

Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by ratherstayanonymous - 20 Jan 2025 18:20

Hello to the chashuva oilam on the forums, I've been poking around on the forums for a while and I feel the time has come to make I own thread, for some background I'm a bucher in Eretz Yisroel and I've been struggling with P/m for close to 8 years, hopefully I don't bore you but here's the backstory.

In 9th grade I got ahold of an unfiltered device through a relative of mine, at the time I was in an out of town yeshiva so most of the inappropriate content I was exposed to happened bein hazmanim, for years I hated bein hazmanim because while I was in yeshiva I didn't have access to P so I would naively tell myself that M wasn't so bad and really I was a shtieging buchor but at home I just felt hopelessly lost about my identity and many times throughout bein hazmanim I would ponder thoughts that "maybe I don't belong in yeshiva" and "yeshiva isn't meant for people like me" but then back in yeshiva surrounded by all the good guys I would laugh at how ridiculous those thoughts were and remember how much I enjoyed yeshiva and how deeply and passionately I felt about learning Torah (very clique I know)

This cycle continued until BM when one bein hazmanim I got rid of that device, I was on a high that bein hazmanim but of course a month later I found myself falling again, and that's how I continued for many years highs and lows all the time,

BH throughout this ordeal I was somehow able to continue to shtieg and am considered of the better buchorim, but inside I was never satisfied I always felt like a fraud and a liar.

Through some crazy hashgacha (I posted about it on a different thread) I discovered GYE and I'm 60 something days clean. So why am I skeptical you ask, in all my years (not that many I'm only 23) of suffering I can count on two fingers how many ppl I've opened up to (both of whom I connected with through GYE), and I just don't really connect to the whole open up on the public (anonymous) form and post where your holding thing, could be I'm bais but let's see where this goes (hence skeptical but open minded)

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by yeshivabachur111 - 30 Mar 2025 21:11

[ratherstayanonymous wrote on 18 Mar 2025 14:49:](#)

Hey all, purim mishulash in eretz hakodesh was wild but now were back at it, first of all thank you Harav proudyungerman for reminding me why I even started posting, to make connections with people gufa to help me pull through in times of weakness and lusting like what I was going through, BH I made the calls and it helped me refocus and analyze what needed chizuk and further improve my strategies to continue the fight.

?Now with the zman coming to a close I'm fearful of the battles to come, the flight back to America, and the hardest fight of all bien hazmanim, b'niogeya the flight there really aren't any fool proof ways to protect one's self from all that exists in the airport and on the plane, but following in the footsteps of the many that did it and came out clean, I prepared different things to keep busy on the plane and shiurim to listen to in the airport I'll also check in with the oiler before and after the flight and set an incentive if/when it ends well and hopefully between all your tefillas and mine it will.

Bein Hazmanim, I don't think there has ever been a bein hazmanim where I didn't fall, like I wrote in my first post B"H was always a particularly hard time, during the zman I never had real access to porn and the struggle then was masturbation which obviously is horrible and is something I was able to get clean of till now, but porn is different in an emotional way for some reason masturbating during the zman never really hurt deep it, didn't make me feel inadequate and hate who I was, of course I realized it was wrong, something that was assur, and something that belittled and defiling the act of creating a bayis between a husband and wife and I always wanted to stop for said reasons and more, but porn B"H just broke me it was all the bad feelings that masturbating wasn't and it reflected what the true problem was, basically what I'm trying to say is that I was able to hide behind masturbating and convince myself that it wasn't so bad and that it was obviously a struggle but one that was normal as opposed to porn which there's no hiding from, so when I did fall (every) B"H it crushed me, that's why I'm scared, I'm scared that after so long of being clean and getting to such a good and healthy place the B"H monster will strike me down again like he did so many times before, and even with all the tools all the GYE friends and accountability partners there's a mental barrier that's laughing at me saying I'll fall.

So what to do.....

