Pornoholics Anonymous

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WELCOME TO

PORNOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to help people who suffer from an addiction to pornography on the Internet. With G-d's help, the material presented will offer ways to break the porn addiction and to stop committing the sexual transgressions, like masturbation, that stem from it.

Hopefully the knowledge presented will allow people to regain control of their lives and direct their energies in healthier, more positive paths. Before we present the specific suggestions of JewishSexuality.com, we will present an overview of Alcoholics Anonymous, and similar addiction support groups, examining their methods in order to learn whatever we can from their experience in the field.

Interestingly, one of the main principles they stress, the reliance on God, is founded on Jewish teachings. After understanding the emphasis they place on the 12 Step Program, we will present 12 Torah Steps, based on the teachings of our holy Sages.

It is worthwhile to note that like alcoholism, gambling, or drug addiction, the person who falls victim to pornography, and the transgressions which stem from it, can initially delude himself into thinking that it really isn't such a big sin. Unlike obvious transgressions like stealing or adultery, he can justify his behavior by saying that it doesn't hurt anyone else, and therefore it isn't such a glaring wrong. When this is coupled with the powerful lure of the evil inclination that surrounds pornography, the person becomes hooked before he knows it.

The truth is the very opposite. According to the secrets of Torah, not only does the porn addict damage his mind and his soul, by viewing forbidding images, he pollutes all of the spiritual worlds of Creation. This is because when he blemishes his soul by viewing images which are forbidden to see, he also blemishes his soul's root in the highest spiritual worlds, strengthens the forces of evil, and pollutes the channels that bring blessings into the world. And with time, not only is he affected adversely, but also his family, his loved ones, and the Jewish People as a whole suffer through his decline, in the same way that a small drop of arsenic in water can poison a whole glass.

Nonetheless, the fear of punishment alone is not enough to break the pattern of temptation and sin. A person addicted to sexual sin must transform his lust into a passionate love for G-d. Only then will he or she have the power and conviction to separate from the unhealthy ways of the past and make a new beginning.

Alcoholics Anonymous

The primary goal of Alcoholics Anonymous is to "stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." AA was the first to adopt the 12 Step Program which has become a model for similar recovery groups such as Gamblers Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, and Eaters Anonymous.

AA teaches that for an alcoholic to end his addiction, he must completely abstain from alcohol on an ongoing daily basis. The society arranges group meetings of alcoholics trying to recover control over their lives, in an effort to provide a supportive, sharing community. The 12 Steps

The 12 Step Program is basically a spiritual ladder. Since the alcoholic feels that he himself is unable stop his drinking and take control of his life, the 12 Steps are designed to connect the alcoholic with a benevolent "higher power" who takes control for him. AA claims that by following this program, an alcoholic can overcome his problem. Here are the 12 Steps:

- We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable.
- We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
- We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- We admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

- We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, we promptly admitted it.
- We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The main elements of the program are admitting the addiction; admitting that one is unable to overcome the addiction on his own; making a strong connection to God and believing that He will take the addiction away. The basis of this approach is summed up in a prayer that group members are encouraged to recite, called the "Serenity Prayer." THE SERENITY PRAYER
God, grant me the
SERENITY
to accept the things I cannot change

COURAGE
to change the things I can

and WISDOM
to know the difference.

Another important factor in the recovery process is supportive group encounters where alcoholics talk openly about their problems and struggles and find hope and encouragement from the group.

Many people come to AA because they realize they are very unhappy and long for salvation. Others have not yet reached this conclusion and come to AA because their spouse has demanded it, or because of an encounter with the police. They are taught that bad habits, like drinking alcohol, can seriously hinder professional advancement, personal and family happiness, and self-growth.

Narcotics Anonymous follows the same model as AA. The program also places importance on trusting in a "higher power", which they often refer to as God. Individuals are left to define this higher power for themselves, in whatever form or religious identification they choose. The 12 Steps are the basis of the NA program as well.

Gamblers Anonymous is also based on the 12 Step philosophy. Statistics indicate that GA has a lower success rate than other addiction recovery organizations like AA and NA. It has been suggested that this is due to GA's lack of focus on the principles of spirituality that are emphasized in other Twelve Step programs. It has been argued that GA is much more secularized than AA.

