

Core Issues

Posted by smiley1900 - 12 Sep 2013 19:11

I want to start a conversation about the concept of "digging". I am still new here (how long do I get to use that?...) and looking around the forums I see a lot of struggle and support and coping mechanisms, most of which work very well.

What I don't see a lot of is "digging", meaning trying to figure out the core issues that are causing these problems. You might ask, what difference does it make? And when I figure out what is causing the issue will it go away? Why waste time on something that is useless?

It is written somewhere (sorry I'm not so good at remembering the sources) "yedias hamachalo chatzi refuah", knowing the illness is half the cure. I think there are two parts to this statement:

1. Understanding what the problem is relieves some of the mental stress that comes with dealing with the problem. On a personal level, I have found this aspect to be the turning point when working on resolving issues in my life, as soon as I got a clear understanding of what I was experiencing and why I felt immediate relief, the problem didn't go away, but my stress level went down dramatically.
2. You can't cure an illness if you don't know what it is. Until you figure out what the illness is, all you'll be dealing with is symptoms. I have found this to be extremely true when dealing with my issues, if I don't identify the core issue of the problem I will keep going around and around in circles struggling with symptoms and trying to find relief.

There's more about making the core issue worse, but I gotta run... to be continued...

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Re: Core Issues

Posted by tryingtoshteig - 12 Sep 2013 20:11

I hear what you're saying, Mr. Smiley, and I will offer you my perspective.

If someone ever discovers a cure for the common cold, they will make their millions and become an international hero. Ditto for the person who discovers a miracle drug that makes cancer

disappear. Until then, there are plenty of people doing research. How long it will take, and will they actually be successful, is anybody's guess. In the meantime, treating the symptoms is all we can and should do. Should we discontinue giving chemotherapy because it is not a cure?

As you mentioned elsewhere, the human sex drive in and of itself is not a negative thing and is not the problem at hand. We all know the gemara that says that Chazal davened to take away the Yetzer Harah of Zenus, and the chickens stopped laying eggs. The problem starts when we use it for our own self pleasure, perhaps using it as a drug to relieve lifes stresses (which doesn't work), and feeling guilty and covering it up.

There may be other underlying life problems that need to be looked at, like stress, boredom, abuse, depression, or other things, some of which may have viable solutions and some may not. But the first thing is to realize that pleasuring ourselves is not going to really make any of that better, and will only make things worse.

So there are plenty of people going to therapy for whatever issues they might be facing, and those issues vary from one person to the next. And we hope that the therapy will be beneficial for them. In the meantime, the symptoms need our attention!

Does that help you?

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Re: Core Issues

Posted by smiley1900 - 12 Sep 2013 21:17

Thank you shteig for helping me finish my thought while I had to run out...

Here is the rest of my thought:

Before I continue, let me set the record straight: I am in no way advocating ch"v against any of the tools and methods on this site, because even when there is an underlying illness (which is not always the case) sometimes the symptoms are so strong and debilitating that they constitute an illness and danger in and of itself and needs to be dealt with immediately, this is called "stabilizing" and must be done to prevent further damage. This is what it seems brings most of

us here, we see a problem or situation getting (or already) out of control and reach out for help, and gye b"h has a tremendous amount of resources and very effective tools to help deal with the symptoms both short term and long term.

At the same time we have to recognize the illness for what it really is, and if the tools we have here are not working and we are consistently running around in confusion and asking ourselves "why is this happening to me?", and if the answer "because we have a yetzer horo!" does not satisfy us then we have to dig deeper.

There are some people on this forum who in addition to suffering from symptoms are clearly suffering from extreme confusion. I challenge those people, WHILE THEY ARE NOT BUSY TREATING THE SYMPTOMS (otherwise it is just a distraction), to take a step back, dig a little into yourself and try to find something deeper that is causing this illness in the first place, you might find that all you need is an extra dose of support or godliness in your life, and you might find that you don't really know yourself very well and are moving in the wrong direction...

My personal experience in dealing with my issues uncovered the latter to be true, and had I not taken a step back and started "digging" I wouldn't be here today.

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Re: Core Issues
Posted by gibbor120 - 12 Sep 2013 22:01

You might like the article by Dr. Sorotzkin called Psychological Factors in Sexual Acting Out which can be found here www.drсорotzkin.com/articles.html#Sexuality . I also have a link to his website in my signature.

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Re: Core Issues
Posted by smiley1900 - 12 Sep 2013 22:02

I want to clarify what I'm trying to say, especially in light of the points raised by shteig.

I cannot stress enough that my words are not meant in any way, shape or form to divert attention from treating the symptoms we are suffering from. Every day we suffer from these symptoms is a day that we could and should live better tomorrow using whatever tools at our disposal! I sincerely hope nobody understands this or uses it as an excuse not to work on treating the symptoms, ch"v.

What I am saying, and in response to the points mentioned by shteig:

1. I do not challenge the use of chemotherapy in absence of a complete cure, (even though the premise that chemotherapy is not considered a cure is highly questionable), I challenge the use of pain medication for treating cancer due to a lack of research into the symptoms. Does that mean that a cancer patient should never take pain medication because it is not a cure? Of course not! Leaving the pain untreated might even cause the cancer to become untreatable due to the weakness of the body.

