

Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Desperate Yid - 13 Dec 2012 19:42

Hello chevra,

I have been watching the chizuk emails for a sort while and have decided to jump in myself. i would describe myself as having come some distance since my first unfortunate encounter with a computer (bought it for my job; downhill from there). There are many areas in which I have succeeded in limiting opportunities to act out on my addiction.

However, it always seems to find a way to creep back in. As Dov wrote the other day, I am constantly on the Aliyah/Yeridah roller coaster.

For one example, i was on a high though (most of) Yamim Noraim. Came Succos, and someone brought us a computer without filters installed. Of course, i had to check it out. After a terrible night, I put on WebChaver. Then we got a gift of two tablets (no pun intended). Try to put Webchaver on one of those! Another day gone. Comes Simchas Torah (hakafo's were a tremendous high), and my sister-in-law made an off-color (flirtatious?) comment in the afternoon. Back down under.

I have come to realize that rather than relying on limiting the situations, I need to also change my own inner quest for the stimuli to feed my addiction. I have finally begun davening to Hashem for His help; I hope that you can help me break free as well.

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by jjblue13 - 19 Dec 2012 08:00

@ broadlife: either I misunderstood Desperate's post, or you mine.

I meant that he can't blame himself for her becoming lax in this regard. It appears to me he is blaming himself for her "loss of innocence" so to speak.

I agree with you fully that such a conversation will probably be very beneficial for both of them.

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by nederman - 19 Dec 2012 08:18

FYI, option 2 takes three weeks.

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Desperate Yid - 19 Dec 2012 09:37

[jjblue13 wrote:](#)

@ broadlife: either I misunderstood Desprerate's post, or you mine.

I meant that he can't blame himself for her becoming lax in this regard. It appears to me he is blaming himself for her "loss of innocence" so to speak.

I agree with you fully that such a conversation will probably be very beneficial for both of them.

Thank you both for your support - it means so much!

That is what I meant. Over the years, I have engaged in flirtatious behavior with her. Boruch Hashem, there has never been a time when both of us were in the mood.

While, at the time, I had gevurah, you can imagine what it did to me numerous times later. I have tried to create similar scenarios, but she has seen through them and resisted. Except when she flirts. So, the see-saw continues.

I am so thankful to Hashem that, out of His love for me, He has arranged that I never ultimately fall into what would be a disaster on so many levels. At the same time, what I do to myself thinking about this is so destructive in its own right.

Back to the guilt: Had I not reached out for all these years, would she have reciprocated? Had I been a better brother-in-law, with my mind and judgment not clouded by my desires, could I have helped her hold out for a better husband than the one she has - one who would not make her seek fulfillment from long hours at work and affection from her BIL?

I would love to have a conversation with her, to say, "let's stop the cycle." But how do I overcome the fear that this is all in my mind - or that she will act as if this is all in my mind, and run screaming and declare me a pervert or worse?

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Re: Hello from a newcomer
Posted by Positivity - 19 Dec 2012 10:05

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Re: Hello from a newcomer
Posted by Dov - 19 Dec 2012 10:11

I am not understanding something here, and for me it is the elephant in the room:

Have you spoken openly with your wife about this issue? And sorry if I missed it, but is this SIL your wife's sister, or one of your brothers' wives? Either way, why have you not taken advantage of your best friend to talk to: your own wife? If it *is* her sister, perhaps she can ask *her* straight

out if she is attracted to you - maybe you are misunderstanding the entire thing...perhaps not.

And if your assessment of the situation is accurate, then at least getting the issue open between you and her is the simplest way to sacrifice your potential sexual relationship with this woman on the altar of honest living. Let go of the gut twisting doubt, and just let go of her. I feel that keeping this distraction alive by keeping it a hush secret, is just a way to hold onto her tightly in your mind.

But either way, even if it will be upsetting to her - your honesty with your wife about your own trouble with this SIL (or sister-in-law) could break open new ground for you. This hiding is basically lying, and the complex interplay between you two people is a danger (at least in your own mind). It is strange, no - to keep all this a secret from your wife...no?

Now, if your wife has no idea you are on GYE or that you have any lust issues at all, then I understand why you'd want to keep this from her and see the idea as nuts, inconsiderate, or whatever. But that is not fair...for if your wife was sure that she was being hit on by your brother, wouldn't you want to know? or would you prefer she dealt with it in her own way without you needing to know? Honesty is actually the doorway into real love. And that is a thing we rarely understand.

Just a thought.

And if you *do* decide to tell her the truth, then you may use a rove or a trusted counselor to help her hear it and support her better.

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Desperate Yid - 19 Dec 2012 10:28

[Dov wrote:](#)

I am not understanding something here, and for me it is the elephant in the room:

Have you spoken openly with your wife about this issue? And sorry if I missed it, but is this SIL your wife's sister, or one of your brothers' wives? ...

