

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 Dov - 22 Aug 2013 20:00

I dreamt that there was the huge funeral procession out a balabos's window and he went out to see who it was for...made his way to the head of the line and asked the quiet guy at the casket who it was...he told him it was his mother-in-law. The balabos then asked him how she died and he told him that his dog just went and killed her. After a minute, the balabos asked him if he can borrow his dog.

The guy said, "Wait in the back of this line."

Boy, what a dream.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by chulentking - 22 Aug 2013 20:36

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 26 Aug 2013 23:18

So Mrs. MBJ went to the mikvah. She almost forgot, but she went. When she came back I again thanked her for going. She reminded me that I promised to not bother her for sex. So I reiterated that I will not, and for that matter have not for a long time now.

I am pleased that she went. I won't even go so far as to say that I am happy. Part of not having ho&@#e for me is disassociating with her actions. I know enough that this does not mean she will suddenly turn around and everything will be perfect. This could be a small step to nothing. Or it could be a small step to better things. I will daven for the latter, but not be surprised by the former.

No H^&\$PE, No expectations. Just baby steps in the right direction. Work on myself, and try to get her to care enough about our marriage so that can move forward as well.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by chulentking - 26 Aug 2013 23:51

Its great that she went. Keep your promise and remember Pamensky's three As. Hopefully, she'll come around and things will improve.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by gibbor120 - 26 Aug 2013 23:52

I hope (sorry) things get better for you and the Mrs.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 27 Aug 2013 00:23

Thanks guys.

gibbor, watch your language here. During Chodesh Elul no less.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 01 Sep 2013 12:10

This past Shabbos was not so good. I was kind of depressed and very short tempered. Not really pleasant.

Also, my ????? ????? has been horrible. It is starting to get out of control again. I really need to step up my efforts there again. I have been more conscious of it the last few days. It is terrible how much I have back slid in this area.

I had an interesting conversation with myself a few days ago. I was typing on the forum when my wife walked in the room. She wanted to know if I was typing for work, so I told her no it was personal. She persisted that she wanted to know what I was doing, so I told her it was a forum for religious guys with masturbation issues. Something she know I am working on.

My next thought was, what would she think of what I wrote here about her. Take aside her obvious hurt at the porn and ????? ????? issues. Also her embarrassment at my candid disclosure of our situation, despite the anonymity of the forum. Those are things that I could deal with. The real thing that got me thinking, is how would she react to some of my ranting about her here. Which then got me thinking to am I being fair to her? I am being honest? Which also got me thinking again at reasonable expectations of her.

I still don't know what the answer is. I think the answer is yes and no. Am I objective? Of course not. Still, I never wrote anything that I didn't feel as correct at the time, although that doesn't make it true or fair. Which brings me to the problem of expectations. I am sure she would prefer I have no expectations of her, I while I can work to limit those expectations, it is not realistic to remove them all together. Still, if my expectations are unreasonable, then I am not really being fair. On the other hand, if they are reasonable, then I am being fair. Part of the problem is I don't know what reasonable is. I am a lust abuser (addict shchmaddict, I am definitely abusing it) so my view of reasonable may be very far from reality.

So that got me thinking to what is it I really want. I think I boiled it down to this, I want to be validated and feel that connection to another human being in my own way. Pamensky goes through this whole thing of validating a woman's feelings by listening and empathizing etc. I want that too. All those things that I desire, for her to be physically close to me, to want to touch me and let me touch her, to give me positive feedback, are really just ways of being validated and feeling connected TO HER. Anyone else's validation is nice, I appreciate it, but it is to her that my soul is entwined.

So of course that med me to the thoughts of a) is that an appropriate form of validation to expect from her and b) is it reasonable to expect that validation.

To a) I say maybe she has her own ways of showing her care for me and even if they are not my preferred method, perhaps I should learn to recognize them and that should be enough or perhaps I can should expect her to talk my language a little.

