

Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Grant400 - 19 Jan 2021 16:51

So I thought of an idea. Why don't we all write down as vividly as possible, how we feel when tempted, and how we feel after indulging.

Reading as many people's feelings as possible, can really create a clarity and understanding, with simplicity, about which way is the better one. (Especially when in the throes of desire).

Please, please add your own perspective.

Onset of Urges:

1) I am completely overtaken by the urge. Images and fantasies start to obsessively swirl in my mind. Sometimes for days. Nothing seems more delicious. Nothing seems more pleasurable. Physical feelings follow. The need grows, and grows... I am almost willing to give up everything I hold valuable, for this blissful treasure...

After Indulging:

2) That's what I was obsessing about? Seriously? So overrated! I feel like dirt. My mind is bombarded with everything I've seen. My eyes are in a daze. I feel like a traitor. Davening doesn't work. I wish I can go back in time! Hashem! Get these disgusting stuff out of my head!

Every time I see my wife, I feel like the worst person in the world. Am I really the father of these angelic children? The guilt weighs down so hard, it physically hurts. The pain is so, so much greater than the pleasure I experienced. I can't ever imagine wallowing in filth again.

Takeaway:

3) The desire is far greater than the pleasure. The pain is greater than the pleasure. It's a no brainer. It's simple not worth it.

Looking forward to reading your posts!

Grant

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Hakolhevel - 20 Jan 2021 05:12

You forgot step 4.

A half hour later (or half day later - each to their own)

Me thinking " well if I've already fallen, I really wonder what xyz looks like now, let me check out that scene..."

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Grant400 - 20 Jan 2021 13:40

Is no one up for this?

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Hakolhevel - 20 Jan 2021 15:02

I think you spelled it out pretty accurately. Nothing more to say.

Here's a related post I put up a few years ago
FALL: Uch I'm all sticky and disgusting, it wasn't even that amazing and I feel like a hypocrite, I'm never gonna do this again
Day 1: Wow it was really bad, I'm never gonna do it again, i will do xyz to make sure
Day 2: I can't believe I ever did such a thing, I feel so much holier and pure now, I'm finally thinking clear.
Day 3: Wow this is great, I really can do this, it's nothing to be clean
Day 4: What was that image on my news feed... Oh I better not look, that's disgusting
Day 5: I wonder what happens if you google Noah, and check the images, you think anything inappropriate comes up?... Oh my what a sick world we live in
Day... - I need my fix, but just to look, not to CH"V be MZ"L 4 hours later under the covers and wife is sleeping
Repeat Cycle*

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Lou - 22 Jan 2021 04:52

This is not exactly on the topic, but related...

I have been thinking a lot about lust lately. I know we have discussed and debated this topic before. I think I have a new insight which in truth is probably simple and obvious. It just took me some time to realize it.

Yes, the issues we have all stem from lust, however, I think there is a deeper more basic desire fueling us. That is the desire for all physical pleasures. I just want to give myself pleasure. Period. All other things such as Hashem, my wife, friends come in second place. I just want to feel good and have pleasure. I think if we could work on rewiring that concept to realizing what true pleasure is and why Hashem sent us to this world etc the lust issue would fall into place. It would be used for its correct purpose at the right time. The same as food, sleep and all other worldly pleasures. Now, I am certainly not an expert on how to work on this, but at least I am seeing that this is (most probably) the root issue I need to work on.

I came to this realization in a pretty embarrassing way. I BH have been doing well with lust related issues. I see that I am very into food now. Not necessarily rewarding myself for doing well or things like that. Just very into food. Even sneaking to buy extra food for myself to eat by myself. At first I felt like ok, i am rewarding myself. Then I realized it is only replacing the same pleasure seeking behavior in a different way. Yes, it is better. It is not (usually) assur. It probably won't ruin my marriage etc etc. But it is the same issue. And possibly when I get bored of the food pleasure I may get back to seeking alternative sexual pleasures again (I hope not!). So, I realized yes, it's great to be working on lust but I think I (and maybe all of us) have to cure the root of seeking selfish physical pleasures as a whole to really solve our issues.

I would love to hear what others think as I am certainly still a work in progress...

