

Struggling and need help (or hope)

Posted by babysteps - 13 Sep 2013 21:50

This may be a long one so bare with me;

I have only looked at this site for a couple of days now but I have not seen any other forum on which to express my problem and get any type of chizuk. I will lay it all out, get all of the dark things out there for the world to see in the hope that somehow I can find a solution, even if I don't think there is one. I will do this because I don't know what else I can do but I know I need to do something.

I am in my mid 30's, married with 2 children and I am seriously addicted to masturbation. Just as a background, I was abused by an older male cousin at a young age. I can't recall when it began or how long it went on for but I know I was around 9 when it happened and went on periodically for maybe a couple of years. It was then that I was introduced to M and have done it ever since. I didn't even need to view anything to get myself off (although it certainly makes the experience more enjoyable and addictive). It sounds so crazy when I think about it but I didn't even reach puberty when I was doing it.

Anyway, that was a long time ago and I have tried to block it out as much as I could. For the most part I have been successful, but the M aspect never went away. Unlike many abuse victims, instead of being scared of sex, I became hypersexed. I can't stop thinking about it, wanting it, needing it. At times I had fallen so bad that I indulged 3-4 times a day for several days, just to get that "fix". I see it everywhere I go, I check out every woman I see until I realize what I'm doing and I stop myself. It is so habitual that I don't even realize I'm doing it. It's also much more difficult to control myself since nobody dresses modestly anymore.

I am also a baal teshuva. I started to become more frum in my early teens and now I would describe myself as right-wing modern orthodox. I really don't like labels but they do help put things in perspective.

What prompted me to post is that it is erev Yom Kippur and I have been really trying to stay clean (not indulge in looking at things or actually M-ing) but it has been really difficult. Just before I started writing I had a thought to "just look at some pictures for a few minutes". So I decided it was time to post. I just don't know what to do with myself. In every other aspect of my life I am striving to be a better person. This holds true for ruchnius things as well. I have been davening with a minyan (almost all the time) for a second year and I began doing daf yomi since they began the new cycle and I have another chabura on shabbos.

However, I feel a tremendous weight on my shoulders because of this. How can I be such a hypocrite? How can I ask Hashem to forgive me when I know that it's only a matter of time before I do the inevitable? I am not an openly emotional person but I have cried during slichos because I feel helpless in this struggle.

What makes it more difficult is the fact that my wife is not interested in sex. I had always felt that

things would be different when I got married. I know I can "hold out" for a few days, even a couple of weeks if I really apply myself, as long as there is something to look forward to. Unfortunately, we only have sex maybe twice a month. She would be fine with just once but she feels obligated after mikva and I am able to convince her at least one other time. The problem is, when it finally does happen it is not very good. I have tried to speak to her about it. I have tried to tell her how difficult it is for me to go so long without getting any but the end result is always the same - lots of excuses; she is always tired (at 9pm) or not feeling well or has a headache or stomach ache or any number of things) and nothing really changes. It is important to note that we are currently in couples therapy and have been on and off for a few years (married for 8). Now, I know that many people will say "of course she is not interested if you are having problems in your marriage". The thing is, this has been an issue since day 1. When we first got married she claimed that it was too painful for her. When I would suggest that we still "fool around" and not get into it unless she was ok with it, she just said she wasn't comfortable and that was it. I, in turn, felt rejected and that my feelings don't matter, and the frustration began to build. For someone who is so charged sexually, it was like living a nightmare. I think we managed to have sex maybe 5 times in that first year. Naturally, I turned to M as my "comfort". It was easy to rationalize that this would alleviate my needs without putting pressure on my wife. I believed it was ok because I was doing it for shalom bayis. But the addiction just grew. Now, even though the physical pain is not there (since she had children maybe?), she is still not interested. Its as if she has 0 sex drive and would be fine living in a convent. She has even told me flat out that she really has no interest in sex. In a recent session she told the therapist that all I want from her is sex, to which I replied "if that is all it would take to make me happy, why is it so difficult for her to go along with it?". Her reply was "I am not a prostitute"! Who says that?

Anyway, I am going to cut this short now because I need to go to mincha soon. I will be going to say viduy and I will certainly feel so ashamed to stand in front of Hashem. What can I say? How can I ask for forgiveness when they say that part of tshuva promising to never do it again? I know I will. I know because it has been almost a week since I had relations with my wife and she will become a niddah in the next several days, during which it is very unlikely that anything will happen, and then its another 2 weeks before her "obligation" compels her to grace me with her presence. I know I can't last that long... and in the meantime I am just torn.

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)

Posted by gibbor120 - 13 Sep 2013 21:59

WELCOME! I don't have time to post much now, but I hope you will stick around. It's a great place of comraderie and chizzuk. Your problems are quite common, and you are among friends who understand you. Have a gmar chasima tova!