For b) Maybe as part of a healthy marriage there should be that mutual validation that we give to each other to make the other feel loved and appreciated. or perhaps as an individual I should stand on my own two feet and give her the job of trying to keep me standing.

Which of course then got me to thinking, an I really giving her what she needs in our relationship, that I can expect the same in return.

Honestly, I could go on like this for hours. It is dizzying and confusing, and I really have no answers.

[/rant]

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 01 Sep 2013 12:55

sorry to hear about the rough time over Shabbos, and in general.

your questions are those that many of us are struggling with.

this is some of what pemansky talks about, and my wife got a book from her therapist that there are five languages of love. we need to know what our wife's language is, and she needs to know what ours is. If we do not know it, or if we cannot communicate in the same language, we are in trouble.

"expectations" is another way of sayin' ~~hope~~, and we don't use that around here, especially like you said above, after selichos began. it simply is not productive in our situation, and it is counter

productive.

i wrote some time before: just think of the amount of times we have been with our wives, and basically, we have been abusing them in some way, using our lustful mindset; that cannot be reversed by a simple conversation. it will take some time. i know your situation is kinda different to begin with, but i still would continue doing what you are doing. you are truckin' on da right road, and there is only daylight in front of ya!

b'hatzlachah

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 01 Sep 2013 17:37

Thanks for sharing all that, folks. Being clean for a while helps me see what's inside my heart a lot better. And I see that my heart holds me for ransom, holds our marriage for ransom. My own heart tells me that the only real validation - the only way for me to truly be at rest is her being sexual with me the exact way that I want her to be. Anything less means to my heart that, "Yeah, she likes me a bit, but I could have that with practically any woman I married...". So I am left - no, WE are left with a big hole through my gut.

But love is really doing stuff for each other. In sobriety I see that what will actually make me feel at rest, is loving her. That is an impossible place to stay if I am lusting or playing with lust. Every peek with my eyes - or inside my heart - at 'what I could have/should have', drags me right back to the crazy-thinking that is sooo natural for me.

The thinking that tells me I have the ability to define love - and it is '*her* wanting sex with me the way I want her to want sex with me *when* I want her to want, blah, blah, blah, etc.'...you get the idea.

So the program talks of G-d and a relationship with Him. He can't give me sex, but He can give me the validation that my wife cannot. And that to me is one of the big differences between all this Pamensky stuff, therapy, etc - and recovery in the 12 steps.

Yes, we in 12 steps are spiritual fanatics. We believe in a real G-d, whose love for me is as real as anyone else's - even my wife's. We can retreat to Him, and He is OK with us forgetting all about Him (we all do frequently). He loves us like crazy anyhow. Even when we are masturbating to porn, even when we are raging inside waiting for whoever to give us whatever. He's cool like that. Much of the RaMa"K's **Tomer Devorah** is about this exact point. I love Him and He loves me - and it is real love and provides a basic spiritual rest that opens me up to living sanely. To living without so many needs. RMB"m's son's sefer **Hamaspik** talks about this idea, too, when he addresses love for G-d near the beginning

And it takes the work of real actions (like opening up to real safe people, writing, making real amends, taking actions of love, etc.), faith, time, but *first* and foremost it takes **surrender** of my lust - not just 'shmiras einayim' or 'yir'as Shomayim'. They are as effective as spitballs are against a tank.

Addendum:

By no means am I saying above that I actually *live* in this reality all the time. All I am saying is that I am growing along these very lines and often do live this way. But I certainly have ups and downs.

I recognize that when I am desiring more touch, affection, or sex than my wife is naturally giving me, it is either pain in me groping for lust-morphine or just my sweet tooth for sex talking again. I am not dead yet, you know. I see it, admit what's wrong with me to my recovery friends and to G-d, sometimes to my wife, and **chill about it**. That's letting go. If I cannot chill about it, I know that I will eventually need a period of sexual abstinence to re-surrender sex and re-reconnect with my wife w/o intercourse...boy do I hate *having* to do those - even though life and our marriage are fantastic during them.

