

B”H

THE GUARD-YOUR-EYES HANDBOOK



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PESACH SHEINI is all about getting a SECOND CHANCE

Check back for newer versions of this handbook [at this link](#).

Guardyour^eyes.org

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Preface

Although we were raised religious, we found ourselves acting in ways that went against what we had been taught. Sometimes we came to believe that we never really had *Emunah* in the first place, or that we were simply “weak-willed” people with a “stronger than usual” *Yetzer Hara*.

After a while, we may even have come to think that we were **anyways** too far gone, and that Hashem surely despised us by now, or had abandoned us.

Then we found the **GuardYourEyes Network** - an entire community of Jews **just like us**.

We discovered that we weren't alone and that it wasn't our fault. We learned that these behaviors are highly addictive, and what had started out many years ago as innocent curiosity or typical “teenage” problems, had led us into a full blown addiction, which is really a type of disease.

We discovered that Hashem had not abandoned us after all, but rather had a beautiful plan for us. And as we joined the GYE community, we began to see that plan unfold.

We learned that we really **COULD** change. All that was needed to begin our journey was **acceptance** that we had a problem.

The soul of every Jew cries inside of them, but we had accustomed ourselves to blocking out that cry. With proper guidance though, we began to discover that the *Emunah* we thought we never had, **was really there all along**.

The word “*kofer*” comes from the word “covered over” (as in the word “*kapores*”). The faith of even the biggest Jewish *kofer* is only “covered over”. **Every Jew** believes deep down. It is an instinct that we inherited in our very genes, going all the way back to *Avraham Avinu*. And like birds that can fly thousands of miles back home without ever having learned how, **all Jews** find their way home if they just follow their hearts.

Every Jewish life is a song in Hashem's honor. After 120, we will stand before Hashem and cry as the most beautiful song of “our lifetime” is played back before us. We will finally understand how much **Hashem truly loved us all along**, and that all the suffering and distance that we felt during our lives were really all part of a magnificent harmony.

A revolution is happening today in the GuardYourEyes community.

Hashem has waited all this time for us to **read these lines** and feel the stirrings of hope awoken inside us. **Today** we will begin to feel the harmony of that beautiful song Hashem is playing with our lives, using the strings of our hearts as the notes...

Welcome Home!



Introduction

Welcome to the GuardYourEyes community, a vibrant network and fellowship of religious Jews of all affiliations, struggling to purify themselves and break free of inappropriate behaviors stemming from Lust addiction. Our network is comprised of a website: www.guardureyes.com, a dynamic blog-site (under development) at www.guardyoureyes.org that will offer new material, tips, stories and articles every day, RSS feeds (coming soon), and a pulsating [forum](#) where members post logs of their journeys to recovery, ask questions and exchange tons of Chizuk with the rest of the community. Besides this, the GYE network provides [weekly phone conferences](#), as well as [hotlines](#) - both in the U.S and Israel, and [two daily Chizuk e-mails](#), (1) “**Learning to break free of Lust Addiction**” and (2) “**General Chizuk on Guarding the Eyes**”. We also help people find [accountability](#) partners and sponsors, and have a [Wall of Honor](#) for those warriors who want to chart their successes and keep a log of their journey to recovery. (**Note: We are in the process of combining the two websites; [guardureyes.com](http://www.guardureyes.com) and [guardyoureyes.org](http://www.guardyoureyes.org), into one powerful website**).

For the first time, a religious Jew has where to turn to for help in this area, as well as an entire network of tools, tips and group support to help break free of the insidious grasp of this addiction. All our work is free of charge (although donations are our life-line) and we zealously protect the complete anonymity of all our members. On [our forum](#), the [charts](#), the hotlines and the weekly phone conferences, only nicknames and non-revealing e-mail addresses are used. For starters, you may want to make yourself an anonymous e-mail address (something like recoveryGYE@gmail.com), as you enter our community.

Through the collective experience of the entire GYE community, and with the guidance of **R' Avraham J. Twerski**, a world renowned expert on addictions (founder of www.GatewayRehab.org), author of over 50 books and a true *Gadol* in *Klal Yisrael*, we present a set of guidelines below, that can help anyone - no matter how far they have fallen - to find their way out of the vicious cycle of Lust addiction.

Our sages have called *Shmiras Habris* “**Yesod**”, meaning “Foundation”. The foundation of a building is “underground” and no one sees it, yet it holds up the entire building! *Shmiras Habris* is the hidden part of a Jew, it's the **real you**. If the foundation of a Jew is weak, his whole spiritual structure is in danger of collapse.

We may have tried to do *Teshuvah* many times in the past, but the standard model of *Teshuva* (*Azivas Hachet, Charata* and *Kabbala al Haba*) doesn't work for us very well anymore. Addiction is a type of disease, and our Sages understood the nature of addiction as *Rebbe Asi* said: “*The Yetzer Harah in the beginning is compared to a strand of a spider web, and in the end like a rope that is used to tie cattle*”. Even more so, in **this** area where our Sages have said: “*The more it is fed, the hungrier it gets*”. Our Sages also recognized that once a person repeats a particular sin a number of times “*it becomes to him as if it is permitted*”. Therefore, the standard *Teshuvah* techniques are not usually sufficient in our case anymore. The nature of the addiction is analogous to someone standing on the railroad tracks while he watches the train bearing down on him, and yet **he can't move himself out of the way**. And as Rabbi Twerski puts it in his book “**Addictive Thinking**”: We place our hands on the stove, get burned, and yet we feel compelled to do it again.

Therefore on GYE, instead of the standard *Teshuvah* model, we begin to change our entire attitude. We learn the tools and techniques of how to **sidestep** the Lust, instead of trying to fight it head on. And we learn how to give our disease over to Hashem and live with **His** help, instead of trying to use **our own** strengths to fight something so much stronger than us.

With the proper guidance, we start to see a genuine change in ourselves that we never believed was possible. At GYE we are finally joining together, for ourselves and for all future generations, to strengthen **the Yesod** - the **very foundation** of our people.

The purpose of this handbook

When a newcomer first comes to our websites and forum, they can easily be overwhelmed and feel lost. They will see many tips and advice, ranging from the most simple and basic ideas, and on through more drastic steps, such as therapy, 12-Step groups and even medication. It is often hard for the newcomer to pinpoint exactly how “addicted” they really are, and what kind of steps are the most appropriate for them to try at the stage of addiction they may be at. For example, obviously a beginner is not going to jump straight into psycho-therapy or join a live 12-Step group, in the same way we don't try to treat the common flu with chemotherapy.

And that is the goal of this handbook. We have attempted to put together a guide of the practical tools that we, in the GuardYourEyes community, have found useful. And we have attempted to present them in a progressive order that goes more-or-less from the most basic and fundamental tools, and on through the more intense and life-changing recommendations.

The ideas and tools we present here, as well as the order they are presented in, are nothing more than suggestions. We are only sharing what many in the GYE community have found works for them. You may try to subtract, add, or jump steps, as you see fit. We would be happy to hear if you feel that something has worked better for you. (We may even add it in the next version of this handbook). Please send your comments to us [here](#), and download the latest version of the handbook [here](#).

It is our hope that with this step-by-step tool guide, every person who struggles with lust addiction, no matter how mild or severe their addiction may be, will find guidelines that can help them. All we need to do, is to start from the beginning and begin to check off the steps/tools that we have - or have not yet - tried. Should we find that we could not successfully break free even after applying the initial advice of this handbook, we will be able to find increasingly powerful and addiction-oriented solutions, ensuring that we will be able to achieve a complete eventual recovery.

We must be aware of the importance of utilizing the increasingly earnest solutions presented below in the event that we are **not** able to break free with the initial tools we try. The addiction is a disease, and if it is not taken care of, it only gets worse. Addiction leads us down a path of pain and self-destruction, until we stand to lose everything important to us, in this world and the next.

It is our fervent hope that those who still stand in the beginning stages of the addiction take heed and learn from the experience of those who have already fallen to “rock-bottom”. (Read this [story](#) on our website for one example). One of our goals at GuardYourEyes is to help people **"Hit Bottom while still On Top"** (please see Chizuk e-mail #441 on [this page](#) for a deeper understanding of this profound ambition). By helping people understand the “nature” of this addiction and where it ultimately leads them, we hope that they will take the necessary steps to break free of the disease while they're **"Still on Top"** and their lives remain intact.

The key to beginning to really heal is simply “Acceptance”. We must accept that we are addicted to lust before we can start to heal. Otherwise, we will read through this handbook and say to ourselves: *“they're not talking about me”*.

To understand better the nature of lust addiction, please see [this page](#). And to test yourself and see if you are addicted to lust, see [this page](#).

The disease **does not get better on its own**. And marriage **does not** solve the problem of lust addiction either. It only complicates it and has the potential to destroy two people's lives, instead of one. So we have to be ready to do whatever it takes to break free. Rabbi Twerski always says that this addiction is like a spiritual cancer. And to cure ourselves from this “cancer”, nothing should stand in our way.

Some Important Notes:

1) Please help us spread the word about this handbook. There are probably thousands of other religious Jews around the world who unfortunately struggle in these areas, suffering pain and shame in silence - sometimes for years! **See Tool #12 below** for a detailed example of how to prepare an e-mail which can be sent out to all the **religious contacts** in our address book, without anyone suspecting that we may struggle in this area ourselves. The e-mail should simply contain links to the two GuardYourEyes Handbooks ([the GuardYourEyes Handbook](#) and [the Attitude Handbook](#)).

2) We suggest first reading this handbook all the way through, from beginning to end, and only afterwards starting again from Tool #1 and working through each tool more carefully. On the second time around, we can click on the important links that are referenced in many of the tools, to help us understand the concepts better. By following this strategy, we will already have an overview of all the tools available, and this can help us focus better on each individual tool on the second time around.

3) Aside from being useful for any individual who struggles with lust addiction, this handbook can also be helpful to Rabbis, Mechanchim, Mashgichim, therapists and community leaders by providing clear-cut tools and guidelines for helping others who struggle with this addiction. This issue has unfortunately reached epidemic proportions in the religious community today, mainly due to the privacy and accessibility of the internet. Help us spread the word to community leaders and to anyone who may be able to **help others** in this area.

4) **Important:** The first 16 tools of this Handbook are not intended for those whose behaviors may have overstepped the boundaries of the law or are causing harm to others. In such cases, please skip straight to tools #17 and #18, and seek immediate psychiatric evaluation **before the next victim is claimed**.

Please pass this Handbook on!

