

When my wife and I discussed GYE

Posted by KiviYVY - 23 Nov 2010 15:35

I apologize for the long post.

I had a discussion with my wife last night about this website and I thought the topics discussed were of benefit for the readers of this forum so here are my notes. Many of these points could probably be broken in to separate posts. I'll leave that to the moderators to do if they choose to.

I had recently mentioned a number of things I saw on GYE. She knew I was receiving the emails but she didn't know I was recently participating in the forums. I also displayed some recent detailed knowledge of the 12 steps, as I've been reading material on this site, listening to some of the phone conferences, and listening to the Big Book audiobook. That got her worrying that maybe I have an addiction myself so she asked me...

Do you have an addiction?

I said I'm not sure since the definition of addiction is quite broad but I said I do have temptations that recur. That's the truth but I'm personally trying to treat it like an addiction so it doesn't progress and so I can have the proper attitudes to help myself stay clean. I didn't want to put it to her in that way because I was afraid she would blow it out of proportion and think her marriage was on the rocks and live with a lingering tension inside that would reveal itself in all sorts of disproportionate forms in the future.

Why do you read GYE - doesn't that mean you have some problem that I don't know about? I care about you and I would want to know. Plus, you've given me the impression that having Webchaver's monitoring and filtering was enough.

I said Webchaver is helpful for the day to day, but there are always temptations of some sort, like on News sites and the like, and I read GYE to help me cope when those triggers arise so I can be healthy and confident enough to avoid succumbing to them.

She raised the issue of women that she knows who have expressed that their husbands have

some form of internet/porn addiction.

I said that I think it would be helpful for those women to take a look at GYE themselves. If there's one message women can take from reading these forums it's that in most cases men are drawn to lust as an escape from their personal issues weighing them down and not because of any desire to hurt their wives or out of dissatisfaction with their wives. These men are well-meaning, just weak, and they are crying for help.

I also suggested that she have these friends somehow introduce their husbands to this site. It seems to me that many, if not all, men drawn to this lust do not want to be doing so and are always searching for a way out. GYE is that lifesaver they deeply crave.

I mentioned that GYE is extremely important to Klal Yisrael today (listen to the recent clip sent to the Chizuk list from the Noviminsker Rebbe) and it has tools for recovery that absolutely cannot be found anywhere. I mentioned that this site is only a few years old and before it came on the scene it was nearly hopeless for a frum person suffering from this addiction to find the right advice on how to recover. Rabbeim were advising Bochorim with this issue to get married, as if that would solve the underlying problem. They were perhaps suggesting the normal means of Teshuva, which is largely ineffective when dealing with actual addiction. If they were wisely referred to a therapist even the therapists were often guiding them in the wrong way since they weren't trained to deal with addiction. Of course, the lures of the internet are fairly new and most people likely did not know the full extent of internet porn addiction.

I described GYE as an environment that's safe for frum people - the conversation is very positive, the personal stories never really get to graphic to the extent that it would give people ideas and feed into their lust, and that the moderators work very hard to run the site Al Taharas HaKodesh.

) because it was an uncomfortable conversation for both of us. B"H the issue is more out in the open now and we don't need to hide it as much from each other. Husband and wife hiding secrets from each other is a recipe for anxiety and frustration so I'm glad to have eliminated that to a large extent.

I'll mention that speaking to your wife about this issue is an extremely sensitive undertaking, as has been mentioned many times on this site, and it must be done with great care. If you read

the women's testimonies on GYE you'll see that their perspective is LOADED with EXTREME emotion. While the truth is likely that addicts of lust do not mean to hurt their wives or their families and they're often suffering from completely different issues unrelated to a wife's physical attractiveness or the like, women appear to take this as a personal attack and often react with anger and insult.

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Re: When my wife and I discussed GYE
Posted by briut - 02 Dec 2010 17:13

[tomid besimcha wrote on 01 Dec 2010 13:17:](#)

I leave it to her imagination to speculate if I have m* or not. I don't feel that I will gain anything by telling the past to my wife. And even if she finds out that I fell sometime I don't think she will freak out or feel personally hurt. The only important thing to me is, to tell her that such a problem exists [...] I might be wrong and have to tell her all the low's I had, but I think that will only bring unfavorable results.

