

BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish

Posted by startrekuser - 20 Mar 2014 02:44

I just passed 40 days on the 90 day chart. I was on this website once before about 1.5 yrs ago but left. So what made me come back? I've been corresponding with another member of GYE and I've shared my story with him and I'm going to share my story with the group. I need help to deal with a lot of pain.

I'm a 47 year old BT and married with a 13 year old child. I've always struggled in my marriage to the point where I didn't care anymore. I let myself get emotionally involved with a woman at work (WAW) and I thought my marriage would be ending soon. We would tell each other about our problems and support each other with advice, etc. We would talk every day and have lunch once a week. I definitely felt strongly connected with her emotionally. I wanted to do all kinds of things for her: buy her gifts, give her compliments, other things, etc. I held back from doing these things knowing that was totally inappropriate.

I was very confused - thinking I was going to get divorced and get more involved with this woman. Then I decided that I have to stop masturbating b/c that was definitely interfering with my thinking and was preventing Hashem's divine light from shining on me. I didn't like what I had become. I also decided to do for my wife what I wanted to do for this woman.

So on Monday the WAW wanted to discuss a guy she is dating and I told her that it's inappropriate for us to discuss each other's relationships anymore since she's a single woman and I'm a married man. She was shocked, but understood. I'm experiencing a lot of emotional pain because I still feel a strong emotional connection to her. It upsets me a lot to think of her dating other men and that's one reason why I set up these rules between us. In addition, I've never felt such a strong emotional connection with my wife. She is often very harsh and critical of me and I don't feel safe discussing any negative feelings with her. It's this emptiness that contributed to my having an emotional relationship with the WAW. So I'm giving up the one person that I can share my feelings with to focus my positive energies on my wife. This is causing me tremendous pain. I don't have a best friend and I don't have a shoulder to lean on, but I'm putting my faith in Hashem to change my situation for the better. I took my wife out for dinner on Sunday night (sort of a private Purim Seudah), bought her a nice gift and card and said romantic things to her. She loved it! I plan on keeping up this treatment of her and hope that she will change also.

That's my story. I need moral support at this point b/c I suffer and cry every night from the emptiness. With Hashem's help, everything will get better. I was using the masturbation to mask the empty feeling from my unsatisfying and failing marriage. Now I've decided to take

responsibility for my marriage.

During the first few weeks on the chart I would have about 1 horrible day per week of just massive negative emotions including thoughts of suicide. I don't seem to have those anymore, but just a constant nagging feeling of emptiness that's worst when I'm alone.

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by startrekuser - 23 Mar 2014 07:53

I'm wondering if anyone else has had any similar experiences or can help me to put my experience in context. Aside from what I'm continuing to do, to the extent that it's not enough, what else can I do? I'll be seeing this woman everyday Monday through Friday because she works fairly close to me. We both just started at this company and it's a really good company to work for, so we may be close to each other for years.

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by Dov - 23 Mar 2014 10:21

A magnet pulling you. I relate, have had the same thing at my work, and work with many attractive women as well. You sound way too afraid of her and at the same time, worship her a bit, no?

But before I get to that, I want to share with you that I felt a rare and simple vulnerability in your share (post) above. You described the situation including how you felt about it, with no detectable shame: just the facts as they really are for you. You opened your heart right up, here.

That is rare, chaver. Your 47 years of maturity are paying off big time. You are OK with cutting the garbage (religious, emotional, or psychological *paint*) and just saying the truth that you

spoke with this woman, got close to her, connected, and feel terribly attracted to her - and that you do not feel some of those things with your very own wife. No shame and explanation - just honesty. Refreshing.

No wonder you were able to take the next right step and tell her honestly that you can't continue this way! And no wonder you were able to start taking responsibility for your own marriage relationship, instead of waiting for G-d to 'drop' a great marriage onto you both. Your wife is undoubtedly a great lady who deserves the very best - and so do you.

