

Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski ShlitoH

Posted by UTS - 09 Dec 2009 10:43

[b]There is now a website with a link to contact Rabbi Twerski by email among many other things.

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www.abrahamtwerski.com/

... making this thread more or less obsolete. I am leaving it here, until I or a moderator decide it's not necessary. There are quite a few comments which I would not like to be the one to delete by removing the whole thread.

It occurred to me that I have and others probably have questions that they would like to ask of Rabbi Twerski. He of course is the one who really got the frum world to begin at least to realize that there are addiction problems within it and that the best way to deal with them is with the Twelve Steps. So I decided to open this thread. In it, hopefully anyone who has such a questions can post them.

Please note that Rabbi Twerski has already answered a number of foundational (yesodistike) questions on this site at:

www.guardureyes.com/GUE/RTwerski/RTwerskiMain.asp

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski ShlitoH

Posted by UTS - 10 Dec 2009 18:32

[guardureyes wrote on 10 Dec 2009 08:42:](#)

To continue the line of reasoning that Ano's using, I think the 90 day program is similar to what Reb Shlachter is trying now with Momo. He said to him, you either go two weeks without surfing or you get on medication. I believe what he's trying to do here is to use the two weeks to SEE if he can live without medication, and if he can't, then we'll know he needs something more. It's the same thing with the 90 days. The 90 days offers you a chance to SEE if you truly NEED a complete character overhaul or not. You aim for the 90-day "magic" solution of breaking the addictive pattern. If you make it, it means that your issues were not so deeply ingrained and you have now proved to yourself that you can live a lust free life. If you keep trying to get to 90 and CAN'T, or even if you got to 90, like Ano, but you see that the lust is not going away and you have to keep white-knuckling it, that is a **siman** that you need SA and/or therapy! So to put it simply, the 90 days is not a goal in itself, it is a "measuring bar" to see how serious and deep your addiction goes.

Any individual can pretty much know whether he is emotionally healthy, generally, or not. If not, he needs the personality overhaul. But the 90 days is really a discipline strategy as well. Maybe this would not fit in with how most people understand the T.S., but I see it that way at the moment. However I am trying to learn (about) the 12 Steps and may change my mind.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski ShlitoH

Posted by Moshew - 10 Dec 2009 20:26

Reb Ano Nymous:

I agree with you %100.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski ShlitoH

Posted by kutan - 10 Dec 2009 22:27

[ovadia wrote on 10 Dec 2009 14:09:](#)

This question may have been dealt with elsewhere on the site, so please direct me if so.

My oldest son is 10 years old. I have always felt that if I had been told about puberty in a mature fashion and the implications of MZL, I might not have fallen. However in frum circles these issues are generally not discussed until it is usually too late. They seem to hope that the first time a boy will discover attraction to women etc will be in the Yichud room.

In a book about sex education which I read only after I was married (unfortunately, I think) the author pointed out that girls need to be told about puberty for practical reasons, but because boys do not have the same necessity it is ignored.

Anyway the question is, is there a definitive answer about informing a frum boy about puberty ?

Great question.

'fraid it may remain that, though.

I've been trying to get an answer for a while, and Guard once told me he has too!

The problem probably is that not all boys develop at the same rate, or have the same level of interest, and one does not want to educate them MORE than necessary. There was (is?) a thread on GYE discussing this issue. Maybe it was called Harry's son? Not sure.

One thing I've done is started to be maavir sedra with my son. Use the Rashi's etc to 'casually' bring up things. But, I've got to be honest, he does not give me much of a hint as to what is REALLY going on in his mind, and since I'm not (yet) a novi, its not fun. I am not sure of how much to say.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito

