

Love despite addiction

Posted by Sarah8765 - 28 Jun 2012 09:21

I found out about my husbands addiction about 6 months ago and I have been taking it really hard to say the least. I am seriously debating wether or not to get divorced.

I noticed that nobody speaks in the posts about love for their wife and I was wondering if all of you men who are in active addiction still feel love for your wife despite your actions.

Please be honest in your answers, it would be really appreciated.

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Re: Love despite addiction

Posted by Benzi - 28 Jun 2012 11:50

Hello, Sarah! I dont have a wife, so I cant really relate to the topic from OWN experience, but I am here quite a while and i saw what others write.

Quote from Awraham613:

I was right..... in the beginning. I had no desire to look or doing anything I shouldn't and was completely submerged in doing what I knew I was supposed to. Unfortunately, those initial feelings began to slowly go away while those old, unwanted desires crept back in. Now that I was not learning night seder in Yeshiva, I had plenty of time at home with my computer. I hated myself for "cheating" on my wife in that way. I felt so guilty for looking at other women but felt completely powerless. The thrill of meeting other women discreetly over the internet (even just to schmooze) was too powerful for me to stop on my own. All my wife ever did was smile and be that perfect Kallah any guy could ever ask for. I couldn't continue hurting her like this....even if she didn't know.

My wife and I always had very open lines of communication and I felt that I could truly tell her anything, so I did. I told her about my struggles, what I used to do every night in High School

(some of this stuff she already knew from previous conversations but not to this extent). I never told her that I tried to form dumb online relationships with random women because I felt it would hurt her too much. She was completely understanding, never judgmental and wanted to do anything she could to help me. Randomly, she would ask me if I looked at other girls because I didn't get enough satisfaction from her. I would cry deep down for giving her those insecurities after convincing her that it was just my "addiction" and had nothing to do with a Chisaron in her. I thank Hashem for giving me such an amazing wife.

and, believe me, I feel your pain :' (

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by jack - 28 Jun 2012 13:05

sarah - your husband still adores you.his addiction has nothing to do with you.believe me, i know.and my wife wouldn't take kindly to my addiction either - she would see it as an insult, just as you are doing.this is extremely important - he loves you, believe me.i dont know either of you so i just might be wrong, but i dont think i'm wrong.

dont get divorced over this alone.

jack

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by Benzi - 28 Jun 2012 13:25

Quote from Blind Beggar:

2. I LEARNED THAT JOHN OR HARRY'S WIFE HAS "NOTHING' TO DO WITH ME.
END OF STORY...
NOTHING!

I DON'T CARE IF SHE IS...
OR WHAT SHE IS...
OR WHY SHE IS - OR ISN'T...

[...]

YES, TIGHT CLOTHES AND TALL BOOTS ETC WILL STILL TRIGGER ME,
BUT I DONT GO TO THE BANK OR THE MALL TO FIND THOSE TRIGGERS ANYMORE.
WE MAY HAVE CAUGHT A FIRST LOOK, BUT WE CAN CHOOSE NOT TO LOOK A
SECOND TIME.

THE LUST IS STILL THERE, BUT I LOVE MYSELF AND I LOVE HASHEM AND I LOVE MY
WIFE AND MY KIDS MUCH MUCH MORE THAN MY LUST.

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by Benzi - 28 Jun 2012 13:36

Quote from Yehoshua

Please Hashem, tell me what to do. I would like to finish my work, not for money, not for fame.

So again, I am afraid, scared for my life, I can't help myself, I need porn, I want to act out, I want to m*, I want to act out in bad ways, I want to fall deep, I want to look at p* and just loose myself, because I'm a loser

BUT

I want to honour my mother by cleaning up

I want show love to my wife by staying clean

I want to come close to Hashem by constantly praying

PLEASE HASHEM TELL ME WHAT TO DO.

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by Benzi - 28 Jun 2012 13:51

Quote from AN HONEST MOUSE

I did something out of pure love for her to connect to her and she felt it and it did connect us.
bH

there are a lot other things... i mean a lot of things, just cant find them all right now.

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by Benzi - 28 Jun 2012 13:54

Quote from KV:

Male, 27, married and love it, no kids yet, and raised secular with jewish and non jewish family members, [...]

A little background on my addiction:

I have anxiety and stress problems. 9 years ago I found out that by finding pictures and meeting people on line (never in person) that I got such an adrenaline rush that I would lose focus on my stress and anxiety. Like how an addict uses drugs! It took a long time till I saw the connection, I am an addict hooked on the adrenaline and my medium is internet porn.

I have had success with an accountability program but I have gone through great lengths every few weeks to get around it. Being married helps (I just adore my wife), I usually don't have time to screw up anymore, but when I do have time I blow it big time.

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Re: Love despite addiction

Posted by Steve - 28 Jun 2012 15:49

Sarah,

Unfortunately, most people equate Love with Lust and Sex, and therefore when an addict (definition: one who has an uncontrollable compulsion to lust and a compulsion to sex) follows the object of their obsession, others (and most likely the confused addict himself) think that his love energy is going toward the obsession and is taken away from his wife and real life.

