

starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 03 Jun 2009 03:02

I have just discovered this site two days ago and I think this is the first time in years that I really think that I can do Teshuva for my sins. I have been masturbating for 20 years and I have tried to stop countless times. Aside from my terrible addiction, I have been quite succesful in other areas of my life. I am what some people consideer a solid Kollel yungerman and I have a wonderful marriage. However, every step of my life has been tainted with my feeling that I am disgusting and that if anyone new the real me, they would run the other way. I have tried to stop in the past but I have always fallen down, often to a worse point than where I was initially. I one time made it all the way from Yom Kippur until Taanis Esther. That night I had a wet dream and woke up feeling so degraded that I instantly plunged deeply, falling to depths that I had not been to in years.

Because my addiction is not so strong, I have difficulty marking success with the passage of days. I would love some Chizuk from people who have dealt with similar situations and I think that I would benefit from some advice on hitting the bottom while still on top. I am ready to fight and I cannot be successful without the support of this forum. please help!

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by Kedusha - 03 Jun 2009 04:32

First, a royal welcome! You've come to the right place.

The Y"H has a way of making small aveiros seem like large ones. Compared to the tests we have all faced (and failed) a Mikreh Laylah (nocturnal emission or wet dream) is a relatively minor aveirah, and not an aveirah at all if it was not caused by improper thoughts or Histaklus. In any event, logically, it would not be reason to do much worse aveiros, such as deliberate masturbation.

The proof that a Mikreh Laylah is not, per se, an aveirah (besides for the common sense aspect - the Ribbono Shel Olam would not hold us accountable for that which is not our fault) is that Chazal tell us that four individuals never sinned: Binyamin, Amram, Yishai, and Kilav (son of Dovid HaMelech). Yet Chazal tell us about only one Tzaddik who avoided Mikreh Laylah all his life - Yaakov Avinu. It follows that Mikreh Laylah is not per se an aveirah.

Anyway, welcome again and Hatzlacha!

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by the.guard - 03 Jun 2009 11:51

Hi Hoping,

Welcome to our community. I am the admin of this forum. You have come to the right place. There are two prerequisites to beginning to heal from this addiction. One is admitting you have a problem, and two is wanting to get help. You have already done both of those. Now comes step three, actually **getting the help!**

The first step to getting "long term" Chizuk, is to sign up to the daily Chizuk e-mails [over here](#).

If you've read a little bit through this forum, I'm sure you'll quickly realize that you are not alone and that we get cries for help like yours many times a day, both by e-mail and on the forum.

You've been going through this cycle of addiction for a number of years already... I'm sure you've tried to get up many times, only to fall again. It doesn't matter that you may have managed to stay clean for longer periods here and there, it's the overall pattern that shows this is an addiction.

We could offer you lots of great Chizuk and advice right now, but it would last only a few days and then wear off. Instead, we want to help you in a way that will be much more effective and systematic.

We put a lot of effort into writing up handbooks that contain all the tools to breaking free of this addiction, in progressive order. These are tools that we in the GYE community have gathered together - through hundreds of people's experiences over the years. These tools can help anyone, **no matter what stage of addiction they might be at**. Whether someone is just struggling a little, or whether they have tried countless times to break free with all types of

advice and tricks, these handbook will be able to guide them on the right path. (See below for links to the handbooks).

By reading the handbooks and exploring what tools you've tried and which you haven't - we can work together and discuss a battle plan for you (along with the others on the forum) step by step, tool by tool. This will give us a clear "Framework" to work in, and will help you make progress, slowly but surely **for the long term** - and not just some "great" advice that will quickly fade away...

We are here for you, and we will do our very best to offer chizuk and advice and help you along **for as long as it takes**, but let's do it within a systematic framework so that the progress can be outlined and mapped, and you will finally be able to break free of this endless cycle of addiction...

Please right click on the links below and select "Save Link/Target As" to download the handbooks to your computer.

1) [The GuardYourEyes Handbook](#)

This Handbook details 18 suggested tools and techniques, in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this addiction, and continuing down through increasingly earnest and powerful methods. For the first time, we can gauge our level of addiction and find the appropriate tools for our particular situation. And no matter what level our addiction may have advanced to, we will be able to find the right tools to break free in this handbook!