Posted by imtrying25 - 10 Dec 2009 22:39

Dont be nervous kutan. :-[Like you said this weeks parsha can be a major spring board for you. Ive always thought that when IY"H i have a son and when he grows up im going to tell him like this; When we start to get older we start having feelings for girls/women. I want you to know tatteleh that this is normal. Dont be afraid if you wanna look at your neighbor or the lady behind the counter. I have it. Your rebbe has it. And every man in this world has it. Hashem created this. Now like everthing Hashem created it could be for the good or for the bad. Hashem made us feel attracted to women so we should marry them. And by marrying them be able to fulfill one of the greatest mitzvahs in the torah of P'ru U'revu. If we wouldnt be attracted to them we wouldnt want to marry them. Just like when you were younger you always loved to start up with the girls on the block and now you want to be their friend. (Now depending on how curious he is he may ask, But why abba do we have to get married to have children? If he asks this i feel the best way is to actually tell him and explain to him the biological reasoning behind it. Now on this i know many would disagree but i feel strongly about it.) Then ill explain to him that this same thing could be used in a bad way. Bust most important yingele dont be nervous why certain things are happening to you and realize that Abba and zaidy and everyone that you know even the chashuva ones all have it. But they all use it to grow in kedusha v'taharuh. Also i want you to feel perfectly comfortable to ask any questions about this subject. (Im not even sure this is needed because the fact thatill be so open with him probaly will make hm feel comfortable enough but ill say it anyways.) I would also explain to him how this thing could be used in a bad way.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito

Posted by Kedusha - 10 Dec 2009 23:04

With my sons, the issue of Baal Keri came up well before puberty, when we were learning Mishnayos Berachos. They wanted to know what the term meant (their Rebbe didn't explain it, other than to say such a person was Tamei). I explained that it's hard to understand at their age, but that when a boy reaches about age 12-13, it becomes possible for him to become Tamei in this manner, due to an emission (not my exact words). When they asked how it can happen, I explained that it can occur in their sleep, or it can happen by touching the Bris Milah, which, I explained, is not permitted.

Even before that, they knew (because I told them, when it came up) that it's Ossur to look at women who are dressed immodestly. So it was perfectly natural that, when they were learning Mishnayos Berachos, I explained to them that looking at such things is another thing that can

cause a person to become a Baal Keri.

Because they were not yet facing the Nisayon, the conversation was relatively relaxed from both sides. Well, at least until they would ask if it ever happened to me!

Once they become of age, I think this type of conversation becomes much more difficult. That's why most men don't ever have it with their sons.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito
Posted by the.guard - 11 Dec 2009 07:16

Now depending on how curious he is he may ask, But why abba do we have to get married to have children? If he asks this i feel the best way is to actually tell him and explain to him the biological reasoning behind it. Now on this i know many would disagree but i feel strongly about it.

Imtrying25, that was a beautiful post... But, with the particular quote above, although I respect your opinion, my personal opinion is that as soon as a child understands the biological process, he will have a lot more to "think about" than he would have otherwise. Once he knows, not only will he feel a natural attraction to girls - like you said, but he will **understand why** and his imagination will take him places that it wouldn't have otherwise. Therefore, in my personal opinion (and everyone is free to disagree), it is best to delay telling kids the truth about the biological process for as long as it is possible. Obviously, if they find out from friends, there's nothing we can do, and in such a case we need to explain them more along the lines of what you wrote afterwards (about using it for Kedusha, etc...)... But, I feel that as long as we CAN delay it, why give them more to think about? Why should they be given a test to think of every girl they see in such terms, if they could be blissfully unaware of it for as long as possible?

Now there is some justified concern that if we don't tell them, they'll find out on their own in worse ways and won't tell us, and then we won't have the opportunity to give them hadracha about how it needs to be used right, etc... This is a good point too, but I still think that the first concern beats the second, unless you sense that it is inevitable that the child will be finding out ANYWAY any day...

As I have my own kids, ages 1 to 13, I have been thinking of creative ways of getting around the issue. If my kids ask me point blank how it's possible that parents only have kids when they're married, and how does it make sense that the kid looks like the father, etc... I have formulated a creative response that goes something along the lines of "married couples kiss, and when the body senses someone else's saliva, it starts the pregnancy process..." :-\ I haven't had to use this yet, but the day is probably coming closer... Just the other Shabbos, this topic came up and I avoided it somehow...

