

Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by YishuvDaas - 01 Jan 2010 18:13

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I've seen various mention on GYE of the difference between lust and love. One person mentioned that lust is Hashem's tool for encouraging marriage, but after marriage, lust should be replaced by the relationship and sensuality - I think this is what was said.

After 2 1/2 decades of marriage - I don't think I have ever gotten beyond lust. I would be very interested in hearing any practical advice for how to start moving in this direction. Sometimes I see someone with a very unattractive wife - maybe she's very heavy. I sense that they have a good marriage - and then I marvel at how they can have a good sexual relationship - because I don't think I could do that if my wife became very unattractive. This type of situation exposes to me how far I remain on the "lust" side of the equation - and I very much want to move to the relationship (without lust) side of the equation. Is that possible?? Doesn't there always have to be - at least to some extent - the lust factor??

All advice and perspectives are welcome!!

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by 7yipol - 02 Jan 2010 16:53

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Im not sure if I would be welcomed trying to answer this.

PM if you are interested in my opinion.

Not insulted if not!

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by the.guard - 02 Jan 2010 18:59

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On [this page](#) at the bottom, you'll find a few great links from "Dov" to answer this question... Particularly the piece called "currency of marriage".

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by Kollel Guy - 02 Jan 2010 19:03

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R' Dessler says, that giving to another, simply out of the will to be good to them - causes one to gain love for that person.

Even though you probably gave a lot to your wife over the years, it could very possibly have been caused to "fulfill a responsibility of yours", or gain approval, or "do I have a choice".

Try starting to give to her solely for the sake of being good to her, with no other intentions.

I think you'll be pleasantly surprised at how effective this simple method can be.

I'm adding this because I forgot how important the following "minor detail" is: I had a similar problem that you are having, so I asked a certain gadol, and he gave me the advice above.

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 15:00

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For some reason, I always feel the need to open my mouth, even though I'm probably the least qualified here to do so...well, maybe not *least* qualified, but anyway...

To start with, the term "lust" and "sensuality" can be very close, depending on how you understand each. As was mentioned elsewhere, I think, we're defining lust in a specifically unhealthy way.

You are supposed to be attracted to your wife - and the point is that as you depend your relationship (which hopefully you're continuously doing), she'll become more and more beautiful to you, regardless of how she looks to an objective viewer. And that's what's important, right? So of course, when you see another couple, you might not find them attractive - but who cares? You don't need to! the important thing is that HE finds his wife attractive! And you find YOUR wife attractive!

Obviously, giving more and focusing on making your partner happy is always a good thing, in every area. You can't go wrong with that!

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by YishuvDaas - 03 Jan 2010 21:09

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Thanks for the replies and links. I see that often it gets down to the "me centered" world of selfishness. Lust is pure selfishness - only doing or fantasizing about doing for the self. Our society promotes the self. I will try to do for my wife without doing because it is my obligation. Which I think has been my motivation over these years. When obligated, or when I feel obligated, or when I feel if I don't do I'll be "punished" by her reaction, then I do. It's hard to break away from the self after all these years. B"H - we have had a good marriage - well - certainly not bad - maybe just "very functional"? It for sure could be much better - and I could cry from thinking about all the years of "just going through the motions." HaShem wants and has designed the universe for our relationships with our wives to be intensely beautiful. Being on GYE has brought this concept anew before me - and has caused me to again believe that it can be accomplished. Life is too short to have an "automatic pilot" marriage. After almost 25 years - I was sort of resigned to living and dying - and leaving it at that. How often have I mentioned to others that our wives are a reflection of how we treat them? How often have I rationalized not following my own advice?

I will, bli neder, try to take the leap away from my self towards my wife. Thanks for letting me blab on - it need it :-)

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by silentbattle - 03 Jan 2010 21:25

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Bro, you're sharing your struggle, and giving us your insights to help with our own.

We're grateful.

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by the.guard - 03 Jan 2010 22:49

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YD, that's beautiful!

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by 7yipol - 04 Jan 2010 10:57

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YiD,

With all my heart I wish you success.

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Re: Lust v. Love - confused

Posted by briut - 27 Jan 2010 21:52

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YD:

I have no standing to address the bigger question of integrating lust and love in a healthy, Torahdik, Zohar-sensitive way. That's probably the biggest quest in my life right now, so I've got nothing to offer.

On one small subset of that question, though, I've learned one shtick! Torah that I find very helpful. As you know, we're supposed to approach a kallah and let her know how beautiful she is. (Well, machlokes whether men or only their wives do the approaching here, but my point will stand either way.)

I asked a Rav, what if the bride is really ugly? I mean, like 300 pounds and toothless! That's not

a little white lie, it's a big purple sweaty lie! What's going on -- is it MY lie to support THEIR shalom bayis, or what?

The Rav said, "no, you've got it all wrong. On the day of her wedding, she IS the most beautiful woman in the whole world and the most amazing kallah in history! To SOMEONE! And of course, that SOMEONE is the CHOSSON! So it's not YOUR views that you're sharing with her, but HIS views that you're REMINDING her of."

I'm not sure which drug it is that makes a chosson see his 300-lb toothless kallah as beautiful. Love is blind, so they say. But I think somewhere here is a lesson that observing a scene from a different spot can help us discern where lust and love are supposed to stand. We just have to move around to see her from his eyes, where the light's a little different.

I haven't learned that one yet, but I think it might point toward a good prescription for finding love (esp. once lust and youthful good looks have faded).

(PS: In reviewing this story, I started to laugh. Why would I have thought that the kallah wanted to hear how 'hot' anyone ELSE thought she looked? Not the other women, esp. not the men. WHAT WAS I THINKING?! No, Torah wouldn't tell us to get involved in such pritzus, and wouldn't suggest a kallah is so insecure that a wolf's whistle from a stranger will make her feel better about her wedding day! So, DUH, the answer is that we're really just reminding her how much her husband loves her. We're simply mirroring that truth back to her. I'll try to remember this next time I'm at a chassanah.)

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