

Question for married men currently battling porn

Posted by jmyers99 - 22 Aug 2024 11:44

I have a question for those of you in the battle who are currently married for any amount of time. I'd like to understand a married man's perspective on the issue, how it's impacted the marriage, and how the wife feels about it, if she knows. (By the way, I'm interested in women who know outright, as well as those who probably 'suspect' something is going on.)

I ask because I'm an almost 25 year old BT, frum for over 3 years now, learning, running a business, etc. I've done a ton of work on myself in therapy, journaling about my past, healing relationships, working on my midos, particularly consistency, discipline, etc. along with working on growing in learning so I can be a proper Jewish father.

I want to start dating soon, but I don't want to start until I have this challenge "under control" because I'm scared about it coming up during the dating process, word getting out, and even worse, having it impact my marriage. I feel it'd be lying to keep this secret while dating, because this is a pretty big issue, and frankly if a girl found out and wanted to end the relationship because of it, I'd understand. And when she tells the matchmaker why she ended it... there goes my dating prospects and reputation.

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The thing is, I really don't want that to be me. I want to handle this before I start dating and get married. I'm so nervous about what this could do to the health of my marriage. Even if she doesn't find out, I'm still scared of what it will do to the relationship. Practically speaking, it may lower my drive to be with her, or cause imagery to pop up in my head etc. when I'm with her. On a deeper level, it will prevent me from having a deeper connection with her that I want to have. And if she finds out, that's even worse, as she'll likely feel cheated on in a certain sense, so upset, what's wrong with me, why am I not good enough, etc. and I don't want to cause her that kind of pain.

My parents divorced when I was young, and a big reason I started on this path was to heal myself and have a healthy marriage. I feel this is the last straw, but also the biggest one... this

struggle has the power to make or break a relationship in my eyes.

I'm interested in people here sharing their perspective on the impact it's had on their marriage. I'd likely relate best to younger men who are in their first few years of marriage, but I'm open to anyone's opinion here.

Specifically, I have the following questions:

- What's the severity of your problem/use (so I can gauge relative to mine)
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I understand I can't take life advice from random people, especially from anonymous strangers writing on an online PMO forum.... but I still appreciate the perspective.

Thank you!

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Re: Question for married men currently battling porn
Posted by BenHashemBH - 22 Aug 2024 12:09

Shalom jmyers,

This thread by jewizard has some responses to the 'tell or don't tell' question as far as dating that you might find helpful. BezH I can try to speak my thoughts on your other points later when time permits.

guardyoureyes.com/forum/19-Introduce-Yourself/412126-Me#412152

Hatzlacha

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Re: Question for married men currently battling porn
Posted by jmyers99 - 22 Aug 2024 12:17

Thank you! You're very helpful / active here. you must be helping lots of yidden overcome this challenge

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Re: Question for married men currently battling porn
Posted by chosemyshem - 22 Aug 2024 13:49

[jmyers99 wrote on 22 Aug 2024 11:44:](#)

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I'll bite. But one immense caveat is that you (as a BT, working etc) will very likely not be dating the uber sheltered bais yaakov girls many of us married. So a girl who has been exposed to more of the world will be more likely to treat it as just a problem to work on instead of an earth-shattering filth. This isn't a universal rule, as even the least sheltered girl may feel cheated on by their husband's porn use. It really depends on the person.

My wife caught the tip of the iceberg and was very, extremely, deeply hurt.

Not mad. But very hurt.

And that's with catching just a "one time" looking at another woman - not catching my raging porn addiction.

I would equivocate the pain of that moment to losing a minor limb.

That's the pain of being exposed. It wouldn't be helpful to share how it impacted my relationship since every person and every relationship is so different.

If you want advice, stop now. If you can't stop now, it really depends on your specific situation what you should do and you should speak to a rabbi who knows you and you can be honest with.

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Re: Question for married men currently battling porn

Posted by jmyers99 - 22 Aug 2024 14:08

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Totally agree here, I imagine my wife will be more "worldly" and aware of the challenge of our generation, but it will definitely still be hurtful no matter what.