The Chovos Halevavos (Shar Ahavas Hashem, Perek 6) says:

“And you should know, my brother, that the merit of the believer, even should he reach the utmost completion in fixing his soul for blessed G-d, and even should he be close to the angels in their good traits and praiseworthy actions, and in the efforts they expend in their service of their creator, and in their pure love for Him, still do not reach the merits of someone who guides people onto the good path and steers the wicked to divine service. For his merits are doubled in relation to their merits, for all days and all times”.

Imagine the merits you will accumulate if others are helped through you!

The 18 Tools

Tool #1 Attitude & Perspective

Having the proper perspective and attitude on this struggle can make all the difference. Often people write in to us saying that **had they only known** the proper perspective and attitude guidelines that we discuss on our website when they were younger, they would have never fallen into the addiction in the first place!

We created a PDF booklet called the "[GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)", which is a collection of what we in the GuardYourEyes community feel are some of the most important "Attitude" principles in this struggle. (This handbook is still a work-in-progress. And we would be happy to hear from you what "attitude & perspective" ideas you think are the most important. Please [send](#) us your comments and ideas).

The "Attitude" handbook can be a cornerstone tool in our struggle. (It may be helpful to make ourselves a day-by-day program to read one of the principles of the Attitude Handbook each day, and try to internalize the message).

Not only can the proper perspective help us in the struggle, but often, various misconceptions we have about the struggle contribute to the underlying reasons we act out in the first place. For example, one *Bochur* who was making a push for purity contacted us after a few days and wrote:

The initial enthusiasm has kind of worn off and my Yetzer Hara keeps telling me that it's not so bad, so why not? I can't keep up the spiritual enthusiasm for very long, and I don't see how I can possibly hold out much longer.

We sent him some of the sections from the "Attitude Handbook" and the next day he wrote back:

Thanks so much! It helped tremendously and seems to have done the trick! It makes me see this whole process in a completely different light. Instead on focusing on how depressing the struggle can be, I should be happy that I am "zoche" to have been given the opportunity for such great spiritual growth. Also, as you mentioned, it is likely that this is part of my main mission in this world. And not everyone is so lucky to know what his personal Avoda is!

This is just one example of how a simple change in attitude can make all the difference.

Therefore, it is vital that the proper perspective accompany us on our journey to recovery from day one - and throughout all the practical steps we take (as outlined in this handbook below). With the proper attitude, we can succeed in learning to control the addiction in a much shorter time frame, with far less steps, and in a much easier manner than otherwise.

Aside from the many great principles presented in the "Attitude Handbook", here are some other great steps we can take to continue learning and refining our perspective on this struggle every day:

- We can [Sign up](#) and receive the daily Chizuk e-mails. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.
- We can read through the archives of [previous Chizuk e-mails](#) sent out.
- We can read through the incredible chizuk that is posted on [the forum](#) every day!
- We can read through the "[Mind Tips](#)" and the "[Attitude](#)" section of our new blog-site.
- We can read through the tips [of fellow strugglers](#) on our website.

- We can listen to [this wonderful Shiur](#) from R' Yisrael Reisman Shlit"a, which provides some **excellent perspective** on this struggle.
- We can [Download here](#) a PDF file translated by GYE from a Hebrew book called "**The First Day of the Rest of My Life**", written by a religious addict with the purpose of helping people break free from Lust addiction.

If we read some of the above every day, even a little bit, we will quickly be swept up by the spirit of the GuardYourEyes community, and will rapidly internalize many of the *Yesodos* that will help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle throughout our journey.

Tool #2 Guard Your Eyes

It is not for nothing that our network is called "GuardYourEyes". Aside from having the proper attitude in this struggle - as discussed above, the most obvious **practical** step to conquering lust addiction is learning to **guard our eyes**. This is the cornerstone of breaking free, and it's obvious why: **We can't lust for that which we don't see**. When we guard our eyes, it's like we are avoiding the wrestling rink where the mighty Yetzer Hara is waiting to beat us up. If we simply don't enter the rink, he can't touch us!

And conversely, it is impossible to even **begin** to heal from lust addiction if we continue to be bombarded with triggers at every turn. As Lust Addicts, our minds have become accustomed to lusting. We can not gaze at stimulating imagery and expect not to be triggered. We cannot have it all within hands reach and expect to be strong enough to stay away. We have grown addicted to the chemical rush in our minds that the Lust brings on, much the same way that an alcoholic craves his bottle. Therefore, we must keep lust at a distance if we are to break the addictive cycle and be able to begin our journey to recovery.

And one of the first things that this entails is installing a strong internet filter.

Internet Filters

The GuardUrEyes.com website has an entire section with [filter options](#), ranging from "server" or "client" based, free or commercial, Jewish or non-Jewish. There is something there to meet anyone's needs. On our website, we can also learn about how the different types of filters work, and [what the terms mean](#), such as "server based", "client based", "white-list", "blacklist" etc...

For starters, we recommend [K9](#) as a free, solid filtering solution. However, it is imperative that someone else's e-mail address be used in the installation, so the password cannot be easily requested. For a step by step guide on how to do this correctly and efficiently [see here](#) (or [here](#)). If we must have completely open internet access for our work, we can still download [accountability software](#) where we will have e-mails sent to a partner who will see all the pages that we browse.

If our internet filter does not block all questionable sites, we must carefully consider our motivation for every site we visit. If it's a news site, we need to consider why we want to read certain articles. If it's because the site or article discusses inappropriate topics (fashion or "news items" relating to immoral behavior), or even if it *might* discuss them and the *Yetzer Hara* (read: *addiction*) wants us to find out for sure, then we must learn not to click. In general, it is important to limit the amount of sites we visit to a small list and question anytime we feel the need to visit a site that is not on the list.

In healing from this addiction, we need to learn to be very honest with ourselves. If we find that we can't control our surfing habits, we need to admit it and make stronger fences (see the next

tool), such as getting a better filter or setting the current filter's settings to a higher protection level.

We highly suggest getting solid internet filters that block any questionable sites. The best type of filters are Jewish server-based filters like Jnet, Koshernet, Yeshivanet and Internet Rimon (in Israel). And of course, the best level of protection is "White-list", which means that all sites are blocked except for specific sites that we ask the company to open for us (or sites that the company has already checked and white-listed). If "white-list" is impossible for us, the filter should at least be set to the highest protection setting we can afford (based on our business needs), even if that means less entertainment.

It is important to realize though, that the goal of the filter is only to keep it "**out of sight and out of mind**". It is not going to remove the possibility of accessing indecent material altogether. If a person is determined enough, they will often be able to find ways to bypass filters, and even if not, they can find many other venues to access inappropriate material. The change must ultimately come from within, with a sincere desire to stop lusting. (See the "[Attitude Handbook](#)" for more on how to achieve this sincerity).

The filter acts mainly as a "*heker*", similar in a sense to what our Sages tell us about *Palti ben Layish* (to whom *Shaul Hamelech* gave over David's wife). Palti was alone every evening with Michal (who Chazal tell us was one of the most beautiful women) and yet he never stumbled because of a sword that he placed between the two of them, saying that whoever bypasses this sword should be run through by it. The filter is like our sword, it is our *heker*. But it will not stop us completely unless we want it to. **However**, since it can take a long time until we learn to genuinely give up our lust to Hashem, we must have a strong filter at all times. For if we don't get it out of reach, we won't be able to stop the vicious cycle of addiction and **begin the healing process**.

Another great way to make sure we guard our eyes online is to place the computer in a highly visible area of the house, such as the living room, and to also make sure never to use the internet when alone in the house.

In any event, it is best for us - if possible - to avoid all non-Jewish news and entertainment sites (and the like). See our [Kosher Isle](#) for lists of Kosher news and entertainment sites that can provide us with more than our daily dosage of news and distractions.

Guarding our eyes outside

As addicts to lust, we must be extra careful about where we go. It is best to refrain from frequenting malls and other such public places where we know we will have difficulty guarding our eyes. If we must be in such places, we can try to spend as little time there as possible, and perhaps even wear sunglasses covered inside with non-see through lamination. (See Chizuk e-mail #76 on [this page](#) for a nice story about this). Even weddings, *Simchos* and family gatherings can be problematic for us, and we can try to prepare ourselves mentally before hand. We can resolve to remain in the non-mixed areas as much as possible, or try to find a seat facing another direction.

If we will have to be in an area where we know will be a struggle, we can try to offer a short prayer before leaving the house: "Please Hashem, help me not to take any **second** looks". And if we find that we do stumble and take a second look, we can quickly offer another short prayer and say "Hashem, I surrender my lust to you! Please take it away from me".

Guarding our eyes off-line

If we are serious about breaking free of Lust addiction, we need to try to refrain from watching TV, movies and reading non-Jewish magazines and newspapers, all of which are full with promiscuity. Even the most innocent-sounding children's movies today are filled with imagery which can be very triggering for a lust addict and we must therefore try to avoid them.

Let's talk about movies, for example. Movies are one of the biggest stumbling blocks to a proper healing from lust addiction, because often we find them very hard to give up. They serve as a source of entertainment for millions of people around the world, and they are often a welcome distraction from the difficult realities of life. But movies are filled to the brim with triggers to lust. (See [this humorous article](#) about movies from Arutz Sheva Blogger, Tzvi Fishman). And even if one is successful to find a movie with absolutely no provocatively dressed women or kissing scenes in them (almost impossible today), will there still not even be any attractive female actors in the movie at all? And therefore, if we are **trying** to guard our eyes in the street – and **we must be**, how can we allow ourselves to stare at attractive women in a movie for 2-3 hours straight? And as lust addicts, most of us simply cannot look at attractive women – even modestly dressed – and not think or feel lust. The nature of the addiction has taken this ability away from us. And as long as we are lusting, we are still feeding the addiction.

Therefore, on the GYE community, we know that if we are truly serious about breaking free from the poison of lust, we must let this be our sacrifice for Hashem's glory and give up non-Jewish movies for good. And surely this is a most precious sacrifice in Hashem's eyes, that we bring on the alter of our hearts!

For more practical tips on guarding the eyes, see [this page](#).

The cornerstone

It is important to realize that guarding the eyes is not just "Tool #2" of the tools we bring in this Handbook, but rather, it is the cornerstone of all the tools. Without guarding our eyes, we are continuing to lust and feed the addiction, and no matter what other steps we take, we are still acting like an alcoholic who takes small sips of gin to get his high. We have to learn to **let go of lust** and not allow ourselves to have that "first drink". There is no "drinking like a gentleman" for an alcoholic, nor is there for us. Once we taste it a little, we are easily drawn back in and will often lose control. (See the SA Guide called "[Why Stop Lusting?](#)").

