

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 legitimize 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 ur-a-jew - 19 Nov 2010 00:13

Confidence you may what to check out this article from Aish.com:
www.aish.com/d/w/48952241.html titled "What is Love?" Hatzlacha

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 19 Nov 2010 07:08

Dear Confidence,

How are you doing?

--Eye.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by StrugglingGuy - 19 Nov 2010 17:31

To comment simply on one aspect of the post, I have also experience mzl on dates as well. I am not thinking about lust actively, but I guess it is a function of talking to someone you are attracted to, especially if you are seated close to each other on a couch for example. Since I am not actively causing this, I would have to think it is ok...

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 20 Nov 2010 16:49

[StrugglingGuy wrote on 19 Nov 2010 17:31:](#)

To comment simply on one aspect of the post, I have also experience mzl on dates as well. I am not thinking about lust actively, but I guess it is a function of talking to someone you are attracted to, especially if you are seated close to each other on a couch for example. Since I am not actively causing this, I would have to think it is ok...

...and try not to sit so close; and probably not for so long, either!

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by aaron - 21 Nov 2010 01:45

Doing great.... relationship is doing great.

I have been clean since nearly mid summer but had a week and a half of falling about 2 or months ago i think.

also, when i come to szl its not becasue im in that moment thinking of bad thoughts. rather, simply having normal conversation and enjoying her company can cause it. i really appreciate the 7 questions posed a couple days ago kedusha. at first, i had a bit of hesitation in being able to answer each one of the confidently, but now, i look at them and am bothered less and less.

i need to continue to evaluate the situation and make sure i am not nit-picking too much. The issue that has bothered me for a while has been one of intellect. its not that she is stupid. i know she isn't. but she carries herself in a girly way - one which i confused for a lack of intelligence for quite a while. i realized though that i cannot evaluate it during hte date but rather after the date i should reflect back and see if it was good enough for me. i know her midos are in line and she is a tremendous tzadekes. the whole world knows that . i just want to make sure she's the tzadekes thats right for me.

also, i think its just troubling diffrentiating whether she makes me happy, or am i deluding myself and lusting even though i don't even realize it. sometimes its hard. in general its hard to tell whether you are enjoying a person because they are giving somethign to you or because you simply enjoy their personality. kal vachomer with someone of the opposite gender.

i started reading garden of peace. i think i am ready to commit myself to that. but theoretically, the concept of totally giving of oneself could be done to anyone or even anything! am i just supposed to be choosing someone that i find it easy to give to? someone that i want to give to?

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by briut - 21 Nov 2010 02:48

[Confidence wrote on 21 Nov 2010 01:45:](#)

...am i just supposed to be choosing someone that i find it easy to give to? someone that i want to give to?

Here's just one simple guy's opinion on this: YES! YOU'VE GOT IT! If you find it EASY to give to them, and WANT to give to them, you're 90% of the way there!

I'm not sure what the remaining 10% is, but I think it has something to do with laughing (in a good way) at the corners where they're not really so strong or comfortable or capable or anything. If you can each laugh at the LACK in the other, it will be easy to love the strengths. After all, no one is strong in everything, with everyone, all the time [that's how He made us].

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Stuart - 21 Nov 2010 02:57

Sorry to bud in, but I think your thinking way too much into this. Of course, its a big decision, but it looks like your on the right track and she contains the basics to be a suitable ezer kenegdo for you.

Personally I don't think reading Garden of Peace right now is the way to go, except maybe the chapter in the back about dating. In fact, it may scare you away from marriage altogether. For sure read it in a year or two no matter how your relationship is going. (I am sure I'll get some dissenting views on this).

Regarding the lusting, this will probably exist no matter which (attractive) girl your dating. I think the attractiveness is good to get you going on a second or third date with the person before you get to know each other. If you really didn't like her personality, you would know by now, even if she's the prettiest one in the universe.

And one final point, which I am sure you know from reading this site is that dating and marriage doesn't get rid of this lust problem and addiction, no matter who you marry.

Looks like your on the right track. Hatzlach raba.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Kedusha - 21 Nov 2010 03:07

As Stuart said, marriage will not get rid of this problem. I would like to add that it will cloud your judgment when dating, which is why it is very helpful to have some good sobriety before starting a relationship and, of course, to maintain your sobriety thereafter.

Where does that leave you, now that you're already seeing someone? That's a good question. Ideally, I would advise you to take a break from all dating, including with this girl, until you have 90 days clean. If you do things right, that will only take 90 days! This is the greatest gift that you can give your future spouse, whomever it may be. How do you feel about that?

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Re: Learning to Love in dating
Posted by Stuart - 21 Nov 2010 03:41

Now that I stuck my nose in this, I am going to have to disagree with R'Kedusha. Of course it matters how severe the acting out was before, but I think if you have the right intentions, your aware of your weaknesses you will be ok. Going a full 90 days clean is not so simple even when your doing the right things.

You've got a good thing going, and I don't think its worth dropping.

It goes without saying that you for sure seek daas torah not just us virtual people.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by Kedusha - 21 Nov 2010 04:17

Thank you, Stuart. I certainly don't want what I said to be the final word.

There's nothing magical about 90 days, of course. My, point, though, is that we need some degree of recovery to properly make major decisions like this.

Personally, I was able to stop acting out shortly before I started dating my wife, and I stayed clean throughout our dating and engagement, totaling over 3 1/2 months. To my great sorrow, I fell three times in one week, around 5 weeks before we got married.

Had I not stayed clean while we were dating, I can assure you that the engagement never would have happened. My guilt would have showed, and it would have almost certainly caused my (now) wife to end the relationship. Other people may be better at covering up their inner guilt. However, there is still the serious concern that the flames of unbridled lust will have an adverse effect on the prospective husband's decision making capability. Hamavin Yavin.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by aaron - 22 Nov 2010 00:53

B"H i've been clean since nearly mid summer with a week exception about 2 months ago

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by Holy Yid - 24 Nov 2010 01:01

I a writing something that was told to me in the sense of sharing. Everyone can either take it, discuss it with their mentors and counselors, or ignore it.

A Rabbinic figure who is very well respected and experienced in the field of shalom bais told me "If you do not respect the young woman do not marry her."

May you all only know bracha.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by StrugglingGuy - 24 Nov 2010 18:33

[Eye.nonymous wrote on 20 Nov 2010 16:49:](#)

[StrugglingGuy wrote on 19 Nov 2010 17:31:](#)

To comment simply on one aspect of the post, I have also experience mzl on dates as well. I am not thinking about lust actively, but I guess it is a function of talking to someone you are attracted to, especially if you are seated close to each other on a couch for example. Since I am not actively causing this, I would have to think it is ok...

...and try not to sit so close; and probably not for so long, either!

About sitting close together, Ideally yes you are right. It is conceiveable to date while *standing* next to each like bowling or something like that. you can also date at a resturant seated across from each other and I think that can help as well. However, there are times like when watching a movie (pg13 or lower of course)

About the length of time, though , I mean that is what dating is..you speak to the person or just talking oin an apt setting where it is inevitable that you will sit close together.

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Re: Learning to Love in dating

Posted by StrugglingGuy - 24 Nov 2010 18:34

last part got inverted a lil bit sry but I think you get what I was tryong to say

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