

A practical appeal that is not all "frummy"

Posted by frumthinker - 19 Aug 2008 02:34

I came across this site today, and I felt compelled to make some comments here. I won't say that I am very far along with controlling my own addiction - far from it. I just want to share some thoughts that help me with this challenge, and hopefully will help someone else too. I'm a worldly, college educated professional, and the average poorly written, grammatically incorrect posting does nothing to convince me to change my behavior - in fact it often has the opposite effect. This is especially true when someone just spouts the fire-and-brimstone punishment message - as my Rebbe did through school - which obviously just made me feel guilty but that's all. The "Meah Shaarim" approach just doesn't work on me - no offense to Meah Shaarim - and I'm sure it doesn't work on a lot of people.

I was raised in a conventional frum environment - right wing yeshiva, top-level high school, night college with learning half a day. I *never* was able to control myself in this area, and this was well before the advent of Internet porn. I won't go through the details of my cycles of guilt before Rosh Hashana & Yom Kippur, and the inevitable slipping immediately after. We've all been there. As I got older, the opportunities got more varied - up to (thankfully not all the way) actual sexual activity with others (not my wife, obviously).

When I am tempted (which I am every day - even today), I try to think of several things -

1) How do you feel after wasting *countless* hours masturbating to Internet porn? How well will you do your job the next day? Just recently, I was on a business trip. I was exhausted when I arrived, but I still spent 3-4 hours online in my hotel room. Imagine how it was to wake up the next morning! This has happened to me many times!

2) Try adding up all the hours you spent, and think about something you could have learnt or done in that time. Not even talking about Torah learning, although that would be great. You could have learnt to play the guitar, a new language, some area of your work that you could study in more detail. Read something on a totally different field that might make you a more interesting person. Just do something more useful!

3) If you are married, how will Internet porn affect your sexual relationship with your spouse? At the *very* least, you won't have much energy or interest in the other person when you are "done". If you keep ignoring a spouse physically, your relationship will :-[get progressively worse, until it goes away (My first marriage ended, not necessarily for this reason, but it absolutely was a factor). If you really don't find your spouse attractive, I don't know what to say other than try to visualize the person as someone you do find attractive. I can't suggest pretending you're with someone else (I doubt that will work), but I found that my interest in my spouse actually increases the more time I spend with her physically.

I welcome your feedback!

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Re: A practical appeal that is not all "frummy"
Posted by me - 19 Aug 2008 07:06

Shalom Frum thinker,

I think it is great that you are here, and the first thing you should know is that we are all here for one reason. We want it to be different! We have decided that in spite of the daily trials, we want to change. We are tired of throwing in the towel. We realize that to change is not a simple matter, therefore we are all here to support one another.

We all have something in common.

We are all observant yidden...

who have fallen, and...

who have decided that we want it to be different.

We are all here to help one another and to give support to one another in any way that we can. I don't think that you have seen too much fire-and-brimstone here. Sometimes it does help to think of these things but not too much, not in excess as it may lead to depression. But, as chazal say, we need to be owed Hashem first through yirah, and only then through ahavah. The bottom line is that we DO need "some" fire and brimstone, just not in excess. But, of course we are all holding by different madreigas here, so perhaps at this point in time, the fire would not be good for you...(or for your yetzer...you decide).

To be honest, if you are really looking for help, and I do think that you are, otherwise you wouldn't be here right now, you should not try to separate yourself from the forum by comparing

your worldly wisdom, college degree etc, with everyone else's bad spelling, grammatical errors etc. The truth is, we all come from different "academic" backgrounds, college, no college, chassidush, poor English etc. But, this really has no importance here. I also have a college degree, am wordly, learned in yeshivos etc, but I have been living in E"Y for many years, where I have forgotten alot of my English, my grammar, and even somtimes I can't think of an English word when speaking. I have lost my spelling skills etc. But in truth, we are all here for one common purpose... to return our neshomos to Hashem, and our level of English or any other language has no value in his eyes. So, I think that you should try not to let the yetzer deprive you of help by telling you that you or on a higher scholastic level because of your English, (and accept his suggestion that you don't belong or fit in over here. This could in fact really be another tachbolah of the yetzer, i.e. to steer you away from here.