This question of 'right or wrong' to tell a spouse is definitely worth some careful self-reflection.

When I say "a good marriage can survive anything but a secret" I am NOT NOT NOT encouraging getting it off our chests so that WE will feel better. And I'm not even saying to put it out there in the (hope? dream?) that the WIFE will feel better. It's really a question IMHO of what will make the MARRIAGE work better!

If either party is not strong enough to "handle the truth," then the truth would only harm the spouse and the marriage. So if there's a goal (or a prerequisite) here, it's gotta be to help the spouse to feel safe, secure, loved, etc enough to be open to hearing it. That has an interesting side effect -- it helps both spouses grow in their ability to understand and tolerate the "stuff" in the other person. This might even make each one perhaps feel a little less insecure/fearful/etc about their OWN stu*f.

In other words, maybe "sharing" a "secret" is like giving true mussar -- it's ossur unless the speaker is giving it lovingly and the recipient is hearing it with an open mind.

I'm not sure this rambling helps, but I did want to clarify my thinking so I'm taking this stab. Thanks.

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Re: When my wife and I discussed GYE
Posted by Dov - 03 Dec 2010 06:05

[tomid besimcha wrote on 01 Dec 2010 13:17:](#)

Can you explain me please why do you call the person in your first example such an outspoken liar. If somebody is making a dodgy business which is ossur according to halacha and he is not telling his wife, is he also betraying his wife and making her live with fear and anger. After all there is a big YH for it, especially in these days where we have to put in a lot of effort to avoid it.

The only big problem is - besides the enormous aveirah - that his addiction will deteriorate to your second example, chatting or even meeting other people etc. which is certainly a betrayal and it does hurt terribly and they feel like the town-idiot. Of course if the first person is - as a result of p&m - skipping being with her and absent from home etc. than its betraying.

I consider my self and addict in the early stages, I never involved other people in to it, like chatting and of course not meeting with people. Also in my case I am coming from a very chassidsha family my wife knew absolutly nothing about s**. Just 2 weeks before the wedding the kallah teacher told here what it is all about, and she was under shock as you can imagine. So whatever she knows about it, is from me. And I know how to talk and explain without raising suspicion. So she knows that I am not behind the moon and I have got it from somewhere. I leave it to her imagination to speculate if I have m* or not. I don't feel that I will gain anything by telling the past to my wife. And even if she finds out that I fell sometime I don't think she will freak out or feel personally hurt. The only important thing to me is, to tell here that such a problem exists and I, as a business man who has got internet access, needs to be constantly on guard.

I might be wrong and have to tell her all the low's I had, but I think that will only bring unfavorable results.

Hatzlocho ubrocha

So sorry for giving you the wrong impression. I never meant that you should tell her anything at all. I just wanted to express that it's too bad that that is the way it must be. I agree with you and know that you are not alone - there are many husbands who have secrets from their wives. But it's too bad.

The secret means there is a wall between you. And we built that wall with our own rotten behavior. It is a part of the price that must be payed as a result of us acting out our lust. There is **always** a price. I need to remember that, and so far, do, b"H.

Of course, the ikkar is to go from this moment forward being only loving and honest with our wives, ourselves, Hashem, and really with everybody.

And of course, that is unlikely. To think otherwise is just another example of addictive thinking. Silly fantasies of our 'perfection'.

But as long as the flops do not involve me *acting out* I can take the suffering of failure and it's inevitable bitter price and it will force me to grow, be"H, in recovery, maturity, etc.

Surely that is a great chessed to my wife, to be living with a growing mensch!

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Re: When my wife and I discussed GYE
Posted by silentbattle - 03 Dec 2010 06:32

Isn't one of the steps making amends, unless doing so will harm yourself or others?

No, wait, here it is: Step 9: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

Briut - still thinking about what you said. Thank you.

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