

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 - 06 Oct 2012 18:38

ANOTHER SUCCOS UPDATE

I appreciate the opportunity to write my thoughts here. I feel like I'm in a recovery pressure-cooker right now with the holidays and all the kids home, and this is helping me to stay sober.

I've got quite a few thoughts to share from the last couple of days (I'll make little sub-headings to break it up a bit):

PROGRESSIVE VICTORY OVER ACTRESSES

On Thursday there was a major SA get-together that I attended. It started with the movie, "My Name is Bill." I haven't watched any movies for a long time, and at first I was thinking, "Great, here's my chance." At first I was focusing a lot on the star actress as I am attracted to any female. I thought maybe I shouldn't watch. But, what happened is I was able to NOT FOCUS on the actress, which was amazing. I wouldn't go ahead now and expect I've got newfound powers and watch any other movies. But, for the one time, it was good to see that this is possible for me.

The get-together continued with a main speaker telling over his story--it was someone who has over twenty years of sobriety, and was very inspirational. The main point he concluded with is, "I CAN BE NORMAL NOW--hold down a normal job, have a normal daily routine, etc."

ONE MINUTE AT A TIME

As a side-point in a private discussion afterwards he mentioned about guarding your eyes on the street. I told him that I haven't found myself ever able to do this. He asked if I could do it for a day? No. An hour? No. A minute? Yes. (To be even more honest, I think I can't manage to

guard my eyes for more than 10 seconds) Then he shook my hand and congratulated me and told me to just keep on doing that--guarding my eyes for a minute at a time. I've heard this idea before, but to hear it as personal encouragement from someone with long-term sobriety, it had a stronger effect on me.

RECOVERY AND CLEARING THE AIR WITH MY WIFE

I got home from the SA get-together and had a light dinner with my wife. I had told her that morning that I had gone to bed late because something was bothering me and I made a lot of calls to people in the program, but I felt better by the time I went to bed (I don't recommend that anybody should just go ahead and to that--my wife is in S-Anon and we can be fairly open with each other about recovery). I said I couldn't discuss it because I was in a hurry, but we could talk about it later. So, that night she asked again. I told her about the things I have been writing about here: Feeling uncomfortable about this Rav of mine, having unrealistic expectations about the holidays (not appreciating that it's still difficult after it starts), and I also mentioned that I feel bad that she has always been so negative about this Rav. She just listened, and a while later I thanked her for just listening and taking it so well. She responded, "I have no problem with you going to your Rav. If you're unhappy about the way I feel, my sponsor would say that's your problem and you have to deal with it yourself." I think that's a very healthy way to look at this. I felt a lot better having cleared the air. In fact, lots of times when I speak to my sponsor about problems with my wife he says, "Did you talk about this with her?" That's something I neglect to do way too often. The next day--yesterday, was the first day in a while I felt a certain sense of calm and happiness about life.

A PROGRAM OF ACTION

The night I was making all those calls, a fellow with over 20 years of sobriety said a lot of things that were helpful. One was, when I was told him about all the old habits that were creeping back, he said, "That's in the past, and you don't have to live in the past anymore." He said THIS IS AN ACTION PROGRAM, so when thoughts come into his mind it's not enough to try and use THOUGHTS to get rid of them. He needs to do ACTION. Sometimes he actually walks over to the door and opens it, or rolls down a window (particularly when driving) as if to escort the unwanted thoughts out of the room. Or he declares, "This is a lie!" Any action--to break the cycle. One thing he says he does is focuses on his shoes to bring his attention back into the present.

S*XAHOLIC VS. OTHER PEOPLE (L*ST IN MARRIAGE)

One last thought I have to share: When I was riding back from this SA get-together (in a car load of sexaholics) some guys were having a discussion trying to define a s*xaholic. "Is it that, if a normal person's desire for s*x is a 20, a s*xaholic's desire for it is 80?" I added my own

thoughts on the matter. It's not so much that a s*xaholic likes s*x more than other people. It's that a s*xaholic is trying to get a lot more out of s*x than its intended purpose. Financial difficulties? S*x will solve it. Feeling depressed? S*x will solve it. Having trouble disciplining the kids? S*x will solve it. But, the problem is that s*x DOESN'T do any of those things. But an addict WANTS it to and thinks it will. And if it doesn't, the addict just DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH to solve the problem yet.

I was recently with my wife physically. I think I have been the most confused about l*st in marriage. So, the above thought was helpful--I feel that by giving this thought away, it came back to help me. "S*x isn't going to solve any problems, it isn't going to make me into Superman or anything. I'm going to be the same Elyah afterwards as I was before--with all my good qualities and with all my character defects. My life is going to be the same afterwards as it was before--with all the parts that seem to be going well, and with all the parts that seem to be going not so well. "It's JUST s*x, nothing more." I think that helped a lot to reduce the l*st involved.

