

a question to married people..or anyone

Posted by s4nh - 29 Dec 2010 02:12

im 22, not married yet. not even dating.

so I was freaking out and Im very very nervous. im B"H on top of my addiction. I spoke to a Rabbi, and I even told my mother I want to see a therapist.... it took a lot of guts...whew!...

but looking to the future... is my marriage life screwed up before it even starts?

because ive had my share of seeing things thats not quite realistic.

I have been told that what you see in porn is not a reflection of what you really want. I hope thats true.

I hope to love the woman I marry and not treat her like an object.

is it possible that someone may try to "act out" what they see in these twisted fantasies?

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone

Posted by Me3 - 26 Jan 2011 23:28

If somebody had a serious illness and recovered should he or she hide that from their prospective spouses? Most Rabbanim reccomend relaying that information in the proper time but prior to marriage.

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone

Posted by ur-a-jew - 27 Jan 2011 00:10

If we could confidently say that once we reached 90 days or x number of days of sobriety and then we were cured I would maybe agree with your logic mac, but if you talk to those who have

long term sobriety you will hear that it doesn't work that way. Rather once an addict always an addict. The difference being they are know addicts who possess and use the tools to keep them sober. If this is going to be a lifelong struggle one would think it should be shared with their future hopefully lifelong partner. When and how much is shared is a different issue which a competent halachic authority familiar with addictions should be consulted. While you shudder at the prospect of a girl that says porn addiction no problem. I shudder at the thought of a newly married woman who suddenly discovers that her new husband has an addiction which came out of remission when she wasn't in the mood to have sex with him.

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by Dov - 27 Jan 2011 00:23

I read the thread, cuz I am a goofball. Nu. It was interesting.

And here's all I gotta say:

I have never met a guy who has been compulsively looking at and using porn, fantasy, and masturbation 'openly'. Every single one of us who do this stuff - *especially* because we are frum - are liars and tricksters. That's how we do it: we hide and sneak it. We hide the fact that we do it from everyone. We put up a false image of a 'normal good guy'...and we try as hard as we can to lie ourselves out of blame and guilt when anyone discovers us.

That's just the way it is.

"I am lying to prevent a chillul Hashem", I am lying to save my marriage till I finally do teshuvah", "What, should I go in the street and shout it out in beis midrash: "Hey! I just spent three desperate and painful hours looking for just the right porn image, with my mouth dry, my breath shallow and my hands shaking....so it obviously means far more to me than any *mizvah* I have ever done...gevalt, I am a sicko....but I made it to seder! Has anyone here seen my chavrusa?" " ...all these excuses are just excuses. The truth about me is just that: the truth about me. And any guy lies and cheats **to protect his ability to keep doing it**. We say we are protecting ourselves, but that's *vaiter* a big lie...this time to ourselves.

OK. So telling the wife will not help us because we will continue to lie our way out of it when she finds out stuff we really do not want her to know - it is a waste of time, in my own experience.

Having a filter - another waste of time. It will eventually not stop me any more.

So am I saying to hide it from the wife? Am I saying not to get a filter? No way! But we need to face the fact that neither are ***the solution***. Stopping hiding and lying is the solution.

And as far as looking to an honest and meaningful marriage to be our solution - it's nice in theory. In practice, it is a heart-ripping sad story - and mostly for the wife. What evidence do we have (besides 'wanting it') do we have that we are really going to create such a marriage!? We types - who have repeatedly and obviously ***not*** been willing to have truly honest and meaningful relationships....being party to such a marriage *simply will not happen* until we are ready and actively open and honest with other people, for a change. In my case, it started with SA guys, lust addicts like me. It slowly grew to more and more people - even without telling the non-addicts about my addiction.

Till we learn how to be honest with ourselves, with our G-d, and with other human beings, we may ***try*** to replace our addiction or lust with a real marriage...but it's just not there. That's my feeling on this.

Thanks for not kicking *me* off GYE, too.

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by dovekbashem - 27 Jan 2011 05:31

Dov,

I have to ask for some clarification here. Are you telling me to be open about this addiction with the outside world? Should my friends know this? Should my rabbis know this? Should my parents and my siblings know this? And, of course, regarding the question that everyone in this

thread has been asking, should my girlfriend or future wife know this about me?

I am pretty sure that being so open about this problem will severely destroy my reputation and completely change how everyone in my life views me. I am young but pretty well respected... all of this will change. Is it really worth it just to "get it off my chest"? Why can't I just struggle with this in silence until I solve it with the help of my friends at GYE?

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by Maccabee - 27 Jan 2011 05:34

[ur-a-jew wrote on 27 Jan 2011 00:10:](#)

I shudder at the thought of a newly married woman who suddenly discovers that her new husband has an addiction which came out of remission when she wasn't in the mood to have sex with him.

I hear what you're saying, however I think the shock would be the same regardless of whether or not she knew beforehand that her husband is a lust addict. Because either way the thought in her mind is "He just cheated on me." I don't think that at that moment she is going to be thinking "Well, he had trouble in the past and he's been working on it, so I'll get over it." On the other hand, for the husband, that is probably very much what he would be thinking that she should be thinking.

