

Help me please

Posted by yetzer - 05 Jul 2011 18:06

Just joined the forum & was looking for some help. I am 40 years old married with 8 children Bli ayin horah. I have struggled with impure thoughts, shmiras anayim , z"l, etc.. since my early 20's .While I was told by the few people who i confided to about my issues that it was perfectly normal to have these feelings, no one seemed to have the solution to curb these habits. Learning mussar helped a bit , however it was and is a continuous problem. I thought that Marriage would help resolve the issue somewhat , but it seems that the yetzer horah gets stronger & stronger & pushes me to stray; by looking at inappropriate books,magazines, (occasional movies) , looking & desiring other women etc.... the more I write the more repulsed I become at my Behavior . That will only last for a for a bit & then I will revert to these bad habits & i wil

I feel bad again Please help!!

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Re: Help me please

Posted by helpfyi - 17 Jul 2011 18:26

i agree with R' eye he's saying it well, we shouldn't expect anything back bec then we will never be satisfied, and its for sure not an excuse to look at other women, that is just a proof that its all about YOUR pleasure and if she won't give it i will get it else where. We have to guard our eyes not matter what, if you were single you would have to and now that you have a wife who you think can give more doesn't make it more allowed. be happy you have a wife who loves you and you love her, think about that and not of what she can maybe could be get better.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by yetzer - 18 Jul 2011 04:31

Thank you Eye.nonymous. Well said.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Jul 2011 05:33

I'm glad that helped.

--Eye.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by TheJester - 18 Jul 2011 08:14

[yetzer wrote on 15 Jul 2011 19:24:](#)

For many years in the marriage it was very much ho hum with intimacy (other than the fact that between being pregnant or nursing didn't help much) it was discovered through joint therapy that although I was a very very helpful husband(not to brag) I was not very emotionally supportive enough outside the bedroom,thus the very passive approach for my wife inside the bedroom. Having worked on this diligently (to a 90% approval rating from the wife in this issue; always being warm, caring, soft spoken etc....) this helped a lot in the bedroom, however, (nothing to do with entitlement etc...) I can't say that it has been enough on her part (meaning if I have come this far most of the time to do wat u asked , why can't you come this far in wat i ask? not that I am asking as you say " victoria secret, porn star, a list socialite" rather a wife who understands her husbands needs who therefore can dress a bit more edgy, who could be a bit more aggressive in the bedroom, who could take care of household needs and be a wife who is attentive also to her husbands intimate needs. I offered hundreds (no exaggeration) of times that she gets cleaning ladies etccc.. but she always refuses (for 1 reason or another) so obviously it would be hard to be rested for intimacy if your forever cleaning, going to bed late because of laundry etc... So while maybe my needs are great I don't think I am asking for so much. By the way many of these things have been discussed with her (certainly what she needs) although she rarely likes to talk about my issues even when they are laced with many compliments how she has improved etc..... (because it makes her uncomfortable to talk about it).

Firstly, I hope you know that I was exaggerating with your "demands" for dramatic effect.

I hear you. And I think that sometimes, us guys are too quick to place 100% of the blame on ourselves, or believe that we must martyr ourselves (because the problem is in "her" and we are helpless). This is just plain wrong, because it is unsustainable, unhealthy, and if we are normal human beings, eventually causes us to crack at the seams, and end up on here (or worse).

It is often true, in marriage, that issues are shared, even where they appear one-sided. I could even make myself unpopular with extreme examples. Moving on... When we "fix" things, we expect things to get better. So if we have an issue, then fix our behavior, we then assume that the issue will go away, because the root cause has disappeared. This is in contrast to people who fix the "symptom" but not the "cause".

However, that's not how it works. It's like realizing that a leaking roof has let water in and caused the fuse to blow. Fixing the roof does not necessarily get the lights working again. Fixing the roof is necessary to *start the healing process*, but does not in itself heal. When a couple get into a "bad pattern", that is very hard to change. Intimacy is the apex of many things - position, power, self, partner, esteem, physical health, mental state, emotional state - to name just a few. One or two early experiences can shape the sexuality of a person. *A fortiori* years and years of learned responses and expectations.

