

Advice for single 30-something BT?

Posted by decidingtotry - 08 Oct 2014 19:18

I am a MO FFB who went on to live a mostly secular lifestyle for the better part of 15 years (basically since I graduated high school). In the past year I have become a BT and thank G-d have been welcomed into a wonderful community. I have gradually resumed being shomrei mitzvos, which has been an incredibly positive and meaningful experience, and I am now trying to work on being shomer einiyim and shomer habris.

I have compulsively masturbated and looked at pornography since I was about 15 (so over half my life, and my entire adult life). I have been in several committed long-term relationships (as they say in the secular world), and intended to marry my last girlfriend. She had other ideas, broke up with me, broke my heart in the process, and is now engaged to someone else.

I very much want to give up pornography and masturbation, and have taken some first steps towards doing so. My problem is that, as a single adult male who has been sexually active for a long time, in terms of both daily masturbation and ongoing sexual relationships, I don't have a halachically acceptable sexual outlet. It doesn't seem possible at this point to become celibate. I struggle with jealousy towards my friends who are married, and ultimately I hope to have a wife towards whom I can properly direct my sexual desires. I don't know when that will happen, however, and I have no idea what to do in the meantime.

I hope I'm posting this in the right place. Does anyone have any advice for someone in my situation?

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?

Posted by AlexEliezer - 08 Oct 2014 19:36

Welcome, welcome back, and yasher koach for taking up the challenge.

It's actually very possible for someone in your situation to stop having sex with himself, even without a girlfriend.

The Talmud (sanhedrin) teaches us the secret:

Man has a small limb (eiver).

He who feeds it is hungry.

He who starves it is satisfied.

Contrary to popular secular misinformation, men do not physically need a sexual outlet. Nothing will happen if we don't ejaculate every so often.

However, that's only if we're not lusting.

When we spend our days ogling women and fantasizing, the pressure builds.

We sex addicts are addicted to this arousal.

Eventually, we need to press the release button.

No lusting, no need to release.

No lusting means bulletproof shmiras eynayim, along with deflecting fantasies and mental images. When these come, I start davening, asking Hashem to take them, and my lust along with them. For today. So I can live today.

One day at a time.

You can do this!

Alex

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by dms1234 - 08 Oct 2014 20:36

WELCOME!!!!!!

To expand on AE's advice of asking Hashem, the next step for me is to reach out to a friend!
That could be a guy here on GYE, a Rabbi, or a "normal" friend.

Check out the [GYE Handbook](#) and [Skep's tips](#)

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by JoeTheJew - 08 Oct 2014 20:46

I'm still pretty new here, but I can tell you this, do not expect your wife to be your sexual outlet. I expected mine to be and lets just say, I've fallen way too far because of it in almost 20 years of marriage. I've come to the understanding that I have a problem and I need to change, and expecting her to be my "outlet" when I feel the need is one thing I need to accept is not going to happen.

Try to change now before going into a marriage with any pre-conceived notions of what your sex life should be with your wife. Believe me, you will be much better off going in blind than with high expectations based on your previous life.

And like Alex said, welcome back!

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?

Posted by JoeTheJew - 08 Oct 2014 20:49

Just to clarify, that doesn't mean you won't have an amazing sex life with your wife. Just don't go into it with high expectations, or you'll probably ruin any chances you had to have a normal, wonderful sex life like I did.

-JTJ

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by inastruggle - 13 Oct 2014 10:50

Welcome to gye,

The world makes it seem as if sex is a necessity, and one way or another we need an outlet. It simply isn't true, Chazal tell us otherwise , and it's been tried and tested. Before I joined gye,I was sure that almost everyone else must be masturbating as well. It seemed inconceivable that they were just living life without it. After I was clean for a while, I realized how wrong I was.

It's hard at the beginning but it's worth it.

Advice for a single 30-something BT?

GO FOR IT!

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by Pidaini - 13 Oct 2014 18:10

Welcome to GYE!!

You still here?

