

Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 13 Oct 2020 20:55

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Hi. I am 26 years old. I have been struggling with inappropriate content since I was in ninth grade. My well meaning father ironically got me an iPod touch as a reward for learning over the summer. After hearing my friends speak about things they had seen, I ventured into the forbidden territory. I tried stopping so many times. I made promises. I put on codes. I eventually smashed the iPod. But the Scourge always found a way back into my life. This wasn't the only front I was fighting though. I had a very low self image growing up. I felt out of place. My family was also semi-dysfunctional and I had a very difficult OTD brother. Then when I was in twelfth grade I started having obsessive thoughts about the craziest things. My self esteem plunged even lower. I was convinced that I was sick and totally beyond help. It was so frightening. I suffered alone until I got to Israel. I finally told a Rebbi what I was going through, and he referred me to a therapist. It took me about six months to even consider the possibility that I was normal, and another six months to get to a point that I was ready to move on to the next stage. I finally went home to start shidduchim. I was convinced that I would get married right away, put my past behind me, and start a beautiful new chapter in my life. After all I had been through, surely God was not going to let me suffer anymore. But my life started spiraling downward very quickly. Being home in a toxic environment brought me back exactly to where I was before therapy. The stress and anxiety of dating was also overwhelming. I went out with the first girl until she said no to me because of my family. I wasn't sure that I wanted to marry her, but I was heartbroken. My dreams of a happily ever after were broken. Then, at the advice of a relative, I moved out of my house. My parents were hurt, confused, and angry. I was filled with guilt. I felt homeless, and I became even more depressed and anxious. It came to a point that I couldn't bring myself to date anymore. I was bouncing around therapists, hoping that someone would fix me, but not believing that they could. I eventually found a therapist who managed to convey to me that the only way out is by accepting my situation, and taking responsibility for my own life. Slowly, I started getting control of my emotions. I began to realize who I am and what I'm capable of. I even started being happy with my life and not blaming God so much for my circumstances. I started dating again, which was a huge milestone. I still had never confronted my 'habit' head on though. I felt guilty about going out and also using the internet. I read some articles about internet usage, and I realized that my habit was really an addiction. I saw the negative effects it can have on a marriage. Studies also show that it's detrimental to mental health, by causing anxiety and depression. It's time to fix up my act. I want to be clean going into marriage. I want to feel good about myself when going on dates. I want to be the best me.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 07 Feb 2022 04:48

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When they said marriage takes work, they weren't kidding. I've seen so many of my bad middos emerge. It is very taxing to rein in all of my faults to avoid doing something stupid. I honestly think the best method for me so far is to forgive myself for not being the perfect husband, and to

move on from my mistakes. It allows me to move through the tough emotions, and to stay happier and more in control. Can those with advice and encouragement please share? Thanks!

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by Hashem Help Me - 07 Feb 2022 11:51

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[hashemyeracheim613 wrote on 07 Feb 2022 04:48:](#)

I honestly think the best method for me so far is to forgive myself for not being the perfect husband, and to move on from my mistakes.

Very well said and a healthy attitude, just make sure you apologize to your wife and make it up

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by Human being - 07 Feb 2022 16:38

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Finished going over your whole thread. you are such a good person. Authentic, vulnerable, growing, positive. Wow. Thanks for the inspiration.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 07 Feb 2022 18:14

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[hashemyeracheim613 wrote on 07 Feb 2022 04:48:](#)

to her....

When they said marriage takes work, they weren't kidding. I've seen so many of my bad middos emerge. It is very taxing to rein in all of my faults to avoid doing something stupid. I honestly think the best method for me so far is to forgive myself for not being the perfect husband, and to move on from my mistakes. It allows me to move through the tough emotions, and to stay happier and more in control. Can those with advice and encouragement please share? Thanks!

I relate to this a lot, especially recently. Until now, I kinda shoved all of my faults under the rug. Don't worry, I shoved my strengths under the rug too and it took a long time for me to recognize them. I know that I have faults and I am working on them but since I have been going through such an emotional roller coaster, I was primarily focused on the effects they were having on me and my goals.

Something happened this week that made me realize that my flaws actually affect other people, and more importantly, other people that I love and want to love me. My flaws were causing a lot of resentment from the people that depend on me and realizing that was really painful. You see, I want unconditional love, but that may not actually happen if I keep on messing up.

This reminds me of what my Rav says in his *shalom bayis shmuez*, "marriage brings out all the horrible parts of you". I never really understood this as clearly as I do now. He was saying that someone who you live with and you care about and cares about you will notice everything and if you want to develop a deep and emotional relationship there can be no more shoving things under the rug.

Coming to terms with the fact that I actually need to get these things under control for my *shalom bayis*, and not just for my personal growth was and is very scary.

