

Am I an addict? Does it really matter?

Posted by committedjew613 - 15 Jul 2013 01:41

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I have been reading a lot of the literature on this site, and one message I get is that these shmutz related issues commonly becomes addictions, and the normal methods of dealing with aveiros are generally insufficient, (as we all know from our countless failures over the years).

Naturally, I believed myself to be an addict. After all, I have been having this p\*\*\* and m\*\*\*\*\* problem since I was a teen, have always been trying to stop, and have never been successful. All my "this is the last time" promises to myself never worked. And the problem continues to this very day. Aside from my computer problems (or maybe resulting in them) I feel a need to "check out" every woman on the street and evaluate her.

I was having a chat with a choshuve GYE member and he got me thinking. Am I an addict? Obviously it depends on how you define the term, but aren't there many aveiros that we've been trying to stop for many years even though they make us feel horrible to do them? These are obviously very challenging aveiros, the Gemara says ??? ?????????? ??????. There is the story with R' Amram Chasida who was able to move an impossibly heavy ladder to reach the attic where a woman was staying in his house. His only recourse was to yell "fire." And countless other stories in the gemara. Isn't it possible that we don't stop because it is so hard and quite pleasurable (even for normal people) and we are so used to doing them, they've become like a habit.

Am I an addict? Maybe the neuronal pathways that are created in the brain of an alcoholic are likewise created in my brain, who knows? I would probably need a neurologist to tell me for sure. So despite the fact that for 15 years I cannot stop doing these aveiros I don't know if I am an addict. Perhaps (I don't know because I don't know what an addict is) the way the issue is presented in the literature leads many people to believe themselves to be addicts when they are not.

The bigger question is does it matter? Is it important for me to determine whether or not I am an addict? Either way, won't I try the simpler stuff first and then move on to bigger steps if those don't work?

p.s. I do not have an agenda, I am just curious.

Thanks

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Re: Am I an addict? Does it really matter?  
Posted by Avrom - 15 Jul 2013 02:21

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I was struggling with this question for a long time. I even started a thread. See dov's reply, I think it could help you.

[guardyoureyes.com/forum/1-Break-Free/202977-Stopping-addiction-without-12-steps](http://guardyoureyes.com/forum/1-Break-Free/202977-Stopping-addiction-without-12-steps) (copy and paste into the address bar)

Speaking on the phone with dov, he made another statement: "even if god himself would tell you that you are an addict, you wouldn't believe him".

In any case you made a commitment to work on yourself. Thats great! You may come to learn that you are an addict - who knows? but you already can make a firm decision to accept and continue to work - no matter what is ahead...

I'm with you, brother!

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Re: Am I an addict? Does it really matter?  
Posted by cordnoy - 15 Jul 2013 03:20

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well...this is a good question

and...it might not make a difference (as dov and gibbor said in the other thread)

I found this:

## What Makes An Addict?

So, the question is when is one to be considered an addict? Well, according to many experts in the field, internet addiction is when one is dependent on some aspect of the internet. When one becomes diseased and displays symptoms of mental unrest by association with such things as online gambling, online auctions, adult sites and others, one could be considered to be an internet addict. Those who are hooked or mentally dependent on these sites become disturbed and restless when they can not log in and check them out during the day. Many have been seen to lose their awareness of their identities while spending long hours at these sites. What are the possible short and long term effects on these victims?

Article Source: [EzineArticles.com/1214464](http://EzineArticles.com/1214464)

so the question is:

1. What happens when we are not engaged in p and m?
2. Do we become restless?
3. Can we function like ordinary human beings?
4. Does it effect our concentration?

The answers to those questions might help us determine the answer, but ultimately, even if we are not addicted, "hergel na'aseh teva," and we gotta crack it anyway.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Am I an addict? Does it really matter?  
Posted by Pidaini - 15 Jul 2013 14:11

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I think this may be for you

Do I have an addiction?

Listen to Rabbi Abraham Twerski, who is a world expert on addictions, answer the question at this link (32 minutes and 12 seconds into the talk).

Here is a transcript:

First of all, the question is, what is the definition of addiction? I don't think we have a good definition of an addict. I think if a person knows that what he's doing is wrong, harmful, destructive, whatever, and he tries to stop doing it, and he makes a sincere effort to stop doing it, and finds that he cannot do it, I think he can call himself an addict. I don't know what the importance is for giving it a name. I think that (he can call himself an addict) if a person comes to that realization, "here's something that I know I shouldn't be doing, and I know it's destructive. I'm trying to stop it, I've tried to stop eleven times, or a hundred times, but I haven't been able to. I need someone's help at being able to stop".

Article on the GYE [Q&A Section](#)

KOT, That's what makes the difference!!

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Re: Am I an addict? Does it really matter?

Posted by inastruggle - 15 Jul 2013 23:32

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Seems to me that for yidden who want to stop whether or not they are addicts, the difference if one is an addict or not, only comes out in if he should go for the twelve steps or if other things can help as well.

thoughts?

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Re: Am I an addict? Does it really matter?

Posted by reallygettingthere - 16 Jul 2013 03:54

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[inastruggle wrote:](#)

Seems to me that for yidden who want to stop whether or not they are addicts, the difference if one is an addict or not, only comes out in if he should go for the twelve steps or if other things can help as well.

thoughts?

I agree. In ordr to deal with the problem you need to attack it at the root cause, not the symptom. Addicts need to deal with their problem differently than non-addicts. Even different

addicts need to deal with their problems differently if there are other underlying causes.

So yes, it seems that whether or not you are an addict can make a difference.

Eli

Have a meaningful Tishav B'Av

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