

A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by skaybaltimore - 28 May 2012 17:39

BSD

Note/disclaimer: I would only suggest this rather paradoxical/non-linear approach for those who have tried repeatedly to take a more direct, head-on approach, and have not found that approach to be helpful.

It could be important -- and helpful -- to accept that pornography is actually a "natural" reaction/replacement for something much more substantial and important that's missing in our lives, rather than merely labeling it a sin/perversion. So rather than attacking it and attempting to place it (and ourselves) in some sort of moral straight jacket, let's approach it as a signal to us that something much more meaningful is missing in our lives. Then it might be possible to break the hold it has on us, if we look deeply into ourselves to see what exactly it is that we truly desire (i.e. our ideal Aishes Chayil/Soul Mate, etc.) so we can begin to understand what it is that's missing in our lives.

We can then take that as a new starting point and build upon our newly created thought/image/ideal through focused meditation/concentration/visualization. The more we do that, and the clearer that image becomes, the stronger our attraction and movement is in that direction, and the weaker our compulsion to run to switch on the porn. In essence, we will be crafting our own object of desire, rather than allowing the porn wheel to run itself (and us along with it) on autopilot, but it will be based upon a much deeper knowledge of ourselves and true inner desires. In that way, the hold that porn has over us might be finally broken, or at least diminished significantly.

Remember...thoughts are not just "thoughts" – they're actually more like "things", and these "thought-things" have a much greater impact on our environment and our lives than we've been lead to believe. So the more our thoughts are in line with what we really truly desire, the more our lives will be positive/constructive, vs negative/destructive.

The thing about all addictions is that they always take on a life of their own, and begin to run in a thoughtless/auto pilot sort of fashion. Our minds have become lazy with despair, and we rarely stop to think if we can ever regain a mastery over our own thought processes. A lot of that has to do with living in a Christianized/Satanic world in which evil is loved and good is hated, which is the complete antithesis of what Hashem has commanded us to do – love good and hate evil. The people behind the dark side of this world are VERY diligent in what they do and the way in which they do it; much more so than most of us. So by taking this one step towards reversing that process, and becoming the director, rather than the directed, of this one most significant part of our lives, we can begin to turn the tide and reverse what we believed up to this point we had no control over.

Remember...this world is ripe with all sorts of potential addictions, because Hashem has built in numerous pleasure principles that are inherent in this world. The discipline of Judaism is extreme -- we do not have the "luxury" of the ascetics who deny worldly pleasures, and we do not have the "luxury" of the hedonists who ignore the consequences of our pleasures. We must

balance pleasure with accountability. It's the most austere discipline of all. And the masters of the dark arts KNOW that. So they intentionally fan the flames of ALL the possible pleasures, with the knowledge that most people will succumb to their ploys and become trapped in their bottomless pits of addiction. (And this is not just theoretical. The way the Afghans were able to defeat the Russians was by sending in prostitutes with opium and other drugs to the Russian soldiers. In a relatively short period of time, the Russian soldiers were so weakened by this tactic that they were able to be overcome by a weaker enemy, because that weaker enemy had weakened THEM to the point that they could be defeated.)

Yet, as R' Nachman states: "The whole world is a narrow bridge (i.e. if we take a step to the left, we fall into asceticism, if we take a step to the right, we fall into hedonism), but the ikar/essence, is to not be afraid."

That's really quite an amazing dictate, when you think about it. One would logically think that after presenting such a graphic picture of walking a tightrope across this world, the mandate would flow to be VERY afraid. But R' Nachman states the exact opposite -- to NOT be afraid. Because fear and despair go hand in hand, and once a soul falls into despair, it loses the energy and desire to even THINK it can extricate itself. But once a soul has become ensnared in despair, what can it do?