Although we present this tool in the very beginning, guarding our eyes applies throughout all the tools. Even someone who is more seriously addicted and is working already with Tools #14 - #17 of this handbook, will still need to guard their eyes. A true lust addict **does not have control in this area**. No matter how many years he manages to stay clean, and no matter what steps he does, if he is faced **head-on** with lust he will feel powerless, as the saying goes: "Once an addict, always an addict". As scary as this may seem, it really is not so bad. Someone who has an Iron deficiency for life can lead a perfectly normal life, as long as he takes his daily Iron pill.

With the 12 Steps (Tool #14 below) we learn how to admit powerlessness and surrender our lust to Hashem. By following the steps of this Handbook, we can learn to keep the addiction completely in check, and lead happy and fulfilling lives. But we must never let our guard down. The number one symptom of this disease is that when we are faced head-on with lust, we cannot help lusting. And that is why the very first practical tool in recovering from lust addiction is to guard our eyes and avoid lust at all costs.

It's a Process

As we discussed, guarding the eyes is the starting point, middle point, **and** the final frontier of this struggle. Even when we have already learned to control the more seriously damaging addictive

behaviors, we may still find that it takes us yet another few years to learn how to fully surrender our lusting to Hashem, and thereby gain complete control over our eyes. So **don't get discouraged** if you break free of the inappropriate behaviors and still find it difficult to guard your eyes on the street. It is a process. But if we are determined to get our lives and priorities back on track, we **do** see progress in this area slowly but surely. And we **must** progress. Staying in the same place keeps us vulnerable to relapse, and if we don't try to move forward a little every day in learning how to guard our eyes, we remain susceptible to being drawn back into the harmful addictive behaviors as well.

Some GuardYourEyes Tips

Here are some GuardYourEyes training tips that might help us get started in learning to guard our eyes on the street. We can try to accept upon ourselves for "x" amount of days or weeks, that every time we find ourselves gazing at something we shouldn't we will (either):

- give ourselves a pinch that hurts,
- give 25 cents to tzedaka,
- or give our eyes a "time out" by closing them for 6 seconds.

And let us reflect for a moment. If we didn't have this amazing gift of sight that Hashem gave us, would we be able to lust? Scientists tell us that the human mind makes billions of calculations per second while processing information from the billions of nerve endings that connect our eyes to our brains. How can we take this amazing gift and use it to go against Hashem's will?

Letting Go of Lust

The world is full of temptations. If we want to hold on to lust, we will have **endless** opportunities to continue lusting at every turn. We will be fighting a losing battle by constantly trying not to look at things we want so strongly to look at. Instead, **the real trick** is to learn how to **let go** of the lusting all together. Instead of fighting it head-on, we need to simply let go of it.

As someone who is working the 12-Steps once wrote:

Today, the fight is much easier for me. When I have urges, I admit powerlessness, acknowledge that Hashem is the only One that can - and will - help me, and I ask Hashem to remove the lust from me. I am frankly surprised by how much better this works than fighting the urges head on

Get daily *chizuk* on "guarding the eyes"

To receive daily *chizuk* on *Shmiras Ainayim*, [sign up](#) to our *Shmiras Ainayim Chizuk* e-mail list.

The eyes are the windows to our souls and must be guarded diligently if we are to make real spiritual progress at all. Download [this PDF file](#) called "Windows of the Soul" by the Salant foundation, for a 30-day Chizuk program to help us learn how to guard our eyes properly.

Tool #3 Making Fences

The addiction is more powerful than us, and if we try to fight it **head on** we will almost always lose. Once we are standing at the edge of the cliff, we will be very vulnerable to falling off of it. Instead, we must stay as far away from the edge of the cliff as possible. (See Principle 15 in the ["Attitude Booklet"](#)). Indeed, one of the most powerful tools in this struggle is making good fences.

One great way to make “a fence” is to create a list of things that we will do before allowing ourselves to fall. The list can be made up of various items, such as “call mother”, say a *Kappitle Tehilim*, take a 10 minute walk, etc... Just pulling out the list and looking at it, may already be enough to dissuade us from acting out.

Vows

In order to ensure that our fences are strong, we can use a very powerful tool called *Nedarim* or vows. Normally making vows is frowned upon by our sages as with someone playing with fire, but when it comes to girding oneself from these temptations, we find that making vows is praised by the Torah and by Chazal. As the Pasuk says "***Nishbati va'akayeima, lishmor mishpatei tzidkecha - I have vowed and will uphold it, to guard your righteous laws***". And as it says "***Nishba lehora velo yamir - oseh eileh lo yimot le'olam - He who swears to prevent bad and does not nullify... he will never falter***". And Chazal also say that Bo'az swore to guard himself from transgressing when *Ruth* came to him at night, as it says: "***Chai Hashem, Shichvi ad haboker - In the name of G-d (a vow), lay here until the morning***".

However, as important and helpful vows can be in fighting addiction, they are also just as dangerous. **The addiction is very often more powerful than vows.** Therefore, it is vital that we learn **how** to make vows in a way that will work and be safe. Instead of fighting the addiction head-on through the vows, we can make vows that will help us “walk around” the addiction. For example, we can try to make a vow for two weeks that before we give in, we will first do the things that we wrote on our list (mentioned above), or make a vow to give a generous donation [to Tzedaka](#) in the event of a fall.

Really Strong Fences

The farther we have fallen into this addiction, the more desperate we become to break free of its clutches. In such cases, extreme vows have sometimes been known to be a wondrous tool. For example, one guy wrote that he vowed to give \$200 to tzedaka after every fall. Within 4 falls, he was free of his addiction. Another person wrote that he kept matches next to his bed and vowed to burn his fingers before giving in. And yet a third guy (in Israel) wrote that he succeeded to break free by vowing that every time he fell, he would have to take a trip by bus to the Kotel and stay there for an hour and a half. This helped him to ultimately stop completely, because each time he felt that he was about to give in, he would remember what he would have to do and be deterred.

However, even less extreme vows - as mentioned before, such as doing 10 minutes of exercise **before** giving in, or vowing that **if we fall** we will go to the Mikva or take a half hour walk, can be tremendously helpful over the long term in less severe cases of addiction.

Taking Great Caution

Any and all vows we make should be made very carefully and only for short periods of time. As we learn which vows are the most helpful for us in fighting our addiction, we can make the vows for progressively longer periods of time. It is important to write up a list of the vows for our records, and also to enable us to review them carefully before making them each time. In addition, having a list of the vows will help us refine them as we discover the ones that work better for us, and we can then use this refined list to make the vows again for progressively longer periods of time. It is important to renew our vows **before** they expire, because once they expire, we often get lazy about renewing them and become vulnerable to falling once again.

Please see [this page](#) and [this page](#) for more information on how to make vows in the safest and most effective ways.

Bein Hazmanim

Vacations and *Bein Hazmanim* are a good example of situations which can be a bigger test for us, since there is more free time available and less structure. Such situations may require a more detailed set of fences and safeguards than usual. We can try to draw up a “Battle Plan” in advance and try to plan for some structure in our days, as much as possible. We can set specific times for particular activities, such as learning with a *chavrusah* or other things that can keep us busy. We can even draw up emergency plans of various activities we can do, for times when we might start feeling bored or vulnerable.

We can also draft in advance a special “*Bein Hazmanim*” list of fences, to help us avoid having to fight the *Yetzer Hara* head-on. Some of the fences could include:

- Setting up a filter on our home computers
- Not using the computer when alone in the room (or at least if no one is home)
- Setting ourselves time-limits on the computer (at least for non-work related activity)
- Making a list of websites that we are allowed to visit– and not visiting any other sites (at least when alone)
- Avoiding certain triggering places that we used to “hang out” at
- Avoiding movies

The secret to success in this area is learning where we are vulnerable and preparing fences in advance. We all need to learn our own *Yetzer Hara* well, as it says in *Mishlei* (12:10): “**Yode’ah Tzadik nefesh be’hemto – The Tzadik knows the nature of his animal**”.

Tool #4 Daily Chizuk

To succeed in this struggle, it is important for us to get fresh perspective and Chizuk each day. Chazal say that the *Yetzer Hara* renews his attack on us every day. He plays real nasty, and will use every trick in the book (and not in the book) to get us to fall. To counter this, we need new Chizuk and tips every day. There is so much material on our website and on other sites as well, but it’s often overwhelming and not practically within reach when we need it most. Our network provides a daily Chizuk e-mail with antidotes, tips, articles, and quotes from the holy texts, therapists, and fellow strugglers, to help us break free of this addiction. We have hundreds of members signed up already, and for many people it is literally their life-line.

So let’s [sign up today](#) and **make sure to read each day’s Chizuk e-mail**. The *Yetzer Hara* will do his best to get us to ignore the e-mails after a while, but if we are determined to break free – we need to make sure to read and internalize their message every day. Also, like drops of water on Rabbi Akiva’s rock, a little Chizuk every day makes a very strong impression on us over time.

GuardYourEyes is also in the process of developing a dynamic blog-site at www.guardyoureyes.org where new *chizuk*, tips, stories and quotes will be posted hopefully every day. There will also be RSS feeds where we can get each new post straight to our feeds without even having to visit the website. With all these great tools, we will never stop learning new things and getting stronger all the time!

We can also browse through the archives of hundreds of previously sent *chizuk* e-mails on [these pages](#) as well. Or we can browse the hundreds of great tips on our website [here](#) (or on our new blog-site [here](#)), divided into intuitive categories, such as Practical Tips, Spiritual Tips, Therapy Tips, Mind Tips, and “Tips from Fellow Strugglers”.

Let's not try to bite too much at once though. It is better to read less and internalize it, than to read tons of material and forget it. We need to find a balance that works best for us, where we read a few articles or tips every day; just enough for us to be able to swallow, digest and feel a little stronger until tomorrow.

Tool #5

Using the Tools on our Website

The [home-page](#) of our website lists a set of tools. **Let's use them!**

Just to mention a few that aren't mentioned in the other tools of this handbook:

We can read through the [FAQ page](#) where we will likely find answers to questions that bothered us as well.

When feeling bored or vulnerable, we can check out the [Kosher Isle](#) of our network, for Kosher entertainment sites, activity ideas, and lots of Torah audio and video *shiurim*.

When in the need for some *Simcha* or some emotional inspiration, we can click on our [Music page](#) for a selection of music that can bring us to tears or make us want to dance!

We can read the [recovery stories](#) on our site (and on our new blog-site [here](#)) and see how we are not alone. We will read how others - even worse off than us - were able to break free, and we will be inspired to follow their examples!

We can check out the [Links Section](#) of our website, where we will find other great websites and other ideas to help us battle this addiction.

And of course, like we mentioned in the previous tools as well, we can use the [Tips section](#) on the site (or on the [new site](#)) to get new ideas all the time of how to succeed, and we can browse through the hundreds of [previous Chizuk e-mails](#) to help us continue refining our perspective on this struggle.

