

BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 04 Nov 2012 16:11

This is my fourth year on the GYE program. I have never posted on a forum or had a public dialogue about my struggle with lust, because it's something I have always been ashamed of. I figured that I could get through this test from hashem on my own and without any support system, but considering my track record, my approach/mindset has yet to be fully successful.

One of the most important lessons I have learned from GYE is that there is nothing wrong with being honest with yourself and saying that your current approach to dealing with addiction isn't working as well as it should. I have tried many of the methods on the website...90day chart, taphsic/shvuot, GYE partner that I update with regularly etc.

These methods have been very helpful. Compared to when I was a teenager and sinning through lust daily, I am very far away from that stage. Since being on the GYE program I have been able to stay clean for (considered me) long periods of time beyond 90 days. But I can't help feeling depressed/dismayed that I can't achieve abstinence, or, for me, being clean for an entire year.

I am self aware and in my long experience with the yetzer hara I have become pretty familiar with some of my triggers. I have an excellent filtering system on my computer, and if it wasn't for that I would be very very lost.

But with all of my progress I am still very unhappy with where I am. I want to act like a ben torah all day long for the rest of my life. I really want that lifestyle more than anything. I want to learn torah without a guilty conscience or lustful thoughts entering my mind. I want to be an eved hashem that is 100% committed to the service of hashem and sees the hand of hashem at every moment of my life. But I have not been able to achieve this. And it's so hard to want that relationship with hashem, and not be able to maintain it with consistency.

I'd like to give some background about myself. I started struggling with my addictions around the age of 13.

You can't blame other people for your struggle with lust, because it is your bechira, but lets just say that I was exposed to very inappropriate things lying around my house when I was very very young (about 9). That definitely wasn't my fault, and I sometimes think about whether my struggle would be less sharp if I had not experienced such an abnormally young exposure.

Then I ask myself why hashem would have allowed me to be exposed to such stuff at such a young age...and I get pretty depressed/lost when i go down that path.

Regardless, where I am now is on the path of working toward a deep relationship with hashem and not looking at inappropriate things on the internet or when I walk around.

I am around 80 days, about to hit 90, but over the past week I have been going through a rough time. I could use some momentum.

Chizuk and advice considering my personal experience are very welcome.

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 20 Mar 2013 00:23

Gibbor, thanks. Completely getting rid of TV is a challenge, I am working toward positive changes in my life in this area.

I welcome any encouragement/practical tips you may have.

Dov, sharing my struggles openly with others would and having a network of people who can relate would be wonderful for me. But the fact is I am not in SA nor do I plan to. I have a nice group of friends who I have wonderful positive relationships with. But I don't know if they struggle similarly to me nor do I want to ask them. Those friendships are wonderful as they are and having a heart to heart over porn/lust struggles will do more harm than good. It may create a barrier and awkwardness more than mutually enhancing our friendships and/or our overall lives.

This website is my best tool for reaching out to the public and discussing my struggles. And my attitude about sharing my name here is the same as sharing it in any chat room anywhere online. I would personally opt not to.

If I can find a forum to talk openly with other lust strugglers (that is not SA since that's not where I fall into) then maybe I've got a shot at finding that huge bowling ball that knocks down many pins.

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by israel613120 - 20 Mar 2013 05:32

Hi Broadlife

I too have no desire of joining any SA meeting, as I feel I'm not an addict, just too exposed, over almost 30 years, some times worse sometimes a lot better.

I also want to remain anonymous. (respected member of kehila etc)

I've reached over 50 days BH, I didn't think i could do it. But you can, one day at a time, if excellent advice.

Thing is, I do really miss the P*** online, it hasn't gone away, will it?

I also, round this time of year, a few years ago, fell really bad, looking at things, and how I got to do it, (I don't want to give details) but thinking about it even now makes me feel so bad.

My best wishes and much hatzlacha

Israel

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by Dov - 20 Mar 2013 19:49

To broadlife and israel,

Your points are clear and well-made and I am not here to argue - just to point out another perspective. I have some experiences that I'd like to share that surprised me, too, about all this stuff, that's all.

1- After 16 years of attending live meetings I am still a respected (and b"H sober) member of my community, and so is every guy I know who attends SA meetings. There are mechanchim, rabonnim, marbitzei Torah, doctors, businessmen, who attend meetings and they all know one thing: *their 'secret' is far safer with the people in the meeting than it is with **themselves***. I have used my real name here since the first day I saw the forum - would not consider doing anything less than honesty - and what damage has it done me? None. To the contrary, it has enriched *everything* in my life without exception.

And it will not do *you* any damage either. It's a boogeyman, that's all.

