

Honesty

Posted by neshamatehora - 11 Dec 2013 07:04

Hi everyone,

Hashem imachem.

I have a question that I'd really appreciate some advice for. I'm involved in a kiruv organization for teenagers and I make a great relationship with some of these non-frum teens. Recently, one of them (who is becoming frumer) approached me (a baal teshuva) and asked how I quit masturbation. I decided to lie to him and tell him that I had quit when I was becoming frum, and I gave him the advice that I wish others had given me (stay away from shmutz, etc.). He told me he's really struggling - I just encouraged him.

Now, I've been feeling really guilty about lying to him. Should I have told him that I still struggle with it now and that I haven't quit? Should I go back to him and tell him now? On the other hand - I'm one of his only frum role models and I don't want him to see me as flawed in this area.

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Re: Honesty

Posted by Blind Beggar - 11 Dec 2013 17:17

Yivarechach Hashem.

Don't listen to anything I say unless other people agree: I think honesty is the best policy. He understands you like we all understand each other and we don't look down on each other. A fellow struggler is the best role model.

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Re: Honesty

Posted by Dr.Watson - 11 Dec 2013 17:29

I think you should ask one of the kiruv rabbis there for advice, leaving out certain details if you

prefer.

I can see why you want him to think of you as a good example of what he's aiming for. On the other hand, if he thinks this is easy for most people, he might start to question himself when he finds himself struggling. He should know that it's very hard and he's alone in struggling with it.

Ask someone with experience in kiruv.

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Re: Honesty

Posted by Pidaini - 11 Dec 2013 23:44

1) It can't hurt to ask someone with experience (although I doubt there are many people who have that experience,

2) I do think that you will be much more helpful being entirely honest with him, both for you and for him. I also had a moment where I was supposed to meet someone from GYE, but when I saw him from afar, I saw that he was someone who looked at my family for direction, and I thought maybe it would damage that relationship. It ended up being exactly the opposite.

Hashem should lead you to do the right thing!!

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Re: Honesty

Posted by cordnoy - 11 Dec 2013 23:47

I agree with both of the above

Pidiani,

it's different when you two are in the same boat together.

Here, one is a type of Rebbe and one is the Talmid.

I am not advocating to lie, but it's not so simple to say, "Hey, son, I do porn as well; we will get thru it together, and if not, movie night is Saturday night."

Just sayin'....

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Re: Honesty

Posted by Pidaini - 12 Dec 2013 02:55

thanks cordnoy, I was placing myself in his situation, you know....young guy, trying to be helpful to kids at risk, not really "rebbe" or even mentor, just good friend to be able to talk to.....

Those were all assumptions, I forgot about that.

thanks

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Re: Honesty

Posted by ?????? - 12 Dec 2013 03:22

Your answer is not only a lie, but it may cast him into unnecessary travail and self-doubt. "I am becoming frum, and I can't stop - what's wrong with me?"

It is important to couch this information in a more general approach (which can be done now, as well).

Explain that the fight with this particular Yetzer Hora is something that just about all (normal) men go through. (You can share the story from the Gemeara where they davened for this YH to be taken away.) Each person is going to have a slightly different way and experience. Some are going to conquer it more effectively, some are going to continue struggling with it througout their life. Both are normal. (Although one is holier.) Even the sifrei mussar talk about how difficult it is to overcome this YH once one starts.

On the one hand, always move forward. Increase in holiness. Avoid looking where you shouldn't. Avert your eyes, and use your neck if necessary. If you are one of those who merit to overcome this sin, that is great. If not, you will continue to struggle - but never let it define you.

If you asks "did you", you can say something like "today I have," or "as of today I have" (if you have done Teshuvah.)

You don't want him to think that everybody who is frum does not m/b. This is an issue even for those not addicted. And it is a sensitive line. We surely cannot approve of it, but at the same time, we cannot give the impression that if you're frum you don't do it.

BTW - this is a discussion that I fathers need to have with their sons, too.

Let us know how it turns out.

Lemanchem

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Re: Honesty

Posted by neshamatehora - 12 Dec 2013 06:43

Thank you all so much for your advice. I'm not comfortable going to any of the rebbeim involved with the kiruv program, because I'm not really close enough with any of them to discuss this.

Also, just to clarify - he's really *not* becoming frum (he's not shomer shabbos, kashrus, etc.). He *is* becoming more connected with Yiddishkeit (wearing a kippah, learning) and when he approached me to discuss this, he told me that he was trying not to do it and he specifically asked me how *I* quit. I don't know if this would affect anyone's advice.

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Re: Honesty

Posted by Gevura Shebyesod - 12 Dec 2013 07:15

Why don't you just send him here?

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Re: Honesty

Posted by cordnoy - 12 Dec 2013 09:43

Gevurah...good point!

And Mr. N.T. just a friendly reminder: Remember that we (myself included) are all anonymous posters with no special credentials. Just because someone types something above doesn't mean that is the advice to follow.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Honesty

Posted by appreciate - 12 Dec 2013 10:42

you should remove this post before you let him know about the website!! but i also dont think you should tell him, although you could let him know you struggle with shmiras eynayim. i

wonder why he picked this to work on ...

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Re: Honesty

Posted by neshamatehora - 13 Dec 2013 06:00

Great question appreciate! I was wondering the same thing - for a kid who isn't frum, why would his number 1 thing he wants to work on be this?

My only idea was that it's something that (he thinks) won't "radically" change his lifestyle at home like shabbos or kashrus (in other words, it gives him something to work on that won't upset his parents). But that's just my idea.

I was also thinking of directing him here but I'm worried that the environment is a little too intense for someone just being introduced to the frum world.

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Re: Honesty

Posted by Pidaini - 13 Dec 2013 14:21

BTW, hate to spoil the fun, but I was just wondering, what are **you** doing to stop?

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