

Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 13 Oct 2020 20:55

Hi. I am 26 years old. I have been struggling with inappropriate content since I was in ninth grade. My well meaning father ironically got me an iPod touch as a reward for learning over the summer. After hearing my friends speak about things they had seen, I ventured into the forbidden territory. I tried stopping so many times. I made promises. I put on codes. I eventually smashed the iPod. But the Scourge always found a way back into my life. This wasn't the only front I was fighting though. I had a very low self image growing up. I felt out of place. My family was also semi-dysfunctional and I had a very difficult OTD brother. Then when I was in twelfth grade I started having obsessive thoughts about the craziest things. My self esteem plunged even lower. I was convinced that I was sick and totally beyond help. It was so frightening. I suffered alone until I got to Israel. I finally told a Rebbi what I was going through, and he referred me to a therapist. It took me about six months to even consider the possibility that I was normal, and another six months to get to a point that I was ready to move on to the next stage. I finally went home to start shidduchim. I was convinced that I would get married right away, put my past behind me, and start a beautiful new chapter in my life. After all I had been through, surely God was not going to let me suffer anymore. But my life started spiraling downward very quickly. Being home in a toxic environment brought me back exactly to where I was before therapy. The stress and anxiety of dating was also overwhelming. I went out with the first girl until she said no to me because of my family. I wasn't sure that I wanted to marry her, but I was heartbroken. My dreams of a happily ever after were broken. Then, at the advice of a relative, I moved out of my house. My parents were hurt, confused, and angry. I was filled with guilt. I felt homeless, and I became even more depressed and anxious. It came to a point that I couldn't bring myself to date anymore. I was bouncing around therapists, hoping that someone would fix me, but not believing that they could. I eventually found a therapist who managed to convey to me that the only way out is by accepting my situation, and taking responsibility for my own life. Slowly, I started getting control of my emotions. I began to realize who I am and what I'm capable of. I even started being happy with my life and not blaming God so much for my circumstances. I started dating again, which was a huge milestone. I still had never confronted my 'habit' head on though. I felt guilty about going out and also using the internet. I read some articles about internet usage, and I realized that my habit was really an addiction. I saw the negative effects it can have on a marriage. Studies also show that it's detrimental to mental health, by causing anxiety and depression. It's time to fix up my act. I want to be clean going into marriage. I want to feel good about myself when going on dates. I want to be the best me.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Captain - 13 Oct 2020 21:42

Wow! You're incredibly strong. Your story is an inspiration to all those here.

?Just a thought: a person like you who has dealt with so much surely would benefit from reading about and thinking about the idea of lefum tzaara agra, that the challenges you've been through make each act you do worth hundreds or even thousands of times more! And especially when you fight this battle which is so hard. Your efforts are worth thousands times thousands! Something to keep in mind and read more about.

Wishing you much success! You're an inspiration to us all.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by OivedElokim - 13 Oct 2020 21:48

You are a brave man! HaShem should bless you with success in overcoming your challenges, as you inspire the rest of us to keep on trucking.

All the best.

OivedElokim

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 13 Oct 2020 23:09

Beautiful and courageous first post. I hope you realize that b'ezras Hashem you can get better. And yes, for your wife's sake as well of for your's let's take care of the pornography watching now. Do you have filters?

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by YeshivaGuy - 14 Oct 2020 01:50

Beautiful post.

I I'm positive that you will be matzliach bezras Hashem.

The scary prospect of watching porn during marriage must lead to action instead of paralyzing inaction.

I'm glad to see you taking this next step in your journey.

We're all here for you every step of the way.

With hope and love,

YeshivaGuy

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 14 Oct 2020 02:43

Thank you all for your words of encouragement! It really means a lot to know that there are others out there going through the same thing. Right now the devices in my house are unfiltered. I've brought it up to my father before but for some reason my request fell on deaf ears. At the advice of Hashem Help Me I plan on signing a thirty day contract to not go on to unfiltered devices (without a shomer). Strike while the iron is hot.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Captain - 14 Oct 2020 03:13

Great! Why don't you also check out these great free resources?

The Battle of the
Generation <https://guardyoureyes.com/ebooks/item/the-battle-of-the-generation>. Even just 2 pages a night can make a huge difference.