As far as the points you brought up. I believe that all of us have considered how much time we have wasted over the years. Thousands of hours completely wasted on nothingness. And in the end we got nothing in return, except the heartache, exhaustion, poor family relationships. But I think that you will agree that thinking about the waste of time has NOT helped you with this struggle. Why? Because as soon as Mr.yetzer comes back for another round, there is only one thing that you need at that moment, and this is your daily fix. The thought of wasting time when you are under his spell will have NO affect. I think that you will agree with me. PLease don't forget one thing. The yetzer is so smart that he will let all of us here think about "why did I do this, why did I waste so much time, why, why why?" In fact through his trickery he is really fooling us in to believing that through our remorse, and introspection, we are actually doing something about our problem. So, he let's us feel good by thinking that we really are in fact tending to this disease. But he has his limits. Just as long as we don't DO anything about it. Yes, he will let us think as much as we wish about how we want to change, and how we are really not satisfied with our actions...just as long as we don't make concrete changes.

Frumthinker, if you want to even have a chance to change, to finally go up, and make things different, then you will need to pull a fast one on the yetzer. The next time "he" starts telling you how you need to change, and he will say to you "we have to look for ways to get out of this, just look at what it does to our marriage etc, etc, and look how much time we waste each day on nonsense, and YOU, Mr frumthinker, (he will say to you), you are so intelligent, you have a good mind, how can you possibly allow yourself to waste countless hours on this trivial tumah. You are much much smarter than this!"

So, now when he finishes talking to you, you pull the fast one on him, and remove your access to porn. Yes, trick the trickster and do what he says before he starts to change his tune. Don't think about it, there is NO time to think and reconsider. You have been thinking all of your life. This is what an intelligent person does, BUT, here with the yetzer harah, (who also knows how to think), we must STOP thinking and start DOING. There is no time to waste. Use your wisdom, and consider ways to cut yourself off from porn. This is the only way. NO porn= no masturbation, =no wasted time,= no.....!

And, YES, the more time you spend with your wife, speaking to her, giving her compliments, showing her in excess how much you love her, in the end it WILL help to make your relationship stronger. Chazal say, that if you dislike someone, and you wish to change this, then the eitzah is

to do acts of kindness for them. The more kindness you do for someone, especially your wife, the greater your feelings will be for her. But really go overboard when you do this. When she is sitting at the table, take off her shoes and start to kiss her feet, and tell her how much you love her. When you do unusual outrageous actions, it makes the effect much stronger. It anchors the feelings in a deeper way. When we have all done this enough, then when we have relations with our spouse L'shem Mitzvah, there will be a strong bond of Kedusha in the bedroom, one that is not contingent upon her physical looks.

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Re: A practical appeal that is not all "frummy"
Posted by the.guard - 19 Aug 2008 13:09

Mr.Frum thinker!

I think "Me" did a wonderful job in answering, and as the webmaster I am very pressed for time so I will rely on his answer. All I can add is that you should [join our daily chizuk list](#) and see the rallying battle cry that I sent out today to all our members and just posted on our site. [See here](#).

Haba Litaher Mesayin Lo. Do yours and Hashem will do his. Welcome to our community!

P.S. As webmaster, I would appreciate any comments on grammatical errors or spelling mistakes on our site :-)

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Re: A practical appeal that is not all "frummy"
Posted by Elya K - 19 Aug 2008 14:12

Frumthinker,

Welcome. You've made the first step toward recovery. It's easy to tell you what to do, but until you

experience sobriety for awhile you will never get to feel the joy of serenity. I've told many people

on and off this forum to get blocks for their computer. They cry to me that they have to stop, what

can they do. Then I recommend put a block on your computer. Answer: No, I'm not ready for that.

There are chemical imbalances in the brain caused by watching porn on the internet. Explain to me

why you shake and sweat and can't stop, if you don't believe it? But psychologically, when you know

you don't have access, you forget about it, eventually. I'm not saying you will never think about it,

but the block is a great tool... an essential tool... to help you heal and get better.

There are two approaches to this. One is, like you say, the frummy approach, quoting divrei torah

and admonishing us for wasting seed. The other is the twelve step (proven) approach which is actually a quest for spirituality. This disease is a disease of lack of spirituality. You're constantly looking outside of yourself for validation, acceptance, companionship... for intimacy. True intimacy is sharing everything. How long do you want

to continue living a lie, to keep covering up everything you do so your wife won't find out?

