

my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict

Posted by ramatganinternational - 11 Nov 2010 17:07

What I am about to set out to you today is something that I have been longing to do for a long while. I wanted to catalogue my feelings and thoughts about a matter that has been directly effecting my life for well over the last decade. You may ask why I haven't done so yet. The answer for this question is oh so simple. Immediately after this year's Rosh Hashanah 2010, I did something that I have been meaning to do for many years. I freed myself from the shackles of the Internet. When I say 'freed' I mean to say that I got to grips with my heart and soul and installed Covenant Eyes on my computers with all the added filters etc.

Ok, a little about who I am. My name is Yechezkel, I am 33 years old. I live in Jerusalem - Israel where I have a family of 6 Bli Ayin Hara. I run a successful business from my office in Ramat Gan. I am from England originally and have been living here for the last 9 years.

I come from an extremely frum family – all my siblings besides my brother with whom which I share the business with here are either in Kollel or klei kodesh. I was brought up and educated to the highest standards of both yiddishkeit and frumkeit.

I was lucky to have been partnered with the most wonderful wife and seeing as her family lived in Israel we decided to settle in Israel.

The internet emerged on the worldwide scene during my teens and developed at a fast pace during my early married life. Whilst maintaining a settled program of learning before Shachris and in the evening as well as earning a trade during the day – I was the typical frum ba'al haboss, living a relatively comfortable lifestyle, bringing up my children and infusing in them the rich heritage that both I and my wife received from our parents. My advice was regularly sought on a wide range of communal matters. I had become an askan in my circles and my stature in the community was one of respect. I was proud of my family and looked on with deep pride when my parents and in-laws visited us. I knew they were proud of me at what I had achieved.

This image I had constructed was all but a screen – a fa?ade of who I really was and what my inner being and soul really looked like. In truth, I was well and truly addicted to the internet and all its terrible associated family. Yes I was able to put on a front as a normal frum man when it came to life away from my computer screen. Yes I was able to preach to my children and portray an example of how a frum Jew should behave, yes I was able to learn the Daf day in day out, but behind all this a lustful and dark man lived. It was a clear case of split personality. Away from my computer I lived the life as depicted earlier on but once I was under the spell of my computer and the internet, I transformed into an animal – yes an animal I am ashamed to say. I will not delve into what I got up to and what I spent time watching on the internet but suffice to say I was addicted to it and it ruled my life, my heart, my brain and most of all my soul.

Year after year resolutions came and went in Elul, year on year I wept through T'fillas Zakoh and klapped the al cheits with every intention to make the coming year a one that removed me from the world of the traps that lay in wait at the end of my fingertips as I typed addresses in my browser. But year after year the temptations were too great, too tantalizing to refuse. I had to feed my addiction I had to nurture my lust and satiate my appetite for everything that is immoral.

It wasn't long before those good intentions and resolutions were lying discarded in the garbage.

Life events and simchas came and went with me posing as the perfect family member and mentch whilst in essence I was putting on a show. I was putting on a show that I had perfected over the years – that of total fakery and deception. After all how would anyone ever find out? How would anyone know? Why did they need to know anyway? What difference did it make to them anyway? I motored through my life watching the world go round and making excuses to myself on how to justify my actions thus allowing me to somehow have a clear conscience of what I was doing - I guess one of the hallmarks of an addict.

This is not the platform with which to describe how the internet is the perfect tool of being able to realize one's fantasies behind a screen of total anonymity. The purpose of this script is both for me to read back and draw strength from as well as for others to read and maybe relate to.

Why now? Why did I do this life and soul saving action of allowing my internet activity to become accountable to a third party? I would compare it to that of a smoker that wants to stop but simply finds the habit and addiction too powerful to take the plunge. On many occasions I made inroads in downloading the software but never took the final most telling step. I always bottled it at the final hurdle. Then one day a couple of months ago right after the Yomim Nora'im, I was about to revert to my usual weak self when I witnessed a terrible accident in Jerusalem. I was due to catch an early morning bus to take me to work but missed it because an elderly yid asked me to help him with his large suitcases. I sat on the bench next to a cute toddler and his parents and busied myself on my blackberry whilst I awaited my next bus. Then, in a flash, the child ran into the road and was hit by a large truck head on. He flew into the air and hit the ground with a sickening thud. It was clear that he had been killed instantly. His parents' cries were heartbreaking. Hatzala just took one look at him and covered his head with a blanket. Everyone there was in total shock. I had never witnessed anything of this nature before. It was a scene that I wouldn't wish on anyone to have to witness, a young cute child being killed in front of his dear parents' very eyes. A tender neshomoh that surely had so much potential to fill – and now extinguished just like that.....

