

Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 13 Jul 2009 21:08

I'm new to this forum, but not new to this struggle. I signed up to the weekly E-mail lists a few months ago. I often just glance at them, as I'm trying not to spend so much time reading E-mails. But, even with this, I have gotten chizuk through the themes that keep repeating themselves.

I grew up secular, but did Teshuva in college--I came to Yeshiva in Israel and never left. Now I'm married with five children (our oldest is eight and our youngest is a month old).

I was in the habit of staring at girls, I remember even in nursery school. I just liked the way they looked. Things got worse when I was 10 or 11. My sisters had a "facts of life" book with indecent pictures and crooked ideas, and I found it. It described Mast... as a fun thing to do, and so I followed the instructions. I've been stuck ever since.

I was a member of a shul youth group around the age of my bar-mitzvah. The youth group leader gained my trust very early on, and I could discuss anything with him. Luckily, I learned early on that mast... is wrong. I've been fighting it ever since, sometimes more successfully and sometimes less so. I think now I go two or three months clean, and then I tend to trip up a few times close together. I always feel that the yeitzer hara tricked me, and somehow it's strategy was different than last time. Also, I view it as tripping up for one "phase," instead of multiple times. So, I manage not to get too depressed about it, and can pick myself up again pretty quickly.

I would like to be able to stop altogether. But, I am more concerned with controlling my eyes. I feel that it is impossible to walk down the street without taking a look at every woman along the way. I think the trickiest part is that, in my neighborhood, everyone is dressed so tznius that it's hard to feel that I'm really doing anything wrong.

Besides that, I slip up every once in a while with the internet--probably a few times a year. But then, I feel that I was somehow outsmarted again by my Yeitzer. I wasn't looking for indecent pictures... I was just curious about such-and-such an actress... I wasn't expecting to find such indecent pictures...

I see the progress is still very slow on my own, and that's why I decided to become more involved in this forum.

But, I find this is also a challenge. I think my own situation is rather mild, and I find that by seeing other people's stories which are more involved than my own, I end up getting thoughts instead of getting rid of them. Any advice on this point would also be helpful. Thanks.

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 04 Apr 2011 06:48

We went away on vacation recently--my wife and I. We managed to send all the kids out to friends and neighbors.

I had a couple of major slips, being in a different environment. And, in general I've had some slips lately.

I started to worry--is this all a joke? Is the only reason I'm not acting out because I don't have certain opportunities?

Then I realized something which I know but keep forgetting. IT'S POISON TO FOCUS ON THE ACTING OUT, OR NOT ACTING OUT, OR TRYING NOT TO ACT OUT, OR TRYING TO SURRENDER MY ACTING OUT TO HASHEM.

I found the serenty prayer is helpful. And, one of the things I need to accept that I can't do anything about is that I have a disease, I'm a lust addict. What's helpful is to just keep my mind focused on the present, on the task at hand, on trying to be helpful.

I once heard the relationship between Yaakov and Esav described as "The Jacob and Esau see-saw". When one's up, the other one's down. I think this helps me understand myself, too--my head works in the same way. If I bring up the positive thoughts, trying to be helpful and useful, then self-loathing and obsessing about acting out automatically goes down. It's the most direct

in-direct way to deal with these things.

--Eye.

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by ToAdd - 05 Apr 2011 07:08

I love that post Dov.

It ties in to Eye's last post too:

Our happiness is dependent on what we focus on. If we focus on the discomfort within our self, that's all we'll see and we'll be unhappy. If we try see ourselves from the outside, and include the ones we love in the picture, we'll be happy.

Like on vacation. I can picture the scene of a man and his wife together and there's something that catches his eye. If he were given a photo of himself standing next to his wife, but looking at someone else would he not stop straight away?

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Sturggle - 05 Apr 2011 07:09

Hey Eye. Maybe I'll get on the see-saw with you, I'll sit on and crush your Esav voices and you can do the same for mine, and then whichever one of us is up or down, it'll all be good!

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 05 Apr 2011 20:19

[ToAdd wrote on 05 Apr 2011 07:08:](#)

Like on vacation. I can picture the scene of a man and his wife together and there's something that catches his eye. If he were given a photo of himself standing next to his wife, but looking at someone else would he not stop straight away?

Not if he's an addict.

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 05 Apr 2011 21:54

C'mon, not even right then? It would stop me right then....and I'd be much more careful next time that no one is watching with a camera. Seriously. No?

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 06 Apr 2011 06:37

[dov wrote on 05 Apr 2011 21:54:](#)

C'mon, not even right then? It would stop me right then....and I'd be much more careful next time that no one is watching with a camera. Seriously. No?

Nope.

=====

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 06 Apr 2011 09:07

Generally, I haven't been involved on the forum so much lately, like for the past few months.

But, I definitely see that when I am involved here, I also feel stronger in recovery.

So now it's not just this guilt feeling "I really should be involved here more often."

It's not something I SHOULD do. But, I am starting to appreciate that it's something I HAVE to do.