Breaking an addiction is a little like "mind surgery", and in the same way that no one can become a good "neurosurgeon" without huge amounts of studying, we must also be ready to "study" **well** in this battle for our souls.

Tool #6

Finding Alternative Fulfillment

We frequently focus on breaking free of the addiction by mainly trying to avoid triggers and running away from the *Yetzer Hara*. But often, the best way to stop an addiction is to remove the need for what the addiction is trying to fill. An addiction is often a psychological escape that we use to run away from the realities of life. If we can manage to keep ourselves occupied with healthy and fulfilling activities that we enjoy, we will often find that the addiction begins to disappear of its own accord.

We can try to find new jobs or projects that will enable us to express our creativity, find enjoyment, and reconnect with life and the world around us. This will help fill the "void" that we

were subconsciously trying to satisfy with unhealthy pleasure seeking. Some ideas can be found in our [Kosher Isle](#) (and especially in [Kosher Activities](#) section).

As the book "[The First Day of the Rest of My Life](#)" puts it:

Disconnecting from the imaginary world of fantasy and sensual stimulation and reconnecting anew to life can only happen if somehow in the beginning of the addiction, before things have gotten out of hand and it has caused irreversible damage, one succeeds in finding realistic and obtainable challenges and goals, and manages to achieve fulfillment and belonging through them.

Some ideas could include *Chesed* projects or involvement in the community in various ways. If you are a *Bochur* in Yeshiva, you might try and get the job of organizing the *Otzar Haseforim*, running a canteen, providing dry cleaning services, haircuts, etc... The main thing is to keep busy, reconnect with the world around us and find fulfillment in a variety of ways that will counteract the "false fulfillment" that the addiction tries to provide us with, which causes us to close up into ourselves and slowly destroy our lives and our souls.

For those who can achieve it, obviously the best type of fulfillment and joy comes from a true connection with Hashem. This can be built up through learning Torah with enjoyment, adding *Kedusha* to one's life, and by seeking a deeper connection with *Yiddishkeit* in general. (See Chizuk e-mail #464 on [this page](#) for more on this concept, and see also what Rabbi Twerski writes in [this Hamodia article](#)). Torah is like water, and as someone once put it, **"We can't put out a fire without water, even if we know it burns"**.

Tool #7 Cutting Down

If you've tried the steps above and you still find that the addiction is controlling you and causing frequent falls, it could be helpful to apply the battle-tactic of conquering and securing one territory at a time, instead of trying to conquer everything at once.

Our sages have said: **"There is a small organ in a man, if one feeds it - it is hungry, if one starves it - it is satiated"**. This is a very important *Yesod* to keep in mind, and it shows how much our Sages understood the nature of this addiction.

We can make ourselves red lines and try to cut down as much as we can. If we would act out every day until now, we can try - **for starters** - to cut it down only to once every two days. If it used to be twice a week, we can try cutting it down to once a week. Or we can try making a strong resolution for a period of time, that besides for, say, one particular day of the week, we will not even consider acting out, no matter what. As we do this and learn to cut down more and more, we will find that **"the less we feed it, the less we need it"**. (See [this page](#) for more on this *Yesod*).

This tactic also teaches us not to use the addiction as an "escape mechanism" anymore. Very often, the subconscious reason that we became addicted in the first place was that we began to use the addiction as a kind of "escape" from reality. We used the addiction to sooth ourselves and medicate our feelings. But once we start to draw red lines and cut down on these behaviors with hard work and determination, we will force ourselves to no longer **instinctively** use the behaviors to "escape" into ourselves. This causes a gradual change in our thinking that ultimately makes it much easier to break free completely.

Also, as we work on progressively cutting down, we are building up our virtues. In the merit of saying “no” to ourselves thousands of times, *Hashem* will give us special divine assistance to ultimately help us break free completely.

The Gemara says: "***Habah letaher misaayen lo – He who comes to be purified, they help him***", and Chazal also say: "***Biderech she'adom rotzeh leilech molichin osoh – in the way a person wants to go, they lead him***". Why does the Gemara speak always in plural form: "***they help him***", and "***they lead him***"? The Maharsha explains that every effort a person makes creates an angel. And when the army of angels gets large enough, it has the power to help one overcome all the obstacles and lead him to where he wants to go!

Every time we say “no” to the addiction, it is a priceless coin that is added to our spiritual bank. And even if and when we do end up falling, we do not lose what we had previously gained. When we have enough “spiritual coins” in our account, *Hashem* helps us to completely break free. (See the "[Attitude Booklet](#)" for more on these important principles).

However, it is important to emphasize that these tactics will only be effective if our **goal** is to stop completely over time, by progressively cutting down more and more. But if we allow ourselves to become complacent with doing it in controlled amounts, we will stop progressing and remain addicted to these behaviors. And as we often end up learning later the hard way, addictions don't get better, they only get worse.

Tool #8 Breaking the Addictive Pattern

If slowly cutting down doesn't seem to do the trick and we find after a while that it doesn't lead to a complete cessation of the addictive behaviors, we need to take a more drastic “Leap of Faith” and try to cut out these behaviors from our lives completely.

There was a recent scientific study that found it takes 90 days to change the neuron pathways created by addictive behaviors in the brain. It was shown that if an addict refrains from their addictive behavior for 90 days, they will find it far easier to stop the addictive thought patterns.

We can find the idea of 90 in *Chazal* as well. The *Halacha* is that if one is not sure if he said “*v'sen tal u'matar*”, he must repeat the *Shmoneh Esrei*. However after 30 days, one no longer needs to repeat *Shmoneh Esrei* when in doubt, because we assume that his mind has already gotten used to saying it. And **30 days is 90 *Shmoneh Esreis!*** *Chazal* knew that it takes 90 times of doing something to get the mind used to it.

We should be aware though, that this 90 day journey may not be easy. We may experience withdrawal symptoms (see [this PDF](#)) and feel depressed, down and needy for stretches of time. We may find that the fight feels unbearable, to the point where we even feel a taste of “death”. But these feelings never last for more than a few hours at a time. And no great feat can come without some *Messiras Nefesh*. (See this wonderful revelation in Chizuk e-mail #420 on [this page](#)).

Knowing in advance that we may experience withdrawal symptoms will make it easier to deal with them when they occur. And if we believe, like so many of us have found to be true, that after 90 days we will feel much freer from the addiction, we will find the inner strength to hold out no matter what it takes! Indeed, so many people have done it already on our website and forum, and they have experienced great subsequent success.

GYE created a [90 day chart](#) to help people track their progress, and we can check out the link and see for ourselves how many people are currently on their way to 90 days on our chart. See [here](#) for the rules and instructions on how to join the “90 day chart”. We also have a special chart called [“The Wall of Hashem’s Honor”](#) for those who have already made the 90 day journey, and thank G-d, it is growing all the time!

Also, to help us on this journey and provide a framework of group support for the duration of the 90 days and beyond, we set up a special [“Wall of Honor” board](#) on our forum where we can post **a log of our journey, every day**. By doing this, we will get tons of *chizuk* and be an inspiration to everyone else in the community as well. This also helps us track our progress over time and provides a certain amount of accountability among the other warriors on the forum whom we quickly come to see as our “spiritual family”. After all, we don’t want to let them down! Also, by joining the community on the forum, we obtain the ability to strengthen others as well, which in itself is a big factor in recovery (see tool #12 below).

Tool #9 Accountability

The first eight tools of this handbook focused mainly on our own private struggle with the addiction. However, if we haven’t been successful yet with the tools above, it is time to bring the struggle to the next level and introduce others into the picture. **We won’t go it alone anymore.** Our own strengths have proved insufficient in dealing with our addiction. We need to start exploiting strength from **outside** ourselves, to help us succeed.

The *Pasuk* in *Mishlai* (18:1) says: **“Le’taava yevakesh nifrad – Desire seeks isolation”**. Being isolated causes us to go after our *Taavah* – our lust. The addiction wants us to withdraw into ourselves and disconnect from life. A partner in this struggle can do wonders in helping us reconnect with the world around us and ultimately break free. Going into detail with someone else about what we’ve done, is known to be one of the best ways to get out the shame, guilt and remorse, and move on.

In addition to the above, simply telling over our feelings and thoughts to a friend or mentor has tremendous power to help us break the insidious power of the addiction. As the ***Tzetal Katan*** of the great Chassidic master, *R’ Elimelech of Lizentzk* states:

One should relate before one’s teacher, who instructs him in the way of HaShem, or even before a good friend, all of one’s thoughts that are contrary to the Holy Torah that the Yetzer HaRah causes to arise in his mind or heart. [Whether they occur] when he is learning Torah, praying, sitting in his bed, or during the day. And one should not withhold anything because of shame. He will find that by relating these things, he will gain the power to break the strength of the Yetzer HaRah so that it will no longer be able to overcome him other times. This is in addition to the good advice that he will receive from his friend in the ways of Hashem. And this is a wonderful remedy.

We see from the above, that simply relating ones struggles to a friend or mentor has the power to **break the strength** of the *Yetzer Hara*.

Aside from the fact that the very act of talking it out already lessens the struggle, the main purpose of a partner is to add the vital element of accountability to the equation. As *Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai* blessed his students, “May your fear of heaven be equal to your fear of man”. And his students asked him: “Rebbe, is that all?”. And he answered: *“Halevai!”*. As we can see so pointedly in this story of *Rav Amram, Raban Shel Chassidim* (*Kidushin* 81/a):

*Some women who had been taken captive were redeemed and brought to Nehardai. They were kept in the attic of Rav Amram the Chasid and the ladder was removed. At night, a beam of light reflected off one of the women, revealing her beauty. Rav Amram was seized with lust and he moved the ladder (which normally needed 10 people to move it) and began to ascend. As he was halfway up, he screamed "**There is a fire in Rav Amram's house!**" and the Rabanan flocked to his house. After they saw that there was no fire they said to him "You embarrassed us (with your behavior)!". Answered Rav Amram: "It is better to suffer embarrassment in this world than in the next".*

We may ask though, if *Rav Amram* had so much Fear of Heaven that he was determined enough to call out "fire", why couldn't he just have stopped himself? The answer is that *Rav Amram* knew, that unless others would see what he was doing, he was powerless to stop himself from the power of the lust. This amazing story shows us the **immense value** of "human" accountability.

Is there anyone among us who will say he is stronger than *Rav Amram*? And we are faced with these desires every day, in the privacy of our homes! We **must** have accountability to succeed in breaking the addiction. We need someone who will hear us scream "**Fire!**" when we feel weak, and someone who we will need to be accountable to.