My wife and I try to take nightly walks (weather permitting) and talk more when we are walking than when we sit in a room face to face. It just helps the talking get going sometimes, and is a great routine that pays off over time. We cherish the walks, now.

OK, now about the lady at work. I am going to suggest a thing to you that will help you, be"H, if you actually do it right: Pray for her. By name.

Ask G-d to give her everything she needs. Here are some ideas: success in her relationships with any future dating partners and with choosing the right man to marry, success in her relationship with G-d, good health, protection from making bad life-mistakes, freedom from pain and fear of being taken advantage of or from confusion, and success in her employment, parnossah, children and child-raising, etc...basically everything you would ask G-d to give your own children.

You seem to have already discovered that masturbating yourself, using porn, or fantasizing about other women hurts your *own* marriage on a deep level, is that not so?

So you have seen that lusting kills love, then.

Now, it works the opposite way, as well:

Love kills lust.

Practically speaking: If I can just forget about a woman I suddenly saw and felt lust for and drop her, then great! My relationship with her is certainly not a sexual at all, because she isn't even mine! Being able to live comfortably and peacefully with *that*, I call 'a good day'.

But when I *do* feel like holding onto her, her image, or fantasy, and cannot seem to shake a lust opportunity 'just like that' - then praying **for her** works like nothing else, *for me*. This is not a gimmick. Rather, I believe it is because the proper relationship is restored.

Hashem certainly loves all his creations, including the shiksah (or Jewess) you work with. She is certainly not an evil temptress, but just another human being bumbling about life like most of us are. In Borchy Nafshi, Dovid haMelech writes: *Yismach Hashem b'ma'asov* - "Let G-d take pleasure in all His creations" when he lists the sky and earth, rivers, seas, trees, lions, birds, beasts, and people (not just Jews) that He made and feeds and cares for, day in and day out. A tzadik wishes all creatures well and 'joins heaven and earth (m'acheid Sh'maya v'arah). And certainly Hashem treasures the relationship a gentile has with Him, as well. After all, He told Moshe Rabbeinu over and over (in 3 different ways) that His *main* interest in drawing out the exodus was not for the Jews, but *for Par'oh and the Egyptians to come to believe in Him and know Him!* Why should the lady you are obsessing about be any different than the Egyptians? He cares for her, and you can establish your **proper** relationship with her[/i] by davening for her. Doing any more than that is poisonous for you and will twist the business relationship that Hashem *does* want you to have with her. It will be damaging for both you and her, as you have discovered, and can get much worse.

I know there are many who will tell you that praying for her is the last thing you should do and just preposterous. They will say that sincerely praying for her has got to just 'play into her hand', or focus you *even more* on her. They will council you to run like heck from her and "Forget about the pink elephant!"

But the experience of many shows that such is simply not the case. And I tell you that *running* is just a gimmick - a geographical solution. Face the fear, man. She is not a goddess, not a powerful magnet of feminine power, as you wrote:

I don't think she realizes the power she can have over men. That's what makes this so difficult - the addiction to the attention.

...but rather, a simple human like you and me. Like DMS1234 wrote. So take a deep breath and gently take her off the pedestal - by praying for her sincerely.

She makes you crazy already, so you have nothing to lose but your obsession about her goddess-like quality.

Consider starting to pray for her *by name* at least once a day in sh'moneh esrei - and each time you feel drawn to her as you describe.

You are way, way too afraid of her. She is a frail human being, just as you and I are. Davening for her this way will change her from the goddess of sexual power you truly see her as now - to a human being that Hashem takes care of and has a purpose for. And you will then let her go - and will probably not even notice that you have till long after.

Hatzlocha, old friend.

