

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.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 08 Sep 2012 18:07

Are you going to put it in the next edition of the GYE Handbook?

[guardureyes wrote on 07 Sep 2012 14:28:](#)

And thank-G-d for Guard! He is not a nutball...what a compliment! (He knows I love him and respect him a great deal, so I can get away with those compliments! ;D But it's true, he really
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I have askamos from many Gedolim, but this one means more to me than any of them! ;D

"Guard is not a nutball, and I *know* nutballs." - Dov

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 09 Sep 2012 13:35

Regarding my question about marital intimacy mishap, from all your responses and from other people in recovery I have spoken with, it seems that although it wasn't a great thing to happen, since I definitely wasn't trying to have z"l and since it was with my wife, I shouldn't make too much of a big deal of it.

Thanks for the shiur download, Reb Guard.

I've been settling back into routine. I really had high expectations of marital relations two nights ago--it's been so long, so infrequent, mutar time is almost up, and with the slichos and holiday schedule we're likely to just keep getting MORE tired rather than more rested. So, I was sort of thinking, "this is the last chance for a while," and my wife said, "I'm tired I just need to go to bed."

I can understand that, but I was really angry. I started to get all sorts of negative feelings, particularly anger towards my wife, and feeling like she doesn't really love me, and feeling like I must really be doing a horrible job as a husband. I fell asleep with those sentiments, and woke up with them too.

As the day went on, I realized that this is really just my addict speaking--making s*x into the most important and only important thing in life; everything centered around it. In the very beginning of my marriage I would sometimes think that my wife was dropping hints and so I would get all physical and then afterwards she would get all upset about it. I remember discussing this with a Rav of mine who was also my chosson teacher. He said, "well then, why don't you just wait until she initiates."

I don't think I have ever been able to do this. I'm so sick, and so dependant on s*x. It was relevant then, and I think it's just as relevant now. I'm so confused for the same reasons--building up my expecations and then being disappointed. And feeling like I'm going to drop dead if I don't have [what I think is] enough s*x. I have to be able to surrender this; not expect s*x. Realize I can live without it. And realize not to be so gloomy--it will work out when the time is right, and when our lives and our relationship is in a good place.

So, with that I felt better.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by the.guard - 09 Sep 2012 14:01

All I can say is "Wow".

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by nederman - 09 Sep 2012 15:27

Maybe you have a belief that if she is a good wife then she owes it to you. Are there things she likes you to do for her? Try bargaining with her.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by think good - 13 Sep 2012 13:51

Wow, Wow!!

Truly amazing, you could be describing my own relationship with my wife.

Tired wife = No intimacy

Patience, Patience, Patience

Easier said than done – I know!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 13 Sep 2012 17:14

Wail till you reach my age (tired husband... z-z-z-z-z). But interestingly, as the sifrei mussar tell us, even when we are asleep, our YH is not. And just as marriage is not a solution to our issues, so too, old age does not seem to solve it either.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Sep 2012 12:59

Clean today 1 month. (again).

From my last fall, one of the major things I took a good look at is my relationship with my wife. It needs work. Also, as far as the physical side goes, I think there actually were times earlier in recovery when I was more on the look-out for lust in the marriage than I am now.

Guard provided a link to a marriage workshop given by Rabbi Aryeh Pamensky, the topic being, "in the bedroom," and suggested I listen to it with my wife. I did listen to it, but not with my wife yet. However, I did hear about a complete "happy wife" lecture series (7 parts) given by the same Rabbi Aryeh Pamensky which used to be available as a free download from Happywife.com. It is now there for a fee (as far as I can tell--unless my browser was malfunctioning as it often does). However, being the addict that I am, I very easily found it floating around the web elsewhere--still for free. THAT series I have started to listen to with my wife--we went to bed early one night this week and just relaxed together listening to the recording. So, we have only just begun, but we have already had some positive changes, and I think we're going in a very good direction with this.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Sep 2012 18:33

Late this Rosh Hashana afternoon my wife was taking the kids out and I had some spare time before Mincha. I intended to head off to catch up on some learning before davening. I stopped for a few minutes, though. It felt like it would be appropriate to read some recovery literature for at least a few minutes.

I know, we have to look at this addiction not that we're evil trying to be good; rather we're sick trying to get well. But, I thought it was important to make some effort on Rosh Hashana towards getting well--show Hashem that I'm at least trying to do my part.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 19 Sep 2012 18:45

Here's an Aish video which obviously is heavily based on recovery-related literature. It's about resentment and not letting people live rent-free in your head:

www.aish.com/sp/pg/Landlord-A-Yom-Kippur-Video.html

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by think good - 20 Sep 2012 08:37

Very nice video, also shows how we can control only one person - Ourselves!

Our actions are not because of our wife's or any other influence.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by silentbattle - 21 Sep 2012 05:46

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 18 Sep 2012 18:33:](#)

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I know, we have to look at this addiction not that we're evil trying to be good; rather we're sick trying to get well. But, I thought it was important to make some effort on Rosh Hashana towards getting well--show Hashem that I'm at least trying to do my part.