Sexaholics Anonymous

Since Sexaholics Anonymous deals specifically with the issue of misused sexual energy, we will quote some of their literature in length. More information can be found at their website: http://www.sa.org/

The Problem

Many of us felt inadequate, unworthy, alone, and afraid. Our insides never matched what we saw on the outsides of others.

Early on, we came to feel disconnected -- from parents, from peers, from ourselves. We tuned out with fantasy and masturbation. We plugged in by drinking in the pictures, the images, and pursuing the objects of our fantasies. We lusted and wanted to be lusted after.

We became true addicts: sex with self, and sometimes promiscuity, adultery, dependency relationships, and more fantasy. We got it through the eyes; we bought it, we sold it, we traded it, we gave it away. We were addicted to the intrigue, the tease, the forbidden. The only way we knew to be free of it was to do it. "Please connect with me and make me whole!" we cried with outstretched arms. Lusting after the Big Fix, we gave away our power to others.

This produced guilt, self-hatred, remorse, emptiness, and pain, and we were driven ever inward, away from reality, away from love, lost inside ourselves.

Our habit made true intimacy impossible. We could never know real union with another because we were addicted to the unreal. We went for the "chemistry," the connection that had the magic, because it by-passed intimacy and true union. Fantasy corrupted the real; lust killed love.

We took from others to fill up what was lacking in ourselves. Conning ourselves time and again that the next one would save us, we were really losing our lives.

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The Solution

We saw that our problem was three-fold: physical, emotional, and spiritual. Healing had to come about in all three.

The crucial change in attitude began when we admitted we were powerless, that our habit had us whipped. We came to meetings and withdrew from our habit. For some, this meant no sex with themselves or others, including not getting into relationships. For others it meant "drying out" and not having sex with the spouse for a time to recover from lust.

We discovered that we could stop, that not feeding the hunger didn't kill us, that sex was indeed optional! There was hope for freedom, and we began to feel alive. Encouraged to continue, we turned more and more away from our isolating obsession with sex and self and turned to God and others.

All this was scary. We couldn't see the path ahead, except that others had gone that way before. Each new step of surrender felt it would be off the edge into oblivion, but we took it. And instead of killing us, surrender was killing the obsession! We had stepped into the light, into a whole new way of life.

The fellowship gave us monitoring and support to keep us from being overwhelmed, a safe haven where we could finally face ourselves. Instead of covering our feelings with compulsive sex, we began exposing the roots of our spiritual emptiness and hunger. And the healing began.

As we faced our defects, we became willing to change; surrendering them broke the power they had over us. We began to be more comfortable with ourselves and others for the first time without our "drug."

Forgiving all who had injured us, and without injuring others, we tried to right our own wrongs. At each amends more of the dreadful load of guilt dropped from our shoulders, until we could lift our heads, look the world in the eye, and stand free.

We began practicing a positive sobriety, taking the actions of love to improve our relations with others. We were learning how to give; and the measure we gave was the measure we got back. We were finding what none of the substitutes had ever supplied. We were making the real Connection. We were home.

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What is a Sexaholic and What is Sexual Sobriety?

We can only speak for ourselves. The specialized nature of Sexaholics Anonymous can best be understood in terms of what we call the sexaholic. The sexaholic has taken himself or herself out of the whole context of what is right or wrong. He or she has lost control, no longer has the power of choice, and is not free to stop. Lust has become an addiction. Our situation is like that of the alcoholic who can no longer tolerate alcohol and must stop drinking altogether but is hooked and cannot stop. So it is with the sexaholic, or sex drunk, who can no longer tolerate lust but cannot stop.

Thus, for the sexaholic, any form of sex with one's self or with partners other than the spouse is progressively addictive and destructive. We also see that lust is the driving force behind our sexual acting out, and true sobriety includes progressive victory over lust. These conclusions were forced upon us in the crucible of our experiences and recovery; we have no other options. But we have found that acceptance of these facts is the key to a happy and joyous freedom we could otherwise never know.

This will and should discourage many inquirers who admit to sexual obsession or compulsion but who simply want to control and enjoy it, much as the alcoholic would like to control and enjoy drinking. Until we had been driven to the point of despair, until we really wanted to stop but could not, we did not give ourselves to this program of recovery. Sexaholics Anonymous is for those who know they have no other option but to stop, and their own enlightened self-interest must tell them this.

