

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 geshertzarmeod - 30 May 2012 10:34

[skaybaltimore wrote on 29 May 2012 20:28:](#)

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 Carlback, 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.)

You got it, exactly!

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 30 May 2012 14:11

[ontheedgeman wrote on 30 May 2012 01:17:](#)

believing in Yishke

personally, i believe in kishkeh

(even though today they are made from plastic)

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by ontheedgeman - 30 May 2012 14:12

[ZemirosShabbos wrote on 30 May 2012 14:11:](#)

believing in Yishke

personally, i believe in kishkeh
(even though today they are made from plastic)

so you mean I'm not supposed to eat that plastic part?

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 30 May 2012 22:38

I ALWAYS wondered about that plastic part too!!!

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by ontheedgeman - 30 May 2012 23:49

[KidusHashem wrote on 30 May 2012 10:12:](#)

I would not recommend throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

What if it's an engraved imaged of baby Yishke? Then we can throw it out with the bathwater, no?

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy

Posted by skaybaltimore - 31 May 2012 00:18

Ongoing update:

One of the goals of focused meditation/visualization, for me, is to uncover (vs discover) my underlying, often deeply obscured, sense of purposefulness in this world. Somewhat ironically, given the "goal-oriented/materialistic" nature of this current world, the true vocation of the Children of Israel is actually to "be", rather than to "do". "Be a light unto the nations". As such, our very essence is often perverted by the hostile societies in which we live. It takes time to uncover our true sense of purposefulness. If/when we don't, a sense of pointlessness, emptiness, and despair ensues, and those feelings lay the dangerous groundwork for falling so far, we no longer care about our actions or the resultant consequences of our actions.

It takes time and effort and skill to quiet all the external distractions and get in touch with what our true soul – the living spirit of Hashem – is endlessly saying to us. That living spirit will NEVER lead us in the wrong direction, but we must first make the choice to listen to it in order to hear it. Once we DO make that choice, however, we begin to be filled up with proper inspiration that WANTS to help us achieve our true purpose in life. Then, other distractions lose a lot of their power. And the more we focus our energies and attention in the proper direction, the more our lives become rich with awe, instead of impoverished by distractions and empty seductions. But this must be done with vigilance; it's not a one time "AH HA!" experience. It should

become a daily habit, along with the other daily and lifelong guidelines set out for the Children Of Israel. Mastering the mind – even one aspect of the mind – enables the ability and the confidence to then use this newly acquired prowess to master undesirable habits that engage both the mind and the body.

And that's directly related to the second goal: the ability to actively choose which thought(s) or image(s) I WANT to be in my mind at any given time, rather than passively allow the auto slide show to run unattended. Because no two thoughts can co-exist simultaneously in the mind. As a result, the stronger the mind becomes at focusing on ONE aspect or image – the image we've chosen, rather than the random images that flow through our mind on an almost second by second basis – the better able we are to control and choose our thoughts and resultant actions based upon those thoughts.

I believe the source of every known malady and/or imbalance in this world stems from the feeling of separateness from The Creator. And it's not simply a matter of finite beings trying to comprehend/behold an Infinite Creator, since The Creator is in us, and we are in The Creator, by virtue of the soul breathed into us by The Creator. It's a matter of us blocking the connection via choices that clog the channels, rather than clearing them. So the point of the meditations and visualizations is to clear the channels.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by Dov - 31 May 2012 04:11

All great, but for me there is always the sincere question:

Yes, yes....but are you still masturbating or not?

As you said, only time will tell. Well, 'time' is now.

Please let me know if you find that an insulting thing to ask. If not, great - / will answer, and *you* can answer, and we can compare notes if you like. Then we may each grow from the other's experience with living sober.

But if you do find the question insulting, then personally i'd start to worry...

As a recovering pervert, I would *never* be insulted by another addict sincerely asking me about my latest sex or lust problems, or asking me if I am sober. It is a pleasure to know the truth about myself and good for me (though not always a pleasure!) to share it with others!

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by obormottel - 31 May 2012 04:17

Ask me, ask me.....

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 31 May 2012 13:45

[dov wrote on 31 May 2012 04:11:](#)

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I don't find your question insulting at all, but I do find the way you chose to ask it rather imbalanced. As any addict knows, or should know, today's answer is about as relevant as yesterday's news. Saying "yes" or "no" today is less relevant, as far as I'm concerned, than acknowledging that this is an ongoing struggle for the rest of our lives. And as I stated in my first post, this approach is clearly not for everyone, and that would appear to apply to you.

I'm seeking a strategy that will work long term, so the fact that this approach has helped me since the day I started it to avoid both porn and masturbation is all well and good, but not nearly as important to me as whether or not it will help in the long run. As such, the short term answer seems to be much more important to you than it is to me. And frankly...I question your attacking, imbalanced style. Is it more to satisfy your own needs, or to help those who post on this board? It was evident from your first post, and at that point I chose to avoid your obvious aggressiveness. I no longer feel the need to not confront you on that point.

The reason I believe that the key lies in strengthening our dimyon--imagination has to do with the fact that that's where and how those who control populations manipulate the images that control us. There's a very powerful book -- Eros And Magic In The Renaissance -- written by Ioan Culiano, a Romanian professor of comparative religions at the University of Chicago, in which he traced back the intentional manipulation of images, especially erotic images, through decades of history, and how they were used to "brainwash"/control mass groups of people. And he concluded that it's through images that we are subtly controlled by those who understand both the power of images and the ways in which to use them to control people (i.e. Madison Avenue, P.R., Sony, etc.). Porn is all about images, and unless or until we understand how to protect ourselves from the manipulation of these images, and cleanse ourselves and replace them with purity vs smut, it's like chopping at the branches and the leaves, rather than getting to the roots. If you get that, you get that; if you don't, you don't. And I'm certainly not accountable to you or anyone else to provide anything other than posts that are within the TOS and the spirit of what this board is about -- to help those of us struggling with this most mighty addiction. You're not my scorekeeper; Hashem is.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by obormottel - 31 May 2012 14:18

It seems to me that the reason you found Dov's posts aggressive and imbalanced is because, despite your verbosity and displays of erudition, you have an agenda here, and you've been called on it.

