

MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 04 Nov 2012 13:48

My heart is pounding out of my chest right now as I put these thoughts on "paper". This is the first time I am being completely honest about my problem, and it is very scary.

I am writing this mostly because I think getting these feelings and thoughts out of my head will be cathartic and if by chance I can help someone else, that would be wonderful.

I have been struggling with this problem for better than 20 years. I started with these thoughts and actions at a very young age. While I can't remember exactly how old I was I am sure I was not yet 10 years old, I think that 8 is a closer approximation. When I got my first computer at age 16 with an internet connection, it got a lot worse.

I went through up and down periods sometimes falling "only" once a week, sometimes everyday. I am still not sure if I would consider myself addicted to p***, but I sure as heck am addicted to m*****. For me the p*** was always a means to an end and not an end itself. As soon as I finished being mZ"l, I would turn off the p*** because I found it disgusting. I only wished I had found it so disgusting 5 minutes earlier.

I tried to stop many times only to fail after a week, two weeks even three weeks. Maybe when I first got married I was able to hold off a little longer, but even that did not stop me forever. It is funny I never davened to Hashem to take away my urge for lust. For some reason I felt that if I didn't stop on my own my Teshuva would be imperfect and I would not be completely forgiven. This past Rosh Hashana I realized that this line of thinking was getting me absolutely nowhere. They say by Neilah, you should take on one Asei and one Lo Ta'asei to work on the coming year. Like a broken record year after year, my Lo Ta'asei was always the same. Clearly my thinking was flawed. This year I davened to Hashem to help me kick this horrible habit. So baruch Hashem, since Erev Yom Kippur I have kept myself pure. I have had 41 clean days now, and I can't believe how easy it has been. Not to say I haven't had temptations, but nothing a small slap in the face and telling myself, "I am not doing anything stupid today" hasn't stymied. In the past my hands would literally start shaking two weeks into my trying to stop with the need for physical relief.

I think I wrote enough for today, hopefully I can update more tomorrow with my 42nd clean day (6 weeks).

Kol Tuv,
MBJ

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 30 Jul 2013 01:16

Yes, I know exactly where you are going with that, but man is it a hard lesson to learn and it is something that I struggle with.

A new line of thought that I have been having is that maybe expecting from her the things that I would like, even though they seem perfectly reasonable to me are just not her way of communicating with me. So maybe I have to try to tune into her wavelength and see how she projects love to me and be satisfied with that.

Maybe, maybe, maybe...

That is why I want the cliff notes.

It sure isn't easy. But then again the best things in life never are.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 30 Jul 2013 01:37

No, you are right. They are not easy. Simple - very, very simple. But not easy.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 04 Aug 2013 15:49

Uch,

I hate to post this but from 99 days back to 0.

I know why I fell. Those who have read my thread can guess why I fell. I don't have the answer

to keep from falling again. I just have to continue to work on my attitude.

Here's to hoping for a quick turn around.

Eli

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 04 Aug 2013 20:04

I read most of it from the beginning
you sure picked up a lot of good things on the way

kot!

we are all with you

look back at that high mountain you climbed
youre doing great

b'hatzlachah

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 05 Aug 2013 00:19

Thank you cordnoy,

I know I have made progress. Actually, if I am being completely honest, I have made a huge amount of progress. Erev Yom Kippur will mark my 1 year anniversary to starting on this path. The change in me is real and significant.

But it still comes down to my marriage. My wife is my only real trigger. The rest is narishkeiten that revolves around my relationship with her.

So I must work on my patience, my acceptance, my compassion.

Gam zu letova, gam zu letova, gam zu letova.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 05 Aug 2013 00:22

keep it up!

have you listened to rabbi pemansky's shiurim?

I just began, and it already is making a difference

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 05 Aug 2013 02:16

Dear MBJ,

Allow me to expungulate a bit.

No, that is not a real word (and it isn't anything sexual, I promise), but you will understand what I

Your situation is a toughy. I think you have already clarified that your wife is not interested in therapy, or that she tried it but it's over for now. I think you also shared that you have been trying to fix her from the day you wanted her to be fixed up - and for good reason. You wrote above that you tried my advice to just let it lay for a few months...though I certainly did not mean 'to ignore it'...and you posted above that it got harder and harder until it just drove you nuts. (To quote you: *But I couldn't hold back anymore so I brought it up again. It was not pretty. She was going on about pressure of the kids and pressure of Aliyah and pressure of finding a job and now pressure of going to that job. And I don't deny her any of these things, they are all true and valid.*) mean, anyhow.