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by gibbor120 - 13 Sep 2013 22:01

one more thing. Teshuva is a process, not an event. make the committment to do whatever it
. Many are recovering, you can too.

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by skeptical - 13 Sep 2013 22:15

Welcome to GYE!
takes now, then "start" to work on it. Baby steps

We're looking forward to getting to know you better.

In the meantime, you may find [this thread](#) beneficial. Have a look and then let us know what you think.

A g'mar chasima tovah!

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by AlexEliezer - 13 Sep 2013 22:51

Welcome!

Your story is actually quite common, including your wife's disinterest.

Wives aren't interested in sex. They're interested in connecting with their man in a special way. If we are lusting after other women and having sex with ourselves (which I did for decades) our wives feel it and don't want to be intimate with us. There are a couple of excellent threads in the Baalei Battim's section started by guys going through pretty much what you are, and are turning their marriages around.

First we need to fix ourselves. You can start by getting really sober.

To stop lusting we need to cut out all sources of lust.

Guarding our eyes in all settings is a must. We simply can't afford to look at women unless absolutely necessary for business. Not even their faces. Your own wife's face is the exception. Don't even check her out in a lustful way.

Surrender your fantasies and mental images to Hashem as soon as they come. Just say "I surrender my lust to You, please take it from me."

Take it one day at a time. Don't worry about tomorrow's nisyonos. Falling is not inevitable...if you stay focused on staying clean today.

There is a lot more to overcoming addiction, but the first thing, after admitting we have an addiction, is to get sober.

Stay here with us. I sense a lot of sincerity from you.

You can do this if you stay the course.

You'll need to PM guard to get access to the Married section.

You can find him here guardyoureyes.com/forum/profile/userid-62

After you get access, check out this thread

guardyoureyes.com/forum/17-Balei-Battims-Forum/119441-Breaking-Out-of-the-Cycle

Gmar Chasima Tova!

Alex

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)

Posted by Pidaini - 15 Sep 2013 00:50

Welcome to the community!!

I have nothing to add after R' AlexEliezer's post, he's said just about everything there is to say. What he said what was got me going when I first joined (some 8 months ago).

Keep on Posting, we're all in this together!

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)

Posted by cordnoy - 15 Sep 2013 09:50

Welcome

It is vital to realize that these two issues are connected.

after reading some of the thread, you will see that people, myself included, did not agree with that, and argued against it.

Most come around, myself included.

our wives might not know the extent of our issues, but they can sense our sex drive and our lusting. this basically turns them off. we need to focus on cleaning our side of the street, and focus on simply giving to the wife; not taking at all.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by babysteps - 15 Sep 2013 10:23

Hi Everyone

Thank you for your support. I just want to add a few things I didn't have time for yesterday.

1) I am not looking to solve my marriage problems here. We have started to see a therapist for that who is very good (after several bad ones). The only reason I mentioned my wife is to provide perspective of the situation, which is the fact that I do not have an alternate outlet for this physical need. I am sure I would be able to control myself if I knew that I was going to get some at regular intervals. I can always tell myself "just a little bit longer and you will be OK", but I have no way of knowing. Here I am, the night after Yom Kippur, after begging mechila all day, and a week has gone by since I had relations with my wife, and she will be a nidda in the next couple of days, and she says nothing but goes to bed leaving me with my thoughts. Where do you think those thoughts were leading me? RIGHT AFTER YOM KIPPUR. That is just crazy. But I can't deal with the fact that I will prob have to wait another 2 1/2 weeks until the next time - which will be terrible. I am going out of my mind.

Yes, I realize that many posters on here are in the same situation and my heart goes out to them. I am just trying to provide the facts.

2) I want to state that I am not interested in becoming celibate for the rest of my life. In spite of my wife's lack of interest, I have a strong but healthy sex drive and I cannot imagine having to shut it down. That is a major part of my struggle: knowing that what I am feeling is natural and yet knowing that the natural remedy is not available to me. This of course leads to frustration and

3) I am aware that I am using M as an "escape". I am having a difficult time with several things in my life and it is so easy to go back to that comforting thing that provides me with pleasure (however brief). I have rationalized "why am I not allowed to feel good"? "Don't I deserve to be happy at all"?

I know that I do but I don't get to feel that very often.

4) I need help because I realize that this behavior is not healthy spiritually and I would like to do something about it. I can get really depressed when I fall back into the pit after several days of being clean. I would like to not fall.

I may add to this list later but these are my truths as I understand them. They may change over time but its good to commit them to writing.

I will do my best to go to this site first if I have an urge. Hopefully it will get derailed, as it has so far. Reading the other stories on here has been a comfort - just knowing that you are out there and struggle just like me

Stay strong

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by AlexEliezer - 15 Sep 2013 17:16

I totally get where you're coming from. I felt the same way you do about the sometimes skimpy relations schedule with the wife.

Rationalize = to tell one's self rational lies.