And where *are* the SA meetings in your neighborhood? Do you know? I'd wager that you have no idea. Neither does anyone else you are afraid of in your community....so who's getting exposed?

And who *are* the guys going to the meetings in your neighborhood? I'd wager you have no idea. Neither does anyone else in your community...so who's getting exposed?

And be"H you will not find out, either - unless you decide you need their recovery and look it up, to attend yourself.

*So I guess their secret **is** safe after all, then. Seriously.*

2- Please do not get me all wrong here. I am **not** saying that anybody here needs to go to SA meetings. To the contrary, I believe that only a small *minority* of the guys here are actually addicts, at all! And even for *them*, I sincerely doubt that 12 Steps is the only way they can live free. Harbei shluchim laMakom, and even for those who may need 12-Steps, certainly SA is not for everyone in this mess. Rather, my point is only that *hiding better and hanging on to the secret* is not an eitzah for *getting* better. There is no need to hide from other sincere recovering people, for the safest place by far for an addict *is in the company of other addicts* - far safer than hiding and faking for another 30 years in shul, home, work, and the rest of the world that we frum masturbaters trick so well for so long.

So if just posting on this forum is working for you - then that's perfect! Stay here! Why use meetings, at all? Why open up any more? I certainly would not.

But if you continue to suffer even while you are using the forum, then why not bump things up a notch? Clearly the hiding and safety is a trick to just protect our ability to keep acting out our lusting...for the failing person, hiding the only way to keep a last bottle hidden in the closet to get drunk with. Boy does it feel like a leap!

But it is really no big deal.

3- If you ever need to reach out and talk with someone safe and in all confidence about the truth and feel I may be right that it is easier to just type it out here than to say it to a real person even though he does not see you (like on the phone)...then I know at least a dozen good, frum, recovering porners and masturbaters just like you and me who will be glad to listen to you share.

Finally, Posting may do the trick for you. But if it does not, then why do you feelows jump to the extreme of meetings? I never said those are the two ways - "posting with a fake name - or live SA meetings." No way.

There is a forum here. People chat and trade their phone #'s and at least get true between themselves on the chat and phone! That's huge. For many guys I know well now, it's where the real change is.

- Dov

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by broadlife - 24 Mar 2013 23:48

These sound like valuable ideas.

I think having a few phone contacts to talk through with people struggling similarly to me, could be great.

I had an email thread going back with someone else on GYE before, but it fizzled out...

It's easier to find such a thing through SA probably...a bit harder to find that for those who are more forum oriented people.

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by tocontrolmyself - 25 Mar 2013 04:18

theres also gye phone conference calls...12 steps and its easier to face, than face to face meetings...btw the calls are oh-so-oh-some!!!

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Re: BroadLife's journey
Posted by Dov - 25 Mar 2013 08:43

'Through SA' - ? SA is meetings, not phone things with usernames and secrecy. It's not a counseling or educational tool like GYE is. If u go to meetings, you will meet many good and sober people there, depending upon where u live, frum and otherwise.

If thats what u want, BL, just pm me and I will try to arrange a shidduch for you with a sober guy who is frum in your area. No fear needed.

Have a great Pesach!

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Re: BroadLife's journey
Posted by broadlife - 01 Apr 2013 02:41

No tv shows is helping, it keeps me off my computer.

Waiting patiently for hashem to keep helping me so I can appreciate his beautiful world he gave me a bracha to live in and experience.

Something I have been paying attention to is that I feel more aware of what's going on in my life. About five years ago I was immersed in porn/masturbation on a daily basis. It was the central focus of my life.

I haven't been clean for 5 years, but I have been focused on growing, improving my character defects, and not looking at porn/masturbating.

It hasn't been perfect, but it's been focused. I actually cared about growing and had many periods of months of being clean over the past five years.

I have much teshuva to do, but I'm also aware of all that I've been fortunate to experience in this world and realize what's going in without being trapped in fantasy land.

The theme of pesach is cherut, freedom. Being able to experience life and appreciate the moments and details without a nagging addiction/lust in the back of our minds. When we move away from a lust centered life, we begin to replace it with 'reality' something strange that we may not be used to, i for sure wasn't. Reality is beautiful. We dont feel guilty and self hating when we have reality as the center of life. We feel at peace.

With chasdei hashem, I have had wonderful opportunities to 'taste' reality and not be panged with lust on a daily or weekly basis. I pray that hashem will give me the heavenly assistance to constantly taste reality and turn it into my true life experience.

Chag Kasher v'sameach to all. May we all merit true cherut and replace lust with a real

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Re: BroadLife's journey
Posted by gibbor120 - 04 Apr 2013 20:18

I wish you continued hatzlacha and growth.