So. I am not suggesting that you just 'hang on longer' and try more of the same. That might be silly, just trying the same thing and expecting completely different results.

[But first a little aside: someone wrote that the fact that your wife initiated some touch shows that [i]you [/i](MBJ) are 'making progress'. Hey, positivity and praise is always nice...but I beg to differ with the tzu-shtel. You *are* clearly making progress. MBJ! But the true litmus test for that is not, and never will be, *her* behavior. It's important for me never to accept responsibility for my wife's choices and growth/mistakes. I can't own her - and if I own her successes, then I owe her failures, too. No can do. So dump 'em.

So I suggest that *her* behavior shows that **she** is making progress. You do not control her and in recovery we do not aim to manipulate our spouses by cleaning our side of the street - we only aim to create a positive environment for them to make their own healthy choices. Her touch or lack of it, is not *your* issue, but *hers*. And as long as you are (thankfully) decided that you will not dissolve the marriage over it - **your only real** issue is the pain you feel and the way her problem affects you. And that is not her responsibility in any way, shape, or form. And that is just the way it should be, I guess.

And the progress you make in *your* issue is getting freer of her issue, whatever it is, and of the pain of her lack of wanting/giving physical affection to you. I feel that fact is a very important one to clarify. Thanks for bearing w/me on it, whether you agree, or not.]

So. Though you have not asked me;) , I would still suggest the following...especially *since you are not getting sexual intercourse anyhow*, and especially since your wife started to show a bit of physical affection:

Consider a period of time that you make it absolutely clear that you both agree intercourse is not on the agenda, period. She goes to the mikvah as normal, you agree to hold her, hold her hand, kiss her or not kiss her - whatever she wants that you are comfortable with not being 'too far' (stimulating). My wife and I actually wrote up a contract and kept it rolled up in our kesubah (where it still is!).

Take sexual pressure off her completely for a couple of months. Hey, you obviously have nothing to lose, right? Just more frustration.

Think it over. Talk it over. It is not a sacrifice on your part - again, cuz you aint getting any woooooee anyhow! Rather, it is an investment on your part - a thing you are not doing for her, but for your marriage.

My SA sponsor taught my wife and I that there are three things: Me, her, and *our marriage*. The marriage is almost like a third person (it is the thing the Torah refers to as the official "Odom", as in "He created them male and female and called them (when they are together) 'Odom' (vayikrah *lohem* odom)". This is a befeirush pasuk and it is explained this way in sforim, as well.

Some things I do *for her*, some things I do *for me*. But there are some things I do for our marriage, as though it were a creature of it's own that I am a part of - it is neither me nor her, ourselves.

Think it over, sweet chaver. And all the love and best wishes to you, man!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 05 Aug 2013 10:18

[cordnoy wrote:](#)

keep it up!

have you listened to rabbi pemansky's shiurim?

I just began, and it already is making a difference

Yes I have listened to them 3 or 4 times over the years. They have been very helpful for me to be a better husband. Of course I need my wife to listen to them as well for it to really be effective. That is my next "project".

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 05 Aug 2013 10:48

Dov, I love you man.

Just to clarify she/we/I have never been to therapy. I am viewing that as a last resort. I want to try all other avenues first, not only because I have no money to pay for it, but she is not one who would do that without kicking and screaming.

Anyway, I like what you said about her and my problems. I am not the boss of her and she not of me. We are husband/wife not parent/children. Her issues are hers and mine are mine. However, while I can appreciate the wisdom of what you say I have a hard time relating and applying it, since we are so incredibly intertwined. Not going to the mikvah again, that is just Mrs MBJ being Mrs MBJ. But every time she doesn't go, it feels like a stab in the heart. So intellectually I know you are right, but emotionally I can't take that leap. And that is why I fell. (Now naturally the fact that I masturbated because of this is its own issue that I need to work on, but taking that as a separate point for now.)

Now as for your advice, I will say this. Anyone who is going through these issues of unhealthy lust and problems with the wife, I highly highly recommend a period of abstinence if you and your wife can handle it. It was so hard in the beginning maybe especially because it was forced one sided, but boy has it helped to bring things into perspective and clear my head.