Typically, people in your situation would see a therapist - not for the relationship itself (presumably, from what you say), but for the intimate side of things. That is often enough to change things and make couples happier. In some cases. For some types of people.

A more interesting point, however, is whether that is actually right for you. Firstly as a *frum yid* (ask your LOR - you'll get a range of opinions), but more importantly, is it right for you. Or more specifically, is getting what you want, *really what you want*?

Let's start with an extreme and possibly upsetting and unsettling example. A man likes [insert completely inappropriate relationship object here]. He feels that without it, his life is empty, and he is unsatisfied. Is it best for that man to keep wanting it, or should he change his desire? *Can* he change his desire? What is his best course of action? Now, these are all huge issues, that are addressed in many ways, in many places. From married women, other men, and boys, to paid services and animals (all R"L). Most *frum* people would say that in all of these scenarios, if he could stop desiring these (if indeed it is possible), it would be ideal. Mostly, because they involve big *aveiros*, and/or serious crimes against humanity. Yet this ignores the crime against himself. People don't usually think much about the one with the desire, who is

dying inside.

And this internal death is no different to someone who desires his wife in a way he is not getting. In all the above examples, the married man has the option of his wife, as well! What makes the difference is the strength of the desire, not the object of desire.

Now, I am in no way, shape or form trying to say that your issue is as horrid as the catalog listed above. But *to you, it is*. You need something, and you're not getting it. So now - do you need your need? Can you work on your need, so as to feel more fulfilled otherwise?

This is where lust comes into the picture. Lust is a kind of wanting, to make us feel good. It validates us. It is something we need. It is something we deserve. It comes in different flavors. It can even be permitted!

From reading everything you have written to date, I honestly think that you would be a happier person if you learned to be happier, not if you get what you think you need to be happier. That is possible, and it is sublime. It is freedom from your needs, to which you are currently a slave. (And for the record, I disagree that intimacy is not an expectation within a marriage. It most certainly is a valid expectation, and if unreasonably withheld, can and should be grounds for divorce. However, fulfillment of all desires is not - no matter how small these might seem to the one demanding them. And I believe that transactional marriage can work splendidly for some people, even if it is not ideal.)

Now if you want to do something with this lust, you have lots of options. Some are like having a pressure-cooker inside you, and others are like lying on the sand as the sea washes it away. OK, who am I kidding - you have options, and other people on here might be able to guide you through them.

On the flip side, and in contrast to what others have said, it is my horrendously unqualified and "gut feeling" that your wife could change a little to make you happier, too. But I think that it will take a lot of patience and work on your side to effect this - not just fixing the leaky roof, but perhaps going out and getting a new fusebox, and putting in a dehumidifier to soak up all the rainwater.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Jul 2011 08:54

Yossi,

Taking out all the fancy terminology, what your message boils down to is: LUST IS OKAY. And it's perfectly normal to make demands of your wife.

This may work for normal people.

But for a person who is addicted to lust, who craves sexual gratification and will NEVER be satisfied by it, then lust--ESPECIALLY WHEN OTHER PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED (especially as a wife), is destructive.

This does not mean never to have sex. But, to go for that feeling in the bedroom like you've suddenly turned into Arnold Schwarzenegger and you've got drool dribbling down your face--that is poison. It is not a justified, or healthy desire.

--Eye.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by TheJester - 18 Jul 2011 09:17

Eye,

Thank you for pointing out how obtuse I was! What I meant to say is that lust can be benign, for some people. But mostly, it is the cause of unhappiness, for the person him/herself, and the people around them.

The entire point of that previous post was to say that lust the very thing that our dear OP should eradicate, for his own sake.

The point about what needs "fixing" was obliquely referring to the emotional side - it is the attitude that is what probably needs fixing, from what I can discern - **but that is only a guess**. There is most certainly a disconnect, it is probably mutual, and I believe that it should be addressed. At no point did I say how his wife should change - I don't know, but I believe that *some* change is on the cards. I think that, first, he should deal with his own lust, and then they should mutually find out how they can "reconnect".

It might then be as simple as his wife showing some desire or initiative, which is laudable and good. It might be her showing more consideration in some way. It is not my place to know, and this is not the place to debate what needs changing.

