

Seeking guidance and perspective

Posted by longsleeves - 23 Jan 2015 01:59

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Hey friends,

As I progress with my dating toward engagement and marriage, I am trying to gain a healthy, HaShem-supportive perspective on my struggle with porn and masturbation. I view this struggle as a personal battle that I am facing and progressing with at my own pace. However, going into a relationship with another woman, while still masturbating on occasion, seems a little dishonest and causes me discomfort. Meaning, masturbation feels like (and perhaps is) contradictory to the honesty, physical attraction, bond, and closeness that I have towards my partner. Is it unacceptable for me to enter a marriage while still battling this challenge? Do I need to wait until I have totally overcome this issue prior to getting married? I don't think this makes sense, but am I required to tell my wife that this is a challenge that I am dealing with? Or is it better for me to continue to work through this on my own (specifically since mentioning to my wife can trigger a whole host of problems)?

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective

Posted by cordnoy - 23 Jan 2015 02:50

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are you gettin' engaged to this girl, or are you in the datin' scene?

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective

Posted by shomer bro - 23 Jan 2015 04:40

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From what I've seen on this forum, thinking that you have stopped acting out forever is not a prerequisite to marriage. This could be because as addicts, we are never fully cured. We may have better control, but the yetzer hara is still there. But it shouldn't stop you from getting married, unless it's seriously affecting your life. With regards to whether you should tell her, that's a matter of debate here on gye. I too am dating and am unsure whether I will tell the girl about my situation. Hatzlacha raba!

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective

Posted by Hashivalisesonyishecho - 23 Jan 2015 10:16

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What if a person knows that he isn't the kindest and most giving type. Maybe heshouldn't get married until he corrected that midah. Or if a person knows he's a kaason and sometimes over reacts. Or if he is lazy so he might have to struggle to fulfill his responsibilities in marriage. etc etc etc. We are never finished correcting and bettering ourselves so we can't wait for perfection. As long as a person cares to try to become a better person, he should continue and move ahead in life and learn on the job. He can therefore hope and expect that his life, marriage, parenting etc will always be heading upwards along with his avodas hamidos.

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective

Posted by longsleeves - 29 Jan 2015 19:42

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dating

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective

Posted by longsleeves - 29 Jan 2015 19:43

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Well said, thank you.

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective

Posted by longsleeves - 29 Jan 2015 21:10

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Well said, thank you.

I believe that I agree with you. Meaning, in regards to telling the girl, I don't think it is necessary, specifically while only dating. Unless, the addiction is more severe and is an actual part of the boys personality (where the addiction is having a significant negative impact on the person's life). However, if the problem is more controlled and it is being done primarily for pleasure (opposed to compulsively) then it could very well be, although not guaranteed, that marriage

itself will be healing. I have a close friend that had struggled with masturbation when he was single but then once he got married the issue was resolved. Additionally, I conversed with a well known mashgiach, who assists single boys with this issue, and he concurred as well that marriage many times solves the problem. I think it is a gemara that refers to this concept metaphorically, where it states that it is easier for a married man to control this temptation since he already "has bread on his plate." In cases like these, it would be unnecessary, and counterproductive, to divulge these issues to the girl. Ultimately, each case is different, and whether it is appropriate to tell a girl/wife would depend on the subjective dynamics of each individual case.

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective  
Posted by cordnoy - 29 Jan 2015 21:32

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I do not have the data to back this up, but I would assume exactly the opposite: marriage will not cure this problem.

But, you will say, "If he is doin' it for pleasure, now, he has the ultimate pleasure?"

I say, "Come back to me in three months, a year, ten years."

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective  
Posted by shomer bro - 29 Jan 2015 22:48

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I concur with cordnoy here. Out of all the stories I've read here on gye, the majority of them that mention marriage, say that marriage does not solve the problem. It's a common misconception that it will. Obviously, it's not a set in stone rule, but it's potentially dangerous to go into marriage with that assumption.

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective  
Posted by skeptical - 29 Jan 2015 22:49

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You kind of got it backwards.

If it's done compulsively, meaning that you try to stop but can't, it's more likely to be an issue after marriage. And marriage will make things worse, not better.

In any case, if you know you've got an issue with something, it's best to be open with your kallah about it before you get married, rather than it potentially coming out afterwards.

For example, I thought this issue would go away for me after marriage, so I didn't tell my wife anything about it when we were going out.

On the other hand, I had a huge temper that only people close to me really saw (my friends can't believe I have a temper, but just ask my younger brother!), so I was really nervous that something would happen after I got married. When my wife asked me if I ever got angry, I didn't really want to talk about it, but felt I had to, so I took a deep breath and told her that I have a temper. She was happy that I was honest about my shortcoming and she trusted me. Shortly after I got married, I told my wife that if I ever hit her, she should just pick up and leave. Boruch Hashem, my temper wasn't really an issue since marriage, but I'll give you 3 guesses what was an issue. Oh, and the first two guesses don't count, but I'll give you a hint: I'm on this site.

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective  
Posted by Shakeitoff - 30 Jan 2015 08:21

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I've had some success with this approach:

(1) I give myself a little credit AFTER going wrong: AFTER I yell at someone, lie, etc., I figure out what I felt like or did or said just before (felt jealous of someone, came home tired and didn't rest, said I agreed with someone when I really didn't, etc.)

(2) I try for self-control WHILE messing up: A few times lately, I've stopped myself WHILE feeling sorry for myself or taking a second look at someone, etc. and looked for the "trigger" --

and at least thought about the trigger and what to do about it.

(3) BEFORE making a mistake: I hope that I can anticipate that when I visit so-and-so, I'll feel sad that I'm not rich like him, or I'm fat and out of shape unlike her, or whatever. I'll then be in a "bad mood" that I cause myself. I need to prepare for whatever I can, however I can.

So that's it: AFTER is good, WHILE is better, BEFORE is best.

I don't know, really.

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Re: Seeking guidance and perspective

Posted by Ezra - 02 Feb 2015 01:46

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Longsleeves. There are a fair number of articles and conversations written on the topic around the site. I will let others who are better versed in the site, and tend to comment quickly on these type of questions, direct you to them.

I would also say dating and relationships are harder when you are hiding something and can't be real. Additionally, I would think that having a spouse that is ready and wanting to work with you, and understands your weaknesses whether large or even small, is a better position to be in then trying to be someone your not for the rest of your life. My two cents.

Might be helpful to work through these issues with someone.

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