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Test Yourself

If you recognize yourself and your behavior in these questions, then chances are you have an addiction that needs to be

cured.
- Have you ever thought you needed help for your sexual thinking or behavior?
- That you'd be better off if you didn't keep "giving in"?
- That sex or stimuli are controlling you?
- Have you ever tried to stop or limit doing what you felt was wrong in your sexual behavior?
- Do you resort to sex to escape, relieve anxiety, or because you can't cope?
- Do you feel guilt, remorse or depression afterwards?
- Has your pursuit of sex become more compulsive?
- Does it interfere with relations with your spouse?
- Do you have to resort to images or memories during sex?
- Does an irresistible impulse arise when the other party makes the overtures or sex is offered?
- Do you keep going from one "relationship" or lover to another?
- Do you feel the "right relationship" would help you stop lusting, masturbating, or being so promiscuous?
- Do you have a destructive need -- a desperate sexual or emotional need for someone?
- Does pursuit of sex make you careless for yourself or the welfare of your family or others?
- Has your effectiveness or concentration decreased as sex has become more compulsive?
- Do you lose time from work for it?
- Do you turn to a lower environment when pursuing sex?
- Do you want to get away from the sex partner as soon as possible after the act?
- Although your spouse is sexually compatible, do you still masturbate or have sex with others?
- Have you ever been arrested for a sex-related offense?

The Twelve Steps - Once Again
- We admitted we were powerless over lust--that our lives had become unmanageable.
- We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
- We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- We admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, we promptly admitted it.
- We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to sexoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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Pornoholics Anonymous

Whether it is Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, or Sexaholics Anonymous, certain basic principles remain the same. In order to break free of the habit, it first must be recognized for the terrible and destructive addiction that it is. A deep inner decision must be made to stop. A program or plan is needed to break the habit. We have seen that these organizations base their programs on the same 12 Steps.

As a prerequisite, the addict must remove himself completely from all possession and access to the source of his addiction, whether it be alcohol, narcotics, forms of gambling, unacceptable sexual practices, or pornography and the like. In addition, the addict should confess his problem to his family, or to someone he trusts, or to an organization that deals with the problem and its treatment. This is because a person will more likely find it easier to stop his or her addiction if the closest people in their lives are behind them in their endeavor. But if this proves impossible, a person should believe that he can still overcome his addiction on his own. Nevertheless, since the struggle is difficult, a person should seriously consider seeking professional help. Lastly, it is important to be firm in ones conviction. Lapses and setbacks are normal, but a former addict must not let them drag him or her back to the destructive behavioral patterns of the past.

The Torah Way

Now we are going to take all of this very useful knowledge and give it a special Torah application in suggesting a program for overcoming the addiction to Internet pornography and the sexual sins that result from it. In doing this, we are going to offer a unique 12 Steps of our own, as a Jewish parallel to the programs that we have studied.

For a deeper understanding of the transgressions involved in viewing porn on the Internet, readers are encouraged to study the book, "Secret of the Brit," chapters of which can be found online at this website: jewishsexuality.com. Often, because a person has not learned the secrets of Torah, he is not aware of the great damage that he causes himself and all spiritual worlds when he violates the injunction, "Thou shall not go astray after your hearts and your eyes." To illustrate this point, let's take a look at two sections from the book to remember some of things that our Sages have taught. Gazing at Women

"Not only is physical contact with women prohibited, gazing at them to enjoy their beauty is also a serious Torah transgression." (Shulchan Oruch, Even HaEzer, Ch. 300, Section 100:2)

Regarding the Torah commandment, "You shall not go astray after your hearts and after your eyes, (Bamidbar, 15:39) the Talmud explains: "After your hearts - this refers to idolatry. After your eyes - this refers to sexual immorality." (Berachot 12B)

"The eye and the heart are the two instruments of sin. The eye sees, the heart desires, and the body completes the action." (Rashi on Bamidbar, 25:39)

Today, because of the promiscuity and immodesty that pervade modern life and Western culture, we have become accustomed to this state of affairs, as if this is the natural way to be. However, Jewish Laws demands a higher level of moral behavior.