Yes, my situation may be different than others. I live in a **very protected environment**, where my kids are surrounded by only religious people, in a very chareidi community, and they don't see TV, movies or internet. Who knows, maybe in such a state I'll be able to get away with not

Although this sounds like a primitive approach, I truly feel that this is in their best interest. Being blissfully unaware of the process will delay the dangers of fantasy, masturbation, addiction, desire, etc. etc. And if I can save them all this by simply not telling, why not?

Again, not everybody's situation is the same. It has a lot to do with HOW sheltered your kids are, I guess.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito
Posted by Ykv_schwartz - 11 Dec 2009 07:28

[imtrying25 wrote on 10 Dec 2009 22:39:](#)

telling them till the day before the wedding?

Now depending on how curious he is he may ask, But why abba do we have to get married to have children? If he asks this i feel the best way is to actually tell him and explain to him the biological reasoning behind it. Now on this i know many would disagree but i feel strongly about it.

I went to therapy about eight years ago regarding my addiction. One of my therapist's theories for the roots of my strongly ingrained addiction was that my father spoke to me about these things at such a young age. Whether he is right, who know, I don't really care, and I think in the big picture he was wrong, but he clearly felt that this kind of talk is certainly not healthy. But I do think to certain degree I could relate to how the talking about it with my father made me feel more obsessed with s*x at a very young age of 11. So, in short, avoid this topic at all costs.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski ShlitoH
Posted by imtrying25 - 11 Dec 2009 08:08

Ok so in response R Guard and YS. Like this; Why i dont fully agree with you Guard is because when the kid does find out your taking a chance with his reaction. Some kids may feel that theyre father lied to them. Although not always but your definitely taking a chance that im not sure i would wanna take. As for YS. I couldnt disagree more. Now im not a therapist but i guess i have my own experiences. When i was young me and a friend of mine started getting into P*** magz. when his mother found out she actually sat down and told him what it was all about. Today this boy is a masmid par excellance. Now you can say it has nothing to do. But i felt that i had to discover it (my curious nature to know everything). For that reason by the time i did i was so far along that im still suffering today because of it. Sometimes i feel that if i was explained by someone who loved me , and my parents did love me , it would of satisfied my curiosity and im not sure if i would of went the lengths i did. I always felt this urge to fully understand this area (as i do in most things in life, i try always to get a full understanding) that i would read Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Hilchos Niddah and Hilchos Tzniyus and things just went downhill from there. And this all before i was even 12. Im just saying my 2 cents. But i guess like most people in the world our reaction is based on our expeirences.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski ShlitoH
Posted by the.guard - 11 Dec 2009 08:29

Wow, this is a great discussion... I may ask Rabbi Twerski to weigh in here.

See, ImTrying, that's what I meant by "it depends how sheltered your kids are". If I had suspicion that my kids would find things like porn (like you did), or bad movies, etc... then you'd probably be right. I am hoping, though, to keep them sheltered and far from these things, in which case, I hold it's better they don't know...

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito

Posted by Ano Nymous - 11 Dec 2009 08:51

[guardureyes wrote on 11 Dec 2009 08:29:](#)

Wow, this is a great discussion... I may ask Rabbi Twerski to weigh in here.

See, ImTrying, that's what I meant by "it depends how sheltered your kids are". If I had suspicion that my kids would find things like porn (like you did), or bad movies, etc... then you'd probably be right. I am hoping, though, to keep them sheltered and far from these things, in which case, I hold it's better they don't know...

Hey guard,

I'm with imtrying25 on this one. I'd like to make a couple points. Your method might work, but it has a high chance of failure for a couple reasons. Firstly, it's HIGHLY unlikely that you will be able to keep your kids completely away from any knowledge of sex. Kids are not stupid, and some figure it out on their own. Once one kid knows, everyone knows. I found out about this in 5th grade from the school principal's son, who was a good friend of mine. His father is a very well respected man, and I'm sure he didn't get this at home. I don't know where he got it, but that's irrelevant. The information he told me grossed me out and scared me out of my wits, and I had nowhere to go and no one to turn to because this subject was made so taboo. I couldn't go to my parents, my rebbi, or anyone else. I was stuck. My father tried to give me "the speech" sometime when I was about 15, and at that point I got very angry with him and shrugged him off. I'll never forget this. I felt like crying, and (I'm embarrassed to say this) I felt like hitting him or biting him, to make him feel the intense pain I was in. I felt like my chance to be normal had been ripped away from me because my parents were too scared to speak to me about this and my Rabbeim were too. Also, lying to a child about how people are born can backfire very heavily. The only thing that could have made me angrier at my parents' handling of the situation was if they had done what you plan to do, and fabricated a story. Children create their entire world view based on what their parents tell them, and finding out that your parents outright lied to you can cause major damage not only to the trust you have in your parents in the future, but also to your belief in other things your parents have told you which you have no way to test for

