

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 ewards - 14 Jul 2014 17:31

[Eye.nonymous wrote:](#)

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by ewards - 14 Jul 2014 17:48

Eye

I sorta tend to do that also like some of these are triggers and i have to be care full what i post from this end . I am at 20 days and trying to get over a desire at this time . Think I'm more aware

of triggers and plan to stay clean for as long as i can (want to) Guess that all this is a journey and we learn every day. Also feel that my problem is mild compared to others and am thank full for that . I to would like to stop completely we will see . Its a journey only been on gye for 6 months or so . acting out has been a habit since i was 13 or so and i am 68 . It will take some time for all of us . Hang in there and keep working on it one day at a time(works for me) . I decide in the mornings if i am going to up date my chart for the day and the decision i make i keep all day no matter what . So far it is working this time around . I have failed before and i may again ,remember its a journey. Oh by the way I am up dating my chart next click

ewards

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 21 Jul 2014 20:59

First of all, thanks for your posts, Ewards and Yehoshua.

It was strange being reminded of my earlier posts. Still struggling with looking at women, and still struggling with P & M.

I went to a sort of therapist yesterday. It's someone that my wife and I are seeing for help with our kids. Usually my wife goes with the kids or I go with my wife. Yesterday it worked out that I went alone.

My participation in this is a product of recovery--just a few years ago I couldn't be bothered. Yesterday, as there was a scheduling mistake, I had the option to cancel or to keep the appointment, and I opted for the latter.

I took the opportunity to bring up some concerns that I usually can't discuss with my wife, or at least I don't know how to discuss them. I wanted to ask: How can I know if my wife's difficulties

with the children are really because something's wrong with the kids (PDD/ADD/ADHD/ASD/etc), or, since it's gone so far, if the problem is really with my wife.

It was a very respectful conversation. We discussed my wife's past and my own past and the various ways how the history of criticism in our families is now playing itself out in our lives in a more subtle way. We discussed ways that I can be supportive and to get my wife to see things differently but without contradicting my wife or invalidating her.

One thing we discussed was the need to get rid of negative self-talk in our heads. And, as I struggle not to look at women, as I wonder "what's the deeper problem underlying this," I think at least part of the answer is that I feel like a failure and there's a voice inside my head that keeps telling me I'm a failure.

"Oh, I looked at another woman. I'm such a failure. I'll never be able to stop."

Yesterday I caught myself looking away one time. I thought, "Maybe that was my success for today, and maybe that's all I need to do." I gave myself positive self-talk. It was easier to keep looking away for a while after.

I don't know if this will keep working. I keep having these "aha!" moments, these new ideas, and these new successes. And then they fade away within a few weeks, usually days, sometimes hours, and sometimes just minutes.

Besides that, I have to say that this sort-of-therapist was a lady. The discussion was on-the-topic and I thought it went well. But afterwards, I was surprised to notice a tingly feeling and that M seemed like a great idea. I guess this bit of self-disclosure, and talking to this woman who is so confident and also so animated about what she does, was triggering. I made a bunch of phone calls to friends in recovery until I finally reached someone and shared what I was feeling.

I'm still sober for a month and a couple of days.

Thanks for reading.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by cordnoy - 21 Jul 2014 21:05

Great post!

Thanks

and good thinkin' to go and discuss alone.

I don't know if you read my posts (or at least lately), but when I mention "specialist" or "therapist" or "I was asked," that is how I write it. Why? for If I write that I saw her, and spoke to her and she asked me, etc. I start to think more about her and that is triggerin' - yessir! So, it's my little way of avoidin' it a drop.....doesn't always work, but it's the little things that count.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 29 Jul 2014 10:11

I've been waiting 9for years) to find a strong enough reason to stop looking at women, and hoping that if I found the right reason, I would automatically stop. I wanted to convince myself 100% to stop!

Today I realized that it should be enough of a reason for me to stop that it's assur. I honestly can't think of any other reason that I can really believe in--if I don't stop it will ruin my whole life! I don't really believe that at this point in my life. Besides, I have stopped a lot of other things and made a lot of other radical changes in my life because I learned that I had to according to the Shulchan Aruch. I realize the distinction now between a reason to stop and being able to stop; they're not the same.

So, I want to follow the Shulchan Aruch, but that doesn't make me stop looking at women, even though it made me stop a lot of other things. So why not? That's powerless. That's where being a s*xaholic comes into the picture. That's were I need the steps and tools of recovery to help me to stop.

Thanks for reading.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by shivisi - 29 Jul 2014 11:36

[Eye.nonymous wrote:](#)

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That's a very true and important point.

There has been very much discussion on this forum about whether we should or should not "mix religion" into our path of recovery.

As you have just pointed out, this has to be divided into two parts.