I don't have the device that I fell on so many B"H before, but there still is a device in my house that's lightly filtered i.e. YouTube, pictures with skin etc. I've never really fallen on it before as it's my parents' work computer but if I'm desperate I'm sure I can find a way to fall on it

inconspicuously, asking myparents to filter it is out of the question and convincing myself that I wont go on it I feel is impossible, and even if I don't fall to porn on it I still don't want to waste time on it watching YouTube every day, I have a good schedule B"H I learn plenty and exercise daily but even with that there are plenty of free hours that I'm home alone, I wish there was some easy way to work this out but for now it seems that, all roads lead to hell.....

Bain hazmanim is very hard with all the triggers in the streets and the stores. I prepared a plan with chavrusas, and an accountability partner but that's not helping. Just very frustrating after a good zman.

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded
Posted by boardg - 30 Mar 2025 23:25

Any other fun clean things that you can do?

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded
Posted by ratherstayanonymous - 31 Mar 2025 20:23

Ok so for integrity purposes last night had a Shtikle major slip (HHM insist it isn't a fall even though it feels that way), I think it's time to tighten the ship a little more, I saw it coming, I was breaking gedararim left and right for the past couple of days, really I should've reached out before the slip for chizuk but now here I am, I'm going to add some pages of TBOTG every night to keep all this on the forefront of my mind, and be shtarker about txting before and after online use (really I should cut it all out but I'm scared that if I do it wont hold and when I do go on it'll feel bad enough that I'll just do whatever I want).

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded
Posted by minhamayim - 02 Apr 2025 06:08

Car mirrors. I have an interesting and unique affection for them. It all began when I first learned to drive. For some reason i couldn't quite grasp exactly which lane the fast approaching car was actually in. I used to kind of guess and hope for the best. Fists clenched and heart racing, I'd

change lanes - and breath a sigh of relief.

Eventually, after about a year of driving, i finally got it straight. I remember the excitement of being able to know exactly where and how far away all the cars around me were just by glancing at my three mirrors. I still love to passionately explain to new drivers all the tricks i invented to help them master their car-mirror skills.

Tonight only further cemented my deep historical relationship with said mirrors as in them i caught my first glimpse of a man I've come to know quite well. Skepticism and openmindedness aside, i appreciate you for that along with everything else.

humbly,

minhamayim

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by ratherstayanonymous - 03 Apr 2025 03:34

[minhamayim wrote on 02 Apr 2025 06:08:](#)

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humbly,

minhamayim

Sometimes I wonder what would have been,

what would have been if such a young kid didn't get an unfiltered device at such a young age,

what would have been if he hadn't discovered all there is to see online,

what would have been had someone reached out to this kid drowning in pain and confusion,

what would have been if someone took the weight of his world off his shoulders,

what would have been if he felt loved and accepted despite it all,

what would have been.....

who knows, but one thing for sure he wouldn't have the friend he has in you now.

Warmly,

ratherstayanonymous

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by ratherstayanonymous - 02 May 2025 17:08

So contrary to popular belief I am Bh alive, well, and very much still part of this fight. For the first time in many years I went through a BH without any falls truth be told I'm still a little

shocked that it went so well, don't get me wrong it wasn't all smooth sailing there definitely were the occasional slips here and there and readjustments to my gedarim at home but bh managed to pull through, I think the key was mainly to stay in touch with some GYE friends (and even meeting one in person), but lemaysa every end is a new beginning and now that BH has come to a close its time to look at what's ahead..... a new zman in BMG, I don't really know yet what the matziv is like and I can only imagine what new challenges it has instore being in Lakewood with a car and all, but I guess I'll take it as it comes.

Can't believe I almost forgot my BH highlight, Brov shevach v'hoda to hkb"h I got engaged to a wonderful girl, looking forward to dancing with the oilem by my chasuna, anonymously of course:wink:

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by chosemyshem - 04 May 2025 20:30

[ratherstayanonymous wrote on 02 May 2025 17:08:](#)

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See the power of just ONE bein hazmanim clean! Wow!

Kidding aside, mazel tov on both accomplishments. ly"h the work you put in will be a tremendous help towards starting your marriage off strong.

Hatzlacha!

