

90 Days - Bring it on!

Posted by Gabe - 04 Jan 2010 02:18

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Hi everyone,

This is my introductory post to the forum and beginning of my 90 day journey to sobriety and freedom from this terrible aveirah which has controlled me for far too long.

I first stumbled upon this site just two days ago. I was reading this (<http://www.vosizneias.com/45949/2009/12/31/new-york-the-roving-eye>) article on vosizneias about how a husband's porn addiction was tormenting his wife and happened to notice that someone mentioned this website in one of the comments at the bottom of the story. I googled it and have to say that I was amazed by the amount of content and tools available. I was further amazed by this fabulous community which is full of caring ovdei Hashem who support one another and are committed to overcoming their y"h and becoming better people and Jews. It really is an inspiration.

I have personally been struggling with this for quite some time now. I love being on the internet but I regularly fall into the trap of reading erotica and visiting pornographic websites, which I'm ashamed to say has led to regular episodes of shichvas zera (1-2 times per week!). I know this has to stop. When I was in yeshiva in Israel I had far greater control over this addiction, and at my best was able to go for a stretch of half a year without mishap. I knew that when I eventually left for home it was going to be far more difficult to remain clean. I cried and prayed at the kotel that I should have the strength to overcome it. Unfortunately, I have failed time and time again and that's why I am here, ready to turn the tables.

I have downloaded both manuals and have already almost completed my first reading of the handbook. I have also signed up for the daily chizuk emails and just requested a license for the filter from the filter gabbai. I am a little afraid about how much the filter will block out because I don't want it to interfere too greatly with my internet use - just the bad stuff! I also feel some of the handbook is probably not for me because I'm no "sex addict". Apart from the odd handshake during interviews, I've remained shomer negiyah my entire life (I'm now 22) and have never had a sexual episode.

At the moment I'm not prepared to go to the opposite extreme. I love my movies and my music and I like working out in the gym, but I know that this addiction of masturbation and porn has to end.

Thank you all for reading this post and G-d bless. May we all benefit to succeed in our endeavours.

Yours,

Halevi.

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!  
Posted by humanbeing - 13 Jan 2010 08:37

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Thanks for cheering me on...it means alot to me.

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!  
Posted by Gabe - 13 Jan 2010 09:06

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No worries, mate. I'm one of your biggest fans.

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!  
Posted by silentbattle - 13 Jan 2010 23:24

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The yetzer hora isn't quite a part of us...but it feels like he is.

You can take the keri as a sign not to watch tv shows, if that works for you, but right now, I think your focus should be on feeling the success of being clean for 11 days! That's fantastic!

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!  
Posted by Gabe - 14 Jan 2010 01:13

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Thanks, silentbattle! I really appreciate the support.

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!  
Posted by Gabe - 14 Jan 2010 03:13

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Alright, time to check in and update people on how I'm going and what I've been up to.

Today, B"H, is my 12th day sober and I haven't had too many hassles.

Last night I attended my first ever sex and love addiction meeting on one of the IRC chat rooms. In a formal meeting, people indicate that they want to speak by typing "!" and then they have the "floor". People then go on to share whatever they are going through/feeling and no one can interrupt until they are done. I was a little bit surprised at how people share but then no one responds to the issues raised from that share. It seems like it is a sounding board only, for people to openly relate where they are at.

I also shared. My share focused on the fact that I still remain confused over whether I really am an addict or have simply engaged in unhealthy behaviours in the past. I keep telling myself that perhaps with a little more will power and some safeguards in place (like an internet filter which is something that I have wanted for some time but never had until now because I couldn't see the point in setting up a filter which I would have administrator rights over), I can finally beat this for good and prove to myself that it's not an addiction so much as it is a momentary problem which I can overcome. If it is an addiction, I reason, then no matter how strong my convictions, I should fall.

Furthermore, I don't exhibit some of the tell-tale emotional baggage of an addict ie low self-

esteem, being full of fear, feelings of hopelessness, living like a tornado running through the lives of others... which according to the AA big book are part of the "emotional malady" of an addict. I am a little bit too introverted and comfortable with my own company - often preferring it to the company of others - and I can certainly be self-centred in that I mumble and complain whenever I'm asked to do housework, but I'm still not certain that that is enough to brand me an addict.