Rabbi Shafier's incredible lectures on breaking free: The Fight. Download here: <https://theshmuz.com/series/the-fight/>

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by YeshivaGuy - 14 Oct 2020 03:33

[hashemyeracheim613 wrote on 14 Oct 2020 02:43:](#)

I've brought it up to my father before but for some reason my request fell on deaf ears.

I've had the same unfortunate experience... I feel you buddy. Stay strong.

Its rough but it's possible

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by i-man - 14 Oct 2020 05:58

Welcome, you sound like a very special yid , despite all the adversity and challenges you faced, you are here looking to grow .

stick around there is much to be gained here !

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Vetaher1 - 14 Oct 2020 09:51

Wow. You sound like a super strong yid and you should be really proud to where you are standing today. Surely, with your getting control of your emotions you're in much a better position to stay strong and that will help you get to where you want to.

Hatzlocha and keep us posted

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Captain - 18 Oct 2020 15:11

Hey @HashemYeracheim613,

How's it going?

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Demolished - 18 Oct 2020 16:17

Dear "HashemYerachaim613"

we all care for you

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 19 Oct 2020 00:54

Hi everyone! Tomorrow is the start of day 7. I still owe it to Hashem Help Me to make a contract about unfiltered internet (he's going to say I owe it to myself). This past week wasn't so bad, but there definitely was challenges. In general this time period of trying to find a wife hits me from all sides. When I'm not dating I have no one to tie me down and keep me grounded. When I am dating, the sexual tension of meeting someone I like but not being able to do anything is tough, especially if she's pretty. And then when the relationship ends, I have to deal with the feelings of disappointment and loneliness, plus the prospect of having to start all over. This past week I was dating someone who I liked, and she was very attractive. On Friday we went out for the third time, and it just didn't go as smooth as the first two. I knew I didn't do well. The shadchan said that she wants to think about it over Shabbos. I already knew it was going to be over though, and it was really hard. I fell back into my old thought patterns for a while. "I'm unmarriageable. I'm a loser. I always mess things up." I felt hopeless and depressed, and I was dealing with the pain of rejection. Historically, this has been the perfect cocktail for a big mess up. The need to feel good, and the feeling that I'm never going to get married lead directly to the

internet. This time though, I knew that I wanted to stay strong no matter what. I let the feelings pass through me; I told myself gently that I'm not such a screwup after all, and eventually I got to a more grounded place. Baruch Hashem I managed to hang on, and by the time I got the no I was ok. Onto the next girl! This time I have even more discipline beneath my belt (literally). I can move forward with more confidence in my ability to be pure.

Another thought. I read a lot of posts that describe how are dreams are affected by our internet usage. When I would watch porn frequently, I would dream about screens, not women. This past week I had a dream that I was holding hands with the girl I was dating. It felt so much better than anything I had experienced online! My Rebbi used to tell us that he gets more pleasure from holding his wife's hand than other people get from giving in to their every desire. Then I had a similar dream over Shabbos. Obviously if someone's mind is totally pure, he probably won't dream about women at all, but I think this is a big step up.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 19 Oct 2020 02:47

[hashemyeracheim613 wrote on 19 Oct 2020 00:54:](#)

Another thought. I read a lot of posts that describe how are dreams are affected by our internet usage. When I would watch porn frequently, I would dream about screens, not women. This past week I had a dream that I was holding hands with the girl I was dating. It felt so much better than anything I had experienced online! My Rebbi used to tell us that he gets more pleasure from holding his wife's hand than other people get from giving in to their every desire. Then I had a similar dream over Shabbos. Obviously if someone's mind is totally pure, he probably won't dream about women at all, but I think this is a big step up.

Two comments about this.

1. It is a breath of fresh air to see a newcomer who accepts where he is up to. It is a key in your success b'ezras Hashem to appreciate where you are up to s opposed to agonizing over what you still need to fix.
2. From your dreams it appears you BH are in the process of rewiring your brain to desire intimacy, not sex. Ashreichem.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 23 Oct 2020 03:15

Hi guys. In yeshiva now so not much access to internet(thank God). Still going strong.

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