2) [The GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)

The Attitude Handbook details 30 basic principles to help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle. Here are some examples: Understanding what we are up against, what it is that Hashem wants from us, how we can use this struggle for tremendous growth, how we can deal with bad thoughts, discovering how to redirect the power of our souls, understanding that every little bit counts, learning how to bounce back up after a fall, and so on and so forth...

Obviously though, just reading the handbooks alone won't be enough. They don't have

. They simply lay down the tools before you, so that you can use those tools with careful thought, patience and determination. Very quickly you will come to see and believe that it **CAN BE DONE!**

"magical" words in them

Rabbi Twerski always says that this illness is like a spiritual cancer. And what will a person not do to get better from cancer? Nothing should stand in his way! To recover from this illness, we have to be ready to put in at least as much time as we spent acting out...

Read the PDF files linked above, as well as the [tips](#) on our website and [FAQ pages](#), and read through the threads on this forum and through the [archives](#) of past Chizuk e-mails sent out.

The underlying secret to the success of so many people on our website, is that we learn to stop fighting the lust head-on. It is too strong for us to overpower alone. Instead, we learn how to give over the fight to Hashem, and how to **side-step** the lust, using carefully thought out techniques, boundaries and fences. To this end, a good internet filter is a **very** important first step. Please see [this page](#) for many great filter options. And I can hold the password for you. See [this page](#) for how to do it!

May Hashem be with you!

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by London - 03 Jun 2009 12:20

Kedusha / Hoping

What you write about the 4 people who never did any avayros it is interesting to note that only Yosef is called Tzaddik - Yosef Hatzadik, he was tempted and withstood the temptation. Every member on this forum can add Tzaddik after our names, let us focus on how many times we are successful in overcoming our temptations. I was told by a Mashgiach (quoting the Rabainu Yona) that I should not beat myself up for my past - it's like a person going on a journey with a knapsack full of rocks his progress is going to be slow and painful, however if he puts the rocks down he can move forward. If I keep looking back at my past and beat myself up over it I am never going to get recovery.

Hoping, recovery is within your reach if you really work hard for it, read through the GYE Handbooks, and find the solution that works for you. If you think you are successful in your marriage / kollel life you will be amazed by how much more you can achieve without the constant craving for masturbation. One the of the biggest blessings I have had in recovery is the physical removal of the cravings, the cravings were the worst part of the addiction driving to distraction. I am now slowly recovering from a relapse, and I can feel that one day at a time the cravings are subsiding again. Try not to concentrate on getting clean for the rest of your life it won't work, make a daily commitment to stay clean if 24 hours is too long (for me it is) make a commitment for a morning, an hour whatever you feel is within your reach and do whatever it takes to stay clean for that time. I know a fellow with over 20 years clean time and he told me that he makes a daily commitment to Hashem that he will stay clean and sober for 24 hours even if his tuches falls off! Me too, I commit to staying clean and sober today no matter what. Keep posting on this forum it works if you work it.

Keep coming back

London

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by jack - 03 Jun 2009 12:25

YAY!!! dont look back - you will turn into a pillar of salt!!

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 03 Jun 2009 13:00

Thank you for your supporting words.

I have B"H managed to stay clean but I am finding it excrutiating to avoid looking at women on the street. The more I try to avoid looking at immodest things, the more I feel drawn to feed my mind with less explicit things. For example, whereas I never felt a pull to look at a properly dressed person unless she was very attractive, I now feel drawn to look at any woman who walks by. How do I deal with this?

Also, I have been reading some of the advice on this website and I intellectually have a hard time saying that the disease is not my fault. It is something that I began after Bar Mitzva and I fed it by choice. I was not brought up under difficult circumstances and I truly believe that I have myself to blame. I do not know if believing that it isn't my fault is an important part of recovery, but at this time I have not been able to remove the guilt from my heart.

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Re: starting my battle
Posted by the.guard - 03 Jun 2009 13:32

As far as getting strength to guard your eyes, I hope [this page](#) can help.

As far as your feelings of guilt, see [this page](#).