I liked your decision to try stopping! I understand that it seems scary, it does still for me, and I haven't had the sexual encounters that others have had.

Take the plunge!! It's worth it!!

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by decidingtotry - 15 Oct 2014 04:36

Yes I'm still here.

Thank you everyone for your responses.

Honestly though, they've been a little bit of a tough pill to swallow. I'm not saying that anything anyone has written is wrong, it's just taking a little bit of time to wrap my head around.

I understand the problem with internet porn addiction. I've understood that for a while, since well before I became a BT. It's harmful to relationships, it's harmful to my own functionality and productivity. And I do understand and accept, from a Torah point of view, the problem with inappropriate lustful thoughts.

However, it's only been very recently that I've even considered the possibility that masturbation is inherently wrong. I have a difficult time understanding that, except I guess that it's a waste of time. (One thing I am curious about, is there a Torah prohibition against masturbation?)

What I am *really* having a hard time understanding, though, are the posts that seem to suggest my goal should be to eliminate all sexual desire. I don't understand how sexual desire is anything but a universal human experience. I've never met anyone, male or female, who has told me they don't experience sexual desire. I go to a shul where mostly everyone is married, are you telling me those married couples don't have sex with each other? I can accept that viewing porn is unhealthy, and I can accept that we should direct our sexuality in a positive way, but that we should just totally try to suppress it and pretend it doesn't exist? I don't get that.

My goal is to stop using pornography and to stop compulsively masturbating, in order so that when I Y"H start a family, the addiction won't interfere. I don't think it's appropriate in a family setting (obviously) and I don't want to have to struggle with it. However I don't think eliminating sexual desire is my goal. I want to have a healthy sex life with my future wife and I don't see what's wrong with that.

Am I misunderstanding something? Can anyone relate to what I'm saying?

EDIT: After reading over what I wrote, I'd add that I do see how reducing sexual or lustful thoughts will be key, at least in the short-term, to my goals of stopping pornography use and stopping daily masturbation. I just don't see how it's possible OR desirable to try to permanently eliminate all sexual desire.

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by AlexEliezer - 15 Oct 2014 05:48

[decidingtotry wrote:](#)

... However I don't think eliminating sexual desire is my goal. I want to have a healthy sex life with my future wife and I don't see what's wrong with that.

Am I misunderstanding something? Can anyone relate to what I'm saying?

No one said anything about sexual desire.

We're all talking about lust.

Sexual desire is the desire to be intimate with your wife, as a way to grow closer through that special bond of shared pleasure.

It's about ***us***.

Lust is about ***me***.

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?

Posted by inastruggle - 15 Oct 2014 09:38

To add a bit to what AlexEliezer wrote:

Obviously sexual desire is a normal thing that every healthy male experiences. More than that, it's the strongest desire as well (as written in many Torah sources). Nobody's asking you to suppress or eliminate it, that would be unhealthy and possibly close to impossible. What is asked from us is to have a healthy sex life, just as you wrote your goal currently is. Here's where it gets thorny though.

The difference between the world's definition of a healthy sex life and the Torah's, is huge. The world's definition is the simple intuitive one, if it isn't damaging, and both parties are happy with it, then it's healthy.

Lehavdil, the Torah's definition of healthy isn't only physical, it also incorporates the spiritual. There are many consequences of this and they're reflected in the Torah's laws.

There are many factors and aspects involved, I'm far from an expert but I'll try to share what I know. Two of the attitudes reflected in the Torah's laws are toward, self control, and toward selfishness.

Self control: Jews need self control in order to fulfill our tafkaid on this world. This one reasons for us having to keep kosher as well. We have to control ourselves in all we do so as to be able to keep ourselves involved in higher pursuits than chasing after physical pleasures and desires. Now, the stronger the urge, the more guidelines we need to keep it under control. Hence the strict rules regarding sex in the Torah.

Rabbi Noach Weinberg Zt"l once put it "you can't orgy at night and then learn in the morning, it just doesn't work" (I'm quoting this from memory so the words are probably slightly different).

