

following in my footsteps

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 16 Feb 2011 17:14

I suspect that my eighteen year old son is M. But before I go on let me give you some background. I've been M on and off since I was a teenager. We grew up in a Modern Orthodox home, so my parents assumed that it was normal and didn't confront me, even though they knew what was going on. I eventually "flipped out" in Israel and thought that I succeeded in doing teshuvah by staying clean for over a year. But as you all know, the problem doesn't just go away. I spent the rest of my life going through the teshuvah roller coaster alone with no support. I was too embarrassed to approach anyone for help. Got married, thinking that would solve the problem. Of course it didn't. I went to a Rav, who sent us to a psychologist to address intimacy issues. The Rav and psychologist knew what I was doing but my wife didn't. It didn't help any. All other issues eventually worked out. We have a great relationship and great kids. Everything is wonderful, but I'm still suffering in silence, trying to break this addiction. But now thanks to GYE, I'm not by myself.

I have a great relationship with my children. This particular son is very close with me. On the one hand I want to help him by providing him with the book "The first day of the rest of my life." Or by offering any other assistance that I feel I was lacking in my battle. On the other hand, I don't want to embarrass him, or ruin our relationship. My general approach is not to pry and intervene in his private life. If he wants help he knows that he can come to me. (Obviously this might be too difficult for him.)

My main question is: Do I get involved or not? Should I get him the book?

Sub questions: If I do get involved, do I divulge my past battles to him?

From the bochrim's perspective: What's the best way to approach it?

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by Rising Up - 16 Feb 2011 19:15

I'm a 22yo Bochor and I think I can help you out with this. I just need a little more info if you are willing to give it (all or some).

Does your wife at this moment, know about your history?

Does your wife know of or have the same suspicions about your son?

Is this your oldest son (and does he have any brothers)?

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 16 Feb 2011 20:36

My wife does not know about any of this, my history or present situation or my suspicion. He is my oldest boy but not oldest child, and yes he has younger brothers. I dont know where you are going with this but he is very much like me. In other words he wouldnt bring someone else down with him, I just feel bad watching him suffer with this alone, thinking that he has nowhere to turn. :'(

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 16 Feb 2011 21:05

I know it Rage I know it. I just gotta know how to do it right. Thanks 4 your help as always.

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by Rising Up - 16 Feb 2011 21:19

I have to tell you that the extra info was very helpful. I am also the oldest boy, not the oldest child, and have younger brothers. And I am also very similar to my own father in terms of Midos (I do not mean to infer that he suffers from this same issue-just a disclaimer). I probably wouldn't have ever had this problem of lust if each time I fell I knew that someone else suffered. The fact remains that he is your son and you are his father. His hero. And make no mistake, as much as I "know" that my own father doesn't suffer from such issues, your son similarly thinks the same of his father, you. I can tell you that from my own experience, and yes over the years my father did catch me once or twice and suspected that I was M*** all along, I don't think he knows just how big the issue became (for further reference read my original posts [on my own forum](#) along with **Reply # 17**). I would never be able to face my father again or think of him the same way if I were to think of him as anything other than my hero (PLEASE remember to read this in reference to the mind of a child, *not* a fully life experienced adult such as yourself). It is absolutely important to discuss this issue in reference to your son, not your own issues, with your wife. It is important that she is on the same page with you, as any actions that you may go ahead and do can cause her to become suspicious of you, unless she knows that they are being done for the sake of your sons problems. Once she feels it necessary to do something about the problem, you can then go ahead and act based upon the issue. The different actions

that I will suggest are things that I feel may have helped me back when I was 18, they are coming from the heart of a son who wishes that his father had taken the proper steps at that time.

The first step, and I consider it preliminary, is to assure that your son knows what he is doing and that it is wrong and that it is **not** something that should be considered normal. If he is not addicted this would put a halt or at the very least slow his lust down to a very minimum. If he is addicted, this is still important for the way that it is accomplished. The best way to accomplish the aforementioned step is to either bring home an article of some sorts that says over the issues of our generation, or to bring up what you heard over from some Rav who was telling you of the biggest issues he faces nowadays (there doesn't have to be any such Rav, it could be Eliyahu Hanavi for all that matters, just make it up). The next step would be to say that "[Look what this Rav, or person who handed you the article gave you in shul yesterday](#)". Starting to see why it is so important to clue your wife in first?? Let this do the rest. If the handbook is too "unsubtle" in your opinion (obviously this is case based), than you could bring home something that refers to GYE such as just the introductory letter on GYE or maybe you can even follow the advice of the handbook and send him the anonymous letter that is in the GYE handbook on page 24. Please let me know if any of this is of assistance to you (here or via PM).

Rising Up

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 16 Feb 2011 21:38

[RisingUp wrote on 16 Feb 2011 21:19:](#)

I would never be able to face my father again or think of him the same way if I were to think of him as anything other than my hero (PLEASE remember to read this in reference to the mind of a child, *not* a fully life experienced adult such as yourself).

Was the point stressed enough? I think you should NOT share with him that you struggle in

these matters yourself too.

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 16 Feb 2011 21:38

I hear you Rising. I just have a few problems.

My wife is a bit overreactive about things. Usually if I explain to her how sensitive this is and that she needs to trust me she will. But I am nervous that she may say or insinuate something to him unintentionally. Im not sure I can do that. Is the concern that she'll suspect me as you mentioned or is there something else? Because my son is not home most of the time, so I dont think she will be aware of anything, just bein hazmanim he's home.

Next, are you suggesting in the preliminary stage that I avoid giving the impression that I suspect him, and just bring it up matter of factly?

If so, is that temporary or long term?

Finally, I respect your opinion about not divulging my own situation. And if nobody else objects I'll follow it. I was just thinking, how much easier it is for him to feel that he has someone who can understand him. He doesnt have access to internet so he can't join GYE. But again I asked the question to get answers from people who would know. And I respect whatever you think.

Thanks

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 16 Feb 2011 21:45

) i assume
that means not even that I struggled (emphasis on past tense) when i was his age?

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 16 Feb 2011 21:54

[geshertzarmeod wrote on 16 Feb 2011 21:38:](#)

I asked the question to get answers from people who would know. And I respect whatever you think.

Thanks

I am not one of those people.

My thoughts are here anyhow.

Many women have a difficult time understanding this *nisayon*. We do not know what preconceived notions she has about this. She might think is as something gross perverts do.....

Maybe it might be better if you to deal with your son yourself. Even if you talk about it directly, it will add to your relationship, being that your are in exclusive confidence.

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Re: following in my footsteps

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 16 Feb 2011 22:06

[David/Rage wrote on 16 Feb 2011 20:47:](#)

I am too far removed from being a bachur to tell you that perspective and too far removed the

other direction from having a son with that problem to tell you that perspective..... but I do think!

There might be some benefit in letting him know somehow that you 'understand' what it is like.....

I hope others speak up with their thoughts/advice too. Mine is only an inexperienced opinion.

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