However, Love and Lust are two completely different things. In fact, they are opposites.

Lust is all about self - to comfort oneself by satisfying the "imperious urge" of a compulsion that comes because of resentments and fears in facing real life. To TAKE from life whatever I can to satisfy MY needs.

Love is all about the other - to GIVE of oneself to another to comfort THEM, without thought or manipulation for one's own self interest. Real love has NOTHING to do with lust. The union between a husband and wife should be one of mutual GIVING, not simultaneous TAKING. If one's focus in intimacy is to take, then one is lusting with one's spouse.

Intimacy can be defined as "Into-Me-See", a union of two souls allowing themselves to be vulnerable and sharing and baring their innermost fears, hopes and dreams, to grow together with a common purpose to build a bayis ne'eman based on Love.

Your husband's innermost soul is YEARNING for that spiritual connection with you, as well as for a deep spiritual connection to Hashem. We became addicted because we have developed an illness, which developed into a physical/mental/spiritual craving, and for some inexplicable reason, we have found that those painful holes in our lives can be temporarily alleviated by a drug of choice, which in our case is the lust. We are misled by our unlearned nature that when we are lusting we become "whole" at that moment. But it is a false reality that leaves us more empty than when we started.

Yes, you feel betrayed, yes you are hurt and perhaps jealous of his obsession with pictures or fantasies of other women, or worse. And you have every reason and right to feel this way. It sounds from your post that you still love and care about him, despite your pain, and that is what has kept you going for the last 6 months.

What your husband needs now is something that only YOU can provide for him - the REAL spiritual union with the woman he LOVES, the relationship that can REALLY make him whole. And what you need now is for him to recognize that he has caused you pain, and you also need time to heal. You BOTH need TIME, patience and understanding that he has an ILLNESS that must be dealt with TOGETHER. Recriminations, finger-pointing, blame, anger - neither one of you are helped by venting your pain this way, and even further the illness away from the ability to recover. If he had chas v'shalom developed cancer, you would not berate him or leave him because of the inconvenience to deal with it, the progress and the setbacks, not quite sure how it will turn out but hoping and davening for the best. The illness of addiction is no less life-

threatening. It robs us of the joy and opportunities of life, and the resulting self-pity and depression can be fatal, literally. And just like families of cancer patients have their support groups, you also need a support group of understanding women who can inspire you to deal with your husband's struggle to find sobriety and recovery.

I love my wife, I am dedicated to her needs and comfort, and always have been, but while under the influence of my addiction in did not know how to connect with her, and that fear drove me onward into self-pity and self-medication. When she lashed out at me out of her own pain and suffering as a wife of an addict (and not even KNOWING why her husband was so distant), it drove me even more into my isolation, because I could not see how to stop myself from acting on my lust, and I ran away from facing the responsibility for her pain.

Through a lot of hard work on the GYE Forum and in **the 12-Step Program of Recovery group conference calls that GYE offers**, I have learned by the Grace of Hashem how to get out of my self-centeredness, rededicate myself to my wife and family, become a more involved father and caring husband than i ever knew i could. My wife and I have had many moments of tender non-physical intimacy, and our love and relationship keeps growing more. I do not need to follow my urges for the false joys of life, once I have experienced the TRUE JOY of connecting with Hashem and the wonderful life's partner He chose for me.

May I recommend that you both find recovery and support programs here through GYE, and be patient with each other as you rebuild your Love and Trust together. Life will even be BETTER than you ever imagined before you found yourselves on this road. May I also recommend you contact Dov from "Daily Dose of Dov", he can testify how much his marriage has grown since he got into recovery. In fact, i look forward to the day when my own marriage will be as good as his, but I know i am on the right path to get there.

May Hashem Yisborach guide you both to build a life of happiness and "into-me-see", and to find great joy together.

Steve

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by inspiredandhopeful - 28 Jun 2012 17:57

Sarah

It is extremely important for you and every married woman to know and understand something about men. Most normal men even tzadikim have a natural craving to look and interact with sexual stimulating images and activities. Moreover Hashem has given our generation enormous challenges in this area of which seforim say is the test of our generation. It is like in the times when avodah zoroh was such a great nisoyon in which the gemoroh says that the holy tanoim and amoroim would have ran with zest to worship idols. Today's world is absolutely flooded with znus, permissiveness and promiscuity and it is very normal for a man to get caught in this addiction. Do not view your husband as a bad person but as a victim of a disease that is running rampant all over. Of course this doesn't mean that you should just accept it and live with it because Hashem has also given us tools to overcome this illness. There is help at hand, you should encourage him and I believe that you even have the right to demand of him that he join a 12 step program and / or therapy and makes progress. I suggest that you also join a support group for wives of addicts.