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by Maccabee - 27 Jan 2011 05:47

[dovekbashem wrote on 27 Jan 2011 05:31:](#)

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I think the rule goes: Don't tell any close family members who don't already know. Especially in the beginning stages of recovery. Because chances are you'll hurt them more with the new knowledge and because it could be that you're dumping the information on them with the subconscious thought that by doing that you are dumping responsibility on them, as if once they know, they should know that if you're being really quiet lately you're probably falling and should have called you, etc. Outside world, no. Rabbis, it really depends what your relationship with him is and your own judgement. If it's someone who you are very close with and you speak to him about most of your issues, I personally don't see why adding the issue which is the crux for all the others would hurt. However again that's my personal feeling and I'm not in your shoes. Friends, you really gotta use your judgement. When I started ten months ago, none of my friends knew. Now, only one person knows. He is someone who I only got to know over the last four months in yeshiva and I only opened up a little bit to him in a very general way because he himself told me about some experiences he had been through in this area.

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by Dov - 27 Jan 2011 08:38

[dovekbashem wrote on 27 Jan 2011 05:31:](#)

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No, no, gevalt.

I mean sharing it with safe people. With people who understand. And as far as I am concerned, that is only addicts. No rove who is not an addict himself (and I know a good bunch of them) can understand. be sympathetic, yes. But that's it.

What I was getting at with the lying and hiding thing is simply that I think it is absolutely indispensable to recovery that I admit that I do not hide the truth about myself from others only because of practical concerns for "my reputation". I don't believe it for a second. Rather, I need to face the fact that I hide and lie in order to keep acting out, period.

We are only as sick as our secrets, they say.

I have witnessed many GYE guys email or post - using their pen-names only, of course - that

they are in trouble and really need help. Yet they hesitate to be part of a phone group or meeting. When they finally come forward, they are meek and hide behind some mask still. Gevalt. 'Everybody' in Shomayim knows all about what we are doing in the bathroom *already*. It's *famous* up there! Why hide behind the username if life is flushing down the tubes? The friggin house is burning down! And I make sure to call out "FIRE!!" - but only from behind a curtain so that no one in the street will actually see *who* is screaming like a maniac cuz he's terrified - me?!

To me, that behavior can only mean that our obsession with fear and shame is still *greater* than the pain of our compulsive obsession with lusting and acting out. Uh-oh.

That doesn't spell "R-E-A-D-Y", to me. And I am not criticizing anyone here - just sharing my own painful experience.

So no, definitely ***do not shout it out to the family or to anybody who is not an addict*** themselves - unless for special cases such as a spiritual guide/Rov or professional person/shrink. And stop hiding behind the shame - get it all out plainly and clearly on paper to yourself, out loud to a ***safe*** person, and start *really* moving on be"H with recovery.

Then Hashem will guide you with respect to who to tell in the future. (See the 9th step promises on the clarity in previously baffling situations.)

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by ben durdayah - 27 Jan 2011 10:30

IMHO it's like the R' Yisroel Salanter approach for asking mechillah from someone about whom you have spoken Lashon Hara and that person has no inkling that you did.

You simply have to consider carefully if revealing your issue will hurt **them** more than keeping it between yourself and whoever knows about it.

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by Me3 - 27 Jan 2011 16:30

So Dov, will you answer the Darn question?!!

Should somebody tell his prospective spouse that he used to have a problem or not?

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by Dov - 28 Jan 2011 04:21

[Me3 wrote on 27 Jan 2011 16:30:](#)

So Dov, will you answer the Darn question?!!

Should somebody tell his prospective spouse that he used to have a problem or not?

Sorry. Every situation is very different. That's what Hashem's help, recovery, and sponsors are for.

But *not being able* to tell her *does* prove some shame, and that's not a good thing, at all. It also keeps a wall between the couple. Nevertheless, sometimes that wall is far better than the senseless damage that a useless confession could make.

Really. Every situation is different. Ask you LSS (Local Sober Sponsor) ;D ;D

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone

Posted by kosher - 28 Jan 2011 16:59

As noted, everyone is different.

What works for me with my wife, is to acknowledge that I have extra *challenges* in these areas. Therefore, I need extra filters on the computer, won't go some places that other people might (e.g. Walmart), and spend some time on GYE.

I have never found a need to discuss any gory details of past failings. I can't say if this would work if I was not been succesfull in my efforts, but at this point it works great. I would think a similar approach with a prospective spouse should work.

As a side point to consider, I fear that many people want to tell their spouse about their problems, not out of honesty and closeness, but out of an attempt to justify their actions to themselves - "the person most directly affected by this is aware and has made peace with it, so its not so bad..."

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone

Posted by Rising Up - 28 Jan 2011 17:26

[kosher wrote on 28 Jan 2011 16:59:](#)

As a side point to consider, I fear that many people want to tell their spouse about their problems, not out of honesty and closeness, but out of an attempt to justify their actions to themselves - "the person most directly affected by this is aware and has made peace with it, so its not so bad..."