One of the areas that has probably been the most neglected in the Jewish psyche over the past 2,000 years is *dimyon* – imagination. I believe the reason for this is twofold: 1. The line between true prophecy and false prophecy is a hair's breadth, and to help insure that false prophets do not proliferate, extreme safeguards have been placed up any attempt to explore that most vital area of our awareness. 2. In order to reduce the persecutions by Christians against Jews, who are, after all, a nation of prophets, even further attempts have been made to purge that part of our Jewish identity in order to survive in this hostile, anti-Jewish environment. Over millennia we have become more accustomed to surviving than living, and just like a survivor of extreme child abuse, our collective psyche has become compartmentalized and stunted. In order to reclaim the vitality that is necessary to combat the calculated and scheduled attacks by the masters of the dark arts, we need MORE access to our most vital resource – our *dimyon* – not less.

By taking the steps to actively cultivate this most essential tool, we can create the means through which to counterbalance addictions that convince us that we are powerless and that our G-d is powerless, and at the same time clearing the channels through which Hashem can personally guide us.

In order to help us achieve this most daunting task, 2 key elements need to be in place. 1. We must at all times link all of our efforts to the clear acknowledgment of Hashem as the One, True Creator. 2. Using a standard Mussar technique, the more detail we can include in our visualization(s), the more effective they will be.

The essential question at this point is: "Okay...how do we accomplish this visualization process? There are lots of books written about it, but in truth, it's rather simple (it's simple to do, but it takes time to develop). To begin with, ground all attempts in a request to Hashem to help us. And know that we have within ourselves MUCH more ability than we give ourselves credit for (another byproduct of a long, protracted *gallus*). Then start simple. Take a simple object, like a candle, for example, sit quietly, focus on your breathing, slow it down, look at the

candle, close your eyes, and see how long you can see the flame in your mind's eye. When you lose that image, open your eyes again, look at the candle, close your eyes again, and see how long you can see the flame in your mind's eye. I guarantee that if you take 5 minutes a day to do this, in a reasonably short period of time, you'll see that this latent ability/talent will become stronger. What you're accomplishing is strengthening the "muscles" of your dimyon/imagination. (An advanced technique of this time honored "meditate on a candle" technique is to be able to see the candle, or whatever object you are holding in your mind's eye, WITH YOUR EYES OPEN. You have the ability to literally superimpose an image you are holding in your mind's eye while looking at the world with your eyes wide open. THAT'S quite an amazing achievement indeed!!)

At some other time of the day, sit quietly and ask yourself: "What type of woman/relationship do I really desire. What are her qualities? What does she look like? What color is her hair; her eyes? How does she look when she smiles? What sort of partner do I really seek in this world/lifetime? What sorts of things would we talk about? How would we raise our children? What are the most important values that she should possess? Does she have to be drop dead gorgeous, or are qualities like compassion, humor, compatibility more important? (These are just examples; use your own thoughts to generate the types of things you want to ask/require of your "ideal" aishes chayil.)

When you combine the practice of visualization training with plumbing the depths of what qualities you desire – both physical and spiritual – in your ideal partner, then you very well might see a significant drop off in the pull that porn has in your life.

I would also suggest that it's important to explore what qualities we possess in ourselves, in order to better understand and balance that which we plan to bring to the table with our object-of-desire aishes chayil; after all, relationships are a two way street, and one can't expect to draw to oneself an ideal partner if one isn't willing to expect the same sort of ideal/compatible and complementary characteristics in oneself. And again...at every step of the way, maintain the connection with Hashem and ask Hashem to aid/guide you along the way. This is by no means a push-button microwave "I want it NOW" process. It requires patience and persistence. This is not a sprint; it's a marathon – the marathon of the rest of our lives.

Finally, any new endeavor must begin with the seed of desire -- in this instance, the desire to make a change in our lives. If we've hit rock bottom with all of our other attempts, we might just be ready to attempt this new direction/change.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 11 Jun 2012 16:49

@Dov

1. You didn't mention anything in your post to which I responded about the 12 step approach,

but you did in other posts.