THE ULTIMATE TRUE REASON for stopping

and

WHAT WILL ACTUALLY GET ME TO STOP

We must always remember that the ultimate end of EVERY action of a Yid must be to do Ratzon Hashem, Hashem's will.

BUT

In order to REACH that goal we very often have to employ OTHER mediums, while at times even leaving aside that thought, so that eventually we will get ourselves to do what is needed IN ORDER to get there.

Thank you EYE, and Hatzlacha Rabba

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 25 Jan 2015 01:59

Hi.

I don't know if anyone is following this thread anymore. But if anyone happens to read this post, here I go:

I'm not promising to make some major return or come-back, but I did feel the need to post here on this forum, at least right now.

I've had a series of falls lately, about a month or two apart. Today I am three weeks clean.

I still attend f2f SA meetings.

I feel that I was really solid early in recovery (that was about 4 years ago). What worked was that I started picking up the phone and telling someone, "I'm about to act out, I need help." Then I'd start to review what was going on in my life that got me to this point, to the edge of wanting to act out.

I've had some long stretches of recovery, 9 months, 1 year, 1 and a half years. Though I think my sobriety was partially masked by relations in marriage, which is one thing that has changed recently--due to medical issues combined with halachic issues, we've had a long stretch of involuntary abstinence (about three months so far, and the end is still uncertain); I've gotten to see to greater depths just how much lust is truly a driving force in my life. After three months of bottled-up resentments and then acting out one Friday afternoon, I was finally able to let go and give up my expectations. So, what if this drags on for another year? I came to believe that a year of abstinence really wouldn't kill me, and it might actually be good for my recovery, my marriage, and my life in general.

Instead of blowing up and making a big mess, I did use the tools of recovery to have a civil, honest, and open discussion with my wife about all the things that were bothering me (about her and about us). I seriously regret that I didn't do this earlier.

That was a bit of a tangent. I was saying how, at first, I'd pick up the phone and call someone because I was about to act out. But then I'd start to talk about things that were bothering me. I'd get in touch with my real emotions and with my real life situation. Somehow, just being able to speak all this out, was very helpful. The program of recovery helped keep such stream-of-consciousness talking focused and directed it to a positive and productive end. But I had to trek through the sludge first.

After these long periods of sobriety, after feeling less in danger of acting out, I felt less of a need to call people. The underlying discomfort was less obvious. I would never call someone to say, "well, I feel a little unsettled and I'm not sure why. Do you mind if I meander a bit until we figure something out." It just didn't feel so urgent. It didn't feel so justified to take the time to do this, when learning responsibilities, work responsibilities, and family responsibilities are also competing for my time and attention.

So, I had gotten out of touch with other fellows in recovery, and out of touch with myself again.

After my last fall, I have resolved to use the phone more often. Just like I got over the awkwardness of calling someone for an emergency, "I'm about to act out!" I can get over the awkwardness of calling someone for a seemingly pointless call, "I really don't have anything to say, but I feel I need to talk for some reason."

There was a short circuit. I was trying to jump directly into writing fear and resentment inventories, the official tools of recovery in the official way of doing them. But, for me, I need that informal and seemingly aimless talking things out to first discover what it is I'm actually resenting or fearing, or just simply annoyed with.

I need to trek through the sludge to reach a healthy place. I need a human connection, communication. If I go first to writing out inventories, I'm just spending more time alone with myself and stuck in my own head.

Thank you for reading.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by cordnoy - 25 Jan 2015 09:57

Welcome back

Sorry to hear about the past few months.

It does sound like you are going thru a lot.

You did mention you spoke to your wife.... About acting or as well?

We are here and we are listening.

Take care

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 26 Jan 2015 21:45

Thanks for writing again. I always enjoy your posts. I can relate to a lot of what you say. I'm sorry that it comes at the expense of having a hard time.

You have a great attitude. You are truly an inspiration!

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by cordnoy - 03 Mar 2015 05:21

I was asked: What should I write in step one?

There are answers (obviously) to that question, but let's take a look at a real live one:

[Eye.nonymous wrote:](#)

Today I am sober for 5 months.

On my thread, Big Book Study Thread, as we are going through the Big Book, we reached the end of the readings that deal with Step One. I encouraged people here to write out their first step, and to post it in their own threads (see the Big Book Study Thread, in IMPORTANT THREADS, for details).

This what I wrote as my Step One (in 5 minutes or less):

I've felt like an outsider my whole life. In nursery school I was teased by the other boys. I remember staring at the girls, thinking there was something "nicer" about them. I thought girls had some sort of secret society of their own, and I'd never be a part of it. But I wanted to be, so badly.