- Dov

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by startrekuser - 23 Mar 2014 17:22

Thanks Dov! I think your advice is excellent and I'll try it. I don't think I worship this woman and I do see her as having her own difficulties and struggling through life - even more than myself. I think for me, that's part of the allure. She's not Jewish, but thinks she is and feels a very strong connection to Judaism. She knows that she has ancestors that were Jewish but can't prove her Jewishness. To get to the point, she wants to convert and I feel this need to help her and advise

her. I'm a baal teshuva, so I see her going through some of the same struggles I went through. So I've always felt this desire to help her. Our relationship became more than just Jewish related advice and I admit to letting it happen even though I knew I shouldn't have. I knew I was playing with fire but thought I wouldn't get burned. The fire felt GREAT!

I don't fear her, but I fear the loss of control I feel when I see her. I guess that's the obsession part. She also enters my thoughts a lot but that's my fault b/c I purposely "thought" about her very often previous to my recent change of direction. I opened the flood gates, so to speak. I will pray for her. I think it's a great idea.

As for my wife, I see a noticeable difference in her since my change of behavior towards her. I'm continuing to shower her with compliments, cards, gifts and make sure we speak every night in privacy and go out at least once/week. I also recently listened to a great Torah MP3 marriage series on Theshmuz.com. I recommended it highly for anyone that is married or is considering getting married.

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by AlexEliezer - 23 Mar 2014 20:22

Hey Trek,

Just catching up with your thread.

You're doing amazing work.

I can relate to what you're going through, the WAW, the wife, the fantasy life, rebuilding the relationship. It's all very much connected.

You're doing great work.

There will always be challenges, obstacles along the way. Be prepared by being fully committed to your goal of freeing yourself from the chains of lust and connecting with your wife.

Alex

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by Dov - 23 Mar 2014 23:30

I was going to write a bunch of stuff here in response, but would rather shut up and let you do your thing putting this into action. If you do, you yourself will see things you d not see now, as I and many here have found.

One thing I will write is that we are all big (or little) chachomim...until we start to actually take actions of recovery. Then we get 'dumb' in a hurry, learning that we really *do not* have the answers we thought we had, that G-d is a lot more powerful and loving than we ever gave Him credit, and that understanding why or how it works or why we do bad things is just plain *useless*. It is all rather humbling to me and others who work this program.

And we need the humbling more than we need pretty much anything else.

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by startrekuser - 25 Mar 2014 23:15

Dov,

You're solution is really helping me. Whenever I start thinking about this woman in an obsessive manner, I pray for her. If it does anything, it definitely interrupts my obsessive thinking. I haven't actually seen her since I started praying for her, so that will be the real test. I'll probably have to do a lot of praying after I do see her again. Thanks again.

- startrek

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by Dov - 26 Mar 2014 03:33

Beware. There is obsessive praying, too. Obsessiveness is the issue, not attraction. If you feel attracted, that is nothing to be afraid of or upset about. It just *is*. The prayer should bring us closer into proper balance with her existence, as she really is: a separate person and not yours, but precious to Hashem, in His plan somewhere, and someone else's girlfriend/wife/sister/daughter/etc.

Hatzlocha treating her like she is normal...if you ever have to treat her at all.

BTW, there was one pretty girl at my work who drove me mad years before I even started recovery. I prayed for her to be transferred...and instead, *I was!* It worked out great.

...but I still kept acting out like crazy for another few terrible years till I was ready for quitting and

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by startrekuser - 26 Mar 2014 23:04

Well, I finally ran into her (the woman at work) a few minutes ago and spoke to her for about two minutes. I still felt the desire to speak with her longer and will eventually, but the feeling of obsession was almost nil! I didn't think the praying and other things would work that quickly, but it did. Thanks Dov for your help. I'll keep it up.

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by Dov - 27 Mar 2014 06:10

Please consider not stopping there, but moving in a direction of some kind of recovery using some kind of tools...that are not self-obsessive. Unfortunately, most religious tools are hard for addicts and people like addicts, for they lead us very deep into the old, familiar 'madreigos' and 'kedusha points system'. And we all know where that leads...