2. Personally, I've tried ALL of the approaches (i.e. 12 Step, Mussar, R' Nachman's Tikkun, Philosophy, Psychology, etc.) and failed at/with ALL of them! (At least I'm consistent). Maybe what happened to me a couple of months ago was that I'd either become so totally saturated with porn to the point that it finally lost some of its appeal, or else I'd hit rock bottom, existentially speaking, where I honestly just didn't care any more -- about much of anything -- and in a way that was somehow different than at any other time in my life when I'd hit an existential abyss. Or a combination of the two.

And somewhere along the way I think that what happened was I just didn't even feel like summoning up the energy to turn on the laptop to watch porn. Somewhere in my psyche, I knew it was pointless, despite referring to it as my "cyber harem", and the more that awareness developed (i.e. of the pointlessness of it), the more logical and rational it all became to me to just stop. I wasn't at the point then to put an all out stop, but it was like a snowball starting out at the top of a mountain. As I began to focus more and more on my life and my spirituality and my addictive personality, I was able to get a totally different perspective than at any other point in my life. It started with R'/Dr. Twerski's book, and went from there. It felt like for the first time in ages, I was on top of the wheel, spiritually speaking, rather than being crushed beneath the wheel. So that's why I joined and wrote my original post, in the event that someone else was going through something similar. It sounds to me as if you're coming from a much different place, and that what I'm writing about is causing you to feel unsettled. I could be wrong about that; I'm just reading between the lines of your posts, is all.

3. As far as you feeling that I'm hitting you over the head with Torah morals...I'm not even Shomer Shabbos. I used to be, and I'm definitely Jewish, but I'd be the last person in the world to hit you with any Torah guilt trip. That's why the book that ontheedgeman recommended was so helpful to me. It's so much more open ended and loving than, say, the classic: Mesillas Yeaharim -- a book that I've tried to read now for the past 30 years, and I've never gotten past page 30. (Not that that's a good thing, just that it's the truth. And I was much more of a Derech HaShem man, myself.) So if I came across that way it was totally unintentional. The current issue I have with what you're saying has to do with the concept of powerlessness, a key ingredient of all 12 step programs. I'm really coming from an almost totally opposite place on that one point. For me, it's a matter of choice, and it's a choice I do, in fact, have power over. But I don't want to get bogged down in debating different approaches.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by obormottel - 11 Jun 2012 19:34

[skaybaltimore wrote on 28 May 2012 17:39:](#)

BSD

...this world is ripe with all sorts of potential addictions, because Hashem has built in numerous pleasure principles that are inherent in this world. The discipline of Judaism is extreme -- we do not have the "luxury" of the ascetics who deny worldly pleasures, and we do not have the "luxury" of the hedonists who ignore the consequences of our pleasures. We must balance pleasure with accountability. It's the most austere discipline of all. And the masters of the dark arts KNOW that.

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[skaybaltimore wrote on 31 May 2012 20:52:](#)

And that's one of the big differences that I see between a typical 12-step approach and a more Torah-oriented approach. The "Big Book" folks really didn't have the 2,000 years of wisdom in their world view that someone attached to the Torah has. Hence, my decision to join this site. I've been a part of 12 step programs over the years, and while they have validity for a lot of people, that approach is clearly not the only approach when it comes to dealing with addiction(s), and it's not the course I choose for myself.

And without a true understanding of how this process works, so that it can function properly, as **Hashem intended**, things constantly run amok. For me, proper understanding is essential, so that the resulting actions are balanced, and not by-products of addictive choices.

[skaybaltimore wrote on 11 Jun 2012 16:49:](#)

Personally, I've tried ALL of the approaches (i.e. 12 Step, Mussar, R' Nachman's Tikkun,

Philosophy, Psychology, etc.) and failed at/with ALL of them! (At least I'm consistent).

