

Falling and struggling lately

Posted by sonicReducer - 31 Jul 2013 16:27

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Hi chaps,

I was a frequent poster (and struggler) when I was still single. B'H I've been married for nearly 3 years and was clean for about 966 days or so.

I fell for the 4th time last night in the past 5 weeks or so.

We had twins about 10 months ago (b'H both healthy and well), so the time has been quite difficult - lots of sleep deprivation, frustration, adjustment. My wife's cycle has also been completely out of whack, we have now been apart for about a month.

I feel like a complete idiot. I keep looking at things and falling expecting it to make me feel good and balance me, but it does the opposite. I feel awful and scared about what I've just done. This weekend was really bad - our twins were sick and Shabbos and Sunday were very difficult. I've found I have real issues with my anger, after a while I lose my patience and get pretty angry, throwing things and kicking toys.

Last night I lost my temper again (in private at least) - I tend to have to do most of the housework (or so it seems to me) and really got pretty mad about it last night. I think I acted out also in a way to 'get back' at my wife.

I think I should be posting here more often - I don't have anyone I feel comfortable talking to about it so I might as well be here.

Does anyone know of any anger management resources? I think I need some help there - it's probably the cause of my acting out more than anything

Thanks, kol tov

sR

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Re: Falling and struggling lately  
Posted by MBJ - 14 Oct 2013 14:36

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I hear you. I don't know how many times my wife has said she will kill herself over stress related to the kids. Kids are hard especially when they are just babies, also when the are toddlers they are tough. They can also be a handful as grade schoolers. I don't know from personal experience, but I hear teenagers can be extremely trying as well. Anyway I digress.

So while I never really took her seriously, it was still disturbing for her to say that. Really what she is doing is screaming at me to help her because she can't cope. I know it is easier at work. It is the dirty secret that everyone knows, but would never admit to your spouse. But you have to step in there as best as you can and be there for her. Also when the sniping and bickering start, it takes two to fight. If you don't engage, the argument will stop.

So much of my falls and resentment had to do with those two exact things that you mentioned. Since I have made a bigger effort to be patient and understanding, to help when I can and try to not engage her in the silly fights (Not always successful in the last one) things have been so much more calm at home between us. Yes there are struggles, but I no longer feel I am walking on eggshells all the time.

I know for myself, had I not taken those steps, I would never be clean for more that a few weeks, the stress was just to great for me to cope with.

I am sorry that you had a fall, now the main thing is to learn from it and take positive action to keep from going back to that place.

KOT

Eli

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Re: Falling and struggling lately  
Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 14 Oct 2013 15:06

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You might want to try the following method for dealing with your wife's whining. When she complains about something, agree with her to the extent that you can, and if you can and if applicable say something complimentary. Do not offer help.

Example:

Wife: "The kids made a mess in the bathroom, I am going to kill myself!"

Husband: "Oh, seriously, look at this mess. I don't know how you do it."

If you offer help it makes her feel deeper in the hole, so to speak, because after all you are trying to help her.

On the subject of suicide, does she talk about it a lot? Some depressed people do kill themselves, so you want to make sure that she is just venting, and not really considering it.

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Re: Falling and struggling lately  
Posted by Dov - 15 Oct 2013 02:11

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SonicReducer

[Dov wrote:](#)

U doin anything besides just posting abt it?

Any suggestions?

OK, so here are what I consider major stressors:

[sonicReducer wrote:](#)

1- I was clean for over 2 months.

2- My wife goes on and on about my mother's spending and finances (which are pretty dire).

3- We bickered a lot

4- Friday night wasn't great for sleep as the kids both have colds

5- and one has been teething badly poor thing.

6- We are also moving in the next month

Now, #1 above may be a big stressor because - if you are an addict or operate like one - our porning and sex with ourselves is *not* actually our **problem**. Rather, for years and years *it is our [b]solution [b]*to stress and disappointment with Life as it is. That is an important observation many addicts make. Our great problem is that Life is unacceptable to us and the only real way we are willing to deal with it is **to zone out**. We use the most powerful, exciting drug we have at our disposal: sweet sex fantasy. So our smaller, more immediate problem is that we happen to have a really bad solution to our greater Problem. The aveirah issue - no matter how horrible the aveiro is - is actually minor compared to the big issue or zero Derech Eretz, of course. In the long run, there is no hope whatsoever for 'Torah' to work for us, until we have Derech Eretz - real sanity - and can live and function in the reality of our lives.