At home, I also felt out of place. My mother, nagged, worried, and complained all the time—she was usually in a state of hysteria. My dad was full of insults and criticism. I wanted to run away or die. I was abused verbally and emotionally; I hated myself—no matter what I did, I was never good enough. I could never win my parent's approval, no matter what I did. I felt confused, rejected, crushed and terrified; I got no love, affection, encouragement, trust, or respect. I desperately wanted to fill this hole, but I had no way to do it—I never learned how to give love and respect to anyone.

So I went inside my head. I spent all of elementary school, high school, and college staring at the girls and wanting to connect with them. But I COULDN'T IN REAL LIFE—SO I CONNECTED WITH THEM IN FANTASY.

I remember in high school working in the supermarket just staring at the cashiers, practically drooling, wondering how to become a part of their life. The thought never occurred to me to ask them, "What do you like to do?" Instead, I sent anonymous love letters and anonymous flowers. I remember that these ideas used to enter my head AND I COULDN'T GET RID OF THEM UNTIL I FOLLOWED THROUGH.

From early on I thought the missing connection was sex—it was so glorified, I figured THAT must be the solution. One time, a girl I knew was supposed to come over to my parents' house for a date while nobody was home. I assumed we would have sex. I felt empty about it—I was about to achieve the ultimate goal in life and then be left with no further meaning and purpose. (Thank G-d, I was stood up in the end).

I started masturbating when I was eight years old, or younger. I had to stop because I got chapped and sore, but as soon as I healed I started again. When I hit bar-mitzvah I met a very influential youth-group leader. I could trust him and talk openly with him, and we discussed girls,

sex, and masturbation. I tried for the next twenty years after that to quit, but only managed to slow down.

Also when I was eight, I learned about nudist colonies where people could live free and be uninhibited. Oh! That's why I was afraid to talk to people! I was too inhibited because I wore clothes! I imagined that living on a nudist colony would solve all my problems. I played out this fantasy by walking around the house naked when nobody was home, or at night when everyone was asleep. As time went on I felt compelled to take bigger risks—late at night I'd walk outside in our yard to our swimming pool without any clothes on.

These behaviors continued into marriage. During the week of sheva brachas, my wife and I went on a nature hike to a place with an outdoor mikveh. I don't remember if I actually dunked or not, but I remember that my wife definitely didn't want to and I thought something was wrong with her.

About two years into marriage, we got internet in our home. At first I had an occasional slip with pornography, and I wouldn't dare look at it when my wife was home. But it grew more frequent and more risky. Eventually our dial-up connection got too slow for E-mail, so we needed to upgrade to a faster connection. I felt like I was about to get sucked in—I had never seen pornography videos, partly for fear, and partly because our internet connection couldn't handle them. But now a whole new world was opening up. I was scared.

We asked our Rav about upgrading the internet; he recently spoke with Rav Twersky and heard that the internet is a plague that has destroyed thousands of Jewish homes. I was scared again, but stayed in denial—how can the internet really be that dangerous! I convinced my wife that we really needed it, so we upgraded. But I was reluctant to install a filter. My wife kept on bringing it up, so I eventually agreed.

THAT'S WHEN RECOVERY BEGAN. We found a particular website with information about filters (and recovery). I signed up for their daily E-mails and became active on their forum. I learned about sex addiction, and how the problem was really lust. So many things finally fell into place. I had been fighting a million separate battles—how not to masturbate in the shower, or in bed at night, how to keep my clothes on, etc. But now it was just one enemy—LUST! It was actually a relief.

My wife noticed my interest in the forum and E-mails and got suspicious. I disclosed my problem

to her, little by little, and sugar-coated. She went through a stage of being furious—we had spent years in and out of therapy treating HER problem, but really I was the problem. As I became more aware of my disease, I got more involved with recovery—I joined an SA phone group, and eventually live meetings. After a while, my wife saw how much SA was helping me and she joined S-Anon.

Along the way, I've learned about the Restlessness, Irritability, and Discontent that underlie the addiction—the early warning signs of acting out. And, through the steps I've learned how to deal with these feelings in a healthier way. I've become much more available as a husband and father, and I can face a lot of the challenges in life which used to send me running to the toilet.

Sometimes I forget that I've done a lot of work to reach this point in recovery, and that I have to keep on working to stay here—so I want to remind myself of that. I'm a sexaholic, and grateful to be in recovery.

--Elyah

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 03 Mar 2015 17:12

Thanks, although I've read tons of Eye's posts, I don't think I ever saw this one. It's probably from before I joined the forum.

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by cordnoy - 03 Mar 2015 17:13

Should I post what he wrote about step 2?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by gibbor120 - 03 Mar 2015 17:14

why not?

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Re: Eye.nonymous (Elyah) official count
Posted by Dov - 15 Mar 2015 23:34

Of course why not?

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