

ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it

Posted by Jooboy - 18 May 2010 17:25

I have been sexually sober in SA for over 13 months now, and sober from pornography for over 5 months. Although my recovery is going well, my wife seems to be getting more uncomfortable with intimacy. She has told me that she has stopped taking her birth control and is not really interested in physical intimacy. Due to some of the craziness in our home and marriage I am not willing to be with her if she could get pregnant so I may be in for a long haul.

I feel hurt that she does not want to be physically close and afraid that I will have a harder time staying sober. I understand that nothing can possibly happen to me that GOD does not want to happen and that whether or not I trust HIM, HE is the one running the show. - so I might as well sit back and relax - right?

Easier said than done.

If anyone has experience, strength and hope to share here I could use it.

Gut Yom Tov

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it

Posted by Ineedhelp!! - 18 May 2010 17:45

I do not have experience in this or marriage for that matter, but what I can offer is the fact that its noteworthy just to point out that even when crisis hits, your head is still on your shoulders and youre thinking straight. You know what the answer to you question is. I wont try to offer another.

Have a great Yom Tov!

-Yiddle

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by the.guard - 19 May 2010 20:16

Some guys in SA take a break from all sexual activity for a year to "dry out". If this is what G-d is making happen, maybe that's what He feels you need. (Yikes.) :-\

Not easy.

I am sure that as you heal and become less self-centered and bring G-d more into your life, your wife will start to feel your sincerity and be more forth coming.

May G-d give you strength!

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by DesertLion - 20 May 2010 00:41

Dear Jooboy,

I think Guard gave you some great advice. I'm not married and I've never been in a relationship so I don't really know how women operate, but maybe you should try talking with your wife.

For me, I find that talking about a problem helps to solve it.

Anyway, TC and good luck.

DL

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by silentbattle - 21 May 2010 04:27

Sounds like this is a period of growth-potential...in other words, difficult as heck. I'd put in an emoticon here, but these emoticons all look FAR too joyful for the end of a comment like that.

It certainly gives you an added incentive to try and work things out with your wife...I do find it interesting that she stopped taking the pill, and indicated that she's not interested in physical intimacy...and yet, you implied that if you wanted, there would be. Does SHE want children?

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by Jooboy - 21 May 2010 16:29

Difficult as heck is pretty accurate.

She desperately wants to have more children which considering the state of our home is somewhat hard for me to understand until I realize that it is similar to my drive for physical intimacy - it is hardwired into me and doesn't need any support from logic.

Over the last few days I have come to see that a large part of my difficulty with this is my pride and loss of control. It is in the emotional realm that this is really hurting. Part of my condition is I can't separate her rejection of physical intimacy with a rejection of me.

Thanks for the supporting posts...keep them coming.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by kanesher - 22 May 2010 21:27

sounds like she's not rejecting you, just rejecting birth control. Now, it certainly has it's time and place -- but is there a way for you two to come to common ground on this? Having children certainly is hardwired into a woman, and you need a good reason to say no to that - but often a woman feels no value other then being a baby machine - and that's something to think about too. Does she have another source of value? Does she know about SA? I mean, that pretty rough on a marriage and you could see her seeking fulfillment elsewhere.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by giboir - 22 May 2010 23:19

Hi Jooboy

I cannot give you any direct advice but can just share some of my experience.

My wife has never been particularly interested in intimacy. She was only interested when it came to having children.

Recently, due to a medical and emotional condition, she has no interest in intimacy at all. Whenever I suggest it she pushes me away with some excuse. I too feel that the rejection itself is often worse than the lack of intimacy. The loss of control is also a massive factor, as you say.

I also feel that it is harder in a way to be in a marriage and cope with a lack of intimacy than to be single. Within the marriage there are so many lust triggers and a build up of expectation which is then met with a cold rejection.

We have to remain clean throughout this test, as tough as it is - and boy it is tough. In the meantime I have been trying to give my wife more attention e.g. listening to her talk and taking an interest in what she does during the day.

You have to stick it out, day by day, until things change. You know you can, especially with the support of SA and your long track record of sobriety. My worry is that in my situation I don't know if things will ever change.