So there I was, mouth agape, clutching my blackberry and briefcase almost in a trance. Why did I have to witness this? Why did I have to miss my bus? Why did the alter yid ask me to help him when there were so many others on the street he could have asked?

I decided that all this was for a reason. It just had to be.

I arrived in my office and did the one thing I had wanted to do for so long. I somehow felt that Hashem was telling me that if this wasn't a wakeup call what is? I installed Covenant Eyes on my computer and set my accountability partners – my wife and father! They would now have full knowledge of what I was browsing on the web.

This was two months ago and now – 2 months later I am a changed man. I have rid myself from my addiction, an addiction that I had so much reliance on previously. I have changed in every way possible – spiritually, mentally and most importantly I am facing the world whilst portraying a true image of who I am. No longer am I hiding behind a smokescreen. No longer do I have those feelings of guilt and shame. Incidentally, my business has thrived and new revenue

streams have been realized – some leads coming from sources I would never have thought were possible.

Why am I writing this? I know that there are many frum men out there that find themselves in similar situations of Internet entrapment. I know that many of you can relate to how I was able to live a life of a split personality – a normal frum yid and that of a cyber animal. And yes, I know many of you out there will agree that whilst all our actions are continuously recorded and monitored by Hashem and we are ultimately accountable to Him, when it comes to the Internet it's a different story. The internet allows your every action to be shrouded in secrecy and this format allows you to push the boundaries further and further safe in the knowledge that no one meaningful will ever know. It's a modern day invention that has become part of our lives and facilitated every yetzer harah and made it all so easy and possible.

But if your best friend knew or your wife was aware of what websites you visited and they saw you every day would you do what you previously were on the internet? No!

I appreciate that it should never have come to this and I pray that the poor child didn't have to die so that I should have to learn this lesson. I should have known and imbued within my heart all along 'hakol goloi ve'yaduah lefnei kisei kevoidecha' and I shouldn't have to rely on the knowledge that my wife and father are aware of my internet activity. But I also know that You will be proud of me for what I did and in effect 'mitoich shloi lishmah bah lish'mah'.

It has brought me closer to You and allowed me to relate to Your Torah and made davening to You such an enjoyable experience. I have done something that has changed my life forever, something I never thought I'd have the courage to do. I feel cleansed and free to get on with my life and face the world with a clear conscience. Thank you Hashem for giving me the strength to make this move and I ask You to help me on my path to be able to serve You with a pure heart.

Thank you all for reading this. May Hashem help us all in our avoda of serving Him with Yiras Shamayim, with purity and sanctity and may we all be zocheh to His brochos in good health ad me'ah ve'esrim shana.

Yechezkel

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Me3 - 11 Nov 2010 17:15

Amen. Wow.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict

Posted by Kedusha - 11 Nov 2010 17:22

[ramatganinternational wrote on 11 Nov 2010 17:07:](#)

This was two months ago and now – 2 months later I am a changed man. I have rid myself from my addiction, an addiction that I had so much reliance on previously.

Thank you for sharing that remarkable story.

One point of caution - I think you're much safer considering yourself to be an addict "in recovery" than to believe you have rid yourself of the addiction. The reason is that, it's rare for an addict to be completely cured. He is still very sensitive to lust triggers, and has to be careful to stay far away from them. But, that's fine - living in recovery is wonderful!

Now, let's give you an official GYE welcome!

Dear Yechezkel,

Welcome to our community! Once you've arrived, there's no turning back. Everyone here will just grab a hold of you and pull you up, up, up!

Scientific studies have shown that it takes 90 days to change a neural thought pattern that was ingrained in the brain through addictive behaviors. Did you join the [90 day chart](#) on-line? Sign up [over here](#).

Make sure to install a strong filter. It will be almost impossible to break free of this while having all the garbage within a mouse click away. See [this page](#) for one good filter option, along with instructions on how to install it best – and give away the password to our "filter Gabai"... See [this page](#) for another 20 (or so) filter ideas and information...