Eventually she will and then it will be too late. Get some counseling and your counselor or a sponsor/friend

will help you and let you know when it is safe to tell. It will release your mind and jet you on the way to recovery.

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Re: A practical appeal that is not all "frummy"
Posted by frumthinker - 19 Aug 2008 17:36

Thanks for the replies everyone.

me: If I came across as elitist, I apologize. I personally immediately tune out if something is poorly written, and I know that's not fair. I guess it comes from me feeling more in line with "modern orthodox" than "yeshiva". I know even that is a generalization, and I hope I didn't offend anyone. For me personally, mussar is much more effective when its professionally delivered.

The truth is that this is a tough battle, and I often don't even feel it's wrong in moderation. I'm sure that's also Yetzer Horah speaking, but when you do something since your teens, it eventually feels relatively okay. (I.e. Nasaa lo k'heter and even k'mitzvah!) I try my best, and I'm taking baby steps (like being on this forum instead of other places!) I'm not quite ready to accept that this is such a horrible addiction as alcoholism or gambling. Just as a little bit of those doesn't indicate a problem, I feel the same about this. Of course, there is certainly an element of deceit, both with myself, and with my spouse (but I still don't consider this really cheating).

Elya K: I think therapy and counseling is way overboard for me personally, but I guess it depends on exactly how addicted one is. At the moment, I don't think I'm a candidate for such intervention.

Thanks for your support -

-FT

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Re: A practical appeal that is not all "frummy"
Posted by Elya K - 19 Aug 2008 20:23

Good luck Frum Thinker. You are correct that therapy may be overboard. How about a twelve step program? There is a questionnaire you can take in confidence that will

let you know if you are indeed addicted. www.slaafws.org/pamphlets/questions40.pdf

There is also great information on this site to get you on the road to recovery, if you ever need that.

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Re: A practical appeal that is not all "frummy"
Posted by me - 20 Aug 2008 11:28

Dear Frumthinker:

Please don't be put on the defense to this. I truthfully have your good in mind.

when you say that you feel that this is really "not so bad in moderation", then I think that perhaps you don't truly understand the extent of this aveira. Being modern or "frum" or whatever does not really change the emmes. In this case "maybe" you should become more informed in this realm. Do some more invetstigation about this topic...even if it means some fire and brimstone. You yourself would probably agree that the more one is educated in something, the better.

I think that there may be a toelles if the adminstrator sends to you the link of the movie that most of us saw.

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Re: A practical appeal that is not all "frummy"
Posted by the.guard - 20 Aug 2008 13:32

As per Me's request, see [this page](#) for a transcript and a link to the movie (on Google Video).

You say you don't think you're a candidate for therapy and counseling. Can you tell me then why you spent 3-4 hours online in your hotel room on a recent business trip, even though this destroyed your next day? And this has happened to you many times, as you yourself admitted!

That sounds like a candidate to me.

Anyone who is frum should be aware of the severity of these sins. But the Yetzer Hara blinds us to the truth because we feel it would be too hard to truly give it up. The Gemara (in Niddah 13) goes as far as to say "Better his stomach burst than one should touch the area of his bris (and bring himself to an erection)". And another Gemara says "better to walk behind a lion than to walk behind a woman". And another Gemara: "whoever brings himself to an erection is destroying the world". This is not Chassidus. This is regular Gemara. Chaza"l were fire about this!

But why? Why indeed is Hashem so jealous and vengeful when it comes to shmiras Habris? Rabbi Twerky once explained:

When Hashem gave us the Mitzvas Lo Saaseh (the negative commandments), it's not just that Hashem is saying "don't be dirty and filthy like the non-Jews", rather Hashem is saying "build yourself with the things you don't do". Sex and love are the deepest human emotion. And fixing these emotions fixes a person deeper than anything else. That's why it's called Yesod – meaning foundation. It's the foundation of the whole building. Mitzvos Asay (the positive commandments) are the building itself, but Lo Saaseh are the foundation. It's what you don't do, what's underground, what people don't see, that holds up the entire spiritual structure of a Jew. If a person is not Shomer Habris, then even if he davens and learns Torah, the whole building is shaky, weak and in grave danger of collapse.

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