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Shteeble - 22 Jan 2021 09:55

[Lou wrote on 22 Jan 2021 04:52:](#)

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I would love to hear what others think as I am certainly still a work in progress...

Wow.

I think that's a super duper mindset. Thank you!

One thought is that food in particular, while not usually assu, often is an addiction. There is Overeaters Anonymous, as you probably know.

But in general, focusing on the fact that I'm not here in this world to pleasure seek... that's an amazing thought.

Others may want to point out that they never heard of anyone recovering from lust addiction by focusing on the abovementioned fact, ...

But hey

Who cares? I think it's a great idea.

So anyone who is in a 12 step program, don't drop your program just yet, but stay tuned! Maybe some day this will be the preferred approach.

To me, it definitely sounds a lot easier.

I have the greatest respect for all my 12 step program friends. Nobody should jump up and down and start screaming. But an alternative program is always welcome. If it works. And it probably will.

Super!

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Shteeble - 22 Jan 2021 10:09

After rereading your post, I want to add that I identify very much with the pleasure seeking concept. It's not just lust. I've definitely indulged in other pleasure seeking activities that were probably not assur, but at the same time probably not so healthy.

So while lust is definitely the big one...

And lust may be the one that makes my life noticeably unmanageable...

Maybe that's just because lust is the biggest and ugliest and most assur poblem (or solution) of them all.

May I'm not a lust addict. Maybe I'm a pleasure addict.

If I get sober from lust, who's to say I will automatically become sober from the pleasure seeking addiction?

But if I learn to live my life with a purpose...

If I learn that life is not about pleasure seeking...

Super. Just super. That's all.

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Lou - 24 Jan 2021 08:34

@ R Shteeble. Thank you for commenting. I appreciate the Chizuk. Just to clarify, I never

intended for this idea to replace any current interventions (12 Steps etc) that someone may be doing. Rather I think this could supplement any other ways people are working on this.

Thank you R Grant for allowing us to use your thread to discuss this...

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Ish MiGrodno - 24 Jan 2021 09:33

R' Lou,

Yup, food has become the go-to pacifier for me as well.

But let me deal with that (and the issue of pleasure seeking mindset) when BEZ"H I reach day 1500.

Pick your battles, my dear friend.

And I formally give you the heter you seek to enjoy that gishmake steak (and Gentleman Jack :)

IMG

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 24 Jan 2021 17:31

[Ish MiGrodno wrote on 24 Jan 2021 09:33:](#)

R' Lou,

Yup, food has become the go-to pacifier for me as well.

But let me deal with that (and the issue of pleasure seeking mindset) when BEZ"H I reach day 1500.

Pick your battles, my dear friend.

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Yesh v'yesh here. This could indicate an underlying issue in which case it can be far more beneficial to work on all areas of "pleasure seeking" at once. I know this sounds overwhelming and in some cases it is and shouldn't be done but in cases where we "pleasure seek" in order to numb stress, trauma etc. if the real issues are not dealt with, people tend to find themselves on a seesaw.

If we are "pleasure seeking" in the form of lust for whatever reason and we figure out how to abstain from lust only to pleasure seek in compulsive eating, we are almost guaranteed to find ourselves back to our good old lust at some point. Especially when we are talking about someone who has health issues related to unhealthy eating habits, there is a huge risk that he will at some point justify his going back to lusting in the name of his health.

I can only talk from my own experiences and in my case, it was so much simpler to work on my entire attitude to pleasure in general. I try to do this by reviewing the first piece of Rav Dessler on *chovaso b'olamo* and try to focus more on *chovaso b'olamo* in general in order to put pleasure in perspective.

There is a saying here on GYE that there have been no recorded deaths so far for abstaining. This holds true in all pleasure seeking activities.

There is a time and place for pleasure that is healthy. There is a reason why we make berachos, because physical pleasure in it's proper form is supposed to make us feel grateful to Hashem.

Pleasure in it's correct form brings us closer to Hashem. Compulsive pleasure seeking however, distances us from Him, and therefore has no place in *avodas Hashem*.

Once again, yesh v'yesh, this is just another approach. While some feel that it's best to "cross their bridges when they get there" others find that it's all part of the same puzzle.