"Whoever gazes at a woman forbidden to him, and says to himself that there is nothing wrong with this, for he hasn't had sexual relations with her, or even touched her, he is mistaken. Gazing at women is a serious wrongdoing, for it brings a man to sexual transgression, as it says, You shall not go astray after your hearts and after your eyes." (Hilchot Tshuva of the Rambam, 4:4)

The Gemara teaches: "You should guard yourself from every evil thing - this means a man should not gaze at an attractive woman, even a single one, nor at a married woman, even if she is ugly." (Avodah Zora 20A.)

This is because, "A man shouldn't have sexual thoughts in the day and come to seminal impurity at night." (Avodah Zora 20B.) Windows of the Soul

A person shouldn't think that he is wiser than the Torah and the great Talmudic rabbis who labored to explain the depth and wisdom of Jewish Law. If he says, "I go to the beach and enter adult sites on the Internet all the time, and nothing happens to me," he is tragically mistaken. Gazing at attractive women, whether at the beach, the movies, in provocative magazines, on the Internet, or on the street, causes more damage to the spiritual world of a Jew than eating forbidden foods such as pork. Eating non-kosher foods pollutes the nefesh, the lower physical soul of a man. Gazing at women, however, pollutes the neshama, the Divine soul itself. In doing so, it damages the flow of Divine blessing emanating from the highest spiritual realms.

The eyes are the windows of the soul. The holiness of a Jew is dependent on the degree to which he guards his eyes from looking at forbidden images. When a man sees an immodestly dressed woman or an erotic photograph, his desire is aroused. Automatically, his spiritual world is polluted. Automatically, a soul is released from his brain and joined with a seed of seminal fluid. If he does not sense the spiritual shock to his being, it is because his soul has already become darkened and dulled by his habitual mistakes.

"The moment a man gazes upon a forbidden image, or at a woman whom he is not permitted to look at, a large and frightful klipah is created by this, along with an evil spirit, each time he looks. Resulting from this, when he has a sexual thought, with every fantasy he violates the Torah prohibition, "And you shall guard yourself from everything evil." All the more so if, G-d forbid, this thought brings him to a sexual transgression." (Taharat HaKodesh, Ch. 3)

A person addicted to porn on the Internet has to realize that his physical and spiritual health and wellbeing, and the wellbeing of his family, depends on his behavior. He has to think that the Torah is referring to him and his home when it states regarding the impurity of a discharge of semen in vain: "The L-rd thy G-d walks in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to vanquish thy enemies before thee; therefore thy camp shall be holy, that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee" (Devarim, 23:15). The pornography in a person's computer, and, by watching it, in his head, is in itself an unclean thing that drives G-d away from him and his home, and adversely influences his life and the lives of his loved ones.

In the section on Sexaholics Anonymous, we saw how depression and low self-esteem can lead to sexual transgression and addiction. While just about anyone can have a secret problem with Internet porn, SA identified depression as a prime factor in moral decline. Certainly a man who is fired from his job and sits at home alone all day in his melancholy is a

prime candidate for Internet misuse. While there are undeniable emotional and psychological influences connected with the succumbing to bad habits, there are deep spiritual causes as well.

In his treatise on the phenomenon of repentance, "Orot HaT'shuva," Rabbi Kook explains that the underlying cause of melancholy is a separation from G-d which is brought about because of our sins. Instead of feeling the light and love of G-d's presence, the depressed person experiences darkness and isolation. Clicking on to porn on the Internet gives the addict an imaginary feeling of connection, but because it isn't real, the connection doesn't last, and the addict needs more and more. This emptiness leads to continuing transgression and a greater disengagement from G-d.

Sensing that G-d is not in him, the addict falls into more self-destructive behavior and eventual despair. In a deep, unconscious way, he uses his addiction to punish himself for his sins. In effect, he creates his own hell. In Kabbalistic terms, he draws a dark, impure klipah, or impure spirit, around himself that seduces him on to more and more evil. Kabbalists say that if he could see the punishment he brings on his soul, he would be mortified. The klipot that his transgressions create beat upon him mercilessly, both spiritually, mentally, and in his day to day life, interfering in everything that he does, and affording him no peace of mind whatsoever.

The only cure, Rabbi Kook writes is t'shuva which comes like a burst of sunlight after a tempestuous storm. In essence, the 12 Torah Steps are a pathway to t'shuva and to forging a loving and lasting connection to G-d that infuses life with transcendent light and meaning, banishing all of the impurity and darkness.

