

Allergic reaction

Posted by Dr.Watson - 12 Mar 2014 23:45

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I've come to understand that I have an allergic reaction to lust triggers. whenever I'm triggered, my mind starts going to places that causes me trouble. When I'm surrounded by such triggers, the resultant allergic reaction can be extremely difficult to cope with, almost debilitating.

The trouble is that I'm triggered by just about every frum girl/woman aged between 16 and 40. I have the good fortune to live in a frum area. However, I often find myself surrounded by triggers and have no escape.

This happens whenever I walk down the main road in my neighborhood, and especially on shabbos, or in the kosher shops, or at weddings. These situations are unavoidable in practice.

Surrendering is all very well, but when I'm in these situation many times a day it can be too hard to think about surrender every time.

So my question is, how can I cope with this trigger? Is there a way to stop the allergic reaction?

My question is not how to not fall. My question is how can I stop the allergic torture?

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by Machshovo Tova - 13 Mar 2014 00:59

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I also have an allergic reaction to lust triggers. Whenever I'm triggered, my mind also starts going to places that causes me trouble...

I'm also triggered by just about every frum girl/woman aged between 16 and 40 - and even younger or older - and even some boys. I also live in a frum area - maybe we're neighbors. I also often find myself surrounded by triggers...

I suffered from this for many many decades. But B"H lately I've been able to keep it in control. With Hashem's help, I now guard my eyes in the street, at weddings, in shopping malls etc.

I do not accomplish it by "surrendering". I simply have come to the realization that:

1. This is no good for me and I need to do whatever I can to save myself.

2. **There are no half-measures.** The only thing that can work (for me) is a total commitment to avoid all triggering sights as well as all triggering thoughts.

B"H I'm constantly reminded of my vulnerability every time I pass a triggering sight. But habit becomes second nature and I just bounce my eyes away from those sights and I try to keep my mind clean as well. The resultant pleasure from being able to keep clean, is a strong incentive to keep going in the right direction.

Just today I had a case where I walked down the corridor at work and my eyes noticed a frum co-worker sitting with her back to me, and her top and bottom pieces of clothing were somehow separated quite more than a tefach, exposing her back. B"H instinctively (born out of habit) I shut my eyes and turned away. In past years that would have been a sure trip to the bathroom... And even now the "allergic reaction" kept on lingering, but I knew I cannot afford to dwell on it, so I kept on ignoring it until it got the hint and bugged off.

So, as they say, "practice makes perfect". There are no easy solutions, but if you would know my miserable life story and compare it to my current state, you would admit that it's worth a try.

As the Rambam says:

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I know, I know. Many folks here think it's dangerous to use Torah, Mussar and Tshuva techniques, but as they say: when one is drowning, he tries anything.

Hatzlacha

MT

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by cordnoy - 13 Mar 2014 01:31

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Even for those who say not to use torah, and perhaps I am one of them, although I tend to keep "higher Powers" out of it, what you said was absolute, and fair game for all; you supported it with Torah.

I kept score in the beginning.

my first hundred desires, I was about 50 for 100 that I avoided the second look.

My next time around, I was 60.

the third - even a bit higher.

Presently, I do not keep score any longer, and for the most part, I can avoid it.

Many of you have heard me write about another of my desires.... women's ling....I would not be able to pass by a picture, a link, a clip, a real article of clothing without giving in. I now can take care of my bodily functions (asher yatzar ones) in the bathroom without touching any laundry on the floor, and that is not because the floor is spotless.

One win leads to another which leads to another, and as MT would say: mitzvah goreres mitzvah.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by Dr.Watson - 13 Mar 2014 01:53

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Thank you for your reply. You're right of course.

I don't always look. In fact, I often have a harder time when I don't look. See, when I look I often realise that she's not that pretty and there's nothing to obsess over. When I force myself not to look, I still imagine that there's a perfect beautiful woman near me, and that thought is hard to deal with.

It's not the looking that drives me crazy it's the fact of it.

The fact that there are good-looking women all around triggers me and I start going crazy. I can't look anywhere, and everywhere I go I'm triggered just by being in the vicinity of all these women.

Sometimes I look just to break the torture. I feel like I'm surrounded by 15 beautiful women or so and I can't stand it. So I look up, and take it all in, just to go from woman to woman and judge their looks, so I can know exactly how many gorgeous women there are. Not 15 now, it's only 3 or 4.