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Re: starting my battle
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 03 Jun 2009 18:48

[hoping wrote on 03 Jun 2009 13:00:](#)

I intellectually have a hard time saying that the disease is not my fault. It is something that I began after Bar Mitzva and I fed it by choice. I was not brought up under difficult circumstances and I truly believe that I have myself to blame. I do not know if believing that it isn't my fault is an important part of recovery, but at this time I have not been able to remove the guilt from my heart.

Hoping,

The source for the concept of this addiction not being so much our fault and close to an "ones"[????] is from the steipler in krainasa d'igrasa (chelek 1). He discusses masturbation explicitly and says it is too bad that many young men do not realize that they are not to blame. However, it is natural to feel this our fault and we are to blame as we have allowed ourselves over the years to become more and more and more addicted. And the truth is that it will be difficult to properly do vidui and teshuvah if you are not to blame. So, you are justified for feeling the way you feel. It is natural and correct to a certain degree.

But now comes the **caveat**. Listen to this: ADDICTION FEEDS OFF GUILT. What this means is that the feeling of guilt does not help one recover but rather it creates a hindrance to recovery. This has been explained to me eight years ago when I was in therapy and I have seen it with my own eyes in my life and others. And I believe that many on this forum can attest to it from their own lives as well.

The other issue that should be important to realize is that the Rabeinu Yona says that when it comes to our obligation of teshuvah, an addict must first work on removing oneself from sin. Only after he is completely removed, both in action and in mind, whereby he reprogrammed his brain to the point where he knows this is not something he does, only then can he focus on the past, which is called charata. [But even if you are zoche to reach that point, which I am sure you will be, you must realize the distinction between guilt and charata. Guilt is never constructive. At a later point we can delve more into that topic]

So on a practical note: Even if you cannot remove the blame from your heart, you must at least learn to ignore it temporarily. Number one, for practical concerns as addiction feeds of guilt. And number two, because of the guidance from rabeinu yona in teshuva.

Right now think of yourself as a prisoner who seeks freedom. You hate the current situation and all you are focused on is how to get out. You should not be focused on whether it is your fault or not. You look to heaven for salvation and put your efforts into action.

May you be zoche to a true recovery!

Lover of All Jews,

Yaakov

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Re: starting my battle
Posted by hoping - 03 Jun 2009 19:12

Thank you Ykv!

Your words are exactly what I need to hear. I can live with not focusing on the guilt for now (and maybe never) I just can't decide that it is not my fault.

On another note, the GUE attitude book is amazing. I have read through it and plan on rereading it often.

Currently, I am so focused on my recovery that it is the #1 thing on my mind. I hope that my enthusiasm does not wear off as it has the other times that I have attempted to break free of my terrible addiction. In one month or so, I will be going to the country where shemiras Ainayim is inordinately more difficult. Also, there is wireless internet access, something that I have B"H removed from my house entirely a number of years ago. Had I not done so, I would be in severely worse shape. Every summer, however, I have been Nichshal with the internet and I am already worrying about how I should deal with this Nisayon. I am trying to arrange that the internet should not be available to me, but it is hard to do without spilling the beans (which I don't think that I can do) I hope that someone can help.

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Re: starting my battle
Posted by bardichev - 03 Jun 2009 19:26

YOU SOUND LIKE SUCH A HEILIGE YID

YKV IS 10000% RIGHT .IGNORE THE GUILT IGNORE THE MENUVAL IGNORE THE
WHOLE GASS (STREET)

OH before I forget let me intro myself my name is bardichev I am the HYPER one on this forum.

You can always count on me for a extra heavy duty dose of chizzuk

going back to our conversation

ignore the whole thing don't even think of it in terms of doing teshuvah.(iknow I will get attacked for this nu nu..)

just be a new person a cool jew the menuval has no control over you now you work on a differnt frequency,watch your eyes from now till bein hazmanm

dont think about it yet.take it one hour at a time.

humle and happy

another coo I jew

bardichev

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by Dov - 03 Jun 2009 21:40

Dearest Hoping -

It is touching to read your posts and like others have written, you are certainly a holy jew. A few suggestions to make things much easier for you, to consider:

1) Get at least one addict in recovery who you can get real, clear, and **specific** with. Terms like

"**fell**" never did me any good, really, even though it is better than nothing. For **real** recovery get **real clear**.

2) Getting involved with this site is a fantastic start and support: stick with the winners. We are guided to the help we need! Two kinds of friends got most of us into and kept us inside the problem: bad friends and no friends. I cannot afford to isolate.

