

Learning to Love in dating

Posted by aaron - 17 Nov 2010 16:55

Dearest chevra,

over the course of the past few months, H' has blessed me to not fall as often as i once have. it is quite infrequent that i do fall and even when i do, i find myself not falling into patterns that are dangerous.

there are a couple of reasons i think that allowed me to step out of my old patterns. besides the fact that hashem completely removed the internet from my life, i was also put in a situation where i was forced to give 24/7 for nearly 6 weeks straight. this built within me a great deal of self-confidence and allowed me to appreciate my own intrinsic value - a vital step in coming closer to H' and no needing lust as an escape. Being at ease with myself allowed me the comfort of not needing to run to any specific drug.

but once more pressures of life began to return, i found that a degree of lust had returned. not merely lust for the physical, but rather lust to be a taker. specifically, mean within the realm of dating.

H' has blessed me with the most incredible person. **She has tremendous midos, great drive, similar goals and values and a great hashkafa. but i found myself nit picking at her characteristics** and being bothered by things which my rabanim said were not important. I know that she is a smart girl, but i chose to demand someone smarter than myself. i know that she is understanding - but i chose to demand someone who can more fully understand me. Its strange because on some level, i know that she understands me more fully than most of my friends. **i have let these things bother me so much - constantly analyzing them and evaluating whether or not she fits my criteria - that i have not allowed myself to love her for the person i know she is.**

i have been told and understand a little bit, that marriage is really a relationship solely based on giving. **the characteristics that the spouse possesses that one searches for during dating eventually end up not mattering nearly as much.** intellect will not create a better family so long as she can manuver in the world we live in. rather - i have been told - that **trust, love, integrity, commitment and devotion to goals are what really count.** all of these things i know she excels in but **it has been so hard for me to let go of my demands that i came to the realization that she had become my replacement for internet lust.**

this might explain why it is that i have had such a hard time seeing her as my equal - but almost as a daughter of mine. i find myself speaking to her as an innocent, pure toy that is meant to make me happy rather than as a partner for life that i know she is fully capable of being.

when i have pain, i have turned to her. and when i have need an escape she is there. she fills that gap within me that i fear to leave revealed - **and i think it is for that reason that i have not been able to respect her fully.**

what makes this relationship more troubling is the fact that **i have known her and desired her for years. i always dreamed of her being mine** - primarily physically. it is for this reason also that **i struggle to stop perceiving her as an object of my desires rather than the wife of my dreams.**

Our relationship has (obviously) been free of physical contact and the content of our conversations has been clean, but i still find myself being aroused by her and occasionally thinking inappropriate thoughts.

i want to love her so badly - i cry and daven on numerous occasion that i be zoche - but something seems to be standing in the way. i want to appreciate her for the person that she truly is instead of the object i have created in my mind.

my questions for the chevra that i so direly need advice on are the following:

1. how can i begin to love her and want to give to her rather than only be interested in what she can give to me?

ie - what suggestions do you have to stop lusting after her?

additionally (more technical of a problem) - **i find that when i speak with her or go on dates, i come to sz'l naturally** - even when not thinking inappropriate thoughts. i see this as a good sign that i am not respecting her as i should be and that my old way of perceiving her as a object of my desire has yet to completely leave me. **i think that my guilt feelings for spilling accidentally make me angry at myself which also reflects onto the relationship.** although this is becoming less frequent, i want to rid myself of this mentality as much as possible.

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2. how can i stop coming to sz'l on dates?

3. (random - if anyone knows) - is it mutar to make brochos when the zera is dry? how about if it is simply wiped away with a tissue but still stained the underwear?

4. am i the only one who comes to sz'l simply by talking to a girl for a long period of time?

5. is it legitimate to be angry at myself for this natural reaction? would it be assur to continue speaking or dating her? (sounds extreme - especially seeing as how i cannot envision ever getting over this problem)

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thanks so much for your help....

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Kedusha - 17 Nov 2010 17:28

Dear Confidence,

Your post implicates some very serious issues - how our addiction affects our ability to date and choose the proper marriage partner. Remember though, your tefilos should be that you find the right wife for you, not that this particular one work out.

I'll take the easier route, and try to address some of the technical issues you raise.

As we all know, it's forbidden to bring ourselves to have an erection deliberately, except, of course, when we're being intimate with our wives. That's easier said than done, of course, but we need to try, by focusing our thoughts elsewhere.