But when we see we cannot afford to masturbate ourselves any more, and lust, porn, sex and fantasy become unavailable to us because we are committed to not use them...*we have a **real** problem!* Many of us naturally accept raging as an alternate way to zone out and get distracted from reality for a sweet while, or violence, or the self-pity party that winds us up for raging or sex with self again...etc. Some of us choose TV, drinking, living in sweet criticism of others, 'kiruv' or 'working on' our wives (fix everyone else, quick!!)...oy...

Sound familiar?

So #1 - just not acting out your lust - can be a tremendous stressor in life and pose a great problem for an addict (if you are one, sorry I forgot, seriously).

OK.

So the list of 6 things above shows you two are going through terrible stress right now. Is that a reason to give up? Nope. But I think it is a reason to admit you must take better care of yourself and your marriage now. That can be done without any work at all: learn how to relax. Learn to relax your expectations in every respect, now. Smile and be nice to her for cheap, now. No expectations of anything in return...and no expectations from yourself to build on it and be better and better. You are not going to come out of this smelling like a rose, and neither will your marriage. Admit it. Admit it to your wife. Make peace with it. It's OK.

Behaviorally, I'd suggest you surrender control over your wife, and ***just get to a therapist yourself*** (if you are not with one, now). Get intense, real work done on what's going on inside you, now.

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Next, regarding "but in her family therapy is for people who are sick or abnormal so not interested"...you wrote:

1- My wife keeps talking about killing herself because she can't deal with the stress of the kids.

2- she'd rather sit and watch tv on our laptop. Then she complains that she can't cope.

That sounds pretty unhealthy. TV? It's full of useless crap and fantasy that increases desires for what one doesn't have in money, sex, adventure, etc, etc. I feel sorry for her - but relate so much! It sounds like a person checking out from life a bit, at least. But haven't you and I been checking out for years using our porn and masturbation on demand? Until we find a long term solution that works, what right have we to ask her to stop and change? None, maybe.

Maybe you can tell her you relate very much and ask her how she feels about her checking out behavior. Does she really need this as a vacation from life? Are there any other ways she really craves to relax that are healthier? You can tell her that you have the temptation to check out, too, so you understand. Does she know about your habit of porn and sex with yourself? Even if she does not, you can still ask her why she feels so hopeless that she needs to check out from reality, remind her that you love her and want to help her and your marriage. Even if she does not answer you with ideas or anything concrete, if it is done in a loving way that is not judgemental or demanding, it will plant a seed of understanding. If you cannot do it in a loving and non-demanding way, then do not do it at all. Pray for her, regardless.

Sorry for the long post, but your issue is painful and important. Thanks and hatzlocha!

With lots of love and respect, SR!

- Dov

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Re: Falling and struggling lately

Posted by SIB101854 - 15 Oct 2013 04:45

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I think that from your last two posts that you and your wife need to see a therapist and to try to spend some time by yourselves on what could be called a "date night." Resorting to porn and masturbation by you while your wife channelsurfs does not exactly sound like a healthy level of communication is present. As far as the challenges of raising children, a great Gadol told me that little children have little issues, and bigger kids have bigger issues. This comes with the territory of parenthood and being able to empathize and help when requested as a husband are all you can do to gain your wife's appreciation, as opposed to being viewed as someone who has no skill or interest in such issues.

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Re: Falling and struggling lately

Posted by sonicReducer - 15 Oct 2013 13:09

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**Thank you all** - you've given me a lot to think about.

I do try to be patient, pushing myself is something I need to work on. The lack of sleep and difficulty getting little things done doesn't help. I do quite a lot of the housework so my wife doesn't need to, one thing I need to improve on is my attitude.

My wife finds the niddah separation period very difficult. It makes her feel lonely even though we are still living together.

Time together is something we need to push. Once the kids are in bed we are tidying up or I am running to shul or a chavrusa. Shabbos afternoon is the best time, we play a game or read together.

As for her TV, I think it's her way of relaxing. I don't doubt there is an aspect of escape but all my hobbies have the same. I also think that her threats to kill herself are due to the stress of trying to deal with the kids - they can be really really difficult. She has been touchy with a local

school to get some work and put them in the creche - I hope it comes together as it will help her have a bit of a normal schedule

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Re: Falling and struggling lately  
Posted by Dov - 15 Oct 2013 20:29

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Well said, and clear, chaver.

About the niddah feelings your wife expressed, I have a question:

Do you think that when she is a niddah, you demonstrate your love for your wife as much as you do when you two are mutarim?

And:

Do you think you are aware of your love for her as much yourself?

Or does it change?

This is not a critique - but a question. If you would like me to share exactly in what ways recovery has changed how niddah affects us, I'd be glad to share that with you. And my wife would be happy to post about it here, too (but that's not allowed by GYE, of course). Consider what I asked, though, OK?