Getting Started

To break the addiction to watching pornography on the Internet, after you have admitted the gravity of your addiction and have made the firm decision to stop, the first thing to do is get your computer out of the house. It would be good if you could throw it in the garbage. Remember, we learned that an alcoholic has to keep away from booze, and a narcotics addict has to keep away from drugs and any people or situation that might lead him to drugs. This is not new advice. To make sure that a Nazir keeps away from wine, the Torah also forbids grape juice and grapes. The Sages even advise him to avoid passing a vineyard.

Thus, if getting rid of your computer is impossible, either because you need it for work, or the kids would go crazy without one, then at least cancel your Internet service. It is as simple as that.

If the pornography isn't in your home, you won't be able to watch it and get snared in its temptations. And if this too is impossible for whatever genuine reason, and make double sure that the reason is real, then have your wife, or a friend, download every porn filter they can without telling you the code. While these systems aren't foolproof, they will greatly reduce your chances of falling back into old ways.

Remember that part of the cure is telling other people, so even though you may be embarrassed by this confession, it is a necessary part of the program. If you can't do it with your wife, then find someone else. Note that one can accomplish this stage without specific confession. Simply state to your wife and daughters: "Of course, I need a filtering program. I am a healthy man with all of my strengths and therefore, I, like any G-d fearing Jew, need a filter installed with a secret code." I once sat at the internet-enabled computer in the home of a great Torah scholar of our generation who has authored important Torah works . When locked out of a legitimate site due to the porn filter's over sensitive screening, he called over his daughter to insert the code and open the site. Only his wife and daughters knew the code.

Even with a filter installed, it is best not to sit down at a computer alone. Make sure that someone is with you, not across the room, but sitting at your side, so that you don't bypass the filters and sneak into a site you shouldn't see. Addicts tend to be clever people who have learned all of the tricks, so until the 12 Steps sink in, supervision is advised.

The Chofetz Chaim had an encouraging word for people who had a problem with speaking lashon hara (speaking bad about other people). He taught that if you are tempted to say lashon hara, yet keep yourself from saying it three times in succession, you are on the way to breaking your habit. This is true with every sin, and also with watching porn. As the expression goes, what is out of sight is out of mind. The more you keep away from temptation, the less it will haunt you. With the spiritual reinforcement that a person will receive by following the 12 Torah Steps, his abstinence will lead him to discover that he doesn't need his addiction at all.

Don't expect your addiction to disappear overnight, and don't fall into despair if you suffer a setback. Only true tzaddikim (righteous ones) do not have impure thoughts, and we are not on their level. The holy Tanya explains that when a person has a lustful thought and pushes the temptation away with both hands, every time he expels the wicked fantasy from his mind, he breaks the force of Sitra Achra (the Other Side), and brings about a great rectification in all spiritual worlds. When a person places his love and reverence for G-d over his passion for lust, his action sanctifies G-d more than any other praise. "Therefore," the Tanya states, "no person should feel depressed, nor should his heart become exceedingly troubled, even though he be engaged all his days in this conflict, for perhaps because of this was he created, and this is his service - to constantly subjugate the Sitra Achra" (Tanya, Ch. 27). Each time a person overcomes his yetzer, he draws a sublime holiness upon himself from Above to aid him in his service of G-d.

Thus, when a person bent on t‘shuva sits down at a computer, even though erotic thoughts continue to rise up in his mind, he should be happy that he reverts his mind from them in order to fulfill the commandment, "Thou shall not stray after your heart and after your eyes which lead you astray." A person who abstains from committing a sin, receives a reward as if he had performed a precept. So he should rejoice in his lot and know that there is great value in his struggle, even though he doesn't become a complete tzaddik immediately.

One final note before the 12 Torah Steps in beating Porn. We learned in our study of Alcoholics Anonymous that a support group is an important factor in the fighting addiction. When it comes to addiction to pornography on the Internet, it may not be possible to find such a group. A possibility is to see if Sexaholics Anonymous has a group in your area.