Thank you for reading all that.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 09 Oct 2012 21:51

Saw this in SB's thread, but thought it would be better to "share" my own thoughts here:

[silentbattle wrote on 23 Sep 2012 05:36:](#)

Trying to work on shmiras einayim. It's almost scary how much I've gotten used to not doing that...

I definitely relate. I was just thinking this evening, "What the heck is wrong with me--why can't I stop looking!"

Then I realized that somehow I got the idea that I'm addicted to REAL acting out, p*rn and m*sturbation. LOOKING, well, that's just an old habit. LOOKING all the while I'm telling myself, "DON'T LOOK, STOP LOOKING."

So, I finally realized that I am addicted to this, too, no less (and I think lots more) than I am addicted to P&M.

Somehow, LOOKING was a different problem than all that other stuff. But, whatever tools I have been using for P&M, I need to use against LOOKING (and maybe even more so). I'm absolutely powerless over it, etc.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by yehoshua - 11 Oct 2012 11:42

Yeah really hard, everybody looks around - if you don't, then you could run into a street lamp or something. But running into a street lamp or something isn't so bad. The thing that gets me is and the thing I have to add to my serenity prayer: and please Hashem, let me not feel depressed because I am looking down. :-[

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Machshovo Tova - 11 Oct 2012 14:11

Aderabah! Every time I pass a triggering sight in the street and I look the other way, I feel great that I can control myself be"H. Quite often I find myself smiling with pleasure upon such encounters.

As they say - lechatchila ariber!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 11 Oct 2012 16:52

Thanks Elyah. I haven't been on GYE for a while. I don't know if "enjoy" is the right word, but I enjoy reading your thread. I can relate to a lot of what you write.

Maybe when I have some more time, I'll send you a PM.

Take care.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Dov - 14 Oct 2012 19:06

Elyah, your succos update was so precious for me and especially the last part will be used while I'm in my car on the way home from work. Patience and trust ans just plain old common sense are so hard to come by sometimes. Nu. Thanks again.

- Dov

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 14 Oct 2012 20:47

A few more thoughts about JUST LOOKING.

For years I've been trying to CRACK this, like some sort of puzzle. I've been thinking WHAT DO I GAIN FROM THIS. Or, WHY DO I ENJOY IT SO MUCH. If I could only see clearly enough that I actually gain nothing from this, if I could convince myself that it's not really so enjoyable after all, if I could convince myself of the stupidity and futility of JUST LOOKING or better yet, if I could figure out what I'm REALLY looking for--perhaps more self-esteem--and then give myself a huge self-esteem pep-talk...

THEN I'D STOP LOOKING.

But I recently realized there's really only one reason I look:

I'M AN ADDICT AND I CAN'T STOP.

There's really nothing to figure out--it's not going to help to convince myself of the futility of it.

I CAN'T STOP.

Even if I really felt I GOT NOTHING OUT OF IT and I truly wanted to stop, I WOULD STILL KEEP ON LOOKING.

And that, to me, was a new recognition of powerlessness.

The solution is rather simple now--I have no alternative but to turn to a Power greater than myself for help.

I heard once the addiction explained as follows: We have an "on" switch, but no "off" switch.

I have to go ask my Higher Power to activate the "off" switch.

Tonight I was riding on a bus and feeling like I was in some sort of wrestling match with my eyeballs not to look at all the women. At first I thought that I was wrestling with what's OUT THERE. Me verses the objects of lust. But then I had a change in perspective--the wrestling match was really within myself--to turn my will over to my Higher Power, or to hold onto it.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 18 Oct 2012 22:37

And it makes for a much more relaxing (and even sometimes enjoyable) ride home.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 30 Oct 2012 06:55

Sometimes recovery is taking the positive steps--calling people, attending meetings, being able to be tolerant and serene rather than judgemental and anxious.

But sometimes, the best I can muster up is at least not to do any harm. Maybe I can't be tolerant, but I know that if I start blaming and arguing, it's "not sober."

Sometimes that was the best I could do (in particular, stressful situations with my wife), and

when I was in a better place I could go back and be positive and, thank G-d, I at least didn't leave a huge mess to clean up afterwards.

On another note, I keep forgetting that s*x is optional, and this leads to a lot of angst and a lot of disappointment. When I can remember that I'm sex-crazed, which is a sick way to be, then it is easier to surrender this. When I put down my expectations and remember that I truly am sick in the head, it's a lot easier to be affectionate without going overboard.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 30 Oct 2012 20:19

It is so precious for me to admit to Hashem, to myself and to others (so I really do admit it to Hashem and myself and it is not a sham) that I am over-sexed. Way over-sexed.

That's is not my entire issue, by any means. But it is a problem I have. It makes it virtually impossible for me to comprehend that my wife can be deeply in love with me, Hashem can be doing His very best for me, my life can be really really great...and yet sex is not on the menu tonight. What!???

Yup.

Sex really is not that relevant. My 'great white hope' for decades - and it is not really that big a deal. Incredible. Shocking. Sacreligious - really.