The solution always brings me back into what I wrote above - dependence on G-d instead of on my wife or on sex. And it works.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 02 Sep 2013 10:14

You are right cordnoy, expectations is just another word for hope and it is dangerous. Which is why I am trying to temper them and keep them realistic.

Dov you are right that needing that validation from your wife is a dangerous game to play especially when you demand that it be on your terms. But you can't tell me that it is not important.

Are you telling me Dov that after all your years of sobriety you have no desire for your wife's touch? It doesn't feel nice when she gives you a pat on the back metaphorical or actual? You don't need want or desire those things because you have a real relationship with G-d?

I know that is not what love is, but it is an expression of love. I know that my wife expresses her love for me not by touching or saying things, but by doing things. Like when she made dinner for me last night, or that she drove out to pick me up from work yesterday so I don't have to take the train. That is how she tells me she loves me. I know those things, I appreciate those things, I am grateful for those things.

Which brings me back to my original point. Despite the fact that I know how she expresses her love and I do appreciate it when she does, is it wrong to desire from her a physical expression of that love, or a verbal expression of it? And I am not picky here, I am talking about ANYTHING!

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by Dov - 02 Sep 2013 22:46

MBJ - I just added and addendum (is that redundant?) to my post above, to answer your question.

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 02 Sep 2013 23:02

[quote="Dov" post=218069]I recognize that when I am desiring more touch, affection, or sex than my wife is naturally giving me, it is either pain in me groping for lust-morphine or just my sweet tooth for sex talking again. /quote]

I think MBJ's question still remains.

Why can't your desire for more touch simply mean that you want to feel loved? Why is it necessary to blame it on lust? Perhaps it is not your sweet tooth?

Now, maybe you are talking about yourself, and you certainly are, but shouldn't it be said...if it is true...that at times, and it depends on marriage, it might simply mean that you wanna feel loved.

It is dangerous for an addict or a lustful husband to think like this, but at times, can it not be true?

thank you

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by MBJ - 03 Sep 2013 00:29

Lust addicts can very easily confuse love with lust, and that is Dov's point I think. Not that desiring love is bad (in fact it is essential to feel loved), but that we shouldn't confuse our desire for lust with love and think that we are unloved because we don't have our lust fulfilled.

So really my question has no answer that anyone outside of me can give. Even I don't know the

answer. Where is this desire for expressions of love coming from? Like I said she has her ways, but they are not what I would call typical or straight forward. I am mister typical and straight forward, so it is hard for me to internalize her actions as expressions of love. That I think is why I want something easier to interpret, like a hug or an I love you, or I am proud of you ...

On the other hand a part of me wants these things because I think if we get back to the place where she is willingly hugging me and seeing the good in me, it will eventually lead us back to the marriage bed. Something I obviously strongly desire. Yes, I believe sex is optional, yes I am living the life that sex is optional, doesn't mean that I don't want it.

On the other hand, my desire for sex is not just physical, but also as a barometer that the trust is back in our marriage. I think she doesn't feel total comfort or trust is me, and is therefore unwilling to be completely vulnerable with me anymore.

All around the mulberry bush the monkey chased the weasel ...

Good Night All

Ellie

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Re: MBJ's 90 day (and more) Journey
Posted by cordnoy - 03 Sep 2013 07:36

I wrote that as well...here, and in other places. I didn't think of it myself; it is all from here. we say love and we mean lust.

all I was saying, and in agreement with your question, that even to the lust addict, there is love that does not mean lust; we just don't know when that is.

I was asking on dov's absoluteness that even him in recovery for decades, when he wants more touching, he says that is lust, not love. I cannot say for him or for anyone, but it seems to me

that it can be love.

either way, your position is a tough one, and the only way is to persevere. Keep on doing the right things; that's all we are asked to do.

b'hatzlachah

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