Just cuz I happen to be sober today, there are things I can do to grow up today, just a little bit more with Hashem's help (and the help of His many people).

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by startrekuser - 27 Mar 2014 06:16

Thanks Dov. I'm not sure what you mean by religious tools nor do I understand what you mean by "madreigos" and the "kedusha points system", but I'm willing to go further. I'm still a sex addict for sure. I want to move towards not thinking about sex at all. Of course, thoughts will pop into my head and I'll see things I'm not supposed to see, but I'll change my thoughts and look away from what I'm not supposed to see.

What else do you suggest?

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by startrekuser - 27 Mar 2014 17:25

Since my previous post, I have been following what I said I would do. It's amazing how often sexual thoughts come into my head. When they do, I immediately change the subject (in my head of course). That includes thoughts about women when I see them - such as, what it would be like to be with them. The thought has to be changed before it gets anywhere. It was especially difficult when I woke up in the middle of the night. The thoughts were coming into my head one after the other. It felt very strange to not entertain the thoughts in any way. This includes sexual thoughts about my wife. I also don't allow those thoughts. I will keep it up, G-d willing.

I had also asked my wife to tell me when mikvah day is, so last night I told her that we don't

have to have relations that night and that I didn't want her to feel pressured. I only want to have relations if she's ready and willing and not put any pressure on her.

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by Dov - 28 Mar 2014 07:49

It is especially beautiful to me how you have been given the gift of seeing that the problem is not really sex, but sex on the brain. Thinking about them more than necessary means that sexuality takes on a life of it's own. It becomes Lust.

And as you wrote, the necessity of having sex with our wives is certainly our enemy. The way sex needs overshadow happiness in our marriages is the real problem, not sex itself. Heck, every couple has sex problems and issues. That's nothing abnormal at all. But when sex thoughts pop into or build up in our minds it automatically means they just don't belong at all. They are just a mishegaas.

And the fact that you connect sex being a necessity/demand on your wife (or really on yourself to *get* it, actually) with the the fact that we are full of mishegaas...well, that's a gift many are aching to have! But our pride often blocks acceptance of it completely. Nu.

You are a lucky man. Now don't waste it by getting too goofy, OK?

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by startrekuser - 28 Mar 2014 18:02

Thanks Dov. I didn't come up with these ideas on my own. I was reading some of the other subjects in the these forums and I followed other members' transitions and decided that I want to be like them. I realized that for my entire adult life, I've been thinking about sex and checking

out women. There was a time in my life when I didn't do it so much, but I've always done it. Over the last 15-20 years or so, society has changed and women dress a LOT more provocatively in public than they did in the 80s and early 90s. It's a minefield of addiction out there for men and we have to be prepared and proactive.

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Re: BT on 90 day chart struggling with mental anguish
Posted by startrekuser - 28 Mar 2014 23:54

Another update: had lunch with woman from work today. I barely felt the pull of obsession at all. She even told me that she is still dating a guy she had told me about a while ago and it didn't bother me. To make a long story short, I feel like the relationship is where it should be. We didn't discuss anything inappropriate and we didn't have any emotional discussions. I never let my eyes wander below her neck level. My head feels very clear now that I'm not thinking about sex. Of course, thoughts pop into my head, but I reject those thoughts quickly.

Also, I went to my gym this morning and there are immodestly dressed women all over. In part b/c of that, I don't like the environment there. I'm going to seek an alternative to that gym as soon as I have some time. I'm going to research starting a very small men's only gym. When I say small, I mean garage size for a group of like-minded men.

As for my wife, I've never treated her so well and understand why she's been distraught about our marriage for so long. As a result, she has been treating me much better. When she does something inappropriate, such as criticizing me, I confront her, but in a very nice way - saying that such and such hurts me when you say X or Y, etc. Then she apologizes! She's never done that - probably b/c I've reacted so harshly to her criticism in the past.

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