Truth # 1 (none of us here like this one, but we've learned to live it): Sex is optional. It is not a physical need. You don't need a "release" or an "outlet." Not unless you're checking out women all day and entertaining fantasies. That's called lusting and then yes, you will need to open the release valve. But if we're not lusting, we can go for as long as necessary.

Truth # 2 (we like this one a little better): Your wife DOES want to have sex with you. But only WHEN SHE'S THE ONLY WOMAN IN YOUR LIFE.

You can go to all the best marriage counselors you can find. Just make sure to tell the counselor (in private) that you're a sexaholic and what you're up to. Without this information, the counselor is IMPOTENT to help you two.

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by Pidaini - 15 Sep 2013 20:44

I completely relate with you, Let me ask you something, maybe the reason you get depressed is not solely based on "spirituality", maybe it's (also) because of this.

We always have this push "if I masturbate, if I just watch that female form, if I could have my wife do everything I want her to **THEN** I would be happy" so the situation gets bad enough and we **NEED** to be happy (yes, it is only natural to want to be happy).

So we go to that place and let ourselves down and watch porn or masturbate or both (or force our wives to be our sex dolls) and**nothing**!! not only are we not happy afterwards, but the tensions that were chasing us fling back in our faces, and it hurts, and we feel depressed, both because of all the issues that we really have to deal with are right there again, and because we let ourselves be fooled again.

As Alex said, we do not need an outlet, our wives are not made to be sex dolls, and I want to add that we don't just have a "spiritual" problem, we have an addiction (addiction here means doing something self destructive that we have tried stopping and have been unsuccessful~R' Dr. Twerski) and we need to have others help us.

It's awesome that you are reaching out, KOT (Keep On Trucking)!!

Keep on Posting (KOP)

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by RebYid90 - 15 Sep 2013 22:39

HEY!

sorry i don't have anything of real substance to add (not married) but i just want to say welcome and,like all the post ive read, yours gives me such chizuk and the strength i need to keep on my road to recovery, (6 days !!!!!)

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)

Posted by MBJ - 15 Sep 2013 23:31

Hey Babysteps,

You have certainly come to the right place. B"H I was never molested as a kid, but so much of what you said could be my story. You will find that for a lot of people here. I know I started masturbating many years before I was able to ejaculate.

I also have a wife who never ever wanted to have sex, I also kept thinking if I only I had more sex things would be better and like you I tried to talk to her about it many times. Not that it worked.

Like others here said already, I have come to learn the two problems are one and the same. But it takes time to learn those lessons.

The first thing you have to do is take it one day at a time and keep coming here to share with us.

If it will be any help you check out my [thread](#).

Best of Luck

Eli

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)

Posted by SIB101854 - 16 Sep 2013 04:45

You have arrived at a great place! There is nowhere on the frum side of the web for Bnei Torah to discuss sexual addiction, masturbation and porn. Being in couples therapy is great, but realizing that porn and masturbation impact adversely on the degree and quality of physical intimacy is a key. One more observation-If you and your wife have emotional intimacy out of the bedroom on the seemingly mundane issues that every couple face on a daily basis, then you should be able to overcome the issues with respect to physical intimacy.

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by SIB101854 - 16 Sep 2013 04:48

Alex Eliezer wrote:

"Wives aren't interested in sex. They're interested in connecting with their man in a special way. If we are lusting after other women and having sex with ourselves (which I did for decades) our wives feel it and don't want to be intimate with us"

If you and your wife are emotionally on the same page, physical intimacy is the culmination of a great relationship, as opposed to an abnormal obsession with Kol Davar Assur.

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Re: Struggling and need help (or hope)
Posted by SIB101854 - 16 Sep 2013 05:24

This is one of the major tests that all addicts face, especially for those of us such as myself who work in Manhattan in the summer where casual attire for women approaches beach attire. For those of us with a strong sex drive, we need strategies that begin with Shemiras Einyaim on the street, in the office, on mass transit and at home. The eitzah that works for me so far is not to objectify all such women as either Zonos or Sotos, but rather an attitude that my life is governed by Derech HaChaim that demands that I avoid such hazards to a life filled with Kedusha, and that I simply walk to lunch and Mincha and back to my office without a possibility of my Yetzer Hara being stimulated to forbidden thoughts. On the way home, a long subway ride, I have been learning Gemara via the Ipod for years as my one of my private Sidrei Limud and as a form of Shemiras Einayim-even during the summers. I hope that my association with this wonderful site will continue to enhance my Avodas HaShem so that one can both be Aseh Tov and Sur MeRaah.

I don't think that we fantasize that our wives should be sex dolls. However, I think that we all have to remember that the Torah approach neither is hedonism ala the Greco Roman contemporaries of Chazal nor Victorian prudery. That is why the Gemara has so many sugyos on the issue and why Rishonim wrote sefarim that we would consider sex manuals, and that physical intimacy is an important element of a great marriage-even beyond childbearing years.

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