

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 ieeyc - 10 Apr 2018 04:14

[Yerushalmi wrote on 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.

good idea, as far as me and my wifes concerned, i feel so bad for my wife, boy is she in for a shock! (unless i do teshuva which will erase my past)

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Workingguy - 10 Apr 2018 16:01

[cordnoy wrote on 09 Apr 2018 23:04:](#)

[Yerushalmi wrote on 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.

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.

The conventional wisdom about disclosure is that it is necessary for two reasons. One, that one of the biggest problems in this issue is dishonesty and what it does to YOU, and the only way to fix that is radical honesty.

Two, that it takes away from your relationship from your wife. After my wife found out, and boy indeed was it not pretty, we called Rabbi Twerski on the phone, and he said two words- radical honesty.

That having been said, most of the professionals I've spoken to, and rabbonim busy with this, say that the specifics should be left out. Sometimes, the specifics ARE too painful for them and they can never get the images out of their head.

That being said, maybe other people will tell you they didn't disclose anything and it worked well for them. Like Cordnoy said, the overwhelming story here is that disclosure was positive in the long run.

I would also add that professional assistance is vital- why go through the pain without having someone help you and her deal with it?

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by ieeyc - 10 Apr 2018 17:01

[cordnoy wrote on 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!

is there anyway that i can see those statistics myself?

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by cordnoy - 10 Apr 2018 17:15

[ieeyc wrote on 10 Apr 2018 17:01:](#)

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

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Yes. Firstly, read the comments on this thread. Secondly, read the comments on other similar threads. Thirdly, stick around for about five years. Lastly, build up a contact list of friends, fellows, sponsees and more where you can obtain relevant, accurate, real information.

God speed!

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by i-man - 11 Apr 2018 03:35

I vaguely remember a concept from the sifsei chaims kuntriss on marriage (i think)

that when a marriage is overall in a good place a big crisis wont be hard to get through,
whereas if its not a crisis could easily derail it,

Is this something to consider ?

How would that go with what were saying about it ultimately being a positive ?

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Markz - 11 Apr 2018 04:05

[i-man wrote on 11 Apr 2018 03:35:](#)

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Singularity - 11 Apr 2018 09:59

[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.

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

My wife told me if she knew I was doing that stuff she'd be absolutely devastated and destroyed.

I later came clean to her about my addiction and she was not devastated or destroyed.

It did bring us closer.

That's just my experience.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by i-man - 12 Apr 2018 03:50

[Markz wrote on 11 Apr 2018 04:05:](#)

[i-man wrote on 11 Apr 2018 03:35:](#)

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That was my next question...

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by eli613 - 20 Apr 2018 06:50

Thank you all so much for your insight. I really appreciate hearing other people's experiences on this matter.

On the one hand, telling her would make it easier for me to work the program, (in fact I find it hard to really commit to the program knowing that I probably should tell my wife but I am unwilling to do so) and it would relieve me of this secret that I have been hiding from her and it might even get me to this higher state of marriage that some of you mentioned that seems so nice. I would love to just relieve myself of this pain that I am holding on to.

On the other hand, I know some women have bigger personalities and may be able to handle such news and get over it or learn to deal with it eventually, but my wife is a really sensitive person, a bit naive maybe, (she is really nice to) my confession would kill her, she would be so crushed, I can't imagine what this would do to her mentally, I don't think she would divorce me since she is very dependent on me, but, who knows? She would definitely need the support of her mom and her siblings and maybe even her close friends which would not make me look very good. Is it right to gamble with my wife's and children's future like that? Also, telling her and knowing that my secrets will probably get out there scares the s**t out of me.

In other news, I am getting close to 30 days of sobriety. I was at the end of a long work day and I was thinking what I can do instead of acting out and I decided to buy my kids a puzzle, they were excited to start but then it was bedtime for them and it was too hard for them so I just finished the whole puzzle myself. It was a new way for me to entertain myself without acting out or binge watching a tv show.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by eli613 - 20 Apr 2018 07:00

So, here is why I really posted. I know my wife and I know that telling her would be a terrible idea so therefore I am not planning on telling her.

I am looking for support from other people in recovery who have not told their spouses but have been successful in recovery. I feel like I might be a lost case if I don't tell my wife, so it would be helpful for me to know that there is hope for me.

Thank you.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 20 Apr 2018 11:10

Your decision to purchase the puzzle and then to actually complete it yourself was a very healthy one. You are training yourself to actively search for stress relievers that are kosher, healthy, and stimulating, in place of the pornography/masturbation escape. Secondly, your intent was to bring you closer to your family - as opposed to escaping from life in general and from them by acting out in private somewhere. This is real recovery based thinking.

Regarding your question. There are many people in recovery who have chosen for various reasons not to share with their wives. Personally i did, but almost all of the married people that i speak and correspond with have not. Many of them made this decision not to tell after consulting with a therapist, rav, or GYE expert. A very close friend here on GYE who originally was in really bad shape and now is BH clean way over 1,000 days, due to his understanding of his wife chose not to share his struggle with her. Of course that means he has to limit his speaking with fellow GYEers to work hours and of course misses out on celebrating the various milestones of success with his life partner. However he is definitely not "a lost case" to quote your concern - not in the slightest - He has helped countless chevra here (including me). So yes, to quote you again, there is "hope for you". Lots of hope. May Hashem grant you much success on your journey to being clean with peace of mind and help you have true shalom bayis and brocho.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by eli613 - 20 Apr 2018 15:03

Thank you. This is really what I needed to hear. If anybody reading this has in been in a similar situation and has been successful in recovery, I would love to hear from you and get some tips on how you worked the steps and made a path to recovery.

On to day 29...

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Gettinghelp2 - 20 Apr 2018 16:50

I do not plan on telling my wife. This come from the belief that her neshama already knows and sends the message her. You'll see a vast difference, in my opinion, in he overall atmosphere of the house and family,especuially your wife. So by not telling her and using the program you are in fact sending her neshama a very strong message. Don't forget your neshama and that of your wife's are connected. I hope this make sense . Its hard to explain without speaking about it one on one.

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Re: Telling my wife?

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 20 Apr 2018 19:14

[eli613 wrote on 20 Apr 2018 15:03:](#)

Thank you. This is really what I needed to hear. If anybody reading this has in been in a similar situation and has been successful in recovery, I would love to hear from you and get some tips on how you worked the steps and made a path to recovery.

On to day 29...

My breaking free came from being in touch with successful individuals from GYE.

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