sins. I was embarrassed but was also familiar with the idea of being a Shogeg... so I was filled with a resolve to stop immediately. But I didn't. Days dragged on to weeks, weeks to months, months to years. Having cable-tv in the house (with premium channels) when I was in high-school surely didn't help - *although in retrospect, just as the internet - I would not necessarily blame it*

as *the root cause*. One time, my father even found out indirectly and had a talk with me. While I was deeply ashamed, I was relieved at the same time - since there was absolutely no way that I could do that again afterwards, right? Right? But no... We did have a few more talks afterwards, and soon enough I learned to lie just the right way for them to stop..

When I was in high school, I was absolutely convinced that there was no way I would continue doing that when I went to learn in Israel. That was not the case either, although towards the second part of the year - I read quite a bit on the topic (Reishis Chochma, etc) and bought a small collection of various Chassidic/Kabbalistic sefarim filled with various Tikkunim/Segulos/etc. Though I did very few of these tikkunim, I did achieve some level of growth, cried real tears, and mostly stopped for somewhere between two to three months. That was probably the longest period that I have ever been sober since.

When I went back to the states, the old habits came back quickly (even though I was not watching any tv anymore) and then - THE INTERNET.... While the result (MZ"L) was the same as before, the material was so much more vast. Whatever 'preferences' I had before - could be found within seconds. Anything you could think of could be found.... the abyss was complete.

When I was single, I was absolutely convinced that there was NO WAY that I would keep having this problem after getting married - I mean, how could I? Took about a month for it to come back in full force. Then I remember thinking that when my wife would get pregnant, there would be absolutely no way (I am somewhat familiar with some of the kabbalistic ramifications, so I figured there's no way I could do that then...) - but I didn't stop... Then when my son was born, that was the absolute end... but NO IT WASN'T! I don't want to go into details, but one time that really stands out in my mind is looking at porn while my wife and newborn son are sleeping in the same room. I don't need to go on, I'm sure you know where this is going.

I don't think that I've hit rock bottom yet.... I don't want to hit rock bottom. Although I have some tears in my eyes while writing these words - the truth is that over the years it has begun to hurt less and less. That scares me most of all, because if it hurts then there is at least still hope.

My Yom Kippurs are filled with remorse and kavona. I find that it's one of the few days when the shell opens up and the real me comes out. Every year, on THAT day, I find myself feeling like I finally came back, for the first and last time. Never again will I go back to the filth and darkness. Sometimes I make it to Hoshanah Rabba, more often not. This year I did B"H - but after reading what you guys define as falling, I certainly fell way before then (just not the final result).

Still, I did do something very different this year on Yom Kippur. I was a bit more honest with myself and with Hashem than usual. I told him straight out that while I have chorota, and never ever want to do this again - I know that I say this every year. I'm not stupid and I know plenty of practical ways to improve my situation (ranging from a serious daily accounting, daily mussar reading/chizuk - to seeing a therapist privately) but why WHY am I not taking these steps!? Hashem, you have to help me help myself - I don't want to be saying the same things again next year. (This is of course a dramatisation, the above words were not exactly my thoughts/words - but it was something to that effect...)

A few days before Hoshanah Rabbah, when I was very close to final breaking point, out of desperation I started typing a plea to Hashem into a google search (I know it sounds tacky, but I do that sometimes...) I don't remember the exact text of it, so will not attempt to reproduce it - but the general gist was how I was frustrated and wasn't meeting my obligations and goals. I don't remember there being any mention of MZ"L or related keywords.. Anyways, something really weird and amazing happened. Even before I clicked on Search - all the results on the page disappeared and the browser was trying to load a page from the guardyoueyes.com forum. It never loaded, but I figured that you don't get more of a direct answer than that - so I typed out the url and after ten minutes of reading felt my first breath or relief in years. Not relief that my problems were solved, but that this was solid proof that I'm not the only one out there and that THERE IS HOPE.

(This is completely an aside, not important to what I am writing, but I wanted to write a bit more about how I found GYE. I would not call the above a 'miracle' - although it is one to me on a personal level. I am a computer programmer, and specialize in web applications. So I kind of understand what happened - to a point. Google has a new feature called "Instant" which shows you results as you type your search. Also, I have a few virus-protection plugins that slightly change the content-results coming in from google. That together explains why all the content 'disappeared' from my screen before I even hit search (i.e. the sentence had so many keywords that google somehow narrowed it down to one site, then gave up, but the plugin was already trying to analyze it & got stuck.. or something like that). It doesn't explain why content from the GYE started automatically loading in the progress bar without my hitting anything though - and though I was not able to reproduce it after trying a bunch of times that day, I'm sure it that it was due to a google/plugin/firefox glitch. Except that it wasn't a glitch to me - to me it was Hashem reaching out to me and showing the way forward. One very practical point that comes out of this, personal inspiration aside, is why didn't I find GYE in the past; I use the internet fairly frequently - read blogs, news, etc... The answer, I think is that I don't really go on Jewish sites that much (other than debka.com - to whatever degree that's jewish). Perhaps there's a way to do an advertising campaign via Google AdWords that somehow targets orthodox men... I realize that this would not be simple to do but in any case food for thought & it's something that I would be glad to contribute to financially...)