What probably concerns you more are the drops of Zerah that come out. I am very grateful to a couple of Rabbanim who clarified this for me when I was close to getting married: Al Pi Halacha, if the Zerah is not "Yoreh k'Chaitz" (literally "shooting like an arrow") the way it does during ejaculation, but just comes out, that does not have the Chomer of Zera l'vatata (and, depending upon other factors, might not even be considered an aveira at all; say it happened to a married man when he was kissing his wife, or in preparation for relations). You may get a different answer if you speak with Mekubalim, but I think you'll find it reassuring that, al pi Shas and Shulchan Aruch, you are not dealing with the severe aveira of Zera Levatala.

I had this issue when I was engaged, but not when I was going out (I was too nervous!).

If the Zerah is dry, you can certainly make Berachos. Even if it's not dry, I don't believe it's a problem if it was not a real ejaculation ("Yoreh k'Chaitz"). (Of course, you're better off asking your Sheilos to a Posek, but I'm writing on the Tzad that you find yourself unable to do so).

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by frumfiend - 17 Nov 2010 18:15

i didnt have a chance to read yourpost slowly yet . However i sense a lot of personal honesty and a willingness to grow.

hatzlacha

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by aaron - 17 Nov 2010 18:29

thanks so much kedusha for helping with my q's. i feel much better now. thanks also frumfiend for the encouragment...

does anyone happen to have any advice for question #1 still though? that issue i would love advice on.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by installed - 17 Nov 2010 19:02

Hey,

This is my 2 cents. We are human. It is normal to have desires when you are with someone that you expect to have relations with. This is why chasidim get engaged quickly and disconnect until the wedding. You should be proud that you are not initiating the z'l. I didn't read the Garden of Peace but many people are telling me that it is a great book and I would imagine that it would touch on these issues.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by yechidah - 17 Nov 2010 19:14

this may sound a little strange to you ,but you need to be alone and think about this and write this down

1-why do I want marry this girl?

2-If tomorrow morning she would be afflicted with a terrible condition that would destroy her looks,or perhaps make her look not ugly but perhaps just quite average looking to you,perhaps put on an extra 20 pounds,would you still wish to spend the rest of your life with her?

3-write down all her non-physical maalos.

4-those characteristics that seem to bother you.If you can see that they are part and parcel of her personality,would you be able to accept her as she is,and not harp on them at all,but accept them (and not just tolerate them begrudgingly)

5- is trying to control another person part of your personality?Are you committed to let go of any unhealthy control?

6-would you be able to break your ego to the extent as to be machnia yourself,humble yourself to what she truly is and needs to be?if some of what she wishes to be or if some of her aspirations seem not perfectly aligned with yours,are you willing do still give to her.

can you picture yourself doing very mundane and even boring and even personally distastful acts of chesed for her,just to help her,and doing this,consistently, even if you will not receive in return?

7-if you would not need her as a crutch right now,and you no longer need her to fill a void in you,or you just met someone who now seems much better looking,finer middos,etc.,how quickly would you dump her?

You need to understand if you really care for this person,**what is inside this person**,or if you really don't,and your feelings of love is a form of dependency because she makes you feel good when you are around her.

This last point is a very difficult one that must be adressed

because if you end of marrying her, sooner or later all the superficial aspects will wear off, and you will be left with the real person behind the persona that you are viewing.

and that is the deep soul-searching that you need to do now-for your sake and for hers.

It's clear that she has a strong physical and emotional effect on you

strip that away, what is left?

That is what you need to focus on. The real person that is before you, know her well, not just externally, and see if you accept her as she is or not.

there is no quick solution to remove the unhealthy lust towards her. But doing the above will help.

also know that lusting her not only hurts you, you are hurting her as well.

she deserves to be known for who she is, and the lust prevents one from viewing her a person, as a whole entire human being.

So you need to start knowing her from the inside and focus on that as best as you can

hatzlacha rabbah my friend

I wish you the very best

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Kedusha - 17 Nov 2010 19:17

Thank you, Yechida, for addressing the more difficult and more crucial issue(s).

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by frumfiend - 17 Nov 2010 20:33

I think you should stop worrying so much. The main criteria for a compatible match is a common language and a physical attraction. It seems like you have both. You got a winning shidduch go for it. I don't think that someone who hasn't been married a number of years can have clear in his mind the difference between love and lust. I definitely think that for you love means you like to be with each other. Anything deeper will come with marriage

Hatzlacha

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 17 Nov 2010 20:36

I thought that if someone looks for specific characteristics in a spouse which actually irritate him, it may be a sign of an abusive family pattern. For example, a guy that was always harped on by his mom, ironically, will tend to pick a wife who will tend to harp on him [which he should actually try NOT to do]. If you are choosing specific characteristics in your spouse that you know irritate you, I think there may be something going on there that needs looking into.