Selfishness: Our way to perfection is by emulating Hashem, since he is the ultimate perfection. One of Hashem's notable characteristics is chessed. Therefore, the Torah looks at any purely selfish act as something to avoid. So, as AlexEliezer put it, Lust is about me, intimacy with your wife is about us. This is reflected in Halacha numerous times. One example is the issur to have relations after you fought with your wife, since you'd be solely focused on your own pleasure and not hers due to your anger.

As in many, perhaps all, parts of life, when you follow halacha, you not only gain spiritually, but in this world as well. It's a well known fact that having sexual relationships before marriage increases the chance of getting divorced. But leaving that aside, there's a certain satisfaction to be had when living life spiritually, and with you, not your animal desires, in the driver's seat.

If you want more information on this topic, there are a lot of good articles on aish.com and simpletoremember.com

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by decidingtotry - 19 Oct 2014 18:43

Thanks for the clarifications.

I guess I was a little spooked by some of the responses, especially JoeTheJew's.

I hear what you're all saying, that in the context of a marriage, lust is about me, and sexual desire is about us. That makes a lot of sense. I understand the value of directing one's physical aspects towards serving Hashem, just like we try to do in all areas of life.

It certainly feels incongruous to spend my day davening and learning, and trying to devote all my actions towards serving Hashem, and then spending time lusting over images of women on the internet. It feels wrong and it feels like it damages my efforts of trying to become close to Hashem. I am trying to eliminate pornography from my life.

I am still having a hard time understanding what is wrong about masturbation.

I am really struggling with it, because every other part of my BT journey, if you will, has been positive, meaningful, and joyous. I **want** to daven with a minyan 3 times a day. I really **enjoy** learning with different chevrusas. Keeping Shabbos gives me a positive spiritual feeling. Even keeping kosher, which I guess has been the second hardest thing for me, feels worth it. Even though occasionally I still have strong desires for the non-kosher foods I used to eat, at this point I'm totally used to brushing off those desires in the name of a greater good.

Not masturbating is different. I've managed several times to hold off masturbating for a single day, reminding myself to focus just on today, that I can do this, and trying to feel like I'm sacrificing my own will for the will of Hashem. By the second day I feel so physically pent up, I can't take it. It's uncomfortable and it's distracting. I'm having a really hard time understanding how it's different from any other physical need. I mean, when I have to go to the bathroom, how is that not just about me? Why is one bodily discharge so different from another? Why is it so wrong to have that physical release that allows me to go about the rest of my day without distraction? AlexEliezer said in the first response to my original post "No lusting, no need to release." That is simply not my experience. I can spend my entire day without thinking any lustful thoughts at all, and I'll still feel the uncomfortable and distracting need for release. I'm having a really hard time believing it's even possible that I could ever get to the point where I could eliminate that.

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by AlexEliezer - 19 Oct 2014 19:17

Thinking about masturbating is also lusting.

And masturbating is lusting.

It's wrong because it feeds your addiction.

When the thought that you need to masturbate enters your head, surrender it to Hashem.

Ask him to take this desire from you.

With daily masturbation, just like with daily caffeine, cocaine, or morphine, you may have given yourself a physical dependence on masturbation.

The longer you go without it, the easier it will be.

This sounds counterintuitive while you're in the throes of it, I know.

But with time, you will see for yourself that it is true.

It certainly won't be easy in the beginning.

Others have done it. So can you.

Daven.

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?

Posted by godhelp - 19 Oct 2014 19:40

Welcome to GUE.

And enjoy your journey to recovery.

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?

Posted by newaction - 19 Oct 2014 20:58

you tell me whats wrong with eating pork , i'll tell you whats wrong with masturbating

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Re: Advice for single 30-something BT?
Posted by millety613 - 19 Oct 2014 21:12

Here is an excellent video:

www.fightthenewdrug.org/media/v/we-need-to-talk1

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