

A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by skaybaltimore - 28 May 2012 17:39

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Note/disclaimer: I would only suggest this rather paradoxical/non-linear approach for those who have tried repeatedly to take a more direct, head-on approach, and have not found that approach to be helpful.

It could be important -- and helpful -- to accept that pornography is actually a "natural" reaction/replacement for something much more substantial and important that's missing in our lives, rather than merely labeling it a sin/perversion. So rather than attacking it and attempting to place it (and ourselves) in some sort of moral straight jacket, let's approach it as a signal to us that something much more meaningful is missing in our lives. Then it might be possible to break the hold it has on us, if we look deeply into ourselves to see what exactly it is that we truly desire (i.e. our ideal Aishes Chayil/Soul Mate, etc.) so we can begin to understand what it is that's missing in our lives.

We can then take that as a new starting point and build upon our newly created thought/image/ideal through focused meditation/concentration/visualization. The more we do that, and the clearer that image becomes, the stronger our attraction and movement is in that direction, and the weaker our compulsion to run to switch on the porn. In essence, we will be crafting our own object of desire, rather than allowing the porn wheel to run itself (and us along with it) on autopilot, but it will be based upon a much deeper knowledge of ourselves and true inner desires. In that way, the hold that porn has over us might be finally broken, or at least diminished significantly.

Remember...thoughts are not just "thoughts" -- they're actually more like "things", and these "thought-things" have a much greater impact on our environment and our lives than we've been lead to believe. So the more our thoughts are in line with what we really truly desire, the more our lives will be positive/constructive, vs negative/destructive.

The thing about all addictions is that they always take on a life of their own, and begin to run in a thoughtless/auto pilot sort of fashion. Our minds have become lazy with despair, and we rarely stop to think if we can ever regain a mastery over our own thought processes. A lot of that has to do with living in a Christianized/Satanic world in which evil is loved and good is hated, which is the complete antithesis of what Hashem has commanded us to do -- love good and hate evil. The people behind the dark side of this world are VERY diligent in what they do and the way in which they do it; much more so than most of us. So by taking this one step towards reversing that process, and becoming the director, rather than the directed, of this one most significant part of our lives, we can begin to turn the tide and reverse what we believed up to this point we had no control over.

Remember...this world is ripe with all sorts of potential addictions, because Hashem has built in numerous pleasure principles that are inherent in this world. The discipline of Judaism is extreme -- we do not have the "luxury" of the ascetics who deny worldly pleasures, and we do not have the "luxury" of the hedonists who ignore the consequences of our pleasures. We must

balance pleasure with accountability. It's the most austere discipline of all. And the masters of the dark arts KNOW that. So they intentionally fan the flames of ALL the possible pleasures, with the knowledge that most people will succumb to their ploys and become trapped in their bottomless pits of addiction. (And this is not just theoretical. The way the Afghans were able to defeat the Russians was by sending in prostitutes with opium and other drugs to the Russian soldiers. In a relatively short period of time, the Russian soldiers were so weakened by this tactic that they were able to be overcome by a weaker enemy, because that weaker enemy had weakened THEM to the point that they could be defeated.)

Yet, as R' Nachman states: "The whole world is a narrow bridge (i.e. if we take a step to the left, we fall into asceticism, if we take a step to the right, we fall into hedonism), but the ikar/essence, is to not be afraid."

That's really quite an amazing dictate, when you think about it. One would logically think that after presenting such a graphic picture of walking a tightrope across this world, the mandate would flow to be VERY afraid. But R' Nachman states the exact opposite -- to NOT be afraid. Because fear and despair go hand in hand, and once a soul falls into despair, it loses the energy and desire to even THINK it can extricate itself. But once a soul has become ensnared in despair, what can it do?

One of the areas that has probably been the most neglected in the Jewish psyche over the past 2,000 years is *dimyon* – imagination. I believe the reason for this is twofold: 1. The line between true prophecy and false prophecy is a hair's breadth, and to help insure that false prophets do not proliferate, extreme safeguards have been placed up any attempt to explore that most vital area of our awareness. 2. In order to reduce the persecutions by Christians against Jews, who are, after all, a nation of prophets, even further attempts have been made to purge that part of our Jewish identity in order to survive in this hostile, anti-Jewish environment. Over millennia we have become more accustomed to surviving than living, and just like a survivor of extreme child abuse, our collective psyche has become compartmentalized and stunted. In order to reclaim the vitality that is necessary to combat the calculated and scheduled attacks by the masters of the dark arts, we need MORE access to our most vital resource – our *dimyon* – not less.

By taking the steps to actively cultivate this most essential tool, we can create the means through which to counterbalance addictions that convince us that we are powerless and that our G-d is powerless, and at the same time clearing the channels through which Hashem can personally guide us.

In order to help us achieve this most daunting task, 2 key elements need to be in place. 1. We must at all times link all of our efforts to the clear acknowledgment of Hashem as the One, True Creator. 2. Using a standard Mussar technique, the more detail we can include in our visualization(s), the more effective they will be.