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Where do I begin? First off, this is my wife's sister. They have a good relationship, marred once years ago when my wife thought her sister was flirting with me and I was responding. After that, I resolved to myself not to do it again. And here we are, with the never-ending struggle.

Any woman my wife has suspected of flirting with me has been completely written off by her. It would kill me to see this happen with her own sister, who is essentially a very good person, and whose kids have a great relationship with mine.

Does my wife know I have issues? She must, although we have never spoken it out as such. Does she know the extent of them? I doubt it...(?)

She has seen me request filter after filter and give her the passwords. She knows I will not get a data plan for my phone. It can't all be for no reason.

Does she know I am on GYE? She sees the chizuk emails in my inbox, but does not read them or comment. Actually, I subscribed because when I came into the room late after one night of surfing and acting out, the Mishpacha magazine on her night table was open to the article about GYE.

It could be a warm, fuzzy conversation that would make us closer than ever. Or it could create unbelievable complications that I am not sure I am ready to handle.

Is there a safer way to start?

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by nederman - 19 Dec 2012 16:56

[Desperate Yid wrote:](#)

I was thinking along these lines: Cost-benefit analysis for me is relatively in the forefront of my mind: The benefit of lust is the elusive potential for fulfillment of desires I myself do not fully understand, and which never seem to get fulfilled.

That is not a benefit. The potential for something is not a benefit. The benefit is something else. You have to write it down, but it hurts to write it down.

Feeling terrible about myself immediately and for days afterwards.

You did a good job here. This is indeed a cost for your cost-benefit analysis.

The lack of ability to be properly intimate with my wife (spent physically and mentally from other, seemingly more desirable women or images of them).

This is not a proper cost to have in your cba. You have not described why this is bad for *you*. Maybe it is bad because being intimate with your wife in the past has made you happy? If not, then you could write down that you imagine that being intimate would be much better if you didn't do porn. That is a legitimate cost.

The lack of ability to throw myself into learning and davening and feel the kedushah.

Feeling the kedusha is a legitimate benefit. You should split out your resistance to learning and davening as separate benefits. You are implying that these are costs because of olam ha-ba, but you also know that olam ha-ba is potentially very far away for you (let's hope) so this is not a cost. For an old man, or a terminally ill person it would be a cost, because they *believe* it.

The lost time from work.

I guess by this you mean lower performance at work.

The lack of ability to be selfless and empathetic towards others (I believe this was one of the causes for my loss of two jobs which required me to work closely with difficult people; how could I win them over by being empathetic and caring - my job description - when I could not care for anyone beside my own selfish desires? Not to mention getting all their needs taken care of given the amount of time I spent acting out.

This is not a cost of doing porn. However people who engage in addictive behaviors are motivated by the belief "everything should be the way I want it or life will not be good for me," which usually results in resentment, anger etc. and since they can't get what they want in this world they go off and drink, do drugs, do porn, etc. So this may be a cost of believing that the world must be exactly as you want it. Nasty little belief that one.

Nonetheless, while I admire individuals like Nederman who have been able to bring their lives under control with such logic (thank you for your brave and honest document), this all falls away from my mind when presented with the opportunity to lust.

It's not about logic. It's about facts. You don't know the facts, mainly because it hurts to know them. Your first attempt at a cost-benefit analysis did not produce enough motivation for you to want to stop.

Do you *want* to try this method, or not? It takes three weeks and then you'll have your choice back.

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Desperate Yid - 19 Dec 2012 18:54

[nederman wrote:](#)

Do you *want* to try this method, or not? It takes three weeks and then you'll have your choice back.

While I'm leaning toward the "can't control myself, let's find a workaround" idea, I'd definitely like to hear more about this method - 3 weeks?

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Dov - 19 Dec 2012 19:20

Dear Desperate Yid,

Thanks for clarifying that the obsession with your SIL is actually part of a long history your marriage has and not a new problem, at all. And I think it's great that you see that in your history of flirting or being flirted with, your wife has written off all the 'partners' you have had. And most

of all, thanks for opening up here about all this - it shows you really do want to start getting better and somehow change this pattern your marriage has...for it seems clear that it is a pattern. And that is real important to know.

If it's a pattern and not something new, no matter what stop-gap measure you use, it's a band-aid. Resisting **this** time...well, that leaves next time. Having these 'women-in-waiting' seems to be a pattern of yours, a preference. The RMB"M teaches that any repeated behavior indicates something is going on with the behavior - and that the issue is not external.

Hatzlocha with facing this (if I'm right about it at all, that is), and with starting a new pattern of behavior right from this adventure today. If it is part of changing the way you respond to the issue *patiently* and honestly, then you will see good results over time, be"H.