So far, one would think we're dealing with one of our own, a frum Yid with a fondness for porn and masturbation. He believes in G-d, keeps Toiro and Mitzvois, tried all kinds of approaches, and finally found one that is working for him. He is happy to share it with other Tora-observant Jews as something that is different from 12-step program, but is intrinsically Jewish and Toiro-based.

Well, here comes an eye-opener:

As far as you feeling that I'm hitting you over the head with Torah morals...I'm not even Shomer Shabbos. I used to be, and I'm definitely Jewish...

Mesillas Yeaharim -- a book that I've tried to read now for the past 30 years, and I've never gotten past page 30.

The current issue I have with what you're saying has to do with the concept of powerlessness, a key ingredient of all 12 step programs. I'm really coming from an almost totally opposite place on that one point. For me, it's a matter of choice, and it's a choice I do, in fact, have power over.

You don't say...

So "I tried all the approaches" is a little misleading...You haven't gotten past page 30 in Mussor...You've stopped keeping Shabbos...You bailed out of the 12-step program...(I wonder how far you got there, or with "R' Nachman's Tikkun, Philosophy, Psychology, etc"). I think it's dishonest to call your approach "a more Torah-oriented approach".

It seems to be misrepresenting the truth when you state: "The "Big Book" folks really didn't have the 2,000 years of wisdom in their world view that someone attached to the Torah has. Hence, my decision to join this site. " I think the inference is that you are "attached to Torah" and therefore you advocate a Tora-based approach that you're sharing with other Tora-attached Jews.

I think, knowing that you're not Shomer Shabbos would be an important disclosure to make when advocating "2 key elements" in solving this issue: "1. We must at all times link all of our efforts to the clear acknowledgment of Hashem as the One, True Creator. 2. Using a standard Mussar technique, the more detail we can include in our visualization(s), the more effective they will be. "

So I think that when I called you out as having an agenda I was correct. I think you are interested in other frum Yidden following your path, and perhaps eventually going off the derech after you and your made-up system of bizzare beliefs. And you cleverly disguise this by quoting from holy books and insterting "Hashem" every so often in your writing.

So of course, life will tell how long it'll take before the porn laptop comes on, and maybe you finally did find a working solution, but my money is on porn. I bet that it won't be too long, either, before you jump off this wagon, as well, and move on to something else, all the while guiltily (or not) masturbating to internet porn.

This, of course, doesn't mean that I don't love you as a Jew and a fellow human being. I wish you the best of health, both physical and spiritual. And of course you're free to choose whatever

you think is the right thing to do, as you always have been. I just wish you were a little more honest, that's all.

Mottel

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by Dov - 11 Jun 2012 19:45

1. Oh, understood.

2. I tried a lot of things, too. When you say you tried the 12 steps do you mean that you actually went to meetings and took a sponsor who shared with you how he worked the 12 steps and worked them, or do you mean you read them and tried to use them on your own? If you must assume I am judgemental, then that's your loss, not mine. All I hope for is understanding and communication of experience with a fellow man and Jew - not to convince you of anything, and certainly not to gain license to say, "Well, if that's all you did, then you didn't *really* try the 12 steps."

I am not (thank-G-d) unsettled by your writing. But I do care, and I do not judge you, and I am living a miracle of G-d's Grace ('Chesed' if you prefer) as of this very day. So I share.

If you have suggestions for me, I'll accept them!

3. I never felt you were hitting me over the head with anything. I was concerned that you were hitting yourself over the head with them. But I was wrong. That's all. You and I are both comfortable in our paths and life is going well a day at a time, thank-G-d.

Finally, I must tell you something that may seem funny to you:

You say you have an issue with the 'powerlessness' idea. Guess what? I do too! I'd *never, ever* accept it. It is a big challenge for not just you, but for me, and for *everybody* I meet with a sex addiction or habit, or whatever-you-want-to-call-the-thing-rotting-their-lives-from-the-inside. And it probably should be.