Anyways - I've been using GYE 'lightly' for the past month. The first week was full of renewed resolve. Afterwards less and less, but all I was doing was randomly reading articles and entries in the handbook - not doing anything else. However, I think that I am ready to really jump in now. Over the past week I have:

- signed up for daily chizuk emails (which I try to read, although not every day yet)
- downloaded the guidebooks

- started attending a weekly introductory phone group (Elya's)
- created a 90-day profile (have been clean 5 days now)
- requested a Sponsor *(From my communication with the parter-admin, it doesn't look like any sponsors are currently available. I'll hopefully be set up with a parter soon, so I'm looking forward to that. Still, if any of you reading know of a good Sponsor who you think would be available, please let me know! !)*
- installed & configured K-9 on my computer. *(I have not yet given the password to anyone. This is because I have very specialized uses for my computer, and need to make sure that I can use it for several weeks without any problems from the filter. After a month (maximum) once I am satisfied with the configuration - I will give the password over to either a partner/sponsor (assuming I have one by then) or to the password gabbai)*

Things that I plan to do in the near future:

- join a responsibility-group (in about a month)
- join the noon SA group (when they start a new cycle)
- possibly install an accountability program in addition to K-9 *(tried this in the past, but didn't have a good experience... if I get a partner/sponsor who I build a good relationship with, perhaps it will be a viable option)*
- possibly use some form of the Tapsik method described on the site
- work on true Teshuva (combination of SA steps + some Tikkunim that I am familiar with & have been planning on doing)
- if all above don't work out for over ~half a year - I will contact one of the professional therapists referred to on your site

I realize that this post was LOOONG... I just felt like I had to get it all out (or most of it, anyways) after keeping it bottled in for so long. If you made it this far I really appreciate it. Any advice and/or chizzuk would be greatly appreciated.

I cannot express how much appreciation I have for the people who made this site and community and continue to make it thrive. While we all have our missions in life, and don't necessarily always know what they are - I am SURE that you are making major roadwork in Shamayim. I hope to some day not only be thanking you but contributing as well - although

there is so much work to be done beforehand...

Thank you again & chotzlocha to everyone here

- Naftali Z

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by an honest mouse - 01 Nov 2010 11:18

welcome! you've come to the right place! we're here for eachother like one big family - welcome to the family! the steps you have already taken is a great stride in the right direction and not easy to take so kol hakavod!

post away as you grow, sharing helps us get out of isolation and 'our own heads', let us know of your hard days and your good days. Sharing it all will help you discover what the real issues are lurking behind this 'escape button' called lust.

Good luck and have a great day!

p.s - im also 5 days now, maybe we can race eachother to the top of the chart! (i hope it will be)

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by frumfiend - 01 Nov 2010 11:35

I already like you. You sound very intelligent and very committed to change. Just give it your all and you will succeed. Hatzlacha

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 01 Nov 2010 14:08

welcome,

you already took some very big steps to helping yourself and be"h you will succeed. keep on reading, posting and connecting. this place is THE place to me for anyone who wants to guard

hatzlocha

zs

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by the.guard - 01 Nov 2010 20:45

wow. The way you found GYE is a true miracle. Isn't Hashem just AWESOME?

their eyes

Hashem helps those who help themselves. Seems like you're taking all the right steps... Keep up your resolve, and you'll see many more miracles, my friend.

GYE is a place where miracles happen every day.

May Hashem be with you.

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by Stuart - 01 Nov 2010 21:18

[Naftali Z wrote on 01 Nov 2010 10:26:](#)

... Then about midway through 8th grade I found out. I was looking at an english Kitzur Shulchan Oruch, probably studying for a test, and found a strange sounding entry in the index. Looked it up - sure enough it was talking about exactly what I had been doing - and I was shocked. According to what I read, I had been engaging in one of the worst possible sins. I was embarrassed but was also familiar with the idea of being a Shogeg... so I was filled with a resolve to stop immediately. But I didn't. Days dragged on to weeks, weeks to months, months to years. Having cable-tv in the house (with premium channels) when I was in high-school surely didn't help [i]- although in retrospect, just as the internet - I would not necessarily blame it as the root cause.

I could really resonate with the quote above. Even though it was over 20 years ago for me, I can specifically recall all the details where I was when I first read that siman in the English kitur shulchan orach.

Overall your story sounds very familiar to me and to many on this site. It's great that you've committed certain steps for recovery and have intentions to continue.

Wishing you much Hatzlacha and Bracha! Feel free to contact me (pm) for anything.