truth (i.e. the truth of God, Judaism, etc). I'll just end by saying that OF COURSE there is no pat answer. Every child is a completely different world. But I still believe that every child needs to be taught these things BEFORE they get to the point of extreme curiosity, but after they are old enough to properly handle this information. This is what makes it so difficult; every kid will reach this point at a different age. In the end, I believe that honest and open discussion (done carefully and tactfully, of course) is more effective in the long run than lies and deceit. That's my opinion. Take it or leave it. ;D

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito
Posted by imtrying25 - 11 Dec 2009 08:57

[guardureyes wrote on 11 Dec 2009 08:29:](#)

Wow, this is a great discussion... I may ask Rabbi Twerski to weigh in here.

See, ImTrying, that's what I meant by "it depends how sheltered your kids are". If I had suspicion that my kids would find things like porn (like you did), or bad movies, etc... then you'd probably be right. I am hoping, though, to keep them sheltered and far from these things, in which case, I hold it's better they don't know...

I think my father hoped that too but i obviously didnt work. Also what do you say about my first comment? About the kid feeling somewhat decieved. this is something he will lyh find out

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito
Posted by imtrying25 - 11 Dec 2009 09:04

Beatiful Ano. That was an amazing post. You can see your heart talking right through it. And im with you 100 percent. Those feelings you had i had too. I thing my father didnt talk to me about it cuz he wanted to only tell me the truth but didnt know how. So he just lsft it. But definitely we always have to be truthful with our kids.ALWAYS!!!!

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito
Posted by the.guard - 11 Dec 2009 09:06

Thanks Ano for weighing in... Lots of good points...

My plan was, that if they find out (assuming I would know they did), I would EXPLAIN to them WHY I hid it from them, and why I thought it was for their own good (as explained above). This would not take away their trust from me, since they would understand why it was important for me to hide it as best I could.

This "plan" would NOT work though, if they find out and I don't KNOW that they did. And this is likely too.

So it's a delicate balance... Which is worse, giving them what to think about 24/7 every time they see a girl until they get married - and risking masturbation, addiction, fantasy, etc..., OR risking them finding out on their own - and - assuming I don't know they did and can't explain - they'll be angry and/or disillusioned (until they grow up and understand)... Which is the worse of two evils?

It still seems to me the first.

But again, I guess it depends on how LIKELY it is for them to find out on their own and NOT tell us (the parents). This is again, dependent on how SHELTERED they are... (hence, the Chassidic custom of not telling till the wedding). It depends also on your relationship with your kids. The more open and honest you are with them about OTHER things, the more likely it is that they'll come discuss it with you when they find out on their own, which makes it much less dangerous to withhold the info until they find out...

I'd like to ask Rabbi Twerski to weigh in here. This is an important discussion.

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Re: Questions, Comments for Rabbi Twerski Shlito

Posted by imtrying25 - 11 Dec 2009 09:28

So it's a delicate balance... Which is worse, giving them what to think about 24/7 every time they see a girl until they get married - and risking masturbation, addiction, fantasy, etc..., OR risking them finding out on their own - and - assuming I don't know they did and can't explain - they'll be angry and/or disillusioned (until they grow up and understand)... Which is the worse of two evils?

Like i said before Guard i completely disagree. maybe its based on my own expeirence. But me not being told pushed me too find out and mu finding out took me to places i wish i had never been too before like i explained above. You have to tell them Theyll look for themselves if not. And that will take them to seforim first and then books mags movies and much much more. I dont agree. Sorry guard but imtalking from my heart. Deep inside.

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