Personally, I directly pray for women I lust after, and am not afraid to use their names when speaking to Hashem about them. I try to restore the proper love for them within me by seeing (and sometimes writing about and sharing with other safe people about) the boundaries that are there and that they are good. They are good because boundaries preserve everything that is Good. That is why Hashem is praised for "*g'vul samta bal ya'avurun*" used the name Sha-dai when he made a boundary for the world - and it is precisely why sforim say that very name represents Yosef haTzaddik's relationship with G-d. He was a man who knew boundaries. And while love **is** the relationship, it is boundaries that preserve the relationships by keeping them right-sized. As Chaza"l say, Yir'as Shomayim (that is the recognition of true boundaries) is the kav chumtin that preserves all the t'vuah.

Shockingly, V'ohavto l'reiacho kamocha applies to your SIL, too! And lusting after her is the *opposite* of loving her - for it destroys your wife's relationship with her own sister, it poisons your own precious marriage relationship, and it will ruin you as a real man. So how to love her? I think the answer is that the right ahava looks a lot different than *anything we could possibly imagine* if we are still lusting after the person. And that goes for our wives, as well.

The Messilas Yeshorim writes that "*hachassidus ha'amiti [is] rachok mitziur sichleinu*." We can't even make a *tziur* of it in our seichel! Why does he need to say that? Just to tease us? No. It's to tell us that when pursuing a new pattern, we need to know that *right* pattern is usually not what we think it is. We are not guiding our own recovery and development - a sad truth for for those of us who are gayvoh-based...and that is all of us. We are indeed works in progress guided to tikkun by Hashem, who is loving and perfect. All we can see before us the how far the headlights can shine, and we are driving at night in the fog...as Messilas Yeshorim says.

This struggle with lusting over your SIL is a tremendous gift from your own G-d. If used right, it will eventually teach you and others what real love means. And my wife and I will testify that our marriage as it is today, is nothing like we imagined it to grow into. It is far, far better. Growing up can be scary - but it is all that recovery is about!

With lots of love and respect,

Dov

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by nederman - 19 Dec 2012 21:06

[Desperate Yid wrote:](#)

[nederman wrote:](#)

Do you *want* to try this method, or not? It takes three weeks and then you'll have your choice back.

While I'm leaning toward the "can't control myself, let's find a workaround" idea, I'd definitely like to hear more about this method - 3 weeks?

Well, the reason I wrote the little document I posted above was to tell people about it. When people read that the best scenario I can usually hope for is that they agree with it theoretically, but they just don't believe that it works. I have seen that people start believing in the method at

two times:

1. As they write the cost-benefit analysis they accumulate enough pros and cons that really make them happy or unhappy, and they start feeling all different.
2. When they first try to remind themselves that they have a choice they are just astounded by how effective it is. This happened to two people I know.

To me the right way to get started is to write a cost-benefit analysis as if you were a callous and materialistic person. Pretend that it's a play, and you are playing a rotten Jew who is writing down the pros and cons of masturbating, doing porn, and staring at your sister in law. This bad, bad man might write:

Pros:

1. It feels good when I look at her.

Cons:

2. She will probably never sleep with me. My brother sleeps with her instead. If I look at her I will just get frustrated while he is having all the fun.

Etc.

If you can pull this off you'll be determined to remind yourself that you have a choice, you will literally *discover* that you have a choice, and in about three weeks you'll believe it enough to know that you'll never go back.

You can also try the reminder procedure and see it gives you hope, then you can go back to your cba to make up your mind for good:

1. Stimulus hits (SIL in sight etc.) At this point the fear hits. This is the yetzer reminding you that you have no choice but to lust.
2. Tell yourself the following thought: "I know I have a choice. I cannot get aroused further I unless I choose to think about sex. If I engage in something before I know I will turn around and the arousal will be gone."
3. Then (and only then) engage in something fun.

This will not work if you skip the reminder thought. When you look back in time you will just forget all the time you spent not lusting and it won't change your belief that you have no choice. The thought by itself without the cba does not work long-term.

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Desperate Yid - 20 Dec 2012 01:09

Dov,

Is it possible to do this without the "direct approach" discussed previously?

Or, given that you are right on about the pattern of "courting" anyone - from secretary to fellow parent to doctor to counseling client (I have sent the females to my wife) - my major work is internal?

Lay it on like it is - I may not be ready to act on everything at once, but I appreciate frankness.

Thank you so much!!!

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Positivity - 21 Dec 2012 21:23

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Dov - 21 Dec 2012 23:21

You do not need to reveal *your* feelings about the SIL to your wife (unless she asks you, then lying is generally not compatible with real marriage so it probably should be admitted). But what I was asking you to consider was telling her the vibes you get from SIL and that you are not sure it is your imagination.

Again, this is an issue that cannot fairly be advised on line. It requires a real relationship and knowledge of the parties involved. All I ask is that you think it over, consider the pattern rather than desperate searching for stopgap measures to overcome it and just 'not get into trouble this time' - and go from there as you see fit. Perhaps advise from a safe 3rd party is called for.

Hey - hatzlocha and good Shabbos!

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Re: Hello from a newcomer

Posted by Positivity - 24 Dec 2012 18:59

I am not sure what u refer to by direct approach. Can you be more direct at least with *me*?

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