Nu. Growing up is hard to do. But I do not have to pretend that I am all alone! I have recovery buddies and not just silly virtual ones I only 'know' on GYE...but of course really do not know, at all. I have in-person, real recovering people I can call and meet any day I need to. And I stay in touch.

This recovery is for real and for keeps. So thanks for being a part of it, Eyeball guy!

- Dov

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 30 Oct 2012 20:34

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 14 Oct 2012 20:47:](#)

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--Elyah

HOW is this accomplished??

I keep hearing about how powerless we are. I can't do it myself. I need to to turn to a Power who is greater than myself etc.

BUT, HOW??

Can you give a step-by-step guide? Without resorting to euphemistic cliches? Without just repeating the slogans of the Rooms?

In simple, plain English, not a bunch of Programese & jargon.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by KiviYVY - 30 Oct 2012 20:42

[Yosef wrote on 30 Oct 2012 20:34:](#)

HOW is this accomplished??

I keep hearing about how powerless we are. I can't do it myself. I need to turn to a Power who is greater than myself etc.

BUT, HOW??

Can you give a step-by-step guide? Without resorting to euphemistic cliches? Without just repeating the slogans of the Rooms?

In simple, plain English, not a bunch of Programese & jargon.

Love this question! For me it's about letting go. That's squelching the thoughts that I can determine any outcomes, or that I have any control over this addiction. That's also acting with humility in all matters, which is the underlying principle of the 12 steps. Then the "let G-d" comes on its own, if G-d wants it to come. Once the ego is gone, there's room for G-d to come in on His own.

How does it work for you?

YVY

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Dov - 30 Oct 2012 21:00

You ask about how to actually truly let go because it still eludes you.

I write here to say that it might know how exactly how to do it and people may tell you all the answers. But you may be doing things that make it **impossible**. Mesillas Yeshorim: He writes all about a middah and how to be koneh it. And then he writes all about the things that are **mafsidei** hazehirus/nekियus, etc. We can truly know it all. But if we are doing something that builds a steel wall against it, we will get zero.

All this applies to me perhaps even more than it may to you, so please pardon me for using the word "you" in the following, but it is written this way for a reason:

If you *act* like you can save others, then you will believe it. You believe you can control it a little. And if you really deep down inside believe that you have the power to enjoy and control it, then

you will keep **trying** to control and enjoy it. You will not be able to be dependent on your G-d, and will be continually shocked at how you find yourself looking at (or struggling like crazy with looking at) shmutz a little and terribly regretting it. And the cycle goes on ad nauseum. And that will make lust and "poor me" cook in you like a big souffle. All puffed up. Till you do *something* that is guaranteed to make it deflate. We know the only way to make it 'deflate': masturbate.

Acting out is just the frum addict's **reset** button, that's all.

Is that simple enough? See if you are taking any poison - or if there is some *left* in you. If there is, then take *actions* that are antidotes to that poison if you want to really get better. Use the power and chochma Hashem has given you - He gave you a lot, for a reason. You can do this. We are not powerless over *everything*.

I know I cannot save anyone, so I am not afraid of my disease, of my lust, of the Yetzer Hora, of you, and even of Hashem. I am a good man like you are, working with what Hashem gives us to work with today. I need Him and can't save myself - how can I really be needed to save anyone else? Harbei shluchim laMakom.

Sorry to respond even though you directed it at Reb Eye.

Too bad.

It probably sounds like cliches anyhow.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 31 Oct 2012 15:27

[Yosef wrote on 30 Oct 2012 20:34:](#)

I keep hearing about how powerless we are. I can't do it myself. I need to turn to a Power who is greater than myself etc.

BUT, HOW??

As long as I think I can stop, nothing is going to help.

When I stand over the toilet and tell myself, "DON'T MASTURBATE! I'M NOT GOING TO MASTURBATE! I HAVE TO STOP MASTURBATING!" there's only one thing that happens. Not

so slowly but surely, I'll end up masturbating.

Somehow (now I know this sounds stupid like I'm not really giving you an answer), when I remember that NO MATTER WHAT I DO, I WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP, and instead of telling myself, "DON'T MASTURBATE! I'M NOT GOING TO MASTURBATE! I HAVE TO STOP MASTURBATING!" I say, instead, "[G-d] help me. Please remove this lust from me." And over and over again, then sometimes fairly quickly but sometimes gradually, the urge subsides.

And sometimes that's not enough and I pick up the phone and call someone and admit that I'm powerless and tell him, "I've got a massive urge to masturbate and I'm about to lose my sobriety," (had to do that this morning) and sometimes that's not enough so I've got to call a few different people and tell them all the same thing and feel really stupid doing it. But, somehow, that urge goes away.

It doesn't make sense, and can't really be explained or understood.

But you can try it and see how it works (and let us know how it goes).

And that's a good start, but still, it's just a start.

--Elyah

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