That being said, we are approaching 2 1/2 years since the last time we had intercourse, I have already told her on several occasions that I will never again put pressure on her for sex. And the last and only time she went to the mikvah in that last 1 1/2 years I think I was a perfect gentleman. In my mind anyway, sex is so far down on the horizon I can't even see it, and frankly I can live with that, if only I saw progress in other areas. So I have to think that writing a contract stating that would be a little absurd.

On the other hand, maybe she doesn't see it that way. Maybe despite the fact that I have not asked for sex in almost 2 years is not enough to convince her. Maybe a verbal commitment the next time it comes up would be appropriate. Now that I write this down it seems true to me. I think she thinks my frustration is first and foremost the lack of sex, but right now that is the least of my problems.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 05 Aug 2013 20:04

Dear MBJ (Menachem ben Yaakov?),

You have not had sex in more than two years - and you consider therapy a last resort? She

would be kicking and screaming? Where is your commitment to your marriage? I don't get it.

I am not saying that sex *is* your marriage, nor do I mean at all that sex is what makes a *good* marriage. I just mean that you are obviously in pain, that you say 'sex is the least of my problems', and that you are masturbating over this. Those are serious symptoms. And it isn't really your pain or your wife's pain that I am most concerned about: it is the pain your marriage is feeling. Your symptoms are indications of '*stuff*' (as George Carlin would call it before he started using the '7 Forbidden Words' regularly). The kind of stuff that hits the fan, if you get my drift. But you two are sitting in it. It does not matter how much you are squirming - you are still sitting in it, till you get up and do something about it.

You got a lot of 'stuff'.

I *certainly* encourage you to keep posting and sharing as you wish...but the tip of the iceberg is all you are sharing here, I feel. And to me that is just not honest communication. It actually bothers me a bit and I feel taken-in, in a sense. Not to say that you *intend* to trick anyone, at all! But it feels to me that all this masturbation talk is a way to completely distract everyone from the elephant in the room - and the elephant is in heat.

So, how can I say this nicely:

What the hell are you two good people doing?!

Yes, the whole damn thing sucks and is very inconvenient to do anything real about. Yes, you may have given up trying or feel like the status quo is worth keeping. But it does not sound like you have tried very much, to me. And don't tell me "Dov, you can talk cuz you don't know what it's like!" - for I *do* know, *have* been through hell a few times, and I know that I love you no matter what. And I say to you that 'sobriety' and 'not wasting sperm' and 'GYE' and all this talk about your troubles, are not the way to do anything about it, in my opinion.

Prayer is #1 (and I know you have already prayed more than I will in my lifetime twice over, yes)

Therapy is #2 (for yourself alone if she doesn't go, for her if she wants to, and as a couple...with a **good** therapist, not somebody suggested by your Rov who has no clue, but a therapist - probably a female one cuz they are often better - who has a *proven* track record of helping couples grow up)

And I confess that I hope you do not resent me for this, though that is not really my business. For I know that I mean this well and without any looking down at you at all. That's my part.

Now I hope you do *your* part whatever it really is, with only love and patience for each other.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 06 Aug 2013 07:36

I guess to echo what dov is saying

firstly, my heart goes out to you; the pain must be excruciating, anyway you slice it

just hearing your story and seeing your basically positive attitude gives us (me) a kick in da pants

dov said a different time (perhaps even in this thread). in every marriage, there are three components. the man, woman and the marriage. in your case (and I apologize) the marriage is ~~in shambles~~ an issue, a big one (on account of Dov's comment which he correctly pointed out...the lack of sex for two and a half years is an indicator; it is not necessarily the tragic point). forget about you or her. there seems to be something seriously amiss with the marriage. yes, there may be blame on one side or the other, and I (we) certainly don't have enough info for that, but you should see a therapist for the marriage. tell your wife that the 'marriage' is going. if she does not wanna go, you will be her shliach. you are not going for yourself (perhaps); you are going for the marriage.

I daven for you, and it seems everyone else does as well.

ultimately, don't take my advice, for I am nowhere near competent; ask a rav..someone who would give good advice. if you have nobody to ask (which could happen), I caana give you a Rav's email, who probably will reply, and he will never ask your identity...an extremely smart man, well respected, etc.