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by ratherstayanonymous - 03 Jul 2025 20:55

engagement sucks period, and I'm really not trying to sound like a cofio tov i really try and appreciate what hashem has given me, I'm just putting it out there that it ain't easy (if this is setting you off and your already thinking of some judgmental and narcissistic response get a life and rain on someone else's post). being a kid in America exposed to the Hollywood culture of marriage and relationships I naively or more like subconsciously thought that once you find the woman you'll call your wife you wont really have eyes for anyone else, boy was i wrong every day every chasuna every event just becomes a comparison game "does my kallah look as good as her" or "do you think my kallah can turn as many heads as that girl" or "Am i as attracted to her as i am to that random person". It's pretty sick i know and the fact that I'm even thinking those thoughts terrify me to. And when those thoughts are at ease the doubts are miserable "is she really the one" "i can probably find a different girl who [fill in the blank] better",And on top of all that somehow you gotta stay clean. I'm not saying this is or isn't standard engagement It could be I'm the crazy one but this is just what I'm going through. There are a couple other things in my life that have gone a little sour that add to the whole stress but they're a little to identifiable to post here.

sorry if this sounds more like a grouch than a post, just trying to be real.

226 days clean (hopefully it'll last)

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by chosemyshem - 03 Jul 2025 21:03

[ratherstayanonymous wrote on 03 Jul 2025 20:55:](#)

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Thank you for the honest and very relatable share!

Engagement does suck. It's neither here nor there and doesn't have much going for it. It gets better once your married, and IMHO, once you have kids together this issue gets even better.

But to be totally honest, if you're checking out other women it'll continue regardless. Marriage is

not a solution for lust. Certainly engagement, which has most of the negatives of marriage and none of the positives, is not a solution for anything. Bitachon that Hashem gave you the best person for you is very helpful. Treating these thoughts as just another fantasy is also helpful. Either way, try to relax and find the enjoyable parts of this time.

Hatzlacha, and above all, Mazel tov!

(Not sure if I should write this, since it'll probably just trigger more stress. There may also be a tiny (seriously, tiny.) possibility that these thoughts (if they're coming hard and fast) may be a red flag of some sort. Either of anxiety, lust, or something wrong in the relationship. The vastly more likely source for these thoughts however, is simply that engagement is a stressful time, men are wired to check out women, and this is just the area the pimple popped up in. Trust me thoughts like this are totally normal. 80% of the people who are doing the head over heels engagement puppy love shitick are compensating too hard for these insecure thoughts. Happy to schmooze about this since I had this pretty hard as well back in the day.)

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by youknowwho - 03 Jul 2025 21:24

These mind-games are super painful!

I always thought the standard chossen is head over heels, thinking his kallah is the most beautiful thing in the world, continuing into early marriage. A sort of natural and normal infatuation common in young couples.

But I am probably totally wrong and naive about that, I have no idea.

Putting other girls you see aside...are you suppressing a deeper concern about being attracted to her?

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by chaimoigen - 03 Jul 2025 22:23

[ratherstayanonymous wrote on 03 Jul 2025 20:55:](#)

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Your honest awareness is a tremendously valuable step towards dealing with all this. Give yourself credit for that.

A further step would be finding a rebbe or mentor (or perhaps Ben Torah therapist) to talk some of this through with.

For example - to think through and work through- why would it feel to be important or valuable if you Kalla turns heads? How do you define being attracted to your Kalla "as much as" a random person you're seeing for the first time? What does "attraction" mean in the context of building a relationship? How would you visualize the role ongoing "attraction" **of this sort** will play in your marriage? How do you want your marriage ideally to look?

The work can be done and you can be happy imyH.

But it probably wont get done by not dealing with these feeling and thoughts...

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by yosefthet zadik - 04 Jul 2025 01:31

[ratherstayanonymous wrote on 03 Jul 2025 20:55:](#)

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226 days clean (hopefully it'll last)

Wow, 226 is amazing!

I dont have much advice, but I totally empathize with your struggle. I totally get it.

If you've gotten to 226, I'm sure you have the right tools and methods to continue. Stay strong fellow fighter!

I wish you a hearty mazal tov and a very happy marriage!