Keep up the good work

Giboir

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by silentbattle - 23 May 2010 04:47

Could it also be that in a turbulent time, she wants to have kids even more - because that would be a statement that you're truly in this, with no thoughts of leaving anytime soon...?

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by kanesher - 23 May 2010 09:03

[giboir wrote on 22 May 2010 23:19:](#)

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Giboir

yeah, gibior- tzurus rabim chatzi nechama - de ja vu for me. I so relate to the fear it will never change. But hey - God split the sea? I hear that there is often reason to be hopeful.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it

Posted by briut - 23 May 2010 16:43

Several good responses here already from the other guys. I haven't seen one here, though, that plugs the book "Garden of Peace" (R' Shlomo Arush, translated into English BTW). It's a sholom bayis book for men only. The first time I read it, it seemed crazy. The second time, intriguing. I've been learning it b'chavrusa for several months now, and it's magic.

I'd bet you'd see some stuff relevant to your situation. I just can't predict which stuff, so you'll have to do it yourself. There are some specific threads on the Married Men's forum addressing his book.

Seriously, man, EVERY married man should read this book twice (maybe 3x) and really "get it." Especially those who have a corner of their marriage that's not working (which is to say, everybody).

Good luck with what sounds like a messy proposition. Our hearts are all with you.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it

Posted by commando612 - 24 May 2010 02:42

This whole discussion is getting me frazzled. Jooboy, I think you're the victim here, and abstinence is not the answer. But my position seems to be different than the other people who wrote above, and from their previous posts I know they're all smart guys, so take my words with a grain of salt. And definitely don't say anything to your wife based on my words unless a far wiser person than me counsels you the same.

Jewish marriage is not a free-for-all. There are obligations in marriage both on the part of the husband and on the part of the wife. The Gemorah Kesuvos deals with this in excruciating detail. Physical intimacy is an obligation of both parties unless the other one is okay with giving it up. If my memory is correct, if either the husband or the wife refuses intimacy on a permanent basis, this is clear grounds for divorce (I'm not suggesting that anyone here wants this, I'm just showing how important intimacy is viewed in marriage). There are halachic penalties even for temporary refusal (by temporary I mean for example a week's refusal; I'm not talking about the occasional headache or not being in the mood).

A marriage without physical intimacy isn't a marriage. I'm assuming that you have a legitimate heter for birth control at this stage of your marriage. So it seems to me that her stopping birth control and telling you that she's not interested in physical relations falls into the category of refusing intimacy. Unless we say that since she's willing to have intimacy without birth control therefore she isn't refusing intimacy - an interesting shaila for a beis din.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by yoyo - 24 May 2010 13:19

I may be out of line for writing in here, and apologise for it.

I am a wife of an addict.

Here is my 2pence worth from the "other side.."

My husband is the most caring and kind man. He'll do anything for me and the kids. He'll always help me before I even ask.

However, due to his addiction, its a different story in the bedroom. Sometimes its as though I'm not even there. He thinks only of himself. (or of others... I don't know...)

Slowly I'm starting to shut off. No intimacy is way better than this.

I advise you to:

- a. Talk to her. Even if she deosn't want to, draw it all out. (The more she deons't want to talk, the more she might really be wanting to talk!)
- b. FOCUS and THINK only of her, not yourself. Her first, yourself later. Ask her what she wants, Listen, really listen, and do it!
- c. If you can't communicate in this area, get a therapist involved.
- d. It might be helpful to read "Men are from Mars, women are from Venus... in the bedroom."

In other words, there is no way to have a healthy, fulfilling sexual relationship with your wife

whilst being addicted. Whether she knows about it or not, she can feel.

Again, I'm sorry for writing in here if it's not warranted.

I think this forum is amazing, I'm just so upset that my husband can't participate as he's Israeli and doesn't know English. But reading all your posts is proving really helpful as I'm beginning to learn to understand this very painful situation.

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by silentbattle - 24 May 2010 13:54

You do know that there is a hebrew forum on this site, right (I think)?

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Re: ABSTINENCE - I may be headed into a long period of it
Posted by yoyo - 24 May 2010 15:59

I will get him on it, though.

Anyone out there know of any recommendations of Hebrew books out there??

Thanks

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