Phew. Feel better.

Oh no, I've given into my lust. I've looked at all these women and objectified them. Argh!!

Let me paint the picture:

I'm in the kosher shop with my wife, pushing a trolley. Up ahead is a girl, so I look over. Another girl, so I look at my trolley. Suddenly my wife sees a friend of hers and says hello, and I'm supposed to acknowledge her with a quick nod and smile.

Now my allergy's kicking in, I'm trying to look down and breathe calmly but I've already seen the friend and she's right there so it's hard. Stop fantasising! I go by myself to pick up yoghurt and there's like 4 women hanging around there. Don't look don't look don't look! Get the yoghurt, look down, push the trolley. Crash into another trolley. Sorry. Another woman. Trigger!! Look down, breathe deeply. Stop fantasising! I'm starting to loose it. I'm getting stressed. I need to get out of here, but I've got to do the shopping. Ah my wife's coming. Good.

Down the aisle. Another friend and her mother. I have to stay to be polite but it's torture. At this point I want nothing more than to run to the bathroom and act on my triggers. Can't, I have to stay there and get irritable. No, can't, must be polite.

S\*\*t, out the corner of my eye I notice a real stunner coming my way. Heart rate is through the roof. breathing hard. Be polite. Get lost you annoying friend. Good, she's gone. Wife asks if I'm OK. No I'm not.

"Yes" I snap, "I'm fine".

"Why are you snapping at me?"

"I'm not snapping, you always say I'm snapping"

"Can we not argue in the shop please"

"Well don't tell me I'm snapping then"

"Stop it. Please."

Argh! that beautiful woman is still there. I'll go round.

"Where are you going?"

"I just remembered we need grape juice"

And so it continues. More friends, with more mothers to smile at. More beautiful women coming towards me. Heart rate up. Feeling very on edge. Have to get out. No way out. Irritating wife. Irritated wife.

Lining up to pay. Oh good, all the beautiful women are right here at the checkout. Where can I look? Straight down. Breathe, breathe. Pay. Get out. More women on the street outside. My wife's trying to talk to me. I'm at breaking point. I can't listen to this. Shut up and leave me with my thoughts.

"Why are you in such a bad mood?"

"Argh, can we just get home already"

"What's up with you?!"

"Argh"

So, that's the picture.

I can't really express how frustrating and torturous it can be.

I'm not asking how I can manage to not fall at this point.

My question is, how can I go shopping and not have to endure this torture?

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by dms1234 - 13 Mar 2014 02:30

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Me too. I also have this problem and its tough. But changing my attitude about girls has helped. I posted this somewhere else on the forum:

I have to give credit for what i am about to say to Skeptical. He taught me what i know about this:

**dms1234**

We have to realize that woman are people too. it sounds silly but its true. We have objectified them soo much. We have to respect them as people just like we are people. Just as we would want respect from people so do they. Look at it like this: if the girl your staring at would know the intensity that you are staring at her, would she feel respected? NO! Absolutely not. She would feel ashamed, angry, and completely demoralized.

This is what I think of: She is a person just like me and deserves the proper respect and if she would know that i am looking at her like this what would be her reaction? (it wouldn't be good)

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by mr.clean - 13 Mar 2014 03:13

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ok ur picture that u painted, epic. lol. really a perfect description of what goes on in our heads. maybe its a good idea to think of BLANK when these people come around, and i mean think of nothing, it seems ur so hellbent on not lusting that u end up lusting the whole time! just whisk them away think about sports or the news but dont focus on not lusting or lusting just focus on something else completly.

i was once at a public sporting event and i remeber waiting outside to get in and there were non jewish women dressed the way they dress EVERYWHERE i literaly had swaety palms and

shortness of breath bec i was trying so hard NOT to focus on them... so every time i saw another one i would bug out and say to myself "I CCANT LOOK I CANT LOOK I CANT LOOK, UH OH ANPOTHER ONE I CANT LOOKL I CANT LOOK ETC." id drive myself insane so i just decided to like not be goires them at all. it worked better for me then working on not looking.

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by cordnoy - 13 Mar 2014 03:37

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perhaps don't shop...not by yourself, and not with your wife.