And that is why we created the GYE handbooks (links below). If you read them well, from beginning to end, slowly, and try to implement what you read, you will find the answers within them to enable you to completely turn your life around. **You're worth it.**

Also, join the [daily Chizuk e-mail lists](#) to get fresh chizuk every day, and post away on this forum. You will get tons of daily Chizuk and support. This disease can't be beat alone. It works best when you get out of isolation!

GuardYourEyes also offers various free anonymous phone conferences, where you can join a group of other frum Yidden, along with an experienced sponsor. See [this page](#) for four different options. Our conferences are taking place daily, throughout the week... This would be a tremendous step in the right direction for you and help you learn freedom from this addiction. Not only will you learn the secret of the 12-Steps – which is known to be the world's most powerful program for beating addiction having helped millions world wide, but joining the group will be another way of GETTING OUT OF ISOLATION and connecting with others who are going through what you are.

Let me tell you a little about the two GuardYourEyes handbooks. They lay down the cornerstone and foundation of our work, and they make our network much more effective and helpful for people.

You see, until now, people would often get "lost" when coming to our website, not knowing what tips and techniques to try. For example, a beginner wouldn't jump straight into therapy or 12-Step groups, while on the other hand, someone whose addiction was more advanced wouldn't be helped by the standard tips of "making fences" putting in "filters" etc... So it was essential to develop a handbook which details all the techniques and tools to dealing with this addiction in progressive order. Now with these handbooks, anyone can read through and see what steps they've tried already, and if those steps haven't worked, they can continue on through the handbook where the steps become progressively more powerful and "addiction-

oriented".

And the second handbook, called the "Attitude" handbook, can also help anyone, no matter what level of addiction they may have. Often people write in to us saying that had they only known the proper outlook & attitude that we try and share on the GuardYourEyes network when they were younger, they would have never fallen into an addiction in the first place! So we hope that through this handbook, many addictions will be prevented.

The handbooks are PDF files, set up as eBooks, and they have bookmarks and hyper-links in the Index, to make them easy to navigate.

Note: You might want to print them out to read away from the computer. Keep in mind though, that if you do this, you won't be able to click on the many web links in the articles. But you can always come back to them later. The truth is, it's anyway good to go through the whole handbook once without clicking on links, just to get an overview of all the tools available. Once you did that, you can start again from tool #1 and read each tool through more carefully, click the links and study each technique and assess whether you have tried it fully yet or not...

Right click on the links below and select "Save Link/Target As" to download the handbooks to your computer.

1) [The GuardYourEyes Handbook](#)

This Handbook details 18 suggested tools and techniques, in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this addiction, and continuing down through increasingly earnest and powerful methods. For the first time, we can gauge our level of addiction and find the appropriate tools for our particular situation. And no matter what level our addiction may have advanced to, we will be able to find the right tools to break free in this handbook!

2) [The GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)

The Attitude Handbook details 30 basic principles to help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle. Here are some examples: Understanding what we are up against, what it is that Hashem wants from us, how we can use this struggle for tremendous growth, how we can deal with bad thoughts, discovering how to redirect the power of our souls, understanding that every little bit counts, learning how to bounce back up after a fall, and so on and so forth...

May Hashem be with you!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by ramatganinternational - 11 Nov 2010 17:35

Hi kedusha,

thank you for your reply.

i have been clean from before the yomim noraim b'h. the reason why i wrote my account and story now is that i wanted to wait at least two months before i knew that i had somewhat overcome my previous lifestyle.

i can honestly say that i have now!

I think its incredible that this website exists - what it must be doing in shamayim is amazing.....

much love

yechezkel

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Kedusha - 11 Nov 2010 17:46

You've definitely come a long way. Just don't let down your guard!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 11 Nov 2010 17:51

Wow!

thanks for sharing that, it's powerful.

to echo Kedusha, it is great that you have turned your life around but it is so important to never ever feel that you have it beat. as someone on the site here "once you are a pickle you can never go back to being a cucumber" (Steve). I don't mean to rain on your parade ch'v. what you did is awesome and heartening. but we are only assured of our status when we leave the world after 120.

thanks for sharing your terrific story,

much much continued hatzlocha.