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by Kedusha - 01 Nov 2010 22:19

I first found out by reading Me'am Loez a couple of months after my Bar Mitzvah (this was well before the Internet was an issue). I was able to stop right away, although that only lasted 8 days. Then about 2 months later I was able to stop again, although that only lasted about 6 months. About 5 years later, I was able to stop yet again, which lasted about 14 months. Then I did quite well for about 3 1/2 years, until I started falling again. After that, it was on and off for the next 14 months or so. I was clean for a couple of weeks when I started seeing the woman I married, and past our engagement for about 2 months, totaling about 4 months clean (all this, still pre-Internet). To my sorrow, I fell 3 times in 1 week, about 5 weeks before my Chasunah.

I'll end the story for now, but obviously this came back to haunt me after marriage as well, especially when we got Internet access about 6 1/2 years later.

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 02 Nov 2010 00:06

The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch was my first eye-opener too! Boruch Hashem!

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by jewinpain - 02 Nov 2010 01:38

Hi Naftuli, welcome aboard, we are glad u finally found ur way in here, there is a lot of good people here who can advice & support , many tools to work with, lots of chizak to read, just commit yourself to go 1 day at a time and reach out for help privately or here on the public forum, when u feel u r falling back into trap, plz show hashem how sincere u mean this & he is sure to help u along in ur journey

Ur friend JIP

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by returner613 - 02 Nov 2010 04:02

Thank you to everyone for your kind replies and chizuk!

More specifically (in the of your replies):

honest mouse: Amein & thank you for the warm welcome. **I very much look forward to tying**
? :D)

Frumfiend: Thanks, that means a lot. I definitely feel very committed to change and hope it carries through this time. I know that the only way that I'll be able to succeed, in the long run, is if I give it my all.. with everyone's help I feel *(for the first time in a long time)* like I have a realistic, practical, shot at it.

(Side note: although raw intelligence can be good or bad depending on how it's utilized. In my case, I feel there is good potential - but I have thus far greatly misused my capacities of imagination/creativity and at least in part they have contributed to this mess. Very much hope to use them in more positive ways in the future..)

ZemirosShabbos: Thank you! Will do so, and I'm so glad to be here!

R'Guard: Yes it was a miracle, and so is this site. Hashem is certainly truly AWESOME, and I think that HE finds this place and the people here awesome as well! May we all see continued miracles. *(Also, thank you very much for posting a shortened version of my story in the today's chizuk email. I wasn't expecting it - and found it very deeply touching, especially since I am so new to this forum.)*

Stuart: Yes - very vivid memory of that siman.. I remember where I was and where it was. Hatzlacha and Berocha to you as well, and I very much appreciate your offer!

Kedusha: Thank you so much for sharing that. From your wall score, I can see that you have had ALOT of success over the past several years. May you have continued success, and I hope to follow!

Yosef Hatzadik: Boruch Hashem indeed!

jewinpain: Thanks friend & glad to be on board! *(pun intended)* Definitely 1 day at a time

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by ur-a-jew - 02 Nov 2010 04:24

Welcome Naftali. There is so much in your story I can identify with even stumbling into the site through a google search. You're off to a great start and the recognition that you cannot do it alone will be a key factor in making this stop successful. Hatzlacha and I'm sure we will see each other around.

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by Holy Yid - 02 Nov 2010 05:37

Welcome. Please find a copy of yatkut mashiv nefesh by rabbi simcha klein and look at his chapters on sin and teshuva.

You are awesome I wished I had jumped in like you. Keep up the great work.

Post away.

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by Jooboy - 02 Nov 2010 13:40

Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow!

How did you get a hold of my first step??????

Not exactly but close. I soooooo identify with so much of your story. Being proud of finding out about masturbation, finding out in seforim how bad it is considered, assuming that this will definitely not continue after _____(fill in the blank - no difference, the result was always the same), learning to live with the nagging shame and guilt but never being able to live happy, joyous or free.

I'm right there with you.

Eventually after being discovered by my wife, pain, therapists, more pain, trying more of my own willpower, even more pain, considering joining SA, much more pain, feeling like I can't go on anymore and then a tad more pain to reach my fill I finally made it to an SA meeting. Then a second meeting. Then, I couldn't wait to get back there again. It became a safe cozy place where I could go, throw off decades of guilt, self-hatred and darkness. It was the emotional connection of being able to connect with others as I really am and not what I think others need me to be that I craved for since I can remember. It has also taught me how to be honest, open, and use the tools of the program to allow GOD to take away my lust and obsession.

The last 12 months of my life have been getting progressively better and GOD willing I still have a lot more ground to cover!!!!!!

Wow, this posting me has gotten me all worked up about my meeting and friends there and I
but I know once I get there

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out
Posted by Yesod Tzadik - 02 Nov 2010 14:53

Hi Naftali.

Just reminded myself that the Kitzur shulchan Oruch was also my first eye-opener. But I don't think it changed or helped much. It just confirmed my theory that this has got to do with marriage and having children.

There is a lot familiarity in your story.

Keep it up

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Re: my story thus far & thoughts on starting out

Posted by frumfiend - 02 Nov 2010 14:59

Why cant i find that siman? I want to learn it with my son.

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