The question whether you're still using your drug of choice is a fair one. In any addiction recovery program, only those whose sobriety have any traction, are given an ear.

We can theorize and come up with any kind of conspiracies, including "governments manipulate populations with erotic images" but so long as we keep masturbating to internet porn, it is utterly meaningless.

So if your (I daresay) unorthodox approach is working for you in a way that it stops you from compulsively reaching for your junk when confronted with erotic media, good for you and thanks for sharing what works for you.

But if today you still struggle, no amount of quotes from Romanian professor, or use of post-graduate vocabulary will convince me to take you seriously.

And isn't there a meditation technique we can use when we feel irked by someone?

Please understand, friend, that dissertations on theoretical topics are cute, but proven recovery record is golden when choosing a path to follow.

With respect to your "gemoro kop",

Mottel

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 31 May 2012 14:45

[obormottel wrote on 31 May 2012 14:18:](#)

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With respect to your "gemoro kop",

Mottel

You're rather presumptuous, aren't you? The biggest presumptions evident from your post are contained in your statement: "But if you still struggle, no amount of quotes from Romanian professor, or use of post-graduate vocabulary will convince me to take you seriously". There are actually two presumptions contained in that one statement.

1. (the most important one) That somehow, this addiction is NOT an ONGOING struggle EVERY day. That shows that you lack even the most fundamental understanding of addiction, and the way to deal with addiction -- ONE DAY AT A TIME. An addict is never "cured"; we only find suitable, effective ways of dealing with our addiction(s).
2. You presume that I'm concerned with whether or not you take me seriously. I'm not. I am concerned with whether or not I take this addiction seriously, which I do. I am also concerned with sharing my own experience(s) in an attempt to both give back to others what works for me, as well as listening to what works for others. What I'm not concerned about is engaging in an on-going battle of wills, since all that does is deplete the energy needed to combat this most powerful addiction.

You also presume that I have some sort of an "agenda". That's merely a projection from inside of yourself, most likely the result of the fact that my approach differs from yours, and the only way you have of reconciling those differences is to somehow demonize my approach. It's a classic, typical response for some people who can't otherwise deal with people who have different approaches/ideas than their own. My only agenda is to battle with my addiction(s), and share those battles and struggles with others who share the same battles and struggles. If my experiences and input don't work for you, then simply ignore them and move on. If there existed ONE WAY to deal with this addiction, we'd all have found it, used it, and wouldn't be here. After all, the Holy Temple had 12 gates, because it exemplified the reality that there IS NOT only one way to approach Hashem.

Now, without knowing you from Adam, and at the risk of being presumptuous myself, what you MIGHT actually be saying is that what I'm engaging in is a form of "mental masturbation". And in that sense, at least at this beginning stage, that might very well be exactly what I'm doing. The thing is...there is a distinct difference between mental masturbation and physical masturbation to begin with, and depending on one's intent, it's entirely possible that as long as the goal is to rise above physical masturbation, this temporary substitute could very well lead to a life free of this addiction. So, to recap...if the intent is ONLY to substitute one for the other, nothing much will have been achieved, other than the obvious -- no more spilling of seed. However, if the intent is to actually replace physical masturbation with something much more substantial, which IS my long term goal, then this beginning/intermediary step could very well place me on the road a long term solution, since masturbation is the lowest, most common level of sensory gratification. My hope is that once I discover, nurture, and form a new habit, masturbation will no longer hold the appeal it currently holds. Or at least, I'll have a choice of which form of gratification to choose, and I'll logically choose the form that holds the highest, not the lowest, form of fulfillment.

Finally, as a point of clarification, my posts are in no way intended to be "preaching". Quite the opposite; my posts are my way of working out and clarifying what's going on with my addiction, and what works and doesn't work for me in my own personal attempt to deal with it. It's a sharing, not a preaching. And so far, I've found both this approach, and the sharing of this approach, to be the most helpful one I've ever attempted. And in the event that my path crosses anyone else's path, and provides a light that shines into a place that was heretofore dark, great. If not, not. And as I said before, if it doesn't work for you, then simply ignore it. There's no reason for you to feel intimidated by either my approach or my language.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by obormottel - 31 May 2012 15:43

When I said "struggle" I meant regularly use pornography and masturbation. Of course, struggling with "urges" is a daily ordeal for me. Notice how you repeatedly refuse to say if your approach helps you to stay sober today.

My only presumption about you is that you suffer from verbal diarrhea.

Noone's demonizing you, and no amount of capitalization and defensive rhetoric will convince a reader of this.

Again, if it works for you, great. Just do say: does it?

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by skaybaltimore - 31 May 2012 15:47

[obormottel wrote on 31 May 2012 15:43:](#)

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Again, if it works for you, great. Just do say: does it?

Apparently our posts crossed paths, and now you do see where I stated that, in fact, my approach, for me, has been quite helpful.

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Re: A suggestion/possible strategy
Posted by obormottel - 31 May 2012 15:49

Apparently you edited your post while I was replying.

Thank you for your honesty.

I will take masturbation-free "today" instead of any promise of masturbation-free tomorrow.

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