We can try to find a close friend or a Rabbi we respect, whom we can confide in about our struggles. And even more importantly, we need to make sure to keep in touch with them about our progress and give them **honest** updates every few days. Obviously for this to work properly, we must be determined to remain **completely** honest and open with our accountability partners, at all cost. If we fall, the shame we will feel in reporting it will be atonement in itself, as well as providing a strong incentive to remain clean next time.

We can also hook up with someone else who is struggling, and give each other Chizuk. It may be helpful to be in touch on a daily basis at first, either by phone or by e-mail. As we progress, the updates can be less frequent, but they should still be at set intervals, which we decide between each other in advance.

If our wives know about our struggles, they can be one of the best accountability partners there are. We will feel their pain when we are slipping even more acutely than with others, and this will be a big incentive for us to remain clean. If our wives do not know, it may be extremely helpful in the long term if they find out. **However**, this should be done only once we are taking serious steps to recover and are seeing good progress. Also, it should best be done with careful preparation and preferably in the presence of a therapist or Rabbi that can help her understand the nature of the addiction and offer guidance on how to cope. Although it is often very painful for the wife to find out about our struggles in this area, in the long term it generally does a lot more good than damage. Aside from the strong "accountability" this provides us with, a couple can ultimately grow much closer together when there are **no secrets** between them any more. (See also [this page](#) for more on the wife finding out).

It is most effective if the partner or sponsor is indeed someone we know. This adds an element of personal honor, which boosts the efficiency of the accountability. However, if this is not an option for us, **the GuardYourEyes network provides a framework to help us find an accountability partner or sponsor. Download [this questionnaire](#) and send it to us by e-mail at: eyes.guard@gmail.com.** We will enter you into our database and try to find you a partner or sponsor that matches your gender, marriage status, location and other constraints that best match your situation. Ultimately, we plan to develop a system at GuardYourEyes where each member can have their own profile with an anonymous username and a personal password, and each member will be able to search for partners or sponsors themselves. (Through this system, they will also be able to register for the 90-Day Wall of Honor - see tool #8 - and update the chart themselves).

The GYE network is looking for volunteers who want to help others and can provide us with either their e-mail address or phone number for us to share with others who are trying to find a partner or sponsor. And (as we discuss more in detail in tool #12 below) there is no greater way to assure our own recovery, than to **be there for others** as well. If you are willing, please [send us](#) your e-mail address or phone number, location, current sobriety status, marriage status, and the times you are available to answer e-mails or talk heart to heart with other strugglers on the phone. Let us also know if you want to be someone else's partner or sponsor, and let us know if you feel you can handle more than one partner or sponsee at a time.

To be a sponsor, we must have at least 90 days sobriety, but anyone can be a partner already from day one, to simply be there as an accountability partner and exchange understanding, *chizuk* and hope. If we still feel inadequate to provide others with *chizuk*, we can use the [GYE Attitude Handbook](#) as a basis for great material to discuss with our partner. Or we can read from the hundreds of tips on the website or the archives of the hundreds of past *chizuk* e-mails sent out.

See [here](#) for more on the importance of having a partner in this struggle.

Those who join 12-Step SA groups (tool #15 below) will be able to find a sponsor in the group who will serve as an accountability partner, as well as a guide to help them through the 12 steps. As one SA member beautifully summed up the power of accountability, and of having others help us in our struggle:

*I have had enough of the silent suffering, the hiding, the lying and the living a double life. Today, I talk to people in my (SA) program every day, besides going to meetings twice a week. **The whole truth about me needs to be on the outside, with safe people.***

Tool #10 Group Support

If a partner or sponsor alone does not yet give us the strength we need to stop acting out fully, there is nothing more powerful than group support to help addicts break free from addictions. Rabbi Twerski consistently stresses this to people who seek his council on dealing with addictions. (See [here](#) for a short piece from Rabbi Twerski on the value of group support).

On the GuardYourEyes network, there are a few group support options. Firstly, we can join [the forum](#) and post there frequently. We quickly come to view the fellow warriors there as our spiritual "family". We get tons of support and are able to share *chizuk* with so many others. This is very helpful in our own recovery. We no longer feel alone in our struggle, and we watch how others, perhaps even worse off than we are, make great progress.

Besides this, GuardYourEyes network offers a free 12-Step phone conference every week where we can share anonymously with a group of *Yidden* like us, and get *chizuk* from the 12-Step program and from each other. Contact the moderator of these phone calls for more details at: yidvre@gmail.com . We also offer another phone conference option, with a professional and religious addiction therapist on the line (who charges only \$10 a session). Contact zcitr@yahoo.com for info on how to sign up to that group. See [this page](#) for more info on both phone groups.

One of the previous Slonimer Rebbes had a Chassid that embarked on a business trip. Being away from the comfort and protection of his home, he was tempted with the Nisayon of Yosef Hatzaddik. In a moment of cheshbon hanefesh he said to himself: "when I come back, my Rebbe will see that I sinned". But then he thought: "I will avoid my Rebbe". And then he said to himself,

*“but my friends will notice on my behavior that I sinned, and can I live without my friends? NO, I need my friends!” And that is what helped him overcome his Yetzer Hara. When he got back, his Rebbe told him: **“What even a Rebbe can not accomplish, having good friends CAN accomplish”**.*

I would like to quote from a letter that an older *Bochur* once [sent us](#):

Yes, it is possible to be shomer habris, both before marriage and after. How did I make it this far? At the time it seemed impossible but, Baruch Hashem, I have a few friends who realize the importance of this mitzva as well. The six of us are unmarried bachurim, currently learning in a prominent yeshiva. Together with my friends, we formed a group based on the idea that this is an important focus of our lives. We meet once a month to stress the importance and beauty of what we have undertaken, and also to make some pledges. The rules of this group require that if one falls chas v'shalom, we are required to inform all other members of the group and to pay a fine of 200 dollars to the tzedaka of our choice. The number is arbitrary and serves as a number that is a significant amount, yet doable. The members have managed to be shomer habris from one month to six months, as of today Baruch Hashem. Your amazing website offers many aspects of our group. It all starts with accountability. If you have someone to answer to, and especially to a group, it will be that much easier and it becomes that much more real.

Based on the above letter, we would like to make this suggestion to **everyone** in the GYE community. If we know even one or two friends that also struggle in these areas, we can maybe start our own little group, which would meet at set intervals to discuss the importance of these matters, offer each other *chizuk* and provide accountability for one another. As time goes on, the group may grow to include additional members.

One idea to make this work **even better**, would be that even if we each kept our own personal “clean count”, there could be a separate count for the “group” as well. And if one of the group fell, the “group” count would have to be reset (and perhaps everyone would have to give a set amount to Tzedaka as well). This would provide a very strong incentive to the members of the group, not to be the one to cause the “group count” to be reset! Also, each time someone fell, he would need to discuss with the group what steps he will take to ensure that he does better next time. And this would help everyone in the group become strengthened as well! Obviously, these ideas could only work if every member of the group is committed to being 100% honest. And that should perhaps be the first condition to being accepted to such a group: a commitment to complete honesty.

If you are a *Bochur* learning in Yeshiva, you could start a revolution in your Yeshiva (discreetly, of course) and earn unfathomable reward in the next world if you can find the inner strength to overcome your natural feelings of shame, and try to begin a discreet group of serious *Bochurim* who would meet at set intervals, as we discussed above. The group can start with even two boys, and gradually it would grow as word would spread (under the tables). Imagine the merit you would have in such an undertaking! Not only would this help you tremendously in your **own** struggle, but it would help countless others, **especially** if the idea continues on after your time for perhaps many years to come! And who knows? Maybe in your merit, this idea would even spread to other Yeshivos as well! What an unbelievable opportunity this is, to do something great for yourself, for *Klal Yisrael* and for **Hakadosh Baruch Hu!**

(For the most powerful form of face-to-face group support, see Tool #15 below).

Tool #11 Talk to the Experts

If we are at a loss as how to continue our journey or we feel that all the steps we've taken until today still don't seem to do the trick for us, there's still hope! We can pick up the phone and call the GYE hotlines to discuss our addiction with someone who understands us, someone with personal experience and long-term sobriety, someone who can give us advice on how to proceed.

We have free hotlines in both the U.S and in Israel. See [this page](#) of our website for more information. The guys on our hotlines have worked with the 12-Step program in face-to-face groups and they are the best suited and experienced people to guide us on our journey by sharing with us what **worked for them** and what **didn't work for them**. They can also provide us with much insight into the nature of this addiction, so we can learn to recognize what we are going through and discover the proper perspective on how to deal with it. Also, by speaking to someone personally, the advice they give us will be more tailored to our specific needs.

GuardYourEyes hopes to one day have an extensive network of hotlines, for people to be able to call in for *chizuk* and advice at any time of the day or night. If you want to volunteer, or if you know anyone who has good experience and sobriety, and may be willing to man a hotline (even for one hour a week), please [contact us](#).

Tool #12 Helping Others

The last of the 20 steps to *Teshuvah of Rabeinu Yona*, and the last of [the 12-Steps](#) to breaking free of addiction, both talk about helping others who are struggling with the same issues we struggle/d with. As David Hamelech writes in Tehhilim 51 (the famous *Kappitle* of *Teshuva* after the story of *Bat Sheva*): ***"alamda poshim dirachecha, vechataim eilecha yashuvu – I shall teach sinners your ways, and sinners to you will return"***.

But this is not just about *Teshuvah*, and it's not even just about helping others. This is about **our own personal recovery**. There is no better way to assure our own long term sobriety than to be in constant contact with the GuardYourEyes community and to be helping others every day. Whether it is by being an accountability partner or sponsor for someone else who is struggling, or whether it is through posting on [the forum](#), we are needed out there, and **we need** the **others** out there even more.

It is interesting to point out that the addicts of AA often found that if they did not make the purpose of their recovery to help others as well, they could do everything else in the 12-Step program, but sooner or later they would lose sobriety. And the reasoning behind this is that if our whole recovery is only self-serving, we can easily get confused with doing what we **feel** like doing, which is also self-serving. However, if we are continuously thinking of others, it keeps **us** on the right track as well.

And this is one of the secrets to understanding the importance of the *Mitzva* of ***"ve'ohavto le'reiecho kamocho - loving your fellow man as yourself"*** which Rabbi Akiva called a ***"klal gadol ba'Torah – a great cornerstone of the Torah"***. When we are living for others and not just living a "self serving" existence, we can learn how to truly do the will of Hashem for **His** sake. Indeed, *Rav Chaim Volozhyn* is quoted as saying (by his son in the *hakdomo* to *Ruach Chaim* on *Avos*) that the entire purpose of our existence is to do for others.