--Elyah

So? If there's a sickness that's stopping us from getting close to Hashem, shouldn't we show on Rosh hashana that we're trying to get better?

And more than that - recovery is tied so closely with getting close to Hashem, trusting in him, showing that He is our king, relinquishing control, letting Him into our lives.

That seems pretty Rosh Hashana-ey to me.

As a side point...maybe I'm wrong on this, but I don't think so, and I think you even hinted at this a couple of posts ago - sex is very tied up with emotions, in our mind. And even though this doesn't fit the stereotype, that's true of men, too. So when we think about "not having enough sex," there's a part of our mind that equates that with not having enough connection, not being wanted enough. And that always hits hard in a nasty way.

I feel like the desire, that desperate need for sex is very much a need for emotional connection, as well.

Am I wrong?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Sep 2012 13:58

Right now I am furious; about to blow up.

I was about to write about a few inspirational recovery moments, but this rage is more urgent right now.

I had a good morning, I truly did. It was a beautiful recovery moment.

And then this afternoon when I got home I was able to be helpful for a little while.

But then, I was DONE! I was ready to go to the computer, check my work E-mail, and write a little bit about my recent recovery moments.

But my wife was on the computer and on the phone; more things that needed my attention. But I was already stretched to capacity. My kids were crawling all over the place when I just needed a bit of time and space to breath.

AND, I'm planning on leaving later this afternoon.

So, I've been talking and talking, helping and helping, one issue after another. I was spent 2 hours ago and now I'm REALLY about to explode.

One issue I have difficulty with--as much as being helpful and being part of my wife and children's life--is setting boundaries. Now that I think of it, they seem to go together.

Through the course of recovery, as I called people to make ammends and got some working relationships with parents and siblings where previously there had been no relationship at all, I have learned that--for me, having the ability to END a conversation is just as important as being able to START one. I'd call, say "hi," and then feel trapped as someone whom I view as disfunctional rambles on and on and on about things that I don't care much about. I hated it--that feeling of being trapped. I have learned to say, "hello," have a nice chat, and when I've reached my limit say, "Oh, I've got to get going." I don't need to justify this with a life and death emergency on hand; I have the right to end a conversation when I feel I've had enough.

And that has made it so much easier to call people and say hello. Even if they truly ARE disfunctional and difficult to listen to, I was also disfunctional in the sense that I took more of it than I can tolerate.

So, I think that may have just happened here. I was helpful and helpful and helpful, but I went too far beyond my limit. It doesn't mean I have to run away and ignore anything. But, it is certainly within reason to say, "I'm feeling a bit overwhelmed right now. Do you mind if I take a few minutes to myself and then we'll talk?"

(I must say, this has been an example where I gained some insights and clarity in the course of writing which I had no idea were within me when I first set out to write.)

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by nederman - 23 Sep 2012 14:07

I just read about this today in Intimate Connections, by David Burns. He has a chapter for people who feel trapped. He says some of the same things that you say and also some other

helpful advice, like paraphrasing, inquiry, tactful self-expression etc.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 23 Sep 2012 14:13

Here's one of the recovery moments I wanted to write about:

On Friday night, having dinner with my family (wife and 5 young children), all was well. Everyone was talking, telling stories and things they had learned. It was so lively that I didn't have a chance to say anything--I made a few hijacked attempts. Then, my daughter had yet another story to tell. I listened politely, but I felt I needed to get away. After she was done I ran into bed. I knew I was feeling this restlessness, irritability, and discontent, but I didn't realize how much it had affected me physically--my heart was actually pounding.

My first inclination was to complain to my Higher Power about how miserable I was feeling. But, something I have learned recently is to express gratitude to Him--despite the difficulties, and even FOR the difficulties (ultimately they are from Him and He knows what's best for me). So, I started thanking Him that I am married, have children, that we're all together, that everyone WANTS to be together and talk to each other and share what they have to say.

Then, I realized I had a WIN/LOSE mentality--if YOU talk, it means I can't. As if there's a quota on how much conversation there can, or as if time is suddenly going to run out. Thinking about that, I noticed it was absurd.

I realized that my view of meal time is, "EAT." That's it. But, these family meal times are really when a lot happens--relationships are built here. People learn to share with each other, appreciate each other, and respect each other. To talk, and to listen. I didn't quite get this in my childhood; my Dad was always threatening to build cubby-holes so that everyone would eat in peace and quiet. And, as I mentioned before, my own weakness is that I'm not good at setting boundaries--I easily get trampled over, stifled. I forget that I can say, "I would like to hear what you have to say, but first I have a few words to share." I can take an active role, and not just sit silently by and get swept away by what everyone else is doing.

After a few minutes (this reflective time in bed only took a few minutes), I went back to the table, shared what I had to say, and then everything wound down for the evening.

After all the kids went to bed, I shared these realizations with my wife and she appreciated it.

--Elyah

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