Part of the reason I'm so reluctant to believe that I'm an addict is that the thought of having a progressive disease that can get in the way of having healthy relationships really worries me. I'm 22 and about to start dating. Up until very recently I really didn't think I had any "skeletons in the closet". What happens now?

In any case, I reiterated these thoughts in the same chat room today and explained that I could really do with some answers. One of the more experience members of the room talked to me in length.

Among other things she said that it's not the amount of alcohol an alcoholic drinks that defines their affliction, but rather the fact that alcohol is the addicts solution. She says that for an addict, sex addiction is their solution to life and its problems. So it isn't about how much you act out or don't act out.

She also said that it's a progressive disease which is 3-fold; it's mental, physical and emotional. According to her, the physical aspect comes in the form of always craving more. She claims that a normal person never craves which is something I find difficult to believe. After all, isn't it just a normal human impulse?

In any case, she has offered to help take me through step 1 of the AA Big Book to ascertain once and for all whether or not I am really an addict or just a user. I have taken her up on the offer.

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!  
Posted by Gabe - 18 Jan 2010 09:20

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Officially on level 3.. woohoo!!!

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!

Posted by silentbattle - 18 Jan 2010 15:21

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Super-glad to hear that!

Rock on!

By the way, might not be my place to say something, and you should probably talk it over with some of the more experienced people here...but is a female partner the best idea?

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!

Posted by Gabe - 18 Jan 2010 22:39

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[silentbattle wrote on 18 Jan 2010 15:21:](#)

Super-glad to hear that!

Rock on!

By the way, might not be my place to say something, and you should probably talk it over with some of the more experienced people here...but is a female partner the best idea?

Don't know but she hasn't replied anyway.

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!

Posted by silentbattle - 18 Jan 2010 23:14

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Worth considering anyway - sometimes, issues that come up are good, because we get a chance to examine our thought processes...

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!

Posted by habaletaheer - 19 Jan 2010 05:36

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Hey Halevi,

A few points. First of all, When we turn to porn for comfort, solace, validation, happiness, or any other emotional need is usually not as emotionally stable and self-esteemed as we think we are....

Also, the key to internet filters here on GYE is that you give admin rights over to the filter gabbai.

I have done it and it has helped me immensely!!!

Good luck!!!

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!

Posted by Gabe - 19 Jan 2010 07:04

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[habaletaheer wrote on 19 Jan 2010 05:36:](#)

Hey Halevi,

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Also, the key to internet filters here on GYE is that you give admin rights over to the filter gabbai.

I have done it and it has helped me immensely!!!

Good luck!!!

Yep, I've tdone the same. Filter gabbai is the best!

And I don't think I've ever used porn as an emotional crutch... I used it because I enjoyed it and then it sort of became routine and difficult to stop. I'll put that down to hormones as much as anything else.

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!

Posted by Ykv\_schwartz - 19 Jan 2010 08:05

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Hi Halevi,

You bring up a great point that needs to be addressed and has been question may times. That is "What is an addict". Allow me to share with you my attitude on the matter. Below is a excerpt of from [recoverynation.com](https://www.recoverynation.com) which I think summarizes the point well. Click on the link to read it in full.

"...don't waste time wondering whether you should label yourself "an addict", or whether or not if you meet the criteria for "an addiction". If you are currently struggling with sexual and/or romantic behaviors, **no matter how small these behaviors may seem**, you have the **opportunity** and **responsibility** to do something about it. "How do I know if I have an addiction?" This can be tricky as there is no absolute set of rules to go by for every individual. Some people can have affairs, masturbate, view pornography, fall "instantly" in love, etc. and certainly not be addicted to those behaviors. There are, however, a clear set of questions you should ask yourself that will help you to determine whether or not a problem exists. If you are unsure of whether or not you should seek treatment for sexual and/or romantic behavior, ask yourself these questions:

- *Do you lack self control over impulsive desires?* This is the point of declaring powerless. It is not intended to be a label of who you are and what your life will be. It simply a declaration that you understand that you currently have a behavior disorder of self control. (call it Impulse Control Disorder if you want). By acknowledging the truth of our current state, we can work to heal ourselves through the means offered to us.

- *Do the potential long-term effects of this behavior significantly outweigh the immediate satisfaction gained from performing it?* If, in your opinion, the behavior appears to be a means of receiving immediate gratification, without regard to the lasting effects to themselves or those around them, you should seek assistance in exploring this.