The essential question at this point is: "Okay...how do we accomplish this visualization process? There are lots of books written about it, but in truth, it's rather simple (it's simple to do, but it takes time to develop). To begin with, ground all attempts in a request to Hashem to help us. And know that we have within ourselves MUCH more ability than we give ourselves credit for (another byproduct of a long, protracted *gallus*). Then start simple. Take a simple object, like a candle, for example, sit quietly, focus on your breathing, slow it down, look at the

candle, close your eyes, and see how long you can see the flame in your mind's eye. When you lose that image, open your eyes again, look at the candle, close your eyes again, and see how long you can see the flame in your mind's eye. I guarantee that if you take 5 minutes a day to do this, in a reasonably short period of time, you'll see that this latent ability/talent will become stronger. What you're accomplishing is strengthening the "muscles" of your dimyon/imagination. (An advanced technique of this time honored "meditate on a candle" technique is to be able to see the candle, or whatever object you are holding in your mind's eye, WITH YOUR EYES OPEN. You have the ability to literally superimpose an image you are holding in your mind's eye while looking at the world with your eyes wide open. THAT'S quite an amazing achievement indeed!!)

At some other time of the day, sit quietly and ask yourself: "What type of woman/relationship do I really desire. What are her qualities? What does she look like? What color is her hair; her eyes? How does she look when she smiles? What sort of partner do I really seek in this world/lifetime? What sorts of things would we talk about? How would we raise our children? What are the most important values that she should possess? Does she have to be drop dead gorgeous, or are qualities like compassion, humor, compatibility more important? (These are just examples; use your own thoughts to generate the types of things you want to ask/require of your "ideal" aishes chayil.)

When you combine the practice of visualization training with plumbing the depths of what qualities you desire – both physical and spiritual – in your ideal partner, then you very well might see a significant drop off in the pull that porn has in your life.

I would also suggest that it's important to explore what qualities we possess in ourselves, in order to better understand and balance that which we plan to bring to the table with our object-of-desire aishes chayil; after all, relationships are a two way street, and one can't expect to draw to oneself an ideal partner if one isn't willing to expect the same sort of ideal/compatible and complementary characteristics in oneself. And again...at every step of the way, maintain the connection with Hashem and ask Hashem to aid/guide you along the way. This is by no means a push-button microwave "I want it NOW" process. It requires patience and persistence. This is not a sprint; it's a marathon – the marathon of the rest of our lives.

Finally, any new endeavor must begin with the seed of desire -- in this instance, the desire to make a change in our lives. If we've hit rock bottom with all of our other attempts, we might just be ready to attempt this new direction/change.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by ontheedgeman - 29 May 2012 13:18

Hear you loud and clear. Visualization is totally under-utilized. There is a great book on it called Visions of a Compassionate World, written right before WWI. So good. Chassidic too.

For most addicts, the power of visualization has been drastically corrupted, and most meditation would not be fruitful, from what I understand. Kind of like the warnings you hear from R. Aryeah Kaplan about meditating without a guide. For many addicts, the visualization meditations would lead to dark worlds. These rooms testify that the only way out for such people is through "group meditation" (meetings) and mentor relationships ("a Rov"). i.e. it's not just me and a Rabbi Nachman book, it's part of a bigger picture so to speak.

Again, for some people the techniques you mention are amazing and produce great advances very quickly.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 29 May 2012 13:59

[ontheedgeman wrote on 29 May 2012 13:18:](#)

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Thanks for your response.

(BTW -- I just ordered Visions Of A Compassionate World from Amazon.)

I would also point out that there are risks involved in certain 12 Step programs/groups as well, in which seductive attractions spring up like weeds when it comes to all addictive personalities, but S. A. personalities in particular.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by 5770 - 29 May 2012 14:46

[skaybaltimore wrote on 28 May 2012 17:39:](#)

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Wow, thanks. I'm no New Age Hippy but I've been thinking /saying this for a while and have been met with rolling eyes and disbelief. So I now just keep quiet on this subject around 'traditional' Yidden. I believe it is a core, understated truth. I am not sure why this isn't being shouted from the rooftops to be honest. Thank you.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by skaybaltimore - 29 May 2012 15:32

[5770 wrote on 29 May 2012 14:46:](#)

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by Dov - 29 May 2012 16:18

Wow, agreed, this has merit and I sincerely wish you the most hatzlocha today and every day with it. Thanks for sharing it with others - I love that!

Though you do not say it in the post I read, I assume you have a real problem with lust or some sort of desire and know the struggle faced by many here, to some degree. Do you?

I also *know* that you are correct about some things you suggest in the post, for they are some of the gifts of step 2 as I work it be"H. But practically speaking: how much of it is your own actual personal experience in living free of your own porn or lust struggle?

Thanks for sharing it all, regardless!

- Dov

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 29 May 2012 16:39

@Dov

I clearly have an addictive personality, and have struggled for as far back as I can remember with various addictions, including S/A. (I've probably helped Lilith build a legion of around 20,000, +/-, over the past 42 years.)

