

Telling my wife?

Posted by eli613 - 05 Apr 2018 01:35

Hi, My name is Eliezer and I am a sex addict. I am 31 years old and have been married for 10 years and I have three wonderful children. I struggle with lust and I have acted out by going to massage providers and massage parlors too many times. I started attending meetings in October of 2017 and I am working the steps with a sponsor. Unfortunately, I had a relapse less than two weeks ago but that made me resolve to work the program even harder. I doubt my wife suspects anything as our marriage is fine, my wife is my best friend and we get along great. I can't imagine living life without her. I would not want to do anything to ruin our marriage (not like I haven't already) but my sponsor who is not Jewish is telling me that I can not go through the program without apologizing to my wife. I want to clear my conscious but I am very scared of the repercussions. Mostly, I am so concerned about what this will do to my wife, she is such a sweet person, a little shy and just loves to live a simple life with no drama. I am looking for all the support I can get to go about this in the proper way. I don't want to leave this up to my sponsor who doesn't understand the dynamics of a frum marriage and community to guide me, I really need some professional help here. Thank you.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by xyxorwa - 05 Apr 2018 18:06

Hello, Eliezer!

It sounds like on the surface, things are going well. Your description of your wife and your relationship sounds (I want to say "sweet", but hope that doesn't sound too sappy). And I hear your uncertainty.

I'm not very familiar with 12-steps programs (maybe I should get to be!!), but it sounds like your sponsor is conditioning your progress through one of the steps on apologizing to your wife.

I'm with you to take this very cautiously. Honesty, especially in marriage, is very important, but causing pain and life upheavals is not good for anyone. I think it speaks well that part of you wants to be honest with your wife, but from your brief description, it doesn't sound to me like now is the right time.

And you say you need professional help here. That's not at all a bad idea! Yes, there are pretty

serious issues at stake here; yes, you want to do what's right. So talk to more people-- maybe a rav or a psychotherapist, or maybe even someone *else* in the 12-steps program. I'm sure your sponsor wants to be helping you, but here I agree with your gut that it's not the right move right now to open up.

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Re: Telling my wife?
Posted by ieeyc - 05 Apr 2018 19:44

hello, please please, dont do anything without the advise of a FRUM expert,they are the only ones who can guide you in such a sensitive situation,Hashem should send you the right shaliach!

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Re: Telling my wife?
Posted by cordnoy - 05 Apr 2018 20:04

[ieeyc wrote on 05 Apr 2018 19:44:](#)

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Frum experts are fine; so are non frum ones, and even Heaven forbid, a gentile, like the one I use.

She would like me to disclose more, but I haven't yet.

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Re: Telling my wife?
Posted by yiraishamaim - 05 Apr 2018 20:56

Telling your wife is not simple.

You describe your marriage in glowing terms. Understand well - Once your secret sex rendezvous' hit the fan - my Lord it ain't gonna be pretty.

Understand that there are circumstances that require a man to let his wife in to some of his secret mess. I for one seriously question if this is one those times.

Seek advice from a very experienced and respected sponsor.

Tread carefully my friend - there is no turning back.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by ieeyc - 08 Apr 2018 07:32

[cordnoy wrote on 05 Apr 2018 20:04:](#)

[ieeyc wrote on 05 Apr 2018 19:44:](#)

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you mean to say: "Frum experts are fine; and even Heaven forbid ,non frum ones, or even a gentile, like the one I use.'

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by ieeyc - 08 Apr 2018 18:36

dont think there is much difference in therepy between a non frum yid and goy

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Markz - 08 Apr 2018 18:44

[ieeyc wrote on 08 Apr 2018 18:36:](#)

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Probably not

Ok

And now what

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Yerushalmi - 09 Apr 2018 19:23

My wife and i were once talking about this topic, and she told me the following: (as best as I can recall)

A woman will look up to her husband, and she will want to do things that please him and make him happy. She looks to him for approval in many aspects, the way she dresses, makes meals, and runs the house. If a husband were to tell his wife that the meal she prepared for him wasn't good, she will be devastated. She very much wants his approval. The bond that marital intimacy creates is a strong one. She also wants his approval in this area as well.

This is now a direct quote "If I were to know that my husband is looking at pornography on the internet, I'd feel as if he had an affair".

You are playing with fire by revealing all. Think very carefully before you do this. I do believe that you should speak with a frum expert, preferably a Rav who has expertise in these matters. In the non Jewish world, acts like this are a breech of trust. A broken trust can be fixed. In the frum world, they are also a terrible sin. Who wants to be married to a sinner? That is not something that can be fixed so easily.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by lomed - 09 Apr 2018 19:49

[eli613 wrote on 05 Apr 2018 01:35:](#)

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Hi Eliezer,

Congrats on the progress you have done so far. Congrats on working the steps and the willingness to go any length.

We dont give advice, but rather share our own experience strength and hope.

?please read in the white book in the section of welcome to newcomers which addresses this issue, if and when and how to disclose to the wife.