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by moish u.k. - 13 Mar 2014 17:12

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[cordnoy wrote:](#)

perhaps don't shop...not by yourself, and not with your wife.

Thats not a long term solution.

I would hate to think that recovery means that i can't go into shops, can't go to weddings,  
can't walk in the streets, can't go to the office etc etc

Recovery has to mean that i learn a way to live normally

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Re: Allergic reaction

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Posted by ur-a-jew - 13 Mar 2014 19:32

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Dov has made the suggestion many a time that when you see a woman that is provoking your lust to daven for them. Many people when they read this seem to have an allergic reaction to the suggestion. Daven for a porn star? Huh!?! But there I believe a chochmah to it. Subconsciously at least you and me have made woman into Gods. But they are not. They are people. Remarkably, they have the same physical and emotional needs we do. By davening for them we come to this realization that they are not all powerful. They will not no matter how beautiful they may be, solve my life's problems and they even have problems of their own. Sometimes even more problems then we have. It takes training and practice to reprogram our brain. A woman is simply a person that like us was created b'tzelem elokim. The same way I don't get an allergic reaction when I see my friend from shul in the supermarket I can learn not to get an allergic reaction when I see his wife. Of course, if I start oggling her I will get that reaction. But I don't have to ogle her I can just acknowledge her presence like I would any other person and go on with my life.

Rabbi Shafier based on the Sefer Hachinuch takes it a step further. That in reality there is only one "woman" in our lives, and that is our wives. That is there is only one standard for how a woman looks and that is the image of our wife. Every other female is simply not even a close second. You wouldn't get turned on by a gorilla, so likewise in your mind every other woman is like that gorilla, they are a different species. My wife, she's a woman! Obviously, it takes time to recalibrate our brains to start thinking this way. But it starts with the recognition that all of those people, are simply that people and nothing more.

Much Hatzlacha

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by cordnoy - 13 Mar 2014 20:39

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[moish u.k. wrote:](#)

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

perhaps don't shop...not by yourself, and not with your wife.

Thats not a long term solution.

I would hate to think that recovery means that i can't go into shops, can't go to weddings,  
can't walk in the streets, can't go to the office etc etc

Recovery has to mean that i learn a way to live normally

we are not looking for long term solutions.

We are dealing with the present.

the way the Doc described his shoppin' experiences doesn't leave too much of a doubt as to  
what it required now; and that is: not to shop!

After a period of sobriety, we can debate regarding the long term.

Now, you'll ask me...howbout the street?

I don't know the answer to that yet, but it seems to me that shopping is a more direct issue.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by Dr.Watson - 13 Mar 2014 20:52

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Thank you all for your responses.

I suppose it takes time to reprogram my brain as to how I look at women. It seems hard, but I  
think it's crucial to recovery.

Cordnoy, I hear you, but in reality I need to go to the shops. My wife can't always go and can't always carry all the bags, so unless I starve, or tell my wife to make several trips, I have to go.

In any case I described the shops cos it was on my mind. The same thing happens of the street, after shul, at weddings, occasionally in my own home. There has to be a way.

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by cordnoy - 13 Mar 2014 21:04

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then go in with a plan....not for the entire hour....for the first women you will bump into.....what are you going to do?

and by the way, although my wife does not know the extent of my issues, I have told her in the past that malls and such are a problem for me. The entire family knows that I do not shop.

[Now, what I used to do when they shopped was a different story, but we don't focus on the past either.]

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by TehillimZugger - 13 Mar 2014 22:32

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[cordnoy wrote:](#)

I now can take care of my bodily functions (asher yatzar ones) in the bathroom without touching any laundry on the floor, and that is not because the floor is spotless.

A charpa and busha! There is dirty laundry strewn across the floor in your bathroom and you're not ashamed to admit it?! How are you going to find shidduchim for your daughters?!

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by TehillimZugger - 13 Mar 2014 22:36

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[Dr. Watson wrote:](#)

Let me paint the picture:

I'm in the kosher shop with my wife, pushing a trolley.

I loooooooooove it!

You left out one thing!

**Warning: Spoiler!**

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Re: Allergic reaction

Posted by Dr.Watson - 13 Mar 2014 23:31

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A cart! I'm so sorry, I meant a cart.

Hey, I remembered to write 'lining up' instead of 'queuing up'.

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