Before we even discuss the various other ways we can try and help others, there is one **powerful thing** that we can all do **right now**. In the same way that we discovered this handbook and are finding it helpful in our own struggles, there are probably thousands of other religious Jews around the world who unfortunately struggle in these areas as well, suffering pain in shame and silence, and yet they **never even heard of GuardYourEyes**. Therefore, there is nothing greater we can do to merit divine help in our OWN struggles, than to spread the word so that others can be helped as well.

Here's an idea of an e-mail we can send to all the **religious contacts** in our address book. The e-mail should, at the very least, contain links to the **two the GuardYourEyes Handbooks** (see the links below). Here's one possible wording for the e-mail we can send out:

Dear family, friends and acquaintances,

Someone sent me these two links below, which are free PDF files that deal with addiction to inappropriate behaviors, and are geared towards the religious community.

[The GuardYourEyes Handbook](#)

[The GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)

I was asked to pass it on to all religious Jews that I may know, because we can never know who might need help in these areas. Sometimes people suffer pain in silence and shame for years, because they're simply afraid to ask for help!

*If you could please forward this e-mail to the religious contacts in your address book as well, hopefully within a short time every single religious Jew in the world who **may struggle in these areas** (how would anyone even know?) will learn that they are not alone and that there is hope!*

*Imagine the merit you will have if countless Yidden end up doing Teshuvah through your simple forwarding of this e-mail... It's kind of like a "Pyramid Scheme" of **infinite divine merit**, only this one is for **REAL!***

Although the above e-mail leaves little room for anyone to suspect that you may struggle in these areas, if you are **still** wary of sending it out to those who know you, we suggest making up a fake anonymous e-mail address in such as xyz@gmail.com or whatever, and using that address, you can send the above e-mail to all your religious contacts.

If this too is not possible for you, then you can [send us](#) your religious e-mail contacts, especially contacts of yours who you suspect may struggle in these areas, and we will send them an e-mail with the links to the GYE handbooks. In this way, there's not even a chance that they could ever discover who might have given out their e-mail address.

What else can we do to help others?

Even if we are just starting out on our journey, we can try to find someone else to partner with and share *chizuk*. The accepted rule on the GYE community is that if we are clean for less than 90 days we can **partner** with others. But once we are clean for **more** than 90 days, we can already be a sponsor as well. However, regardless of whether we are **partners** or **sponsors**, we can share experience, strength and hope with others, and help them along on their journey.

As we discussed in tool #9 above, we are developing a whole partner/sponsor system now at GuardYourEyes, to make it easier for people to find partners and sponsors on their own. But even though the system is not yet complete, we can still help you get started. Download [this questionnaire](#) and send it by e-mail to: eyes.guard@gmail.com. We will enter you into our database and try to find you a partner or sponsor that matches your gender, marriage status,

location and other constraints to best meet your needs. If you are clean for over 90 days and want to volunteer to be a sponsor for others, please make a note of that in the questionnaire.

For more on helping others in these areas please see the last section of this booklet called “**Help us Help others**” for many ideas you can try to be a part of the GuardYourEyes revolution. Not only is this a great therapy for your own struggle, but also “*Midah kineged Midah*”, if you help others heal and help GYE spread the message of hope, Hashem will help you as well in ways you never believed were possible!

Tool #13 Psycho-Therapy

Very often the addiction stems from underlying issues, such as a difficult childhood, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and so on. We used the addiction as an escape mechanism to run away from subconscious pain, or as an attempt to fill a void we felt in our lives. Often these issues were deeply rooted in our subconscious and began back in our childhood. We began years ago to use the pleasure to medicate our feelings of inadequacy or the void we felt in our lives that may have stemmed from childhood trauma, abuse, or even from simply not “fitting in”. An addiction therapist, and preferably a sex-addiction therapist, can help us explore the underlying causes of our addiction and discover where the root of our behaviors is stemming from. This is important for the long term, because even if we learn to fight the addiction, if we do not deal with the underlying causes, the disease will often relapse at a later stage.

Besides for the therapist being trained in addictions, it is best if the therapist **himself** had also dealt with an addiction and broken free. The mechanics of all addictions are very similar, so it doesn't really matter what the addiction the therapist dealt with was.

Seeing a therapist who is not trained in addictions and does not understand the **nature** of addictions, will ultimately cause us much frustration and waste time and money before we realize that they are not really helping us. They may try to help us find the underlying causes, but they do not understand how addictions work. An addiction is a disease, and understanding where it comes from alone is not enough to enable us to break free. All the understanding in the world can't take away a disease. However, a good addiction therapist will know how to “bypass” our minds and find the causes and fears in our hearts that are causing us to act out. They will be able to teach us how to turn our feelings and will over to our Higher Power. They will know how to “trick” our minds into thinking in a whole new way, often without us even realizing it. They will not just try to give us better understanding or logic, because understanding alone does not heal a disease.

Also, a therapist trained in addictions will be able to guide us on to the next step of this booklet (the 12-Steps and SA groups) if they do not see as much progress as they had hoped to see through face-to-face therapy alone.

As religious addicts, it is not necessary to see a religious therapist in order to be helped, just like the doctor we see for the flu doesn't have to be religious to heal us. All that really matters is that the therapist understands the nature of addictions well, and is trained in dealing with them.

See our “[Therapy Page](#)” for many types of therapy options, but most importantly, check out our “[Therapist](#)” page for lists of therapists in Israel and the U.S. There are also some great links on those pages that can help us find a competent **addiction** therapist in our area.

Rabbi Twerski once wrote that: “**Psychotherapy is the frosting on the cake, but the 12 step program is the cake**”. Psychotherapy often works best, if it is in parallel with the next tool of this booklet.

Tool #14 The 12-Steps

David Hamelech says in *Tehhilim* (13): “**Ad ana ashis eitzos binafshi – until when will I try different tactics?**”... “**ad ana yarum oivi alai – until when will my enemy have power over me?**”... “**Habita aneini Hashem Elokai, ha'eira ainai pen ishan hamaves – look and help me, Hashem my Lord, enlighten my eyes lest I sleep the death**”.

If we feel like these *Pesukim* were written for us because:

- We've tried every tactic in the handbook and we still keep falling back into it,
- We see we cannot do this alone anymore,
- And lastly, but most importantly, we feel that we will “**sleep the death**” if we don't succeed;

... then we have “**hit bottom**” and have **already done** the first of the 12-Steps, which states:

“We admitted we were powerless over the addiction – that our lives had become unmanageable”.

The 12-Step program, if internalized properly, has consistently proven to be the most powerful approach to breaking free of addictions, all over the world. There is an organization called SA (Sexaholics Anonymous) and like AA (Alcoholics Anonymous), it has a spiritual program to overcoming Lust addiction that is based on three core principles: (1) Trusting G-d, (2) Cleaning House and (3) Helping Others. (See Chizuk e-mail #470 on [this page](#), for a little more elaboration on these three core principles).

The 12-Steps are built on religious principles that are fundamental to ALL religions. Some religious Jews find it hard to accept that they will be learning from non-Jews how to give their life over to Hashem. But this *Pasuk* in *Koheles* 7:29 perhaps says it best: “**asher asa haElokim es ho'odom yoshor, veheima bikshu cheshbonos rabbim - G-d has created man straight, yet they have sought many complications**”. The 12-Steps are the ABC's of being a human being, created in the image of G-d. And we can learn these ABC's from any human being who has lifted himself up above the level of “animal” and seeks to be a humble servant of G-d, regardless of the nuances of the particular religion he may follow.

Many religious Jews who have joined this program have achieved not only recovery from their addiction, but amazing success in all areas of their lives. In addition to face-to-face groups (which we will discuss in the **next** tool of this handbook), SA also has an online presence (see [this PDF](#) for example) and phone groups (see [this PDF](#) for example) that serve the general population.

For the first time now, the GuardYourEyes network is developing an entire SA division, which will host an online presence for religious Jews who identify with SA. It will be a self-contained area within GYE that will follow SA guidelines. It will include a forum for SA discussion and SA Step work, and will provide details of various phone groups and e-mail groups for religious Jews who identify with the SA program.

GYE's four current 12-STEP PHONE CONFERENCES

Ask any SA sponsor or addiction therapist and they'll tell you that the two most powerful methods in finding freedom from lust addiction are (1) **Group Support**: “GET OUT OF ISOLATION” and connect with others, and (2) Work the world's most proven and powerful method of all time: **the 12-Steps**. For the first time in history, GuardYourEyes is proud to present **four different phone groups** to help religious Jews connect with other addicts anonymously and work together to break free from the grasp of this insidious addiction. Besides for the immense power of **group**

support that these phone conferences provide, we also learn **the tools** of how to find freedom from this addiction through the 12-Steps.

These four phone group options are presented below in a clear and organized manner, so that you can find the group that works best for you.

Click the links below to learn more!

Group 1: Duvid Chaim's Group: Monday through Thursday 12 PM EST. An in-depth 12-Step Big-Book Study Lunch & Learn which is an SA style group for men who are willing to make a serious commitment to finally find the freedom from their addiction; as literally promised by the Program. The Big Book Study Lunch & Learn (BBSL&L) uses the traditional and proven format used by millions of 12 Step sponsors and sponsees who have, with G-d's help, found recovery and freedom from their addiction. This program is a proven method of success!

Group 2: Boruch's Group: Wednesday Evenings 9 PM EST. "Back to Basics" - 12-Steps in 4 Weeks; an anonymous SA phone conference. A proven program with high success rates.

Group 3: Elya's Group: Thursday Evenings 9 PM EST. An anonymous 12-Step phone conference that follows the rules and traditions of the SLAA (Sex and Love Addiction Anon) fellowship.

Group 4: Zeva's Group: Tuesday Evenings 9 PM EST. A weekly anonymous phone group, offering professional clinical therapy, 12-step work, DBT Skills (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy), [Pat Carnes](#) work... and more!

Learning about the 12 Steps

To begin internalizing the power of the 12-Steps, we can click through the "Recommended Reading Order" on the second half of [this page](#) (especially the "12 Step" section of the eBook "[The 12 Steps and 12 traditions](#)"). Reading the literature can help us become acquainted with the steps and the deep philosophy behind them. We can also read the many true stories in the "[Big Book](#)" to see how the 12-Steps helped people turn around their lives to G-d and break free of the most powerful addictions. We also highly suggest purchasing the SA Book (known as White Book due to its anonymous White Cover). It is available for purchase in hard copy [over here](#).

Understanding the magic of the 12-Steps

We will discuss here briefly the secret power behind the 12-Steps, and what is it about this simple program that has enabled millions of people around the world since the 1930's to break free of the most severe cases of addiction.