I also use food as a pacifier but I've gotten much better (and much skinnier) at it. I do believe that there is a way to eat as a "pacifier" where it's not unhealthy (or at least as unhealthy) and that is when we are able to focus on the true purpose of this world and the role of pleasure in it. If when you sit down to that steak you can say for real "thank you Hashem for this delicious piece of meat" and feel real gratitude, then you are talking about a whole different kind of eating. You can change it from being a self indulging experience to a spiritually uplifting one.

Just my two cents.

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Shmuel - 24 Jan 2021 17:55

I think is an interesting point you are making and lav kavka a bad one.

i wonder though if pleasure seeking in its own is really that bad and the cause for the issues. Or is the underlying void that we are attempting to fill with pleasure that is really the root.

The answer to this is prob different for each one of use but it will prog dictate to us what path to take...

Thanks for sharing

Hatzlacha

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Shteeble - 24 Jan 2021 20:59

[Lou wrote on 24 Jan 2021 08:34:](#)

@ R Shteeble. Thank you for commenting. I appreciate the Chizuk. Just to clarify, I never intended for this idea to replace any current interventions (12 Steps etc) that someone may be doing. Rather I think this could supplement any other ways people are working on this.

Thank you R Grant for allowing us to use your thread to discuss this...

Or else:

It can be used as an alternative program, if it works.

For those who have tried a 12 step program, and have found that it totally does not work for them (and yes it's true, 12 step programs don't work for everyone), perhaps this CAN be a replacement program.

But there's no need to clarify really.

It's a great idea, and it can work. I even tried it out, and I believe that while on this path, you are certainly pulled LESS in the lust direction. That was my experience.

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Lou - 25 Jan 2021 06:02

Reading everyone's beautiful posts here and been thinking a little... Perhaps it depends on the person but also in the day and exact situation going on. For example,if on Monday you go out to Daven Maariv and have an intense desire to call a chatline or similar detrimental behavior. You tell yourself No I won't do that but rather I will stop by the nearest fast food place and wolf down a burger,that may be a victory. But on Tuesday when you are not having that intense desire but just feeling like you want something pleasurable it may be a good time to exercise your working on not seeking pleasure and thinking of others,ma chovaso biolamo etc.

Hopefully with enough Tuesdays your Mondays will turn to Tuesdays also!

Does that make sense?

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Shteeble - 25 Jan 2021 07:09

[Lou wrote on 25 Jan 2021 06:02:](#)

Reading everyone's beautiful posts here and been thinking a little... Perhaps it depends on the person but also in the day and exact situation going on. For example,if on Monday you go out to Daven Maariv and have an intense desire to call a chatline or similar detrimental behavior. You tell yourself No I won't do that but rather I will stop by the nearest fast food place and wolf down a burger,that may be a victory. But on Tuesday when you are not having that intense desire but just feeling like you want something pleasurable it may be a good time to exercise your working on not seeking pleasure and thinking of others,ma chovaso biolamo etc.

Hopefully with enough Tuesdays your Mondays will turn to Tuesdays also!

Does that make sense?

That could be the correct approach...

Rav Avigdor Miller said something similar to that. He said that when your child wants to go to a ballgame, take him to a park. If he wants to go to a park, take him to a Rebbe's tisch (or something like that). I don't remember Rav Avidgdor Miller's exact words, but something along the lines of the above scenarios.

It seems to reason, that we should treat ourselves the same way we would treat our sons. If the nesayon is strong, then something that is very pleasurable (but not assur) may be the win for the day.

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Re: Lust vs. Reality

Posted by Shteeble - 25 Jan 2021 07:17

The flipside to all this is...

If you allow yourself the big (non-assur) pleasure, it may draw you to lust in the near future. Pleasure seeking breeds bigger pleasure seeking.

If however, you can somehow be rid of the lust without having to indulge in the big (non-assur) pleasures, you are truly distancing yourself from lust in the future.

So do I want lust to be right around the corner, with the knowledge that he is welcome to stop by any time... with the feeling that he is family... not much different (in a feelings type of way) than wolfing down burgers etc.....

Or do I want lust to know that he is the furthest thing from my mind... Even "people" far less ugly than Mr. Lust are not welcome at my door... So Mr. Lust gets the message, loud and clear, I don't want nothin to do with ya.

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