I am evidently not the best at expressing myself. However I would venture that we are in violent agreement, on most fronts.

PS

Okay, I think I see why this was not evident. Something that I wanted to do was differentiate between sexual relations being a basic right, but specific desires not being a basic right, and indeed being potentially detrimental to the one who has them. I.e. I might have a right to expect relations, but it might be unreasonable to demand it on a trampoline... And by having desires that focus on an object (or person-as-object) rather than a person, I am doing myself a disservice.

Nevertheless, it is important for a couple to negotiate themselves how to connect, as people, in a way that works for them.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Jul 2011 10:51

Thanks for clarifying, Yossi. That was very helpful, and very admirable of you.

--Eye.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by helpfyi - 18 Jul 2011 13:01

yossie,eye- so it comes down to a man helping himself by guarding his eyes and getting over the lust and he will be happier and see results correct?

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Re: Help me please

Posted by TheJester - 18 Jul 2011 13:18

[Helpfyi wrote on 18 Jul 2011 13:01:](#)

yossie,eye- so it comes down to a man helping himself by guarding his eyes and getting over the lust and he will be happier and see results correct?

I suppose that depends upon what you mean by "it", "happier" and "results". If I were to summarize what I said into one line, it would be "think more about others, and less about yourself, and everyone will benefit". Unless criticizing or trying to change someone, in which case "look more to yourself, and less to others".

Guarding your eyes probably falls under thinking more about others than yourself. Getting over

lust probably fits more under changing yourself, instead of seeing problems in others.

And one of my favorites from William Blake ("clod" referring to soft and pliable mud, as opposed to a hard and unchanging "pebble"):

The Clod and the Pebble

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a heaven in hell's despair."

So sung a little Clod of Clay,
Trodden with the cattle's feet,
But a Pebble of the brook
Warbled out these metres meet:

"Love seeketh only Self to please,
To bind another to its delight,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a hell in heaven's despite."

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Re: Help me please
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Jul 2011 16:14

[Helpfyi wrote on 18 Jul 2011 13:01:](#)

yossie,eye- so it comes down to a man helping himself by guarding his eyes and getting over the lust and he will be happier and see results correct?

Guarding one's eyes and getting over lust is only the beginning.

(You may have heard this before:)

Lust is actually not our problem--it is our solution. We use it to solve pain--restlessness, irritability, and discontent (RID). It's a pain killer, and has done the job for many of us for many years. Until it got out of control and took over our lives. It became a problem unto itself. Then we tried to stop but could not.

So, we have to get back to the root of the problem. The pain for which we run to our pain-killer, the RID. What causes that?

EGO. We want life to go OUR way, but it doesn't. We have plans, demands, and expectations, but G-d's plan for the world isn't always the same as ours. Whenever there is friction between OUR will and G-d's will, we experience RID, and then we have pain, and then we run to our drug of choice--lust. Much like babies to a pacifier.

When we can put our ego aside, when we can focus on contributing to life instead of taking from it, when we can focus on helping others instead of what we can get from them, when we can accept life on G-d's terms instead of trying to make everything hold to OUR terms, then the RID diminishes, the pain decreases, and we have less desire to escape to our drug of choice.

Not acting out is just the beginning of the beginning. Becoming an all-around useful human being in every way is what comes next, and it's a lifetime journey of ever increasing joy and satisfaction.

--Eye.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by TheJester - 18 Jul 2011 16:44

See? I told you that we were in violent agreement wit hone another!

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Re: Help me please

Posted by helpfyi - 18 Jul 2011 18:16

eye,yossi- i agree that its only the beginning and that is step 1, so we all agree, but what about reb yetzer??

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Re: Help me please

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Jul 2011 18:31

[Helpfyi wrote on 18 Jul 2011 18:16:](#)

but what about reb yetzer??

Perhaps he was waiting for the dust to settle.

--Eye.

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Re: Help me please

Posted by Eye.nonymous - 18 Jul 2011 18:41

This is related to our discussion here, a response I wrote to Yetzer in a different thread about lust in marriage.

www.guardyoureyes.org/forum/index.php?topic=1593.msg111528#msg111528

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