All that is needed for the 12 Steps to work for us is:

- **Step 1.** Hitting Bottom and admitting defeat. We admit powerlessness. Our lives have become unmanageable, and we cannot do this alone. (We will discuss more below what "hitting bottom" means).
- **Step 2.** Belief in a higher power. For us, that's easy; we believe in Hashem.
- **Step 3** is the core of the program, where we completely surrender our lives and will over to our Higher power. We internalize that we are completely dependent on Hashem - a "life and death" dependency – like a one day old baby is dependent on its mother. And we give our life and will over to His hands, and trust in Him fully to take the addiction away from us and care for us as we heal.

An amazing thing happens when we do step 3 properly and begin to live a life of humility, honesty and integrity in all our affairs (through the other 9 steps as well). No one understands exactly how

it works and science can't explain it, but we miraculously find that we no longer have to overcome the addiction. Instead, Hashem does it for us, as it says: "**Hashem yilachem lachem, ve'atem tacharishun** – **Hashem will fight for you, and you shall be still**". We learn to leave the entire issue of our *Yetzer Hara* / disease completely for Hashem to deal with, and instead we focus only on living our lives as a servant of Hashem to the best of our abilities. And when we do this, a miracle occurs and Hashem gives us a "**Free Pass**" from the *Yetzer Hara*!

This sounds impossible. But it is documented in thousands of cases. ("[Dov's story](#)" on our website is one great example). We can read the stories of [the Big Book](#) and join the groups to hear for ourselves how the most hardened addicts were able to make a 180 degree transformation in their lives through this program. (See Chizuk e-mail #438 on [this page](#) for one example from the Big Book).

More about the program

We mentioned above that for Step 1 of the 12 Steps to truly work, we have to "hit bottom" first. But let us clarify this. It doesn't mean we have to wait until we are suicidal, divorced or bankrupt. All that is necessary to "hit bottom" is to know that the addiction is too strong for us and that we cannot break free alone. This is enough because we have read the stories on the website and forum and we know that addictions only get worse and don't get better. And we have seen how they lead only to more and more pain until they ultimately cause us to destroy ourselves. Therefore, once we admitted that we have this disease and that it's not going away, we don't have to actually experience the self-destruction ourselves before being able to "Hit Bottom". And this is indeed one of the goals of the GuardYourEyes network: To help people "Hit Bottom" while still "On Top", and get proper help while their lives are still intact (See Chizuk e-mail #441 on [this page](#)).

The first three steps we mentioned above, are the "root" of the program. The rest of the 12 steps help us learn to turn our lives around and live in a whole new way, with honesty, accountability, humility and faith. Once we have learned to give our lives and will over to Hashem, we become like new people. The 12-Steps are a set of fundamental moral principles so basic, that even non-Jewish "drunks" are able to use them and ultimately become men of G-d. They are the ABC's of what it means to be human beings created in the image of G-d, as opposed to being animals who don't have free choice. They are such basic foundation blocks, that they come before Judaism, before Torah and before *Mussar*, as Chazal say: "**Derech erez kadma la'Torah**". We have to learn the *Alef-Beis* fist, before we can continue on to learn Torah and reach ever higher levels.

Unfortunately though, many of us never internalized these *Alef-Beis*. It is often ironic, that only when a man is desperate, is he finally forced to learn the real ABC's of being a **mentch**. As addicts, we are forced to learn these important moral principles, and through them, we have the potential to become much greater people than average! And that was what Hashem was waiting for all along. That is perhaps **why** he gave us such a seemingly insurmountable addiction in the first place.

And it's interesting to note that steps 2 through 12 (of the 12-Steps) do not even have anything about drinking/acting out in them. Instead, they are all about learning how to live right and think right, so that we do not get uncomfortable enough in our lives that we feel the need to medicate ourselves through acting out. The 12-Steps teach us how to trust in Hashem and live with **His help** instead of relying on our **own** strengths.

If you are serious about breaking free but still have doubts about the 12-Step groups, please take the time to read the series of e-mails that we sent out about the 12-Steps on [this page](#), from #438 – #450. There you will learn more about how the 12-Steps work, what is their magic, and about the importance of working the program within the context of a group.

Let us also mention here, that on GYE we do not push anyone to join a 12-Step group. The 12-Step philosophy proliferates through “Attraction” and not “Promotion”. One cannot be forced or pushed into this life-changing program. There must be a sincere desire to change, that comes from deep inside us. Then, and only then, is there indeed hope that we will be able to internalize the “spiritual experience” that the 12-Steps can awaken in us.

If anyone has more questions about the steps, how to implement them, and how they fit in with our being Yidden, feel free to contact our 12-Step-specialist “Boruch” at: boruchshemo@gmail.com .

Tool #15 **LIVE 12-Step Groups**

Because the 12-Steps are truly a life-changing set of principles, as we discussed above, they can often be internalized properly **only** through joining a live face-to-face group. Through a group and sponsor, we learn how to work the steps into our lives, and we are able to see what others do and follow their example. We get to hear the real-life stories of others who were even worse off than us, and watch as they miraculously recover. We share hope, strength and experience with the rest of the group and feel a strong sense of “accountability”. And we get a sponsor (from the group) who has good sobriety, and we work closely with him on implementing the steps into our daily lives.

Trying to learn the 12-Steps without a group is similar to learning brain surgery from a book. Anyone who wants to become a professional surgeon must join hundreds of real-life surgeries before they may be qualified to practice surgery on their own.

Rabbi Avraham J. Twerski, who provides guidance for our network and is a world-renowned expert on addictions, has always advised those who contact him for help on this issue that the live 12-Step groups are the surest way to break free of any addiction. They have a very high success rate with even the most hopeless cases. Here is what Rabbi Twerski wrote to one religious person who had been struggling with the addiction for 20 some years, thinking that he simply had a much larger *Yetzer Hara* than most other people:

"Your case is not unusual. I say this because I can tell you what works and what does not work. Sexual compulsions come in a variety of ways, but the common denominator is that the person has a compulsion which he finds it very difficult to resist. He tries all kinds of ways (like you did) but nothing works, including marriage. This kind of compulsion is essentially an addiction. The only thing that works, in my experience, is participation in a 12-step recovery program similar to that of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is called Sexaholic Anonymous (or SA). They have meetings everywhere, including Israel. You should be able to locate a meeting via [the internet](#).

*There are many excuses for not attending meetings. What happens if someone sees me? The bottom line is, if a person wishes to be cured from cancer, he'll do anything. If one wishes to overcome a destructive sexual addiction, nothing should stand in his way. There are two important books to read. (1) [The SA Book](#) (known as the White Book) and (2) *Cybersex Unhooked*. Both are available [here](#). Get these books and you'll find out what it takes to free yourself of this problem. Psychotherapy is the frosting on the cake, but the 12 step program is the cake. When you attend SA meetings, you may be able to find the name of a competent therapist. Be aware though, that many psychiatrists and psychologists have not been trained in addiction.*

The particular type of sexual compulsion does not make much difference. A beer drinker can be as alcoholic as a whiskey drinker. The core problem is the inability to restrain ones self from doing something that one knows he should not be doing but appears powerless to control it. Quite a number of religious people have been able to do with the 12 step program what they were not

able to do with mussar (religious ethical texts). Perhaps this is because of the group support. We may learn mussar together, but we don't practice it together, which is what happens in a 12 step meeting. There is also a book called "[The 12 steps and 12 traditions](#)" which describes the 12 steps. It's worth reading. Although it was written about alcoholism, one just substitutes the particular compulsion in place of "alcohol."

See [here](#) as well, for a page where Rabbi Twerski answers (on our network) another religious addict's questions about the 12 Step groups.

The 12-Step groups are very zealous in protecting the anonymity of all members. There are very rarely breaches in the anonymity of any of the members. Our secret is everyone's secret. However Rabbi Twerski still agrees that for us religious people, it is acceptable to try and internalize the 12-Steps first through GYE's SA division and the 12-Step phone conference groups that we discussed above (in step #14).

However, for those of us that did not find this to be sufficient, we will need to take this to the next level and seek out a live group in our area. In addition to regular SA groups that cater to the general population, there are also religious face-to-face SA groups in major Jewish population centers. We can start by going to www.sa.org and searching for an SA group in our area. When we find the telephone number for our city, we can leave a message on their hotline and someone will call us back.

On a separate note, there are many types of 12-Step groups that deal with sexual addictions. However, for religious Jews, Rabbi Twerski agrees that the SA program is best suited. SA works on "Lust" addiction and nothing else, and their definition of sobriety is the closest match to the Halachic guidelines of our Sages. SA is also predominately male, while other groups (like SLAA) are often mixed.

See [here](#) for SA's new-comers brochure, and see [here](#) for the SA brochure titled "Why Stop Lusting".

Even if the group meetings are held in a Church, Rav Shmuel Kaminetsky was asked about this and ruled that the behaviors we are trying to break free of are by far more severe, and therefore if it is necessary, one should not hesitate to join a 12-Step group because of this.

Tool #16 Medication

If our therapist determines that our addiction may be connected with underlying causes such as depression or anxiety, obsession, OCD, or even hyper-sexuality (which is common in lust addicts), he may send us to be evaluated by a psychiatrist for medication that can help us significantly in these areas. This is nothing to worry about, because millions of people around the world take medications for these type of issues. The medications can truly make a difference in the long term, and with today's medical advances, the side-effects are often negligible.

Rabbi Twerski wrote to someone on [this page](#):

In order to have both physical and emotional health, we require proper nutrition. If we lack certain essential vitamins and/or minerals, we develop "deficiency syndromes". For example, lack of iron and B vitamins may cause depression.

If a child was raised by abusive parents, who, in addition to being unkind to the child, deprived him of proper nutrition, he may be very depressed as an adult. A physician who examines the person may diagnose the nutritional deficiencies and prescribe the missing vitamins and

minerals. The person may say, "How are those going to remove the pain of the abuse?" The answer is that the vitamins and minerals will remedy the deficiencies, and he will have to get therapy to deal with the consequences of the abuse.

See [this page](#) of our website for some medical ideas that can help us in this struggle, ranging from "alternative" medications which can be purchased over the counter or in health food stores, and down through the more conventional medications that often require a psychiatrist's prescription.

If our addiction is connected with OCD or other compulsive behaviors, our therapist may suggest that we be evaluated for SSRI medication. These type of drugs can often help take off the "edge" of the obsession, and help us deal with the "void" and depression that is often felt in withdrawal. They could perhaps be compared to a lifesaver, while we are swimming in the stormy sea. We still have to do the swimming ourselves, but the medications can help keep us afloat.

In many cases, we can slowly get off the medications as we make more progress. A period of eight months to a year on medication is often enough to do the trick, and help us break the cycle of addiction for long enough that we can continue to maintain our sobriety without the medications. However, getting off the medications requires close follow-up and approval from our psychiatrists. These type of medications can never be stopped suddenly, but rather in gradual increments.