Regarding zera l'vatala on dates, I also had this probably [let's take a survey of all the GYE people--who had this problem?]. Now, with hindsight, I realized I was LUSTING, not loving (and it took 10 years for me to realize this was all MY problem, and to stop thinking it was my wife's problem). Each time, each date I would try setting up different safeguards, but yet kept falling in some new and different way. I didn't realize it then, but this is a sign of lust addiction. I can

sometimes hold it at bay for a while, but until I got into serious recovery, it always came back. It was just a matter of time. Marriage didn't even help.

In addition, it could be you are going into topics or situations that you really oughtn't be going into right now.

As far as what to look for in a girl: My wife and I dated for a while, it didn't work out. A couple of years later some mutual friends strongly urged us to try dating again. Their advice was--FIRST OF ALL, DO YOU ENJOY THIS PERSON'S COMPANY! CAN YOU GET ALONG! We were instructed not to think about hashkafa or anything serious like that for the first couple of dates. It's not enough to be a good shidduch on paper, you also need to be a good shidduch in person.

Also, a HUGE piece of advice for dating is CAN YOU ACCEPT THIS PERSON THE WAY SHE IS! Don't expect her to change. Our job is not to change anyone (We can just barely manage to change ourselves, of all people!). Don't even expect that you'll be able to work on yourself eventually and accept these traits. If you can't live with them NOW, forget it.

Also, it is ultimately YOU who has to live with this girl for the rest of you life, not your Rabbonim. If they say something doesn't matter but it really bothers you, listen to yourself. [If you say something doesn't matter and it bothers them, you should probably listen to them!]

The best of luck to you,

--Eye.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Kedusha - 17 Nov 2010 20:57

[Frumfiend The star wrote on 17 Nov 2010 20:33:](#)

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Hatzlacha

FF,

I think you're minimizing the problem of making what is probably life's most important decision in this state. Confidence, how much recovery do you have? Notwithstanding your successes, it doesn't sound like you have 90 days clean. While 90 days is not a magic number, it's important to have a certain degree of recovery when making this most important decision. Otherwise, your judgment will be clouded.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 17 Nov 2010 21:06

[Kedusha wrote on 17 Nov 2010 20:57:](#)

I think you're minimizing the problem of making what is probably life's most important decision in this state.

I second that (in case you didn't already realize).

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by ur-a-jew - 17 Nov 2010 22:02

[Confidence wrote on 17 Nov 2010 16:55:](#)

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Hatzlacha

[Kedusha wrote on 17 Nov 2010 20:57:](#)

FF,

I think you're minimizing the problem of making what is probably life's most important decision in this state.

I actually agree with FF on this one. I don't think you can expect to "love" this girl when you hardly know her, no matter how long you've dated her. Dating is an artificial setting that does not mimic life, everyone is on their best behavior, she's all made up, etc. Love comes later and with a lot of hard work.

There is no question as Kedusha says that this is a momentous decision, but marriage always requires a leap of faith. The question then is how do I know if I want to build a family with this person, well if you have "a common language and a physical attraction" and she has good middos so then you have the basic ingredients to build a bayis neeman biyisroel. What more are you looking for. Continuing to endlessly date a girl to see if she fits some checklist that no girl on this planet can probably satisfy (and if she could she probably wouldn't be interested in you -- sorry to sound so harsh) is not healthy.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Kedusha - 17 Nov 2010 22:09

We don't disagree, UAJ. I think all of us know that, in the Torah view, love comes after marriage, as Rav Hirsch writes regarding Yitzchak and Rivka.

My point is a different one, which has been stated countless times on this forum: to succeed in dating and marriage, a person needs a certain degree of sobriety. Otherwise, his judgment and priorities will be clouded.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Nov 2010 07:31

I also had aother idea... If you're already dating, it would probably be a good idea to read GARDEN OF PEACE. Give you an idea of what marriage is all about.

--Eye.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Nov 2010 07:34

[Kedusha wrote on 17 Nov 2010 17:28:](#)

Al Pi Halacha, if the Zerah is not "Yoreh k'Chaitz" (literally "shooting like an arrow") the way it does during ejaculation, but just comes out, that does not have the Chomer of Zera l'vatata

STILL, THIS IS NOT SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING REGULARLY DURING SHIDDUCHIM!

--Eye.

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