

For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 14 Jul 2015 01:37

Hello all,

I'll go by my middle name here, Michael age 21, and I'll give you some personal history.

My father was born and raised Jewish. Before he met my mother, he converted to Christianity and thus was I raised. At about 8, my brother introduced me to porn and as I became an adolescent I was hooked. I never thought about whether it was right or wrong but eventually I realized how terrible it was. I wanted to stop, but I wasn't very energetic about stopping. At 18, I met the girl who I would later marry. We lived together on campus for a while and that's when I became serious about stopping. But I didn't tell her that I was masturbating to porn the entire time we were together. Eventually I mustered up the courage to tell her. It was almost the end for us but I was able to stop and we moved to a different state and got married.

All was fine for a little over a year. I was interested in learning about my Jewish roots, and after a lot of research me and my wife decided that Judaism was right, the messiah had definitely not come yet. We both are seeking to convert. I'm very spiritual and religious. I've never felt closer to G-d in my life. My wife had just started trusting me again...

Out of the blue, it happened. I found myself watching porn again. I felt G-d trying to call me out of it. I would beg for His help but ignore it when it came. I was afraid to tell my wife that I was doing it again. I couldn't bear to see the heartbreak in her eyes again. I prayed to G-d one last time. That night my wife found out, no coincidence I'm sure. I had been using again for about a month and a half. I haven't looked at porn since then (about 2 weeks) but about a week ago I masturbated.

I'm doing everything I can to keep her from leaving me. Some days she understands and just wants to help and tells me how much she still loves me. Other days she yells at me and wants to leave...I know I don't deserve to still be with her, but I can't bear to be without her. I need to never give in again. I don't want to give in ever again. And I hope that my wife will be able to be happy staying with me again. I love her and really want it to be death that has to part us, and not my own stupidity.

Thanks for listening everyone.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 19 Jul 2015 21:10

It is ultimately one's own choice whether to tell our wives or not, I would not dare pressure anyone into deciding one thing or the other. I do wish, however, to help inform people so they can consider all sides of the situation.

If my wife were cheating on me (emotionally, physically, sexually, viewing inappropriate content, etc) I would be very upset to find out she were hiding it from me. I do not believe in "what someone doesn't know won't hurt them". They will find out. And it will hurt them. In my experience, it hurt my wife more that I didn't tell her than what I was doing did. Now she doesn't trust me AND she doesn't trust me to tell her if I do act out. So it's better to be honest and tell the truth than to hide it. It will hurt her less to be told than for her to find out.

Also, the wife is another line of support that is crucial to success, I feel. The support here is amazing but if your wife can be willing to help you too, then the chances of success are at least doubled. I don't live with you all here on the forum, none of you are going to understand me as well as my wife does. But you all can relate to my struggle and that's something my wife can't do. Different kinds of support.

As for honesty, whether lie by omission or even if the wife is checking up to see that you're okay, or has noticed something suspicious about your behavior that you've tried to explain away (like staying on the toilet for 45 minutes and when she asks why you tell a half truth and say you were just doing your normal business but it was taking a while when really you were on your smartphone acting out). These are excellent opportunities to work on honesty. And I'm sure at some point in any relationship there was some sort of promise to be faithful to your spouse. Acting out may not have anything to do with your wife personally, but in a way it's definitely a fidelity issue. Lusting after another woman is up the same alley as cheating. It's the same sin at a different level. I do feel an obligation to notify a party member if a word of commitment is broken.

I am curious, Serenity, what areas of honesty do you view as prerequisites to sharing our struggles with our wives? No doubt being honest with oneself is first and foremost.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by abd297 - 19 Jul 2015 21:58

Happy to hear that telling your wife has worked out for you. How did you start the conversation? Why did you tell her? How did she react?

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Re: For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 20 Jul 2015 19:43

Well she was always worrying about whether I was being faithful to her or not so when the conversation lead to that I started implying that I was looking at porn and she picked up on that and pressed me and I said it straight up. So if you can't build up the courage to sit her down and tell her point blank then there's always building your way up to saying it.

I told her because I needed to reach out for help and because I couldn't keep lying to her. Her reaction was very bad. And I felt just as bad. The guilt finally caught up completely and it was a lot to handle. I prefer not to share the details because of how emotionally intense it was for both of us, but it's not something you can prepare for. You just have to go for it and hope for the best. Also, you need to be the one to tell her. If she finds out then it will be a million times worse. Which is what happened the second time with me and my wife. That's how all women work, they would much rather be told than find out. I end with a story:

A poor Jewish farmer called on his more affluent neighbor to borrow his donkey.

"I'm sorry, neighbor," said the well-to-do farmer, "but my donkey is over in the pasture now."

At that very moment the hee-haw of a donkey was heard coming from the stable.

"What a foolish excuse to give me!" said the poor farmer angrily. "Why, your donkey has just brayed in its stall!"

The well-to-do farmer became offended.

"Whom would you rather believe," he asked with dignity, "the braying donkey or me?"