Tool #17 Rehab

If we've tried everything and still can't break free, perhaps we need some time to get away from society **completely**, to be able to **fully focus** on recovery for a period of time. Here are a few ideas the GYE network has put together:

- 1) See [this announcement](#) on our forum by Elya K (our 12-Step phone conference moderator) offering a week of group therapy and a trauma healing workshop in the Experiential Healing Center of Tennessee. Obviously no date has been set yet, but if you contact us and are interested, we can see if anyone else is interested as well. All it takes is a few guys to put together a group, and as Elya puts it (from personal experience): *"it's worth every penny!"*
- 2) A [Rehab Option](#) in Florida, run by a religious Jew who developed a 12-Step Torah approach to recovering from addictions. He currently deals with addicts of all types, but he is interested in expanding his work to include sexual addictions as well. The more people contact us about joining his program, the more chance there is that it will take off.
- 3) Based in Los Angeles, SRI (www.sexualrecovery.com) treats clients from all over the world, providing intensive programming that works to eliminate compulsive, addictive or offending sexual behavior. Their 5 and 10-day Intensive Programs (IOP's) offer focused daily psycho-education and individual therapy, as well as structured social support and spousal involvement and are a well-established, functional treatment alternative for those who cannot afford the time or money for a 4-5 week residential stay. (Patients can stay in a local recovery house or with friends).
- 4) **Zev Ballen LCSW**. thehypnosistrainingcenter.com Based in Monsey, NY. A Licensed psychotherapist with many years of experience in the addiction field, particularly sexual addiction. At times, he has men live with him and work a home-based program as an alternative to institutional care.

Tool #18

The Very Last Resort

If all else has failed G-d forbid, and the addiction continues to ruin our lives, for example:

- If we are plagued by fantasies day and night and can find no peace, and none of the tools above were able to help us.
- If our sexual orientation is against the Torah's guidelines (such as same-sex attraction) and we can never lead a normal marriage-life, in spite of therapy and in spite of the options [mentioned on this page](#).
- And especially if the addiction is harming the lives of others or causing us to act in illegal or harmful ways.

In such cases, there are medications or shots that can reduce our sexual drive to the point of chemical castration. If the addiction is harming the lives of others, this should be done as soon as possible - **before the next victim is claimed**. We will need to be evaluated by experts in this field, before these procedures can be carried out. Usually the drive can be brought down to zero over a period of a few months, by receiving a special shot once a month.

We have contact information on our network of professionals who deal in this area, in both Israel and the U.S. These shots are often requested by law officials for sex offenders and pedophiles, before the court will agree to release the offender from jail.

However, if the addiction is not harming others, we do not suggest this method unless one has truly tried everything else and can not bear it anymore. As opposed to all the other tools mentioned in this booklet, **this tool** is not a solution, but rather a cop-out. It is like closing the door on a room full of garbage, but leaving the garbage inside. And as soon as the addict is off the shots, all the garbage returns to destroy their life once again. We were sent down to the world to work on ourselves, and not to just have the *Yetzer Hara* chemically removed.

Also, one can not have children while on this treatment, and it will obviously interfere with marital relations as well. And although there are ways to find a balance where the patient may still be able to be with their wives somewhat, the balance is difficult to ascertain and may take many months to perfect.

See the bottom of [this page](#) for more info on this **last resort** option, and see [this article](#) about it over here.

In Conclusion

This area has been Taboo in the religious community for far too long. There is **such a desperate need for the work we are doing today** on the GuardYourEyes network. The very fabric of our society is at stake here. Families are literally being destroyed. Husbands, wives and children are all being affected in some way. The ease of accessibility and privacy that the internet provides is the all out attack of *Amalek* in our generation.

GuardYourEyes is helping save lives and marriages every day, helping people retain their self-respect and regain **their sanity** and connection to spirituality, all of which they had given up for lost thinking they had no hope to ever break free... (See [here](#) for how widespread this epidemic seems to be in the religious community today). Finally people are finding that they are not alone and that there is true hope in overcoming this addiction.

See [here](#) for Testimonials of how our network is helping people all the time. There is also a Testimonial section on our new blog-site [over here](#). (You can also download a PDF file of the latest testimonials from this past March and April, 2009, [over here](#)).

There is probably nowhere else in the world where one can find such an awakening of *Teshuvah* and closeness to Hashem **within** the religious community. Read the testimonials and see for yourself! People write in countless times how they simply break down crying when reading through the website and forum for the first time, and they realize that **they too have hope!**

The GuardYourEyes network is the **only** religious network in the world today that deals with this issue in such a comprehensive manner, offering so many tools such as; [a website](#) with over 300 pages of information, [a forum](#), a [blog site](#) with dynamic daily content, two [daily e-mail lists](#), [phone conferences](#), [hot-lines](#), [12-Step groups](#), etc... **And now these powerful handbooks!**

And what we have today is only a start. Ultimately, we hope that our work will spread throughout the Jewish world. We are building and expanding our websites every day, adding new features and using the most cutting edge web development. Already in the near future, we hope to have a system where each member who joins our community can have their own anonymous profile, which they could use to find partners and sponsors, get the daily e-mails and RSS feeds, get up on the [Wall of Honor](#) and post on the [forum](#) and blogs. We are also reaching out to develop a network of sponsors and partners, as well as phone conference and hotline moderators. More and more people want to be part of this revolution.

We fervently hope that this handbook (along with the "[GYE Attitude Handbook](#)") will ultimately evolve into a published book that will provide hope and guidance to thousands of religious Jews around the world who may suffer from Lust addiction. And we also hope that our message will one day be translated into other languages as well, such as Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, French and more!

The Zohar writes that failings in the area of *Shmiras Habris* are one of the main factors that are holding up the Redemption. At **GuardYourEyes**, we are helping pave the path for Moshiach.

Every time we fix ourselves, we are fixing [a whole world](#).

Be a part of the revolution!

Help Us Help Others

As detailed above, the GuardYourEyes network **directly** addresses what is likely our generation's greatest test. **The very fabric of our society is at stake.** And there is no other organization anywhere else in the world that deals with these issues in such a comprehensive way.

But we can't do this without you! Your support is our life-line.

Let us all gather together for Hashem and for *Klal Yisrael's* sake, every Jew according to his means, and support the GuardYourEyes network, financially and logistically, to help us continue our holy work, and to expand and grow ever further.

WE WILL NOT REST - with the help of Hashem - until every religious Jew in the world who struggles in these areas knows that there is HOPE!

Please help us spread the word! For example, here is an e-mail that we recently got from one anonymous donor, who - in addition to sending a \$180 donation - wrote as follows:

I think the efforts of your site are probably - or are at least tied for - THE most important effort being undertaken for the Jewish nation today. May you and all those involved merit tremendous blessing and light from HKB"H. I contacted Arutz Shevah recently for a request to get a good advertising deal for GYE. They responded today and I arranged a \$500, two-month advertising campaign. They already have your banners and so it should have already started. I'm just letting you know to expect more traffic. Tizke L'mitzvos!

We would like to suggest, that every Jew **who understands the importance of our work** should perhaps set aside a percentage of their monthly *Ma'aser* money to become **a sponsor and partner** in this monumental undertaking. There is **no question** that one can halachically give *Ma'aser* money to this cause, as one Rav put it: **"Helping Yidden who are poor in deeds is even greater than helping Yidden who are poor in means".**

Also, perhaps you might know of other venues through which we might be able to garner financial support, for example, **friends or family** who may also understand the importance of what we are doing, or organizations that also work towards these goals and would perhaps want to partner in our holy work somehow. Write to us please and [let us hear](#) your ideas.

In the merit of your help, *"Midah kineged Midah"*, Hashem will give you special divine assistance in your own struggle as well. By helping others heal and by helping us spread the message of hope to thousands of others, Hashem will help you **in ways you never believed possible.**

Perhaps you can also help us spread the word about our work to the *Rabbanim*, *mechanchim* and community leaders in your area. Maybe you can even help us get articles published in Jewish newspapers, magazines or Jewish websites. Perhaps you even have your **own website** and can put up banners that link to our site. [See here](#) for some available banners. And [see here](#) for a flyer that you can print out to hang up in your neighborhood *shteiblach*, bulletin boards and the like, or use the flyer to sponsor an ad in your community or neighborhood magazines.

Chazal say that there is nothing that Hashem despises as much as *Zimah* (promiscuity and licentiousness). Yet, without these intense struggles, could we really become great men and Tzadikim? Hashem's **knows** that we **need** to have this *Yetzer Hara*, after all, that's why He created it in the first place! But these struggles were only given to us so that we can break free in the end - and in the process learn how to give Hashem over our hearts. And that's what GuardYourEyes is helping Yidden to do. We are helping ***Klal Yisrael*** achieve their destiny,

helping people get back their sanity, their lives, and their connection to Hashem and his Torah. **And every time we fix ourselves, we are fixing a world.**

R' Noach Weinberg *Za"l*, Rosh Yeshiva of Aish Hatorah, was once asked how he had been so successful in building such a colossal world-wide *Kiruv* movement. He replied that he had once seen a crane lifting a 10 ton block of cement, while the workers on the roof guided it into place. And it occurred to him that since the prophets had already promised that the Jewish people will return to Hashem before Moshiach's time, it is like Hashem is already holding the 10 ton block. All that is left **for us** to do is to guide it into place.

R' Noach used to also ask people if they thought they could change the world. And they would say, "what can I do on my own?". But then he would ask them, "and what if **Hashem helped you**, could you change the world **then?**" And they would agree that with Hashem's help, **anything was possible**. And that was Rav Noach's secret to success. He knew that **if this was something Hashem wanted to happen in the world, he just had to be there to guide it into place.**

The Ohr Hachayim on Parshas Shmos (3:8) writes that before Moshiach's time, the Jewish nation will be subjected to the 50th level of impurity. But he **also** writes there, that before the Redemption the Jewish people will garner the strength to enter into the very "mouth" of the 50th level of impurity and pull out that which the Satan had already swallowed ("*le'hotzi boi'lo mi'piv*").

And that is **exactly** what the GuardYourEyes community is doing today. The *Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh* could not have used a more **divinely inspired** analogy. We are entering **into the mouth** of the *Yetzer Hara* himself and using the **very power** of the internet to pull out these sparks of Kedusha, these holy souls, that have fallen to the 50th level of impurity! So as Rav Noach used to say: **All we have to do is be there to guide our Jewish brothers' hearts back into place.**

The GuardYourEyes revolution has arrived. The Redemption is around the corner.

Guardyour**eyes**.org

"Working with Hashem to change the world, one Jew at a time".