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Meaning, out in the street? If so, wow, all the more so the P problem...

If you want advice, stop now. If you can't stop now, it really depends on your specific situation what you should do and you should speak to a rabbi who knows you and you can be honest with.

Definitely, I agree, this is my primary avodah right now above all else. I really want to start dating by this pesach, and if I really work on this by then, I'll have enough data to feel comfortable embarking on the next chapter, G-d willing having "left" this "mitzrayim".

I know flare ups can happen any time and it's a life long battle, but I want a long time feeling free and having invested a lot in growth beforehand.

I also see P as just a surface level issue of something deeper, which is also why I'm so motivated to stop. I feel that if I can do the inner middos work to grow from this, I'll fix the P issue and come out a healthier person, better suited for marriage and family.

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Re: Question for married men currently battling porn

Posted by BenHashemBH - 22 Aug 2024 15:41

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Thank you!

You are dancing with something that I think should be stated in a more concrete manner.

Dating & family may be great motivation to stop, but don't do it for them - do it for you.

When you make change dependent on others, you give away some of your control of the outcome.

For a terrible example, what if your future wife doesn't care about your p&m? What if they do or say something that makes you feel that they don't appreciate the work you put in with the intention that they deserved a clean you? This is exaggerated, but the point is that you need to make sure that you are the main focus of your change - that is how it will be most stable and lasting, especially if met with any future turbulence.

1 - The severity of others' problems could serve a purpose to know, but generally we each have our own and it's our job to work on ourselves.

2 - Some do, some don't. Some a little, some a lot. Again, this is specific to each relationship, so I don't see it as actionable information.

3 - #1 it can create a barrier and distance, even if subtle. Hiding, sneaking, lying, and betraying. #2 you almost certainly have effects on your intimacy (I don't just mean sex) when allowing other things into what should be the private space that only you and your wife share. How much again depends on the severity, the individuals, the history, and all manner of other details. It can range from almost healthy to nearly obliterated.

4 - Sorry to keep being vague, but it again depends too much on the circumstances and people.

5 - Keep working on it for **you** (and them). Wanting to be clean before marriage is a great motivation, but should it be the end-all dealbreaker? Ask your Rav. Speaking of a Rav, keep in touch with your Rav/mentor who gets you and can help guide your specific case. I wouldn't go telling a prospective or current wife without a thorough conversation on if, what, when, and how to go about it. In a way, if you think about it, there can be a selfish angle in wanting to share this with them. It gets it off your chest, but what does it do to her? It hurts her. Whatever you do say, the benefits for you BOTH needs to be worth that pain.

I want to reiterate that change with dependance on circumstances leaves you vulnerable to things that you can't plan for. Inner change is how you reliably maintain your growth.

Continued Hatzlacha Holy Brother!

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Re: Question for married men currently battling porn
Posted by jmyers99 - 22 Aug 2024 17:06

Thank you! I agree that it may really be about getting it off my chest vs for her benefit... this is a back-and-forth I saw a lot in the other thread. It could be spun as "honesty" when really it's

selfish.

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Re: Question for married men currently battling porn

Posted by jewizard21 - 23 Aug 2024 04:35

I would recomend listening to some of Dovs talks in the audio library:

guardyoureyes.com/tools/kosher-isle/shiurim/category/dov-s-recovery-talks

I actually talked to him on the phone about this type of question. I won't try to say what he said bc it's been a while but remember each case is different so each case may need a separate approach.

I started my recovery partially due to wanting to be able to date in the future. Now I'm at a point where that's not the drive but a outcome of being clean. Now the drive is more towards being in control of my mind.

Hope this helps,

Also remember this is our hishtadlus, but Hashem is the one that plans it all and that is especially true with who you marry.

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Re: Question for married men currently battling porn

Posted by pinny1 - 23 Aug 2024 04:43

[jmyers99 wrote on 22 Aug 2024 11:44:](#)

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Thank you!

People on this blog have no respect For a mashgiach.

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Looks like a geshmack resource thank you!

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