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Re: Love despite addiction

Posted by alexeliezer - 28 Jun 2012 19:21

Please see "A Letter to the Wife of the GYE Husband" by Yechida, linked below

www.guardyoureyes.org/?p=1795

[I am sober now for 3 years, but certainly loved my wife in active addiction. Now that I'm not lusting anymore, I am free to love her even more. My wife complained to her friends for years that she didn't feel connected to me, and that the relations felt like going through the motions without feeling. Now that I'm sober and she knows about my addiction, our connection has been revitalized and continues to grow.](#)

[My wife tells me things are pretty quiet on the GYE spouse's forum, although you will get some support there. If all this is not enough, consider joining SA-Anon, the group for spouses of sex addicts.](#)

[I understand you feel betrayed and maybe unloved. But you've come this far. Things can only get better.](#)

[Hatzlocha!](#)

[Alex](#)

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 28 Jun 2012 19:53

just fyi, according to gye policy there can be no cross-gender communication on the forum

that notwithstanding, the topic is great and it is something that should be addressed.

thank you Steve for another pearl!

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by ur-a-jew - 28 Jun 2012 21:37

[ZemirosShabbos wrote on 28 Jun 2012 19:53:](#)

just fyi, according to gye policy there can be no cross-gender communication on the forum

that notwithstanding, the topic is great and it is something that should be addressed.

thank you Steve for another pearl!

The user has been restricted from the men's side. But because the post raises important points the thread can still be viewed.

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by Dov - 09 Jul 2012 21:48

Originally emailed this to Guard. Some thoughts on this thread and what it is worth (or not):

Would she *have* a chance to really go back and forth with us sickos, she'd learn a lot - but

remain as confused and twisted as ever. We are not the best people to 'really, finally explain it to her' - we are actually the WORST ones for that job. For:

1- Many of us are *plotzing* for the respect of women. Plotzing for it, davka. So we try to excuse our disrespectful, perverted and often subtly abusive behavior - *especially* to women. Sort of like so many Germans used to try to apologize for the Holocaust, feeling they were representing their entire people and atoning for its sins. Same here. Who better to get on 'our side' *more* than a scorned wife?

I am not criticizing at all, here - just observing.

2- Many of us are still masturbating. How could we *possibly* exude sanity and cross this painful bridge to make peace with someone who we'd quite likely be *lusting after*? Sounds unlikely to me.

3- I think that many of us are motivated to reframe our 'struggle' in *religious* terms to others (and to ourselves) because it makes it seem so much more common, respectable, or even healthy...and we often try to make our struggle sound like it ought to be greatly *admired* by others. I have read this on GYE often, and did it for years, too. And for normals *it is* to be admired - but not for addicts. Addicts have no choice in the matter of recovery, really. The talk to these hurting women sometimes sounds to me like reframing and explaining - excusing our horrible behavior based on religious grounds. As though many men have this just because they are *guys*. Or because *hagadol mechaveiro yitro gadol mimenu!* Or because they are aching for Hashem and can't find Him...maybe all true, but what does that have to do with the unfairness of our disgusting behavior for our innocent wives? Nothing at all, I think. Acting out is wrong, period. And I think that we sexaholics will be able to face our wives better when we *admit* that, rather than *excuse* it to them using religious or other reasons.

They might come to see we cannot stop - until we give it up - but I believe that is ***their*** journey, not ours to convince them of.

4- Many of us forget that even though the porn and our fantasies usually portray *women* as being exactly as sex-hungry as we are, and to want exactly the things we *want* them to want...they usually don't. They are women and are different, and will probably remain that way no matter how hard our TV and movies try to twist them into aggressively sexually charged people. So it is naive for an afflicted man to try and explain the nature of the problem to a sexually very different *woman*....that is, in my opinion.

All these things just feed into ***co-dependence***, a thing I am starting to learn about right now.

In S-Anon, it seems to me that the wives learn not to treat the husband sexaholic like a baby. But our explanations would likely do *just* that - sympathy, empathy, cut us slack. The wives of S-Anon learn to put themselves and their *marriages before* their husband's comfort - even before his sobriety! His sobriety is HIS business, none of the wives'. No sexaholic man could 'explain his disease' well enough to a wife to accomplish this healthy separation for her. It's her work.

I think that much of what you will read in the explanations to these curious wives reaching

across the mechitza is about how *the wife should not feel bad*, about how *incredibly hard it is for the husband* and that his need for sexual stimulation elsewhere is *no reflection on her*, about how *much patience she will need....etc.*

Nu. Very nice. Maybe true, but isn't having a **sexaholic man** explain all this to her directly, dangerous? What of the danger of dishonesty, let alone the lust. So we SA's generally leave it to someone else and do not do it.

Joint sessions do exist in SA. Where the wives hear the men describe their problem to EACH OTHER, or speaking as a couple about their issues - not to 'finally explain it' to the women.

But this is GYE! Its a different thing entirely, so I regret locking the thread, and whatever you think should go, I say.

Enough out of me.

Sorry for being so loud again.

- Dov

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by mifatfait - 10 Jul 2012 06:26

Dov, I really enjoyed that.

I see sometimes that lust can hide or cover up the real love, causing stupid arguments by making me overfocus on her faults in order so that I won't have to confront my own. All I feel is my selfish desires, nothing else exists.

But I still love her inside, and when I am more sober the connection always returns.

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Re: Love despite addiction
Posted by workingmyprogram - 10 Jul 2012 10:00

I am very in love with my wife and that is one of my main reasons to try and get clean. She is the most beautiful and caring person i know.

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