My own experience is, that i disclosed to my wife when i was about 6 month clean, before i

came into sa. as someone wrote here, it wasn't a pretty scene. it was actually a tough two or three weeks, with some milder times the next few months. However I can say that this was part of my journey and recovery. for me to live this lie was so painful and was interfering with my recovery. From the other side, the fact that i am today honest and open with my wife has taken my marriage to a much higher and better level than ever could imagined.

From what i hear in the rooms, there is not one member that has disclosed that tho ride was a smooth one. many had it harder and some had easier. most will attest that this step of becoming honest with our closest person is integral for our recovery.

?all this is in addition to the fact that we owe amends to our wives, as your sponsor says. For me making amends to her will be a life time mission. I cannot apologize enough to her for what i have done. But i can make living amends. yes, whenever i am having it hard to be there for her and the family, i use it an opportunity to make living amends.

To summarize: for me to become honest with my wife is an integral part of my recovery. however, it must be done cautiously. in the book it is suggested that it should only be done with a substantial length of sobriety and with prior discussion with group and/or sponsor and/ or therapist.

Thanks for letting me share, and feel free to reach out to me with anything or support you need.

wishing you much Hatzlacha on your road to recovery and with your Sholem Bayes.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by cordnoy - 09 Apr 2018 21:12

[Yerushalmi wrote on 09 Apr 2018 19:23:](#)

My wife and i were once talking about this topic, and she told me the following: (as best as I can recall)

A woman will look up to her husband, and she will want to do things that please him and make him happy. She looks to him for approval in many aspects, the way she dresses, makes meals, and runs the house. If a husband were to tell his wife that the meal she prepared for him wasn't good, she will be devastated. She very much wants his approval. The bond that marital intimacy creates is a strong one. She also wants his approval in this area as well.

This is now a direct quote "If I were to know that my husband is looking at pornography on the internet, I'd feel as if he had an affair".

You are playing with fire by revealing all. Think very carefully before you do this. I do believe that you should speak with a frum expert, preferably a Rav who has expertise in these matters. In the non Jewish world, acts like this are a breach of trust. A broken trust can be fixed. In the frum world, they are also a terrible sin. Who wants to be married to a sinner? That is not something that can be fixed so easily.

And yet, 8 or 9 out of 10 people here, and perhaps the percentage is even higher, say that the experience of tellin' their wife, or gettin' caught by the wife) was positive, and the marriage only improved. So, although I am a hold out (although I broached the topic), the statistics from GYE are all against you.

God speed!

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Yerushalmi - 09 Apr 2018 22:07

I have not discussed my issues at all with my wife. Knowing how she feels i don't know if I ever will. At the least, it will have to wait until i am further along in recovery.

I just meant that telling all can cause some harm. For some, this damage is short term, and may be easily repaired, and is worth it. For others, it may be best to not mention it until later, when it won't cause as much damage. Telling one's wife that I had "issues" a while back, and they were solved a few years ago isn't the same as telling her that I have "issue" now.

My suggestion for Eli would be to feel her out. Without arousing her suspicions, try and find out how she would feel. Perhaps you can say that a friend wants to know if he should tell his spouse, and ask for her opinion.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by cordnoy - 09 Apr 2018 22:33

[Yerushalmi wrote on 09 Apr 2018 22:07:](#)

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My suggestion for Eli would be to feel her out. Without arousing her suspicions, try and find out how she would feel. Perhaps you can say that a friend wants to know if he should tell his spouse, and ask for her opinion.

Please talk from experience, either your own, or your sponsors, or your sponsees. To categorically state that tellin' ones wife about current issues is dangerous (when one is undergoin' recovery) without data, borders on the asinine, and is detrimental, and one would need to have kavanah when he klaps ?? ??? ?????? ??.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Yerushalmi - 09 Apr 2018 22:56

Let me start over.

My wife once told me that if she were to find out that her husband is looking at online porn she would feel as if he had an affair. Knowing how she feels about it, I have not told her the things that I have done wrong. Perhaps when I am further along my road to recovery I will tell her then.

Based on our conversation, i can say, that to reveal all MAY cause a lot of damage. It may not. Other people's spouses might not feel the same as mine. Some people feel that it helps t heir recover to tell everything. In my own personal situation, I think it may cause more harm than good. If it's true for me it MAY be true for others as well. It might not.

My suggestion was to try and find out what her feelings on the subject are in a hypothetical scenario. Knowing how a spouse will feel about it, MAY help someone decide to tell or not to tell.

I have seen 2 therapists over the years. Based on that i would definitely say to seek the advice of a frum expert.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by cordnoy - 09 Apr 2018 23:04

[Yerushalmi wrote on 09 Apr 2018 22:56:](#)

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My suggestion was to try and find out what her feelings on the subject are in a hypothetical scenario. Knowing how a spouse will feel about it, MAY help someone decide to tell or not to tell.

Thank you for that. Most of the wives who have been told or who have caught their husbands also felt the same as your wife.

There is a dynamic to it. Vulnerability. Compassion. Love. Respect (yes respect....for recovery). Teamwork. Understandin'.

That bein' said, I still do not suggest to tell, but I say that in most of the cases I know about, it has turned out as a positive step.

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