[This post was edited after Dov's follow up to it]

b'hatzlachah

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 06 Aug 2013 07:50

Woah! Let's not be hasty here, amigo Avrom.

MBJ's marriage is *not* 'in a shambles'! It's just got issues that it seems *must* be dealt with. Plenty marriages have troubles, and that's they way they grow...it's actually the only way marriages grow.

Maybe you feel that if sex is not in the picture *that's just gotta be tragic*. Well, I say it isn't any more tragic than any of the other issues MBJ describes that are unchecked. And yes, when all taken together they *do* present quite a mess...*but remember: **we here are only getting MBJ's side of the story!***

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by cordnoy - 06 Aug 2013 08:21

I edited my post above, based on Dov's follow up

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey

Posted by MBJ - 06 Aug 2013 12:42

Dov,

Close on the name, but as I have said before just call me Eli. (Yes, my real name)

I do care about my marriage, I care about my marriage very much. I also care about my wife very much. It is for that reason that I have learned to become patient. I have said this many times, and it is still true. I has taken years for my marriage to fall apart to the point where it was a year ago and earlier, when my wife used to get hysterical and threaten to leave. It has improved significantly over the last year, mostly due to me learning to be patient, to respect her and treat her better.

I love my wife, I love her more than anything else in the world. I learned many years ago, that I cannot be happy if she is not happy. I can only be happy with her. The newer lesson I learned is that I cannot force her to be happy on my terms, I can only be happy with her on her terms. If that means that for a time I have to give up sex, I am more than willing to pay that price. It is difficult, it takes self control and restraint, but it makes our marriage work better for now, it makes her happier and it makes me happier. That is why the sex is the least of my problems. It also has helped me reduce my rate of masturbation from several times a week to once every 3-4 months. And frankly, I feel it is far healthier for us not have sex at all, than for every act of sex requiring incessant pestering on my part and indifference or actual contempt from her and culminating in both of us feeling worse for it. It is the way things used to be and the way I see described many times on this forum.

Now taking the act of sex aside, I am fully aware that the fact that she wants nothing to do with me sexually is a giant elephant and gorilla both in heat in the room that is pointing a huge red arrow at the health of our marriage. That is my pain, and that is my frustration. My pain because as a human being I want to feel that connection, and my frustration because I feel like she

doesn't care. However, it is not like we are two strangers who happen to live in the same house and have kids together. It used to feel that way a year ago and earlier. Now I have that connection back with her. We talk a lot, true mostly about the kids and how wonderful they are. (They really are, I am not just saying that because I am their father, they are wonderful by any) My favorite part of my day is at night when the kids go to sleep and she and I sit on the couch together talking or reading or watching something together, usually with me rubbing her feet. There is a connection between us, our marriage needs help, but it is not is shambles. While she does not touch me as much as I would like, I now realize that every time she asks me to rub her feet or whatnot, it is because she is reaching out to me on her terms, I can live with that **for now**. Our marriage at one point was so much in the dumps that I have to earn her trust back. I have to give her time for that. Almost like we are dating again.

objective indicator you can think of

Now Dov, I am sorry if you feel that I have not been honest with you, but I have. This is not the first time on this forum that I have written that I have not had sex for over 2 years, my marriage problems are well documented on this website. Hey, If I can't be honest with a bunch of anonymous names on a website, who the hell can I be honest with. Now of course you only hear my side of the story, my wife is not posting here. Part of the problem is that I can guess what her side of the story is, but I really don't know. She won't open up to me in this regard and that is also part of the problem. How can you fix a problem if you don't know what it is?

So yes odds are we will end up in therapy. But when you are in hoc up to your ears, you really can't afford a good therapist. So I am giving time, and giving tephillot, and davening that Hashem should help us. In the meantime I am trying to be a better husband, so that she will want to be a better wife. I am trying to push her in the right direction, but very gently. I know I have a lot to atone for and a lot of work still to do on myself. It may seem like we have not done much to fix our marriage and that may be true, but you have to take into perspective that up until 6-7 months ago I was in no condition to take real positive steps with her, I had a very dirty side of my street to clean up. So now, while not glistening, my side is oh so much cleaner, and now I can try to take steps WITH her. It is frustrating, there are going to be ups and downs and forwards and backwards steps, but we are moving in the right direction now.

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