- *Have you ever promised to stop?* If you have voiced a promise to stop performing a particular behavior, even if you have not yet had the opportunity to follow through with that promise, you should seek treatment. That may seem harsh, but the rationale is valid: your promise to stop is a verification of conflict between your values and your behavior, and such a conflict needs resolution. Simply expecting yourself to stop on your own is unrealistic, and may actually hasten the addictive process. Can a person permanently stop on their own? Absolutely. But it rarely happens. Seek assistance through a self-management program or counselor to assure that your behavior changes.



- *Is this a behavior that is being done in secret?* Like the promise to stop, anyone that feels the need to perform sexual behavior and keep them secret knows that there is a conflict between what is socially acceptable and what isn't. Still, they continue to perform the behaviors that they know to be wrong in exchange for the immediate gratification they receive. This indicates a problem that needs to be addressed.
- *Does this behavior appear to be a part of a pattern?* Examine other behaviors that you engage in. Look for similar compulsive behaviors, and not just sexual and/or romantic, that appear to be a part of an addictive pattern. Usually, these behaviors will tend to be obvious in particular areas, and will emphasize the theme of immediate gratification over long-term satisfaction. Compulsive shopping, eating, exercising: these are just a few that can indicate a pattern of emotional self-regulation that indicates the need for some type of intervention--especially when found in conjunction with compulsive sexual and/or romantic behavior.
- *Does the behavior appear to be completely out of character for who you believe yourself to be? Or the person that you want others to think that you are?* For you to have recognized a behavior pattern that is totally out of context for who you believe yourself to be is a strong sign that you have developed a dual (secret) lifestyle--which can be indicative of a rather advanced pattern of addiction.
- *Are you trying to cover for your behavior through lies and secrecy?* Just because someone lies about having an affair, or how a particular pornographic item was downloaded from the internet does not necessarily indicate addiction. By nature, people try to avoid uncomfortable feelings and frequently do so by lies and avoidance. But, the more pronounced and elaborate the lies become, the more indicative of a pattern of preoccupation and value conflict--and thus the more pronounced the addiction. In its extreme, murder and suicide may even be considered to maintain the aura of secrecy.

Answer these questions with absolute honesty and you will know whether or not you need help.

Notice, that emotional crutch is not mentioned once. Emotional crutch has NOTHING TO DO WITH DEFINING ADDICTION. A person can use emotional crutches without being addicted. When we speak about emotional crutch, we are just speaking about some of the causes. This

seems to be true for many people in general and on this site. For those people, it is important for them to recognize that about themselves in order to recover. But, this is not true for everyone. You have to know yourself well and define your problem in an individual sense. No two people are alike. No two addictions are alike. And no two recoveries are alike. The importance of getting help and speaking to people is in order to understand yourself better and learn to grow the way you are supposed to.

Hatzlacha.

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!  
Posted by Gabe - 19 Jan 2010 13:16

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Thanks for the lengthy reply. I'm going to try and answer each of these points as honestly as I can and you can tell me where I stand.

[Ykv\\_schwartz wrote on 19 Jan 2010 08:05:](#)

Hi Halevi,

You bring up a great point that needs to be addressed and has been question may times. That is "What is an addict". Allow me to share with you my attitude on the matter. Below is a excerpt of from [recoverynation.com](http://recoverynation.com) which I think summarizes the point well. Click on the link to read it in full.

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unsure of whether or not you should seek treatment for sexual and/or romantic behavior, ask yourself these questions:

- *Do you lack self control over impulsive desires?* This is the point of declaring powerless. It is not intended to be a label of who you are and what your life will be. It simply a declaration that you understand that you currently have a behavior disorder of self control. (call it Impulse Control Disorder if you want). By acknowledging the truth of our current state, we can work to heal ourselves through the means offered to us.

Certainly I have lacked a fair degree of self control but I don't believe that I am completely powerless - take my current stretch of sobriety for example. I think that with a renewed determination and with a few extra safeguards in place, I can control myself. Furthermore, I give in to all sorts of temptations all the time... does that mean I'm addicted to those behaviours as well?