But if you are religious, considering the taboo surrounding the problem, you may be hesitant to ask. Nevertheless, as we learned, confessing your addiction to others, whether it be to family, friends, a professional counselor, or rescue organization, is an important element in your chances for success. Since our 12 Step plan is based on the Torah, it is important to find a rabbi who can guide you along the way. Breaking the porn addiction and the snare of sexual transgression involves a lot more than downloading a filter that will screen out things you shouldn't see. It means adopting a life of t'shuva and Torah. If you are already religious, it means committing yourself to a greater devotion to Torah and a more intimate reverence of G-d. If in the past, you forgot about G-d every time you tuned on the computer, now you have to think about G-d all the time. So being in touch with a rabbi, or Torah scholar who is familiar with the secrets of the Brit, is a vital part of your journey. In addition, if you can't find a group, you should endeavor to associate with people who appreciate your strivings to get closer to G-d and to Torah. If you put the same energy into your recovery as you put into your addiction, you will surely succeed. When a person comes to sanctify himself, even if a little, then G-d sanctifies him in a great measure from Above. So, remember, you are never alone in your quest. G-d is willing and eager to help.

THE 12 TORAH STEPS

At the outset, we want to emphasize that this is not a complete list of the many effective remedies and atonements that our Sages have formulated for sexual transgression and self-correction, but rather a basic guideline that can serve as a foundation for the lifetime of Torah and t'shuva that must follow, in order not to return to the mistakes of the past. People are encouraged to read the chapters of the book, "Secret of the Brit," posted in abridged format on jewishsexuality.com for an overall understanding of the damage caused by all forms of sexual transgression and ways to build a renewed connection to G-d.

- We admitted that we were powerless over lust -- that our lives had become unmanageable.
- We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves, the One and Only Creator, who gave the Torah to His nation Israel, could restore us to sanity.
- We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of G-d, and to cling fast to the commandments and the teachings of His Torah.
- We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to others, especially to a Torah scholar, the exact nature of our wrongs, and made a commitment not to repeat our mistakes.
- We were entirely ready to put our trust in G-d and have Him remove all of our transgressions through our heartfelt t'shuva, and to trust Him to help us correct unhealthy character traits, and to rectify our moral shortcomings and the spiritual damages we caused. We humbly begged Him to remove our shortcomings and forgive our sins.
- We took upon ourselves to immerse in a purifying mikvah as often as we could, and to stop gazing at women, or pictures of women, whether on the Internet, on TV or the movies, in magazines or in the street.
- We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would embarrass or injure them, as in the case of children too young to understand.
- We set upon a course of constant t'shuva, making a daily personal inventory, and if we erred and sinned as before, we promptly admitted it.
- We fervently prayed to forge a constant, joyous connection to G-d, and spoke to him out loud, on a regular basis as a man speaks to a friend, admitting our weaknesses and fears, and asking for His help in all of our doings, placing special importance on the recital of Tehillim, and the Bedtime Shema with great intention, and the midnight lamentation "Tikun Hatzot" over the destruction of Jerusalem, and special prayers called "Tikunim" designed to rectify the damage we caused to the Brit.
- We took upon ourselves a loving, joyous, and diligent commitment to Torah study for its own sake, including the study of the secrets of Torah, applying ourselves to the learning with the same fervor and passion we once wasted on vanity, and we sought out holy Jewish sages who could help illuminate our learning, knowing that it was in the power of the holy Hebrew letters of the Torah to heal the damage we caused to our eyes, to our souls, and to the world.
- We took upon ourselves a new heightened level in the fear and reverence of G-d, including a heightened concentration in our daily prayers, in the recital of blessings, and in the proper performance of the commandments, including the sanctification of the marital union, accepting stringencies upon ourselves, rather than pretending that immodest behavior was perfectly all right.
- Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles with all of our strength and with all of our hearts, with the supreme joy of knowing that G-d has forgiven

us and created us anew.

Follow-Up

A patient, steadfast commitment to these 12 Torah Steps is sure to bring healing to ones eyes and ones soul. An important thing to remember is, "Don't worry - be happy." As Rabbi Nachman of Breslov teaches, "The whole world is a narrow bridge, but the most important thing is never to be afraid at all."

Also, while an actual recovery group may not be possible to organize, we have opened a "Virtual Recovery Group" at the JewishSexuality.com Pornoholics Anonymous Forum, where people can write about their addictions and challenges, relate their successes and setbacks, share their experiences, and offer helpful tips that others can benefit from.

But this is just to get the beginner started. Once a person has made a commitment to do t'shuva, let's hope that he stays as far away from the Internet as he can. Click here for Pornoholics Anonymous Forum