ZS

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by ramatganinternational - 11 Nov 2010 17:57

ZS and Kedusha

thank you very much for your replies.....much much appreciated.

zol aler brochos mekuyam veren....

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by the.guard - 11 Nov 2010 18:03

Hi. I'm the admin. Welcome to our community. What a truly amazing and inspiring story. I printed it out and read it together with my wife over supper ;D

I will likely share it in the upcoming chizuk e-mails to nearly 1,700 members. Your story will inspire many others...

Gevalt, may Hashem save us from tragedies. May we make the decision TODAY to change. May we not need any wake-up calls.

May the images you saw stay ingrained in your mind, as Hashem said after Matan Torah when the Yidden asked Moshe to speak to them instead of Hashem: "Halevai they should always have such fear of me, that they should not sin".

And like the chevra wrote here, keep up the vigilance. The years of addictive behaviors can sometimes be deeply ingrained in the mind. We can be much more sensitive than others to lust triggers. We need to be extra careful to guard our eyes on-line and on the street. And we have to always know that without Hashem's constant help, we can't do it.

May Hashem keep you strong, and may you continue to inspire us here on the forum! :D

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict

Posted by bardichev - 11 Nov 2010 18:21

moning chilling gripping!!!!!!

wow!

yechezkel

welcome aboard

you story is so familiar to mine

I am a tad older than you (tad means a drop I am talking to an english man it's tad)

the story with the baby is really amazing

may his death b azechus

for you

yecheskel

let me introduce myself

my name is bardichev I have a fake name i use at work and in shul

I grew tremendously from this forum

and so will you

I beleive that with simcha and a good nature you will eventually kick this addiction

I said eventually

why??

I also went from real addictive behavoir to 90 days clean without a slip

nothing

but tayaere tzaddik yechskel

the monster lurks everywhere

I would like to suggest 3 things

1 stay part of the chevra here it is very helpful (posting reaading drinkung lechayim in bardys of london and in the yerushalayim snif of bardys pub)

2 remeber that we can overcome a fall its called KEEP ON TRUCKING!!! (Or lorrieng)

3 be yourself !

(read bardichevs battle <http://www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=450.0>

and harrys son <http://www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=1120.msg80396#new2>

main thing is be besimcha and keep on trucking-lorrieng-tamshich hasaot

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by david712 - 11 Nov 2010 18:50

Wow.

What a story

In all its glory

this is a wake up call

and chizuk for us all.

But as the details start fading

Your memories you may start craving

The Y"eh eint asleep

For a while he may stay quite and no peep

But as you start cruising

At your computer you may find yourself snoozing

So while you are on your high

to Hashem you should outcry

to help you get close to him

with deveikus to Hashem Elokim

Because with out him we can not

whether this storm

once we have been shot

we are not anymore the "norm"

As the above comments have mentioned

you need to take prevention

Some of us it was a week and some a year

one thing to us was clear

When we thought we can do it alone

The Y"H after some time through us a bone

And with our face in the porn

We return to the forum.

So learn from the ones that tested it for you

it's tried and true..

Stick around with us ..

and catch **this** bus

stay for the ride

Now that you removed your pride

Acknowledge how hard it is to stay away

and dont fall as prey

Not any more my freind...

Y"H your done

as we fight with one thing and only one..

Hashem.

Keep on posting Pal..

David.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Kedusha - 11 Nov 2010 19:03

David, that was breathtaking!

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Me3 - 11 Nov 2010 19:08

[Kedusha wrote on 11 Nov 2010 19:03:](#)

David, that was breathtaking!

Oh nevermind. You can probably figure out what I was going to say anyway.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by the.guard - 11 Nov 2010 19:50

Wow David. Truly impressive.

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Kedusha - 11 Nov 2010 20:22

[Me3 wrote on 11 Nov 2010 19:08:](#)

[Kedusha wrote on 11 Nov 2010 19:03:](#)

David, that was breathtaking!

Oh nevermind. You can probably figure out what I was going to say anyway.

You mean after they revived you? ;D

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Re: my story.....Confessions of a Frum Internet Addict
Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 11 Nov 2010 22:14

[david712 wrote on 11 Nov 2010 18:50:](#)

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David.

After **David's Poem** there is no need for a **Daily Dose of Dov!!!**

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