- *Do the potential long-term effects of this behavior significantly outweigh the immediate satisfaction gained from performing it?* If, in your opinion, the behavior appears to be a means of receiving immediate gratification, without regard to the lasting effects to themselves or those around them, you should seek assistance in exploring this.

Yep

- *Have you ever promised to stop?* If you have voiced a promise to stop performing a particular behavior, even if you have not yet had the opportunity to follow through with that promise, you should seek treatment. That may seem harsh, but the rationale is valid: your promise to stop is a verification of conflict between your values and your behavior, and such a conflict needs resolution. Simply expecting yourself to stop on your own is unrealistic, and may actually hasten the addictive process. Can a person permanently stop on their own? Absolutely. But it rarely happens. Seek assistance through a self-management program or counselor to assure that your behavior changes.

I promised to stop after the first time. Doh!

- *Is this a behavior that is being done in secret?* Like the promise to stop, anyone that feels the

need to perform sexual behavior and keep them secret knows that there is a conflict between what is socially acceptable and what isn't. Still, they continue to perform the behaviors that they know to be wrong in exchange for the immediate gratification they receive. This indicates a problem that needs to be addressed.

Doh!

- *Does this behavior appear to be a part of a pattern?* Examine other behaviors that you engage in. Look for similar compulsive behaviors, and not just sexual and/or romantic, that appear to be a part of an addictive pattern. Usually, these behaviors will tend to be obvious in particular areas, and will emphasize the theme of immediate gratification over long-term satisfaction. Compulsive shopping, eating, exercising: these are just a few that can indicate a pattern of emotional self-regulation that indicates the need for some type of intervention--especially when found in conjunction with compulsive sexual and/or romantic behavior.

I'm addicted to using the computer/internet.

- *Does the behavior appear to be completely out of character for who you believe yourself to be? Or the person that you want others to think that you are?* For you to have recognized a behavior pattern that is totally out of context for who you believe yourself to be is a strong sign that you have developed a dual (secret) lifestyle--which can be indicative of a rather advanced pattern of addiction.

Damn. Not doing too well here.

- *Are you trying to cover for your behavior through lies and secrecy?* Just because someone lies about having an affair, or how a particular pornographic item was downloaded from the internet does not necessarily indicate addiction. By nature, people try to avoid uncomfortable feelings and frequently do so by lies and avoidance. But, the more pronounced and elaborate the lies become, the more indicative of a pattern of preoccupation and value conflict--and thus the more pronounced the addiction. In its extreme, murder and suicide may even be considered to maintain the aura of secrecy.

Haven't needed to lie. Need to be caught first!

Answer these questions with absolute honesty and you will know whether or not you need help.

Notice, that emotional crutch is not mentioned once. Emotional crutch has NOTHING TO DO WITH DEFINING ADDICTION. A person can use emotional crutches without being addicted. When we speak about emotional crutch, we are just speaking about some of the causes. This seems to be true for many people in general and on this site. For those people, it is important for them to recognize that about themselves in order to recover. But, this is not true for everyone. You have to know yourself well and define your problem in an individual sense. No two people are alike. No two addictions are alike. And no two recoveries are alike. The importance of getting help and speaking to people is in order to understand yourself better and learn to grow the way you are supposed to.

Hatzlacha.

I guess part of what I'm struggling with is that

a) The repercussions of having an addiction are huge; not only because of what's needed for recovery but also because of how it can impinge on future real-life relationships.

b) I see footage and read about genuine addicts (outside of this website) and I'm nothing like them. The people I read about are completely out of control and literally killing themselves with their behaviour. I, on the other hand, act out in only a very moderate way. It's not destroying my life or making it unmanageable. The only reason I'm concerned at all is because it doesn't fit in with my values and religion. So can I still be classified as an addict?

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Re: 90 Days - Bring it on!

Posted by silentbattle - 19 Jan 2010 15:46

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First of all, it's good to see that you're being honest with yourself. To be honest, I grappled with your issue, as well - the term "addict" has lots of unpleasant connotations for most people, and no one likes to think of themselves as "powerless," or "out of control."

As the article points out, don't get caught up in the terms. The way I look at it is, whether or not I'm an addict, the technology of recovery can help me. So I'll use it.

As an aside, there are different levels of "powerless," but on a basic level, it implies a lack of power, a lack of control. And that's certainly present by all of us. If we had the power we wanted, we wouldn't have a problem.

Keep on rocking!

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