Since the advent of the computer, things definitely took a turn for the worse. No more need for the sneaky little trips to the back room of the video store. And frankly, for quite a long time now I'd simply given up even trying to fight it. (I rationalized it as my "cyber harem".) Then I was cleaning out some old books I'd stored in boxes, and came across Dr/R Twerski's book on addictions. I read it (or rather, re-read it) and discovered some new found motivation. Then I

read some other books and began to re-think my approach, somewhat in conjunction with "Addictive Thinking", and somewhat radically different. I began to write down my thoughts, which I then copied and posted here. Admittedly, the post contains "raw" (i.e. novel, spontaneous) material, but it's also the culmination of decades of struggles, learning, and thinking. What this most recent approach HAS given me is a renewed perspective and strategy on combating this most persistent shortcoming. And not surprisingly, at least for the time being, it's given me a new tool/weapon (i.e. a "fighting fire with fire" paradoxical approach, vs fighting fire with water), which has, in fact, replaced my urge to drown myself in porn. Only time will tell whether or not this new approach will convert into something I can take with me and use to balance out the addiction well into the future.

I hope that helps puts my post in perspective.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by kidushashem - 29 May 2012 19:46

Hi there,

Thanks so much for your post!

To echo what others have said, I too believe that mind control/meditation is such an underemphasized art in today's Jewish world.

I personally am involved with meditation, as well as 12 step groups. I find that meditation is very helpful for calming my mind and not getting upset when it goes berserk. I've reached a point where I can let go of images that I see or that come into my mind, much more quickly than I used to be able to. I'm sure that meditation has helped with this.

Just to add to the booklist, I recommend the "Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle. Sold over 2 million copies.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by geshertzarmeod - 29 May 2012 20:05

[skaybaltimore wrote on 28 May 2012 17:39:](#)

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That's really quite an amazing dictate, when you think about it. One would logically think that after presenting such a graphic picture of walking a tightrope across this world, the mandate would flow to be VERY afraid. But R' Nachman states the exact opposite -- to NOT be afraid. Because fear and despair go hand in hand, and once a soul falls into despair, it loses the energy and desire to even THINK it can extricate itself. But once a soul has become ensnared in despair, what can it do?

Hey! They're playing our song!

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by skaybaltimore - 29 May 2012 20:20

To K/H:

You're welcome, and thanks for the book recommendation.

Also, your post helped me remember an old distinction when it comes to meditation: there's passive meditation (i.e. staring at a candle and trying to clear your mind) and more active meditation (i.e. one example is trying to maintain an image with your eyes open, or even the

classic walking while monitoring the thoughts that bubble up in your mind). What I like about active meditation is that it maintains the connection with the world. And additionally, the visualization aspect is appealing since, as you mentioned, our minds are bombarded with countless images, and generally we have -- or exercise -- very little control over that. It's logical that when one had developed an ability to hold an image in one's mind, one ALSO has the ability to REMOVE an image from one's mind. As it stands now, the powers that influence my minds with all the tons of advertising campaigns out there are clearly stronger and more focused than my ability to deflect/remove them. Hopefully, in time, I'll at least be able to bring more to the table in that regard than I've been able to do in the past, or even the present.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 29 May 2012 20:28

[Gesher wrote on 29 May 2012 20:05:](#)

Hey! They're playing our song!

This post really made me smile!! Thanks.

(And can I assume that when you quote R' Shlomo in your sig, you're referring to R' Shlomo Carlbach, z"tl? If so, your post made me smile even more. Some of the best Shabboses and Yom Tovs I ever had in my life were on his moshav, Modiin, in Israel. And also at his shul in New York. My ex-wife and I were members there even though we lived in Baltimore. I've met very few people who could bring down Hashem's presence, and uplift an entire chevre quite like R' Shlomo.)

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by Dov - 29 May 2012 22:11

[skaybaltimore wrote on 29 May 2012 16:39:](#)

Only time will tell whether or not this new approach will convert into something I can take with me and use to balance out the addiction well into the future.

I hope that helps puts my post in perspective.

Yup. Got it. And the quote above is kind of where I was going with my post, so you hit the nail on the head, chaver.

Continued hatzlocha!

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 29 May 2012 23:24

[dov wrote on 29 May 2012 22:11:](#)

Yup. Got it. And the quote above is kind of where I was going with my post, so you hit the nail on the head, chaver.

Continued hatzlocha!

Yasher koach. My intent was/is to give something useful to this site and the folks who frequent it, as well as to learn -- to give and receive for the sake of sharing.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by ontheedgeman - 30 May 2012 01:17

KiddushHashem - as the master of self help books, I did read Power of Now but was dismayed when the last chapters of the book, delivered the "punch line" of believing in Yishke. I felt devastated having spent the time reading the entire book, to be effectively duped into finding my own personal "Yishke". terrible ending. I think I actually burned the book because of that. No offense to our non-Jewish brethren, just, ya know, a bit of unpleasant history there...

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by Dov - 30 May 2012 03:32

Well, at least you got to find out what happened at the ending. Next time stick to the real literature: DC Comics!

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