3) Consider building a network of friends like us who you can call/email on a moment's notice. I make and get at least 4-5 calls a day to help me not give lust the time of day, with Hashem's help. BTW, talking to "normals" - especially the religious do-gooder kind - just made my problems worse. It added silly, self-centered guilt and just more of the same "emotion" that got me screwed up in the first place. This is an addiction, an illness, and needs to be treated like one, period.

4) Notice that the problem is not really in your eyes but in your **head**. Mine is. Crazy thinking and self-centeredness goes together with lusting. Use the recovery tools (with help) to slowly - over months and years - change your **attitude**, not just to stop your behaviors. Otherwise, chas vesholom, you'll think you are OK after a few weeks of not acting out and basically drop the whole thing. Most people probably do this. It is just a matter of time until we'd all rationalize our way back into the same behaviors, just in another venue. Don't be satisfied with bronze or silver, go for real gold and recovery!

These ideas may seem like implementing them'd make things harder for you. But in the long run, doing them made living much much easier for me and they still do. Recovery is still the #1 thing on my mind. When it is not, I know it because I start feeling and acting wacky.

Heartfelt Tefillos are with you from many, many people who understand!

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by the.guard - 03 Jun 2009 21:55

"BTW, talking to "normals" - especially the religious do-gooder kind - just made my problems

worse".

Dov, thanks for sharing these great tips! Can you clarify a little what you mean by the quote above please? Sorry for the ignorance.

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by hoping - 04 Jun 2009 03:24

Thank you Dov for your wonderful advice.

A few questions:

1) How do I find an addict that I can be comfortable with?

2) How do I keep focusing on recovery while going through periods that I do not have a drive to sin? It is easier to focus on recovery when I am determined to change, but after I go through some time of not feeling the pull, the focus wears off, only to allow me to get caught in the downward cycle all over again.

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by BentleyJunkie - 04 Jun 2009 03:39

Hoping,

Welcome to the forum!

It seems like you already know what will happen when the yh decides to wait out when you're focused on recovery. Since you know that you'll automatically lessen your focus over time, you know what you have to do...just keep up the focus!

When you know the tactics of the yh will probably use...he'll wait out patiently until you become confident, distracted, depressed, etc...you end up waiting and waiting at the door for the yh to come a'knocking, because you know he will come at any moment (he's a fan of the unannounced drop-in)...then when he comes, you greet the yh (the thought, image, etc), acknowledge him, thank him for coming by, and tell him that he's not welcome here...all while being completely calm and mindful of what is going on. The key is to not give in a single millimeter...when an image/thought pops up, you must immediately do whatever is necessary to look at or think about something completely different.

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Re: starting my battle

Posted by the.guard - 04 Jun 2009 11:13

Dear Hoping, I will let Dov answer you - but I think I already know what he'll say to question #2... Here is something Dov posted recently;

One of the most frequent causes of failure at actually getting better is forgetting. It would be quite natural for me to consider myself fixed up as soon as I turn my back on the first temptation! "It's been three days - I feel better!! I am better!" You'd think that after a year of not screwing up all of us would just figure we are OK. In fact, the overwhelming majority of people I have met in recovery rooms over the years use a revolving door approach for a while, then finally disappear. Strangely, the "last gasp" is often when they start giving advice to others in meetings instead of sharing, I guess because they are now better. They also use "you" - the straw man - a lot when sharing, rather than frankly opening up about themselves directly. Fortunately, some do not. They retain faith - and it really is exactly faith - that they are not OK yet. This means I still cannot expect to act in the same ways I did before and expect to remain sane/healthy; cannot use lusting behaviors and remain in control of them (or myself); can't lie my head off and stay sane in every (or any) other respect, etc.

In order to actually keep getting better, I need to stay an addict in recovery. I try to say: "when I lose my temper/lie/act out, I do xyz." I can't talk like I am all better, lest I actually believe it. It sometimes makes others think I am still doing that stuff, still just as sick. Too bad. The gemora puts it most beautifully: Better I should appear a fool in the eyes of my fellow man for a short time (like a lifetime, for example) than be a fool in the eyes of the Almighty forever. Hatzlacha and stay in touch.

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