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Re: Falling and struggling lately  
Posted by sonicReducer - 16 Oct 2013 13:27

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[Dov wrote:](#)

Do you think that when she is a niddah, you demonstrate your love for your wife as much as you do when you two are mutarim?

I have been thinking about this since last night. I honestly think I treat her the same when we are mutar and when she is a niddah. I buy flowers, send her nice messages, do chores so she doesn't need to - none of this really changes. I think for her the distance is hard. It's an easy, quick fix when we can cuddle and kiss and sit together. When we are in separate beds she says she feels like she is single again. She's said so more or less since our first year of marriage. If anything hearing things like that discourage me a bit from emotional gestures as I started thinking that nothing I did would really make her feel loved the same until we had that closeness after mikveh.

[Dov wrote:](#)

Do you think you are aware of your love for her as much yourself?

Or does it change?

I don't think it really changes. After 2 weeks of being together I need a bit of space, sometimes the separation is refreshing. I think without it I'd feel smothered. I wouldn't say my feelings towards her oscillate because of niddah, they might oscillate due to external causes (tiredness, bickering, her laziness), but not due to niddah

edit: I've asked my mother to baby-sit for us tonight and have taken tomorrow off work so we can have some time together.

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Re: Falling and struggling lately

Posted by ploni.almoni@gmx.com - 16 Oct 2013 15:19

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From carefully reading what you wrote it sounds to me as if your wife is depressed. If she can't talk to a therapist would she enjoy talking to a rebbetzin, maybe a young rebbetzin, that can she identify with?

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Re: Falling and struggling lately

Posted by Dov - 17 Oct 2013 00:57

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Thanks for that well thought-out response, SR. Let me ask you please, just to get the right perspective myself, ok:

Do you believe you are an addict, or not?

As you know, I believe most guys here who masturbate or use porn are *not* addicts...though the many, many guys who are **not** here are *more* likely to be addicts....and though I have discovered that so many here who say their problem is 'just porn and masturbation', really have much deeper and twisted behaviors.

Do you see your habit of using porn and sex with yourself as an addiction, or just a really annoying habit?

There is not a single advantage one way or the other, as far as I am concerned. But it makes a difference how I approach this thread. Sorry if my question is intrusive at all, chaver.

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Re: Falling and struggling lately  
Posted by Dov - 17 Oct 2013 01:08

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The reason I am asking this is mainly becs I am trying to understand more clearly why you are posting this marriage problem you have on a place like GYE. You clearly have significant marriage issues - and Ploni is right, she probably has some things that will eventually need intervention by a trained therapist.

But what does your masturbation and porn use have to do with all this?

I'm inclined to say that a wife who is getting crazy being away from sex, belongs here more than you do...unless you have a chronic problem with using sex and porn that has a life of its own. Like an addiction, for example. In that case, it is likely that your sex and fantasy itch is part and parcel of her problem.

Or is this merely about not sinning?

Help me out, here, man.

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Re: Falling and struggling lately  
Posted by sonicReducer - 18 Oct 2013 16:00

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Sorry! I have just read your posts now - let me have a think and reply without rushing, hopefully before Shabbos

sR

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Re: Falling and struggling lately

Posted by sonicReducer - 18 Oct 2013 17:02

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I have had a bit of a think about you guys wrote.

I honestly think my wife would do well to go to therapy for a bit - and likely for us to both go to marriage therapy. She isn't interested however, so I don't know what else to do.

Am I addicted? I think I was. When I was a teenager I went through a long period of loneliness and frustration and used porn and masturbation a lot. This is likely fairly normal for a teenager (as destructive as it is) but I had a lot of emotional issues stewing around and the porn was likely to help me cope. I had little control over how often I looked and masturbated - usually a few times a week and even when I didn't want to I found myself doing it anyway.

Now I'm a bit older (I'm 28) I anyway find my sex drive less intense than it was when I was 19 - 24, again, likely normal.

Do I enjoy looking at attractive women? Yes, very much so.

Do I fantasize about every woman I see? No.

Do I enjoy hardcore, explicit pornography? No, I find it distasteful and gross.

Do I go out of my way to find and look at pornography? No.

I kind of assume this is a normal, heterosexual drive. My wife has been my only sexual partner (besides those on screen).

Do I find her attractive? Yes, very much so.

But ... I find our relationship difficult. I often wish I'd waited a few more years before getting married. For more emotional and monetary stability. I found our first 6 months of marriage very very difficult. I'm a private person and the lack of space and privacy was a big shock. My wife also isn't the easiest, she can be quite judgmental, argumentative and demanding. But she is also very caring and supportive.