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by justwannabefree - 04 Jul 2025 05:05

Just kedai to keep in mind that a lot of this might be anxiety. Especially if you have had a tendency to be anxious throughout your life but even if not, anyone can start to get more anxious than usual in a stressful time such as engagement. If your convinced that's not what's going on then ignore my post but from my experience I would give it a good sixty seventy percent chance that's what it is.

I'm not suggesting therapy or anything of the like I'm just telling you its very possible that its your mind playing tricks with you, I know a thing or two about this(not engagement because I'm not there yet but I know about anxiety). **Once you know that's what it is you should be much more calm.** You chose her before you got engaged obviously you liked her there's really nothing to worry about, its really the thoughts themselves you can't handle. Big tip is to not freak out when these thoughts go through your mind don't try to fight them or disagree with them be calm and chilled accept the thoughts and let them stay or quickly think about something else but do not fight with them. Hatzlacha raba! mazel tov and don't worry you'll be just fine.

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Re: Skeptical but open-minded

Posted by jewizard21 - 04 Jul 2025 05:30

Hey,

Mazel Tov

From one engaged guy to another, I can definitely relate to engagement being a difficult time.

I want to be clear that I am not saying what I am about to say as judgmental at all. What you are experiencing with regards to looking at other women is 100% because of the false projections of marriage and love in western society. You already are working on so many things in life which is

evident of you being here on GYE and that is already extremely impressive, but one thing that we as men of western society need to do is to change our perspective. There is one thing to know what's wrong and twisted and another to really internalize it and change our perspective to a healthy one.

226 days is extremely impressive and shows that you have extreme strength and commitment to staying clean. Since I don't know where you are at with regards to your mindset, which is a different part of this challenge and is crucial for long term maintenance, I will try to explain everything that I have learnt with regards to my perspective of women and marriage. I am sorry if I say anything that you already know but it will be helpful for people that read this that don't know it.

There are a few main topics I will try to discuss, objectifying women, Lust in marriage, sex in marriage, intimacy and love, and struggles of engagement. Again, I am going to write about these but I am not writing obvious things with the assumption that you don't already know them, rather with the assumption that someone else that does not know will be reading. What I am about to write is the perspective I have developed over the past 500+ days by talking to and interacting with some amazing mentors on this site.

One of the first parts of changing our mindsets for long term success in fighting the yetzer hara is to de-objectify women. The porn industry and western society as a whole has become extremely provocative and promotes the objectification of people and especially women. As you mentioned this is completely false and we need to rewire our brains to think of women as people rather than objects of pleasure. Women have emotions and lives which we need to treat with respect as a fellow human being. This is where *shmiras eynayim* comes in to play.

Shmiras eynayim is about respecting women, Jewish and non-Jewish, regardless if they are *tznius* or not. We need to respect them so that we can have true self-respect and to have the ability to respect our wives (and future daughters *BezH*). When we look initially out of instinct then that is not in our control and we must make sure not to linger, fantasize, or look back because that is when it crosses the line from instinct to animalistic Lust, which rips away their humanity and turns them into a object of lust for our own twisted pleasure. We can't truly respect ourselves if we don't respect others and we need that self respect in order to live lives of *shalom*. This is also why looking at billboards and other advertisements because in doing so we disrespect ourselves by lowering ourselves to look.

We can't control how they look, we can only control how we react.

Due to our exposure to porn and western cultures perspective of sex and marriage we have an unrealistic idea of what marriage will be like. Many *bachurim* and *chassanim* have the idea of

their marriage being full of sex and fulfilment of their desires, and this is really detrimental to a marriage. When marriage and especially sex in marriage is solely about the physical, then the relationship gets lost. When a person uses his wife as a way to just satiate his desire, he is corrupting the true beauty of marriage and replacing it with Lust. This is where people go wrong when they think that marriage will help cure their desire. Marriage only helps with taivah when sex and intimacy in general is done in a proper way with a healthy mindset.

When we are deep in Lust, especially when we use our wives to try and fill that desire, we distance ourselves from others emotionally. We tend to use Lust as a way to numb our emotions that are difficult to deal with, like stress, anxiety, depression.... and we block or never even develop the tools to deal with these emotions in a healthy way. What ends up happening is that these numbed emotions end up resurfacing and compound with new difficult emotions, and we keep trying to numb them over and over. We then become callous without even realizing and we tend to unintentionally and sometimes intentionally, out of anxiety or fear, block out true connection in any of our relationships due to the overwhelming emotions that come with them.