The only reason I *do* accept it is because *I was forced to* under the weight of my own 22 years of personal struggling experience....at the age of 35.

It is not a belief that I have, at all. It's just a fact that is proven to me beyond my choice.

Funny. As long as accepting my inability to manage my own life was left up to my choice, I played the game, theorized and tried, cried, etc. Once my will was finally broken, I no longer had the intellectual *choice* to keep pretending.

To use a funny Mahara"l: The Gemorah states that G-d held a mountain over the heads of the

Jewish people and said He'd crush them if they would not accept the Torah. Mahara"l writes that when it says He threatened to kill them, it means that He made it so **clear to them** that the Torah is true, that they felt they *had no choice left but* to accept it. To them it became as irrevocable as choosing life vs death - not *really* a matter of choice. When faced with death, we do basically **anything** to stay alive, even things we would normally be very ashamed to . Same with accepting the Torah, for them.

Not *really* a 'choice'.

And the Mahara"l says G-d did this *even though they said "na'aseh v'nishmah"*! He wanted Torah to be something a person sees he really does not have a choice but to accept. Cuz it's G-d's mind. His Will is not ours to accept or deny. We can play and pretend with philosophy to 'determine' whether G-d exists...!? But He knows that He does. Game over.

I would never have come up with the detestable idea of powerlessness, and it is far, far out of my 'comfort zone'. Besides, it's such a religious can of worms. But the fact remains that I did not stop even though I wanted to for at least 15 years. How many things does a guy have to try - and how much of his life needs to get flushed down the toilet *while* he tries - until he finally is brought to his knees and is broken in the face of his problem....and then before His G-d? I went to at least 5 rabonim and three shrinks, got married, read books about sexual addiction and 12 steps, read Twerski, talked to R/Dr Twerski on the phone, admitted it to my wife, very nearly died behind the wheel, used mikvah, Tikkun Klali, etc, etc....am I to wait as one guy out there Or that I

need to drink only Wheatgrass Tea?

It's *not* respectable, true. But I admit that I failed and *am* a failure at winning the battle with lust. I am a failure at running my own life. When I try my very best to run my life, it revolves around really good sex, or not having really good sex. And my problem is not sex! It is living life on Life's terms, period. I am a failure at that and need a miracle to succeed. So far, it's going OK as long as I take my 'medicine'...

Hey, guess what? The Torah teaches us that after 120 you and I will **both be losers**: we will lose the battle against death. Heck, we cannot even keep our bodies, families, and lives! We *are* losers in that sense. Here, too, I am one of G-d's (favorite) losers, and He loves me and gives me this great, growing life that is *way* beyond anything I could have dreamned up! Anytime you'd like, I'd tell you (only on the phone, cuz of all the self-identifying info involved) all the ways my life - our life - has improved since I was given the gift of sobriety for a day. And it's been over 15 years of days, so far.

And He did all that for a decent man man who is also a pervert and loser (me). Obviously He loves, *loves*, **loves** me and always offered the help - and I was finally willing to take it *from Him* when I masturbated enough and got into enough trouble.

And I'd also be happy to detail to you exactly how my sexual acting out brought me to *have* to conclude that I just had no more choice. I do not do *that* on GYE, either, cuz of anonymity.

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says, "Oh! but you did not try Submerged Hypnotic Infusion Therapy!?" (woops!) :o :

Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 11 Jun 2012 20:32

@Dov

As I said, we're coming from different places, and I respect the fact that what works for you is working for you, and may it continue to work for you!!

@ obormottel

There are lots of options in terms of how I choose to respond to you. From that group, I'll simply select: "Peace".

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by obormottel - 11 Jun 2012 21:24

[skaybaltimore wrote on 11 Jun 2012 20:32:](#)

"Peace".

Sure, sure.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by Dov - 12 Jun 2012 02:30

Peace is nice enough for me, thanks.

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