2. I challenge the mindset of comparing an unhealthy sex drive to a cancer, as shteig so clearly illustrated from chaza"l (I could not have done it better myself, thanks!), the world cannot exist without sex drive, can the same be said about cancer (or drugs, alcohol, etc.)? Of what use is it to stigmatize a healthy human expression just because some (or many) of us are using it in an unhealthy manner? I feel, like with all stigmas, it does more harm than good. Let's market the problem as "a healthy human expression that is being used in an unhealthy manner " and I

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Re: Core Issues

Posted by smiley1900 - 12 Sep 2013 22:44

Thanks gibbor for that powerful article!

His approach is a lot more extreme than mine, while I was just suggesting a little digging, he is saying that any consistent acting out is definitely a result of some kind of psychological problem, is this true? Has this been proven across the board or is it his own experience in a clinical setting? I find it hard to believe that it's impossible that some of those suffering from consistent acting out simply have huge yetzer horos that they were never taught how to control until they got addicted. But again, what do I know?

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Re: Core Issues

Posted by smiley1900 - 12 Sep 2013 22:58

I guess what I'm really saying is that i challenge members of the forum to start their story instead of with "i was sixteen and saw movie and got addicted...", but with "i am an only child and i was always expected to be the best at everything...", "i am from a family of fifteen and my older brother beat me all the time and nobody ever listened...", or "for as long i can remember i was always the target of the school bullies...", etc. etc.

Just one thing, try not to use the words "parents, father, mother, etc." too much if at all...

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Re: Core Issues

Posted by tryingtoshteig - 13 Sep 2013 00:23

I am still not quite sure what you are getting at, maybe I'm the wrong guy to debate this with you.

For myself: (and I understand this may not hold true for you and others on this forum)

I was never bullied

I was never beaten

I was never abused

I was never neglected

I was never held to a standard that I ended up disappointing people

I cannot really think of any deep seated psychological issue to blame my lusting on. Maybe I am missing something, I don't know what that something could be. I had several sessions with a therapist, and we did not come up with any brilliant ideas of a root cause. We did decide that I have to make a better effort at using my down time more wisely when I am at work and sitting in front of a computer all day. To my knowledge, as a teenager I had a (normal? above average?) curiosity and fascination about the changes happening to me, and it turned into a little experimentation, and eventually it snowballed out of control. It's an old story. Maybe it is not the same as your story.

Perhaps my parents and/or rabbeim did not talk about these issues enough or in the right way to me when I was younger. I don't know. But what I do know is that I can't change the past, and regardless of what did or did not happen to me 15 years ago or yesterday, I have a responsibility to (1) not act out TODAY, and (2) be a good husband and father TODAY, which includes the responsibility to be ehrlich at work and be mefarnais my family and (3) to make a Kiddush Hashem or at the very least, not a Chillul Hashem in all my affairs TODAY.

For me, staying in touch regularly with a large group of others whose experiences are similar, although not identical, to mine, has been a mechaya and has kept me away from the edge of the cliff. This includes both these deep conversations like we are having now, as well as (and perhaps even more so) the Just Having fun thread.

I can accept the fact that there are people here, who were, let's say for example, child abuse victims, and they might need more intense therapy, or to get more support from others whose experiences mirrored theirs. They will still need to keep the above attitude of a responsibility to stay clean TODAY regardless of the past or the future, in addition to the other healing that they need. But again, I'm probably the wrong guy to discuss that.

People will start their story with whatever they want. If they do a little digging and find a deeper root cause later, then they can share it if they so choose.

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Re: Core Issues
Posted by gibbor120 - 13 Sep 2013 00:30

I'd say that from my experience on this forum, most addicts have some emotional issues, were abused in some way, not given enough love, were loners that did not know how to make friends, have low self-esteem for one reason or another etc. etc.

There have been a couple that claim to have had a normal childhood (which seems to be the)

I can accept that there are some that just started experimenting and got caught up in taava to such a large extent that it was very difficult to stop. I don't think that is the majority here though.

Just my observations. I could be totally wrong.

You could take a poll if you want. There is a way to do it on the forum.

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Re: Core Issues

Posted by smiley1900 - 13 Sep 2013 03:38

Shteig, read my story and decide: guardyoureyes.com/forum/19-Introduce-Yourself/218879-%28trying-to%29-Keep-Smiling#219129

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Re: Core Issues

Posted by tryingtoshteig - 13 Sep 2013 17:29

Wow, Smiley, I just read your story, and I see now that I have no business telling you any sort of advice or criticism whatsoever. I apologize again (if I didn't already) for think I had you figured out and telling you off.

I am impressed with the way you are in touch with your inner self, something that I suspect is rare in today's day and age.

I don't know what to say. Your story is way more complicated than mine. I hope to find the healing you are looking for, be it from GYE, your therapist, or from others, but ultimately, from the Ribono Shel Olam.

Gmar Chasima Tovah. If there is anything else I can do for you, let me know.

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Re: Core Issues

Posted by smiley1900 - 13 Sep 2013 18:06

There's a funny story about a certain town where the people were always jealous of each other and complaining about how difficult their life was and how "the grass is greener on the other side", so the rov of the town made an announcement that the next day everybody should come to town square with a sack filled with all their problems and everybody will get a chance to go through everybody else's tzuris and choose which one they want. So, they all came the next day excited to finally be getting rid of their problems and have a better life like "the other guy", they looked and looked all day and at the end of the day each took his own "baggage" and went

Ultimately we're all here for the same purpose, to get closer to hashem and inspire each other, we each have our own journey custom made by hashem just for us, who's to say I would do any

What you can do for me is keep the conversation going! Sometimes it's more about sharing and encouraging, we each have something unique to bring to the table!

We should be zoche that hashem should see our efforts and give us all a good year in everything we need!

Gmar chasima tova.

home...

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