This distance that is created, whether intentionally or not, is detrimental to a healthy marriage. We all know that women tend to be more emotionally in tune than men. Well this is true with regards to sex in marriage as well. Women need that intimate and emotional connection more than the physical. A wife will instinctually know when a husband is just using her and not connecting with her on that emotional level, and she may start to feel abandoned and not valued by her husband because he won't connect with her intimately. Meanwhile the husband may be oblivious to this because he is numb from lust and has these views from western culture.

Lust kills Love, Love = Intimacy, Lust kills Intimacy

What is intimacy? Unfortunately most people believe that intimacy is just sex. In reality sex is only one aspect of intimacy. Intimacy is what takes place in the day to day interactions of your relationship with your wife which add to the feeling of true love.

Love is not just an emotion. The initial stages of a relationship are full of this emotion that people feel as love. While there is a spark of love there and there is the start of a relationship, this love is really infatuation. True love is a choice. Love is something that is intentional and needs constant work. True love is creating an environment of safety and intimacy that you and your wife can connect with each other. During engagement is the start of the building of that true intimate relationship.

The main types of intimacy are emotional, recreational, physical, and sexual (there are more but I am forgetting them at the moment). Intimacy is how a husband and wife truly connect on the deepest of levels, and that connection is what develops a deep love for each other.

Emotional intimacy is, in my opinion, one of the most important and foundational parts of a marriage. The ability to trust, feel comfortable, respected, cherished, and valued is crucial for a marriage. This form of intimacy is also usually the form that is most valuable to women. Women

need that feeling of trust and comfortability in order to feel loved and cherished.

Recreational intimacy is doing activities with your wife and getting to see different sides of her personality in different situations and vis versa with her getting to know you. This is mainly focused on during dating but is also crucial to have during marriage and usually gets lost with the advent of a busy life. It is still very important to continue going on dates once married even if you may not have time. The investment into your relationship will make the rest of your life better as a whole.

Physical intimacy is not sex and does not have to be sexual. For a woman, especially one that is shomer, it is a very special and intimate thing to trust her husband with this. A hug, a kiss of affection, even a holding of hands is something that enhances your relationship with that special connection and that trust she gives her husband should be cherished. To be held and feel secure, to hold a hand and just know that your not alone.... and many more than I can imagine. (we'll get to the hardships of fantasy during engagement)

Sexual intimacy is the culmination of your love and emotions for each other and is one of the holiest things in judaism. When a husband and wife connect in this way they bring the schina into the home. I could go into more depth but I don't think that I can post that on the singles

There is also I believe financial intimacy as well and maybe a few more that I am forgetting.

Again, engagement is extremely difficult. When dating there is this amazing bubble of just you and your now kallah going on dates and having a good time with each other. Now during dating there is really a step back from each other even though your relationship has gone to the next level. Especially for us as guys where we don't need to do much but choose a tallis bag and show up to the wedding in our suit.

A very difficult part which I think you can relate with is the fantasising. We are in this weird stage where she is still not mutar to even think about in this way but our mind and our bodies are closer to having this deep, emotional, and intimate connection become even greater with, a muttar, sexually. Something we need to try to internalize and change is our desire for her.

We need to change our desire "for her" to instead a desire "to be for her". Fantasizing about her is really us satiating our desire with disregard to how she is and who she is. If we change our perspective to truly want to love her and be with her then we need to control ourselves to be with her and at her level of the relationship.

To add to that, just like she is not mutar now to think about and look at in that way, so to when she is a Niddah and we need to practice on making sure that we value her for more than just the physical part of the relationship. We need to value her from her perspective of how she feels valued rather than our warped view on how we think women feel value.

I hope that I made sense and if you feel like this is too much for your thread then I can take it down and move it to mine.

If you want to talk more message me!

Again, Mazel Tov!!

Keep on Trucking, One Day At A Time!!

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