

5 mistakes good couples make that silently lower desire, MISTAKE # 1

Humility

Humility is one of the greatest, most important *middos* one needs to be a good Jew.



It can also quietly kill desire in a marriage.

As well all know, the Torah teaches and emphasizes in numerous places that humility is absolutely central to *avodas Hashem*. It's something we need to continually work on throughout the course of our lives.

And whereas other sinful drives may taper off as the decades pass,

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz famously pointed out that the *yetzer hara* for *kavod* can actually grow sharper and stronger with age.

He would give the example of an elderly uncle who spends weeks before his nephew's wedding agonizing over what honor he'll receive — or whether he'll receive one at all — to the point that it completely destroys his *menuchas ha'nefesh*.

So, yes, humility matters. A lot.

But here's the part people don't talk about:

In marriage, **excess humility can actually be damaging.**

The *Orchos Tzaddikim* teaches us that *middos* are like ingredients: each recipe demands the right ingredients and in very particular amounts. So, what does this have to do with marriage and desire...?

The Gemara tells us that there were women married to men of very low socio-economic standing who constantly cheated on them (Kesubos 75a).

It's a jarring, almost uncomfortable Chazal.

Why spell this out so starkly?

After all, we already know the rule:

A minority stumble in *arayos*, most in money, and everyone in *avak lashon hara* (Bava Basra 165a).

So why emphasize these particular, lurid cases?

Clearly, Chazal are teaching something, and I believe the message is this:

Desire is not automatic.

A spouse needs to feel respect. A sense that “my spouse is someone important... someone interesting... someone I find worthy of admiration...”

If that fades, desire can slip away right along with it (and for some people, that vacuum becomes dangerous territory).

Now, if you'll object: “Isn't dialing down humility for the sake of *shalom bayis* a *mitzvah ha'baah ba'veirah?!*”, consider the following.

Rebbetzin Bashi Twersky once shared:

“My husband did *not* like talking about himself. Of course, I always wanted to hear... In the later years, he did start to tell me things. He’d preface it by saying, ‘I know you like hearing things like this, so I wanted to tell you that...’”

Even clearer is the story of Rav Yechezkel Abramsky zt”l.

Once, Rav Moshe Aharon Stern came to ask him a question. Rebbetzin Abramsky answered the door, told him that her husband should be home any minute, and that he can take a seat.

When Rav Abramsky came home, he motioned that his guest should wait a few minutes. First, he sat with his wife and told her about his day. Simple, mundane details. How he traveled, whether the walk was hard, what happened.

Only afterward did he turn to his guest.

“My apologies for the wait,” he said, “but at least you saw how a man should treat his wife. Perhaps you’re wondering why I would talk about things that sound like *devarim beteilim*. But, listen well. She was home all day. I was out and about. Sharing what happened lets her feel connected to me, and those are the things that happened, so I tell her.”

One detail in that story really struck me.

Among the “mundane” updates, Rav Abramsky mentioned:

“I visited Rav Yechezkel Sarna to discuss attendance at meeting of the *moetzes gedolei haTorah*... he showed me great honor...”

Now normally, a modest person would never say such a thing. It sounds like tooting your own horn!

But here we see the exception: **Your spouse is different.**

Your spouse needs to feel pride in you.
To admire you.
To feel that you are someone interesting and significant.

Interest. Value. Respect. Admiration.

These are major drivers of desire.

So if desire in your marriage feels lower than it should be, ask yourself: How do I present myself at home?

Do I shrink myself?
Downplay myself?
Hide my strengths?

Don't.

Not with arrogance. With quiet confidence.

Let yourself shine — for your spouse. That's not self-promotion for ego, it's self-revelation for connection.



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