...wives will always find out. And they would rather believe the lie you tell them than the braying donkey. But we all know what the right thing to do is.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by gibbor120 - 20 Jul 2015 19:53

The general advice is usually not to tell until you have some measure of sobriety first. Many wives take it VERY hard. It is a bit easier for them to handle if they see that their husband is in recovery, or at least has made some efforts towards recovery. It's a delicate topic, and I don't think we can do it justice here. There are 2 sides, and each situation is different.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 20 Jul 2015 20:43

I agree, Gibbor120, it is a rather difficult topic to cover and there are many different situations/circumstances. I was trying to share my experience with it and make the point that it is important to tell one's wife. Plus, confessing the truth can help enable us to be sober. For instance, and I know this may be different for different people, I was only able to become sober after telling my wife or after my wife found out.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by abd297 - 20 Jul 2015 22:54

Thank you for sharing. Great advice. I am trying to get all the advice I can so I can better open up to my rabbi in yeshiva.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 21 Jul 2015 15:14

That's great! And I'm sure your rabbi will be impressed to see how much you've been able to accomplish already (with HaShem's help, of course) and will be able to offer further guidance. You've already reached out to a bunch of strangers here, I think you can be confident in telling your rabbi.

b'hatzlacha!

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Re: For the last time

Posted by abd297 - 21 Jul 2015 23:54

Thank you for your words of support.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 18 Aug 2015 20:16

So I haven't posted here in a while and being as this is technically my thread/journal to track my progress I should probably be telling people about how I've been in my journey.

40 days as of today since I last fell. My wife says that 40 is a good number because after 40 days, the habit starts to break and by 90 your brain has rewired itself. 40 is the number of days Moses spent fasting on Sinai the first time and 90 is 10 days longer than the total number of days Moses spent fasting at Sinai. It rained 40 days/nights. 40 is an important number, I think.

I have felt the change in my mind take place these 40 days, going from having a strong urge to resist to feeling like I have some amount of self control. I like what I did differently this time; instead of thinking I can just stop for good and walk about unguarded, I pay attention to the fact that I could fall again any second. I learned that just as my wife can't trust me, I can't trust

myself either. I have to constantly make sure I don't even give myself to opportunity to lust again. So if my wife accidentally leaves the computer unblocked (we have a whitelist filter) I make sure I don't even touch the computer. Not because I think I'll watch porn, but because I don't want to give myself the opportunity to.

My wife has been studying, philosophically, the Tao Te Ching. It translates loosely as "The Moral Way" and I often compare its teachings to similar teachings of the Torah. Both are "Ways" and both lead to becoming closer with whichever monotheistic god you believe in. In our case, Hashem.

One teaching is "...Deal with things before they happen...A terrace nine stories high begins with a pile of earth; The journey of a thousand miles starts under one's feet...People usually fail when they are on the verge of success. So give as much care to the end as to the beginning; Then there will be no failure." -Tao Te Ching, #64.

It takes a great deal of effort to start a large task or a long journey. Maintain that same effort and focus all the way through and it will not end suddenly. Do this by being preemptive about the present situation. If in the moment you see something that will cause a problem in the moment then take care of it so that way the problem is avoided (not touching the laptop you realized is unblocked). Don't mistake this with thinking far ahead into the future. The teachings of the TTC encourage not being concerned with the things that are afar off.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 27 Aug 2015 06:35

So I think I need help with a judgement call here. I don't know if I had a really bad slip or a fall. I kind of feel like it was one of those "slipped and started falling but mid-fall managed to catch myself and pull myself back up before I hit the ground" moments. So here's what happened.

I have maybe 5 channels on Comcast. Me and my wife only have this because Comcast basically said we have to. Those channels are fine. But we have access to the On-Demand menu. Some stuff is free, other stuff you have to buy. I've only ever watched 3 episodes of a show that was clean and I've never bought anything (not that I have the extra money for that anyway).

That being said, for whatever reason, I decided to browse the actual titles for the "adult" films and read the summaries of some. I did not, nor did I ever intend to actually watch them or masturbate (\$6-15 of guilt isn't worth ruining my life over). There weren't previews of it so I didn't see anything (and I knew this would be the case).

I didn't imagine watching any of the films, most of the time I didn't even have an erection. I didn't reach down there even once either. The definition of a fall would be "Intentionally viewing adult material". I did not view adult material but I did intentionally view an image-less directory of adult material without acting out or imagining things. Fall? Or really close call?

On the positive end of things: I was able to stop, I didn't even attempt to get off, and I still didn't look at a single woman wrong the entire day. I feel like if this had happened to me a month earlier, I would have definitely took it further and fell. I'm gonna have to talk to my wife about this and ask what we can do to prevent this from happening again. Probably locking up the TV modem or something (should have happened long ago).

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Re: For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 27 Aug 2015 07:49

My wife decided it counts as a fall, so I updated that on my 90-day page. Still interested in everyone's thoughts though.

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Re: For the last time

Posted by serenity - 27 Aug 2015 17:21

Maybe having a higher standard is important for you. Also it would probably greatly depend on your history, the ways you act out, how good your program is in general and how long you were sober for. It would also depend on how resetting will effect you. Since you've done it already, there isn't much to talk about. Just move forward!

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Re: For the last time

Posted by amusichef056 - 27 Aug 2015 18:50

I kind of disagreed with my wife's judgement but she's also getting hurt by this so I need to make her comfortable. It never hurts to be safe, anyway. After all, in most sports if the ball or foot is on the line, then it counts as a goal or a penalty, etc.

I don't view it as I started all over again, though. The journey of a thousand miles begins under one's foot. I didn't fall back to the beginning. Days are just numbers. I did not lose the progress I made so I'm picking up right where I left off. And this time, I get to be even more careful and that will ultimately be rewarded.

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