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Re: BroadLife's journey
Posted by broadlife - 28 May 2013 03:46

B'chasdei Hashem I have not looked at anything on the internet for 85 days.

I have not masturbated in over 10 months. At the end of July it will be a full year.

And I wont post when I hit 90 for not looking at internet/youtube porno, because 90 days doesn't mean anything to me anymore. It's real life that is what I want and hashem has given me a beautiful gift of sanity and reality.

life has never been so joyful! Thank you hashem so much from the bottom of my heart and from the depths of my neshama for the beautiful chesed of sanity!

Here is some stuff I posted a few months ago on other forums which definitely helped me gain a fresh perspective.

HOW I ACHIEVED A JOYFUL LIFE-ATTITUDE

1. Everything, Everything, comes from Hashem.
2. I cannot indulge in self pity
3. I cannot manipulate my performance of mitzvot and avodat hashem. No cutting corners in how I do mitzvot and live my life as a Jew. everything has to be done completely because that's how Hashem wants it to be done. Cutting corners is a byproduct of me bringing myself into the picture and me determining what's the right (or easy) way to do the things Hashem wants me to do. Not listening to what Hashem wants.
4. I can't let my ego run my life. And anytime I feel my ego surfacing I have to pray to Hashem to let it pass. Ego, narcissism, self-indulgence, etc. These expressions all lie dormant inside of me, and sometimes they'll try to surface. I can't beat these expressions to a pulp. I'm not strong enough, and my past has taught me this. No use spending another decade trying to prove my past wrong. Rather, I have to have faith in Hashem that if I 'let go' when these things arise, and really let Hashem into the picture...then it won't be as tough.
5. It's ok for me to be vulnerable. I can't be perfect and no one not even Hashem expects me to be perfect. The funny thing is the moment I accept my vulnerability and lack of perfection, seems to be the moment when I am actually fulfilling ratzon Hashem and reaching simchat hachayim...how is that possible!!!???. I can't say fully, but who cares. If that's what it takes to find joy then so be it.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO ACHIEVE A JOYFUL LIFE-ATTITUDE

-Self honesty. Stop lying to yourself about your failures and trying to cover them up with dramatic cover ups that somehow prove you're a good guy despite your falls. We need to stop trying to write dramatic scripts and start facing the brute facts about ourselves

-No cutting corners in judaism

-stop trying to control everything/everyone around you. Stop being a control freak

-Focus on helping/complimenting others. Make the people around you the focus of your life. Not yourself.

-Absolutely no TV shows/Movies. No matter what. (This was particularly hard for me, but b''h with hashem's help I haven't watched anything for the past 45 days or so)

-Stop judging people around you and questioning their choices. This is an escape from your own pitfalls and is unnecessary and can be very damaging to staying clean

-Focus on improving your character defects. Work on your anger, impatience, lashon hara, laziness, honoring your parents, chesed involvement, carefulness in making brachos, saying krias shema al hamita every night, dedicating time to torah learning every day, eating healthy, etc.

-Stop freaking out over small failures. If you see a provocative magazine or billboard, close your eyes, say thanks to hashem for all the beautiful things he gives you, and move on. Dont dwell on it. just thank hashem and move on

-ALWAYS THANK HASHEM FOR EVERYTHING! AND GRAB EVERY LIFELINE HE SENDS YOU! (this has worked for me and has been my best tool in the toughest of moments). hashem gives us such beautiful gifts in life. Always think and focus on that in the toughest of moments, and it will be your saving lifeline. At least it has been for me.

-Never, not once, think that you can fight this lust on your own. NEVER. no matter how long you stay clean, always, always remember that hashem gives you the strength to stay clean

-Get active. Find chesed opprtunities. Read. Learn. Work out. play ball. Go on walks/jogs. Find activities that you didn't realize you would enjoy. Go on trips. Write a journal. Research a topic of interest and write something up about it. Active interests are where you will start living and stop living in fear.

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Re: BroadLife's journey

Posted by Dov - 28 May 2013 06:44

Wow, what a beautiful share!

But the 'Always', the 'Never', and the fastidiousness with 'saying kriyas Shema', for example - all those are things so many of us tended to be the only things we would actually hear and walk away holding, in all the beauty and wisdom we would read! Pity. Rituals are so much easier than real content, as yeshaya bemoaned 2300 years ago. All *those* things did was make us *worse*.

But your message is really one of so much hope and good experience we can all learn from - if we are willing to hear and take home the right lessons - the whole picture.

May Hashem help us learn the right things from your beautiful post above, rather than latch onto the comfortable parts - the very aspects of working on ourselves that were always part of our twisted-ness in the past and have always fueled our addiction or habit.

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