

**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 Rebbe 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 - 05 Jan 2021 17:58

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[evergreen wrote on 31 Dec 2020 23:17:](#)

Hey, I think it's really important that aside from your struggles you don't evaluate your self worth based on your dating life. It's time not to care what other people may or may not think of you cause your single or bc of your family situation, they don't know you! If they read one of your posts on this forum they would **only begin** to understand that you're a **massive** ?????. You were given a really tough package, you know why? It's because Hashem knows you can swing it. Don't let you're dating life control your emotions, you'll be happy that you waited when the girl **who actually gets you** comes along! Keep fighting brother!

This definitely makes sense but it's so hard to implement! Obviously the best thing would be for my self-worth not be dependent on any outside factors at all. I am so not holding there though. Right now I'm struggling on all fronts. Yeshiva, Dating, Family, Kedusha. My self-image has nothing to latch on to. I feel so empty .I could really use some big wins right now...

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 05 Jan 2021 18:21

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I went out with someone for the first time Sunday. The date itself wasn't bad. She looked ok. Conversation wasn't so awkward. She seems to have a decent personality. The problem is I don't ever seeing myself being comfortable enough with her to be able to marry her. Or what I'm going to talk about on the next date; it was hard enough to keep the conversation going the first time. This isn't a new feeling though. Whenever I go out I feel like this. It makes me wonder if it's ever going to happen. Is this what dating is supposed to be like? I just had a dream that I thought to myself that I'm never going to get married. I then went on to the Internet. I woke up to a reality that feels the same. I'm not giving in, but I do wonder why I'm still fighting this battle.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by Zedj - 05 Jan 2021 19:21

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I don't have any experience at all with dating but good on you for putting yourself out there.

It's only the first date, it seems like it went ok from the way you write.

I'm sure the other guys here will be able to give you more advice.

So why are you fighting this battle?

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 05 Jan 2021 19:55

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[hashemyeracheim613 wrote on 05 Jan 2021 18:21:](#)

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All first dates are awkward, seconds and thirds can be as well. Conversation doesn't have to flow freely to be able to marry someone, you just have to be comfortable around each other.

Iy"H you will find the right one, but it can be rough until that happens. I feel for you and I wish for it to happen quickly.

All the best,

Wilnevergiveup

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by BHYY - 05 Jan 2021 23:37

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[hashemyeracheim613 wrote on 05 Jan 2021 18:21:](#)

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I've yet to find someone who enjoys first dates or who is comfortable on them (and if there is someone I don't believe you!) 2nd and 3rd aren't much different. If you don't have a reason to say no then I wouldn't worry about it. As HHM told me when I started dating, many people don't think on their first date "this is the person I am going to marry", some do but many do not. It's a rough parsha but she's out there and waiting for you. If it's bashert you'll see it will work out.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by evergreen - 06 Jan 2021 03:35

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Latch on to your kochos, whatever that may be. Hashem gave you a unique toolbox which makes you essential, something all of us can learn and grow from. I don't know you, but your self-honesty and humility is coming across big time in your posts, for one. Again, tough package, but your arsenal is killer good (only you and those close to you know what that is) and by design is exactly what you need to thrive in your struggles. Actualize and take solace in your kochos, keep posting (the guys here are an incredible resource), and with God's help big wins will be on the way:)

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by withgdthereshope - 06 Jan 2021 03:38

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What @willnevergiveup and @BHYY wrote.

First dates are awkward for most people and for some more than others. The idea that you

weren't comfortable on the first date or that you cant see yourself marrying her based on the first date, shouldn't be a reason for concern. If it meant anything at all, so many people wouldn't be happily married today.

Re your general struggles, I'm wondering if you are seeing a good therapist. You have a lot on your plate and I can envision good therapy being very helpful.

Re your struggle with GYE stuff, I think you have touched on something important a few times and that is the realization that your urges come when you are feeling down. This is generally how addictions work because the most difficult part of addiction is how it fills a void for us. When we feel down, we use masturbation to make us feel better. Overtime it comes to point where masturbation is the cure for all difficult feelings because the short high allows us to cope. When were upset - masturbation. When we feel down - masturbation. Even simply being bored leads down the same road.

This site (and most of the addiction world) focuses on finding ways to stop and holding ourselves accountable. This approach can be very helpful for many and can even be lifechanging. Still, it doesn't address a core issue. The struggle is a means to escape feelings.

Understanding this can go a long way to help ourselves truly overcome addiction.

Because when we are able to be comfortable with the idea of discomfort and not be thrown off by it, things change. When we recognize that we have been living a life of escaping our difficult feelings and this is why pornography became our answer we can start to instead become comfortable with discomfort instead of turning to pornography. Doing this correctly allows us to overcome the addiction instead of simply trying to keep addiction tied up throughout our lives.

Hatzlacha Rabba and let me know if there is anything I can help with.

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Posted by evergreen - 06 Jan 2021 03:38

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[hashemyeracheim613 wrote on 05 Jan 2021 17:58:](#)

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by hashemyeracheim613 - 07 Jan 2021 20:46

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Hey guys. I really appreciate all the encouragement, it really goes a long way. I went out again last night and something was just off. She wasn't talking much or asking me follow up questions. During the date I wasn't really focusing much on it, I was just trying to keep things alive. After I dropped her off though, I immediately felt a huge pit in my stomach and a very profound sense of sadness. It was just that really bad feeling that I knew she didn't like me, even though I had given it my all. This one was especially tough, because my best friend had been pushing me to go out for three years with her. She was his wife's best friend. I didn't go for it at first because she came from a messy background, but he finally convinced me to give it a try. I had really

high hopes, and it turned out that it was a total flop. I am also really upset at my friend even though he only acted with good intentions. How did he read me so wrong that he pushed such a bad idea on me? It was really hard to stay clean last night, and I almost failed, but I made it through. Honestly, I think for me personally, I **can** know right away on a first date that it's not going to work. So far I haven't been wrong. I still like seeing things through until the end, but it's really tough to keep going out with different girls and just not connecting. I feel that there should be a certain chemistry, even on a first. On to the next idea. Take care guys.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by Grant400 - 07 Jan 2021 21:57

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Staying clean after feeling so let down and betrayed, especially about a girl, is superhuman!  
Kudos to you!

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by Hakolhevel - 07 Jan 2021 23:43

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My experience has also been you should feel some chemistry on the first date

Sadly, all the girls i see on a screen seem to have that wonderful chemistry with me:grimacing:

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 07 Jan 2021 23:48

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Staying clean after a date falls apart is incredible. There are so many negative thoughts. "Hashem, here was Your chance. I woud get engaged, married, and have a kosher outlet (a debated subject - but this is not the place for that). Now i have no choice but to act out with a vengeance!" Similarly "I am a loser. Noone wants me. I will never get married". Most guys don't feel comfortable sharing that a date did not work out, especially if the girl said no, and he was "dumped". So by being macho, they can't get chizuk, so acting out becomes the pacifier. How do i know all this? Because unfortunately that's how i reacted when dates fell apart.

In closing, buddy, you are a **HERO**.

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by Zedj - 08 Jan 2021 06:13

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I can imagine its really tough now for you.

Keep strong!

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Re: Mental Health and Marriage  
Posted by BHYY - 08 Jan 2021 07:26

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I know your feelings all too well. You are amazing for not acting out!

Bez"H Hashem should guide you to the right one b'karov.

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