So yes, whoever said marriage takes work wasn't kidding, but the work is not just in the form of biting your tongue, buying her flowers, and doing the dishes even when you are not in the mood. The hard work is finally addressing my core issues that I have been shoving under the rug my entire life.

Sorry for the rant, I just needed to share that and you brought up marriage taking work.

All the best.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by Vehkam - 07 Feb 2022 21:50

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Amazing. Keep focusing on the wins! Any idea what changed for that one night? I also feel like the last few months have been a gift....

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 10 Feb 2022 04:56

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Thanks for the feedback guys. @willnevergiveup I totally agree with you that the idea of getting ourselves under control for Shalom Bayis is scary. Before I was married, the only thing that was at stake of me succeeding at being a good person was my own life. Now there is another person, and an entity called a Marriage that is also dependent on my actions. I did a lot of work on myself before marriage. I didn't realize that the main work was yet to come. It's very hard to see very ugly parts of myself surface. Maybe part of the issue is that I'm even calling them ugly, and not accepting them for what they are. I do my best to not take out my feelings on my wife, but it's tough knowing that they are there inside me. @Vekham I don't really know what changed. I do know from that long stretch that success is in my reach, and I want it. Hopefully the next time Taaivah starts giving me attitude I'll have some sharp retorts and send him packing.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 18 Feb 2022 04:45

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Hi everyone. Something that I personally struggle with is making huge problems out of minor issues. For example, if there is a little bit of tension between me and my wife, I think that it's over. I'm not kidding. My mind jumps straight to the worst possible outcome. It's totally irrational and very much anxiety driven, but to me it's reality. I spoke to my Chavrusa, an older Avreich, and he basically laughed. He said that if I took my "issues" to a marriage therapist, they would crack up. It was very reassuring, but it reminds me that going forward I have to take myself less seriously.

New issue on the Kedusha front. In the past I struggled with Shmiras Einayim, both with real women and online. For over a year I've managed to cut out the Internet trash, and I'm really proud of that. It never occurred to me that stopping that ugly habit was only the beginning. When I walk in the supermarket, I notice that my eyes wander to every semi-attractive female in the place. When I was single, I didn't think much of it. But now, I've noticed a new process

taking place in my brain. Comparing. Noticing all the "features" that my wife is missing. It sounds gross and repulsive, and it is. I am very well aware that even if my wife was objectively the prettiest lady in the world, I would still think like this. There is always a different "look" that has its own attraction and appeal. There is no end. Being aware of this idea is a start, but it's difficult to internalize and implement it. I have to start buckling down on these eyes. There is much at stake.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by Vehkam - 18 Feb 2022 05:02

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Here's my two cents....

What benefit would you have with the better more attractive person? It's really just a façade from the yetzer hara. There is no extra pleasure and it is just a case of Mayim gnuvim yimtaku. you have an opportunity to create a beautiful relationship and a beautiful home with the wife that you have, The one who shares your common goals and ideals. The one who was determined to be compatible with you when you went through your shidduch pricess. Would you sacrifice a long term goal for some momentary instant gratification? Follow the advice out there on how to invest in your marriage. Once you are fully invested you would not even think about doing anything that would hurt your investment.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by jackthejew - 18 Feb 2022 10:29

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[hashemyeracheim613 wrote on 18 Feb 2022 04:45:](#)

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Check out this talk from Dov. It was very helpful for in these inyanim (although I'm still single)

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by cordnoy - 18 Feb 2022 12:23

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[Vehkam wrote on 18 Feb 2022 05:02:](#)

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Of course there is more pleasure with the more attractive person; even if it's the yetzer hara's doin'. That's the way the world was created. Our responsibility and challenge, however, is to overcome and see past that.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 18 Feb 2022 12:31

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First of all, be reassured that this is very common and "normal". Definitely do not obsess or panic about it. While you will try to slowly rewire your brain about beauty/marriage/loyalty etc, start learning how to walk in the street and look past people. Every yid, even those who are not "comparing their wives", is mechuyav to avoid looking at women for the sake of pleasure etc. Yes, it is a challenge, but one can use seichel and make wise choices. Staying out of the ladies kabalas panim at a wedding, choosing to shop during less crowded times, going a block or two out of the way to avoid certain streets, are some examples of strategies that help us peacefully avoid triggers. And when there is no choice, train yourself to focus on other things in your peripheral vision... Hatzlacha. The big tzaddikim say that there is tremendous schar for being that loyal soldier as one traverses the streets of the world. "Chap arein"!

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by 5Uu80\*cdwB#^ - 18 Feb 2022 13:13

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You are 100% correct that there is much at stake. ??? ??????. You can do it!

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by Vehkam - 18 Feb 2022 16:44

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In my opinion. There is no inherent more pleasure, it is a façade.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by cordnoy - 18 Feb 2022 17:44

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[Vehkam wrote on 18 Feb 2022 16:44:](#)

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God also created men with different opinions.

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