Very good point!!

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by Dov - 30 Jan 2011 02:03

This is meant to confuse, so to the brave reader I say, "knock yourself out.":

Kosher is referring to an ongoing relationship - how he is feerzach with his wife, who already knows about his problem. He is not describing (here, at least) how he enlightened her about it in the first place. Did he come forward? Did she discover it herself? Did he figure she'd find out eventually so he just gave up and spilled the beans? Was the relationship already a loving and open one and he felt OK confiding in her? Or was he already suffering so much (being a man with yashrus) that he just could not take the secrecy and lying any more....or were his circumstances different than all of these?

Exactly what the situation was for Kosher and his wife is not the point. All I am saying is that it's apples and oranges to discuss how we are dealing with our problem in a marriage where it is not secret vs whether and how to be open in a relationship where it is still a secret.

And even if one wants to say they are the same, it still seems that every relationship is different.

No chidushim here so far, right?

OK, so I'll just put these "tz'dadim" out there to confuse the reader. If anyone disagrees with any single one of them on it's own, please say so. It seems to me that they are all true:

Hiding lust thoughts in my head about another woman's image - whether she lives next door or in the movies or even on a website - is betrayal. And my point is **not** that "*since it is betrayal, we shouldn't do it.*" No, that is *not* my point, and it is not even *my business* - it is yours. My only point is that betraying someone wrecks us from the inside, and ruins our chances of getting and remaining sober. That is my concern. We are doing something very jerky, and that always has an effect on us. It also poisons our marriage, whether the wife knows or not.

Telling the wife every time we have a lustful thought - or whenever we are in a lust struggle - is just plain dumb. It implies to her that she has some sort of responsibility. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. That misunderstanding alone can drown a marriage. Thanks to Hashem, ours was mostly saved from that one!

If we continue to hide our dirty not-so-little secret, *we are dead in the water*. Secrecy is what gives our habit air and water. But admitting the truth is not **nearly** enough. we need a continuing and regular relationship that forms context for safe sharing of our daily state, real-time struggles, and deepest stupidities. Without shame. Now, how in the world is my wife equipped to do *that*? I will have to share so much shtus and mishegaas - because it is in my head!! It **is** my problem, not the porn. My compulsive use of porn and my acting out is just **my solution** to my problem. My problem is the crazy beliefs I live according to, like:

*Hashem cannot take care of me; women are for sexually pleasing me; they want me; they are mean for withholding themselves from me; people are generally jerks; people are generally much better than me; life is a losing proposition - I can't make it; I will die at the end of my life here (ridiculous, actually); Hashem hates me (after all, isn't that what "Hashem soneh zimah means? - another mistake); people cannot be trusted; Hashem cannot be trusted; I will die if I do not get another better look at that woman over there/have an orgasm tonight/look at schmutz on the web (otherwise, what exactly does that feeling in me that I **need** it really mean?)....etc. A- kitzur, WE NEED HELP! And it is not about willpower - it is about **sanity**.*

Telling a wife or other relation who does not already know of our problem can be very traumatic and insensitive. We do not feel the shock of it. When we are 'ready' to tell, we are really 'ready'. After all, we have been living with the lie for all these years...but the poor wife, friend, brother, parent - for them it may be like getting the rug pulled out from under their feet. Horrible.

Hiding the truth of my acting out from my wife (who already knows about it) is lying and further betrayal.

Now, have fun with all that.

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Re: a question to married people..or anyone
Posted by kosher - 30 Jan 2011 23:13

[dov wrote on 30 Jan 2011 02:03:](#)

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I would like to answer some of these questions, because I think it has relevance.

My wife never "caught" me looking at anything that did not belong in my environment. Rather she found me to be looking inappropriately at things that appropriately belonged in my environment (e.g. a billboard on the road we were driving down or a female relative at a yom tov seuda). I am not even sure if the accusations she made were accurate, but they had such an uncanny correlation with my viewing inappropriate material that she could not possibly be aware of I couldn't deny them (I would suspect she has nevuah, but I think I am going to settle on feminine intuition being a much more powerful force than I would have imagined). This caused tremendous strain on my marriage and I am shocked when anyone thinks they can hide this stuff from their wife and it should not effect their marriage.

Even since I finally started having success in these areas, it was something I discuss with my wife very seldom and coarefully. She is clearly proud and appreciative of my efforts and success, but even so, discussing it too much seems uncomfortable to her...

I do discuss it somewhat because I do not want to be keeping any secrets from my wife and

sometiimes there are practical concerns. I wish I could talk about it more, but she is not the right person for this discussion.

(I remember one time that I was in a hotel and a pool was right outside my room window. Despite the sounds of action coming from the pool, I (not without difficulty) managed not to look out the window. Who better to call and share/savor this victory with than my wife that (since improving my shemiras einayim) I have such a close relationship with?? Ultimately, I did mention it to her, but very breifly. I left the main sharing for GYE...)

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