I heard recently an interesting idea. Everyone knows about limiting their money spending, "If it costs more than \$100, ak 350 NIS, then I won't buy it." BUT, we can easily spend three days running from store to store to find the best price. So, we can also limit our time. "If I don't find it after going to 3 stores, I'll just have to forget about it."

So, it's easy to get hyper-involved with the forum. Check every thread, and every new thread, and write every new insight on my own thread. And hey! Someone just responded to me so now I simply CAN'T go to sleep until I write back again! I could easily spend hours until I do everything I want to do. So, I have to look at it--whatever I can do in 15 minutes, or in a half-hour, I am going to do. After that time is up, I'll just have to wait for tomorrow.

Just an idea.

--Eye.

=====

====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 06 Apr 2011 16:25

Beautiful. I'll use that general idea, thanks.

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 11 Apr 2011 13:05

Someone asked me, "If acting out wasn't asur, would you stop?" And, forget, "acting out leads to x, y, z, and therefore I must stop--do you see that NOW it is dangerous."

It got me thinking. What's REALLY so bad about a little acting out? Why should I stop? It almost made me into a heretic until I got my footing again. But, I thought it was important to ponder because I feel that, despite all this recovery, I'm missing something, a part of the program. I feel that I can slip too easily, but I want to stop.

This person told me, "he realized this would kill him."

I still didn't appreciate how a little acting out is going to kill me. I understand, intellectually, it's a downhill ride and eventually I'll end up doing things that will kill me.

Then, I realized, it's this powerlessness. This inability to stop no matter what. LUST is dragging me along.

So, some people have fallen off the cliff, and in retrospect they can see how everything was one long process that drove them over the cliff and they are amazed they didn't die from the fall, and they want to stop before it happens again because next time they might die.

So, it's harder when you don't feel like you've done anything SO dangerous.

But, if you're at the edge of the cliff and something knocks you over, or you're a hundred feet away from the cliff and something is dragging you towards it, if you have no power over this thing, you're being dragged to your death. You might be a hundred miles away and can't even see the cliff, but you know you're being dragged, helplessly towards the cliff and then over the edge, to certain death.

I don't want to be dragged along, even if the cliff is a thousand miles away. It's a road to certain death, even if it's a long road.

And, I can see in another way how it is death. It's not like a little hobby, it's an obsession. It can fill my whole mind, and be the entire focus of my whole life. Also, it knocks me down over and over again and kills my self-image, "I'm such a loser, I keep losing to this." And, I definitely feel all messed up because of that.

I don't know if these ideas helps you, but I found them helpful.

--Eye.

=====
=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 11 Apr 2011 15:12

helpful to me too, Eye. thanks for sharing that.

maybe i can add to the metaphor a little. if we let Hashem take care of us, trusting Him and not trying to run the show we can ride a hot-air balloon instead of being dragged down the cliff. a serene, gentle, and quiet ride. so long as we don't go and shoot the balloon full of holes.

=====

====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Dov - 11 Apr 2011 16:25

Like what you said.

The day that I started needing to stop because I could no longer afford to act out, was the day that saved my life - both of the guf and of the neshomoh. As long as I was trying to stop primarily because it was assur, I never did. I see now, that I was blaming my inability to get what I really want on G-d, instead of accepting that it is really unacceptable to me. And as long as I blamed it on Hashem, I was toast.

Boruch haYoreh (throws down) Chato'im baderech!!

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 12 Apr 2011 06:46

I got clarity on something else, which I have found helpful--the pain of not acting out.

I thought, until now, that it's pleasurable to act out (albeit a fake pleasure), and painful not to. I thought the pain was only from the lack of acting out. Sort of like if you don't eat for long enough then you start to feel hunger pains.

But, someone explained to me how the process works, which I found very helpful.

When you don't act out it IS painful. But why? Because your true pain is surfacing. It's not the pain because you're not looking that this woman. It's the pain that comes from fears, resentments, selfishness, and a whole host of other negative character traits.

It's not a choice to look or not to look and therefore to have pain. It's a choice to look--to escape reality--or not to look--to face the REAL pain and deal with it.

And, I can't get rid of this pain on my own, to get rid of my character defects which causes so much pain. It hurts it hurts it hurts, and I don't want to self-medicate myself, to numb myself, to cover up this pain anymore. I want to REALLY get rid of it. SO, I need to turn to a Higher Power Who can do that.

I'll have to be open to NOT ONLY THINKING DIFFERENTLY, but to an entirely different way of life. This is another mistake I made. I thought I can continue life as usual, all the regularly scheduled programming, and just try to change my attitude. NO, THAT DOESN'T WORK. My life, as it is, is the result of my faulty character. SO, if my character is going to change, if I'm going to ask God to do that for me, I should also expect that EVERYTHING in life may be different than the way it has been until now.

--Eye.

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count
Posted by ben durdayah - 12 Apr 2011 10:18

Wow!

That was a real eye.opener!

Thank you **so much** for sharing that gevaldige insight!

E

=====

Re: Eye.nonymous official count

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 12 Apr 2011 14:11

i second that!

great stuff you have there, reb Eye, thanks

=====

====