My desire for porn and masturbation tends to spike as I get stress - and my marriage is one of the biggest sources of stress currently. b'H my job is quite easy going so not particularly stressful.

I also don't really have anywhere to kvetch about my wife with. I have few close friends - my family immigrated when I was a teenager and the kids I grew up with were left behind. I was already shomrei mitzvos at university and not close to anyone there. And most of the boys I was close to in yeshiva are on different continents.

I certainly see this forum as a place where I can release a bit of frustration, especially as I feel that my marriage and desire for masturbation are linked.

I have struggled with loneliness most of my life - at least here I can open my mouth

sR

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Re: Falling and struggling lately  
Posted by Dov - 22 Oct 2013 01:56

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Nu, thanks and y'yasher kochacho for so much honest, clear writing, SR!

The 'addict or normal' question is not necessarily addressed by anything you wrote, as far as I can tell. I'll explain as this post goes on, iy"H. But my feeling is that it is more likely that you are normal and not a sick man (addict) like me. Just a general assessment. If u (for some reason)

wanted to discuss it, I would. It's probably not a discussion for this forum, but I'll try to iron out some aspects of it, be"H now:

In general, I do not believe addiction is something a person can 'catch', nor that it is a condition which they 'once had'. While some of the characteristics of *dependence* can be 'caught' (really: *used*), and one *can* go through a period when they used dependence as a coping mechanism in the past or occasionally in the present...that is not what I call addiction. I believe that within such narrow definition, such a person has no hope whatsoever of honestly using the 12 steps to save him or her. So why bother labeling it as such - there is ample reason to see it simply as what it is: a desire (YH) and temporary coping mechanism.

There are plenty guys who drink when they have a pain in life - but they soon wake up, go to work, and live functionally OK 90% of the time. They do not endanger marriages or jobs with drinking - cuz they are not nuts.

Addicts are otherwise smart people, who do incredibly stupid things over and over. Eventually, when it comes to their drug, they are incredibly stupid. Some of them are Rabbonim (and *really effective* ones), some see themselves as very good husbands, etc...but they are living a double life.

Now, if a frum (and/or irreligious *but supposedly faithfully-married*) fellow is using phone sex, chronically compulsive porn, or sex workers, as the coping mechanism...then I do believe it strongly demonstrates a much bigger problem and it is more likely that he or she is an addict. But there are plenty frum people who 'just' masturbate or use porn and are full-blown addicts as much as I or anyone else is. The double life *is* still there and they *are* sadly out of control, but do not see it until they need to. And I know many of them in good recovery, b"H.

[Just as an aside, there are many, many goyim who are in sex addiction recovery and their only problem is that they masturbate or use internet porn. They see they are suddenly like little children when it comes to sex candy - taking risks, spending money and time like water. And pursue recovery as desperately as anyone else.]

And in such a case, it has nothing to do with sex - if sex were not available and pleasurable, then they'd just end up using alcohol, gambling, or overeating/under-eating, instead. But sex, fantasy and orgasm are right there between our legs and on the computer! They are cheap...at least to start (unlike golf). They are so readily usable, and so much *easier to hide!* No wonder so

many frum Jews use it rather than drugs or alcohol. It's a little messy, yes, but far less messy

Normal people have a 'lust challenge' because they have a yetzer hora and a penis. Big deal. But the addicts pick it as their focus...whether it is their focus to fight it and 'keep kedushas habris' - or if their focus is when the next time they will get to the porn and have sex with themselves. No real difference, for obsession and double life is what they have got either way. Like the Kotzker, "Wrestling with a muddy guy gets you muddy" - but they prefer to wrestle, even though they are losing! And then we desperadoes proceed to belabor our poor, often ill-equipped rebbis, wives, and psychologists with addiction that only sincere surrender can help. Nu. I am pathetic, too, in my addiction. So what's new?

But you really do not seem to be in that category, to me. But I *never* decide for anyone if they are an addict or not. That's the one thing that's gotta be a personal real decision...so take my

And to conclude, as I posted before, I think it is time to quit *even **thinking*** in terms of 'what to do for/to your wife'. It's probably time for you to go to a decent therapist to learn better ways to live with this woman. Don't hide it from your wife. You are going to a shrink to get help to be a better husband and be happier in this marriage. That's the truth and she should know it.

She may change, but as I discovered in our marriage, I must change for her to want to change at all. It only works when I am truly, *sincerely* focused on cleaning only my own side of the street, and not hers or anyone else's.

And it works.

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opinion with a wife-of-Lot-sized grain of salt.  
Re: Falling and struggling lately

Posted by sonicReducer - 22 Oct 2013 17:02

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Thank you Dov!

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