

Anxiety anxeity anxeity

Posted by gman613 - 13 May 2014 12:14

Not sure if this has been discussed on this forum but I suffer from terrible anxiety and this area seems to be my only way of feeling some kind of release from the strain. (I had never fallen before getting married TG but after experiencing the feeling for the first time after getting married its been a battle to stop ever since) 2 different therapists (non religious) tell me I'm being top hard on myself and that I need to cut myself some slack and allow myself the chance to experience it and get it out of my system. It kills me when I fall and I need guidance. Fighting the urge only makes me more anxious which in turn makes me moody and depressed. How can I find my balance?

Please help!!

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Re: Anxiety anxeity anxeity

Posted by Imperfection - 13 May 2014 17:44

Welcome!!!!

This is discussed all the time on this forum!!

I have called myself "Imperfection".

Why?? Because I have been a perfectionist. And perfection is not always attainable. So I acted out to find a world of "perfection"

I fought and fought and ran away from lust. I am, in keeping with my perfectionism, very frum, so I hated these urges. They were the very opposite of the perfect frum man that I (and everyone else) saw in me.

In GYE I discovered that all these issues are bound up. The moment I began to accept my imperfection, and stopped being angry when I or my life was not running perfectly, my reason for lusting began to wane.

This included, finally enough, accepting that I have uncontrollable lust urges, and that they are just part of me. Consequently, if I ?? ????? fall, I do not feel broken about it. To feel broken is as silly as falling in a pit and not making any effort to climb out! So if I fall, I try to get up, and daven to Hashem to save me from falling in the pit the next time.

So from my experience it looks like your therapist may well be right - maybe give yourself slack, be easier on yourself. This does not mean that you should drop your lofty goals. It does mean that you need to stop blaming yourself, and start looking to Hashem for your strength.

A big step to progressing from self blame to self acceptance is to share, to admit, to be absolutely honest about what is bothering you and what you are doing. This is primarily what this forum is about. There is nothing to be embarrassed about here - we are all in the same boat!

Looking forward to hearing more about you and your story!!

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Re: Anxiety anxeyty anxeyty

Posted by gman613 - 13 May 2014 18:46

Thanks for the welcome. I, like you am also a major perfectionist and failing in this area, even to a minor degree doesnt allow me to feel success in the so many other areas of life where Hashem has blessed me with so much hatzlocha and it has come to the stage where my short comings in this area are making me feel depressed about life in general. I will look at pictures of my beautiful new baby boy and think to myself "If Hashem decided to punish or harm him to teach me a lesson G'd forbid, I would'nt be able to live with myself"

Sounds punitive I know, but such is my mindset at the moment. The constant struggle is so mentally draining that I become moody and snappy and my middot go out the window which is terrible. My therapist told me that because I have am constantly fighting and falling, that I'm flirting with the concept and not getting it out of my system. She even recommended as a possible method of help to do a 24 hour non stop porn/masturbation session to try knock it out

of me but I think to myself that this couldnt be what Hashem would want. I think its possible that never having done it before I got married Baruch Hashem has created a situation where it will always be a novelty that wont ware off. The anxiety I suffer makes controlling the urge almost impossible and giving in only creates more anxiety. fighting the urge is what I know I should do, but this only spikes my anxiety levels and makes fall short in my middot, so it seems like a cycle that I cant escape. I know I need to work on many areas of my character but I feel like being able to have this release guilt free (which I know is impossible because of my fear of retribution and my obsessive personality) would allow me to function so much better in all my other areas of life (but even as I'm typing this, I'm thinking that this is probably just my yezter hara talking and not the emes). I dont want to have to take meds to suppress the urge, beacuse I want to also have a healthy body and not be reliant on meds for this. I try so hard to do what Hashem wants, I'm up at 4.45am to be at kollel before work, I'm a devoted husband and loving father, I try excersize 3 to 4 times a week to keep fit and having an anxiety disorder without an outlet is making life unmanagable. My ownly outlet seems to be this and it can happen 2 maybe 3 times a week when in niddah. Dont really know what to do anymore!! Need advise!

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Re: Anxiety anxeyty anxeyty
Posted by cordnoy - 13 May 2014 18:51

Welcome

Joinin' a phone conference or an SA group could be beneficial for you.

It has a calming effect on a person, and might be what you need now.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Anxiety anxeyty anxeyty
Posted by gman613 - 13 May 2014 19:07

Thanks, but I live in South Africa so a phone conference would be difficult.

I have just starting seeing a therapsit to try manage the anxiety. hopefully this will help.

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Re: Anxiety anxeyt anxeyt
Posted by cordnoy - 13 May 2014 19:25

There are others from there and other countries as well that join the phone conferences.

b'hatzlachah

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Re: Anxiety anxeyt anxeyt
Posted by gibbor120 - 13 May 2014 19:30

WELCOME! You seem to be suffering from what I call an emotional trigger (as do most of us) Meaning, you find something in life unbearable, so you turn to porn and masturbation as a method of self-medicating.

My guess is that had you started masturbating before marriage, you would not be able to stop. It was basically a coping "skill" that you did not have any experience with, so you did not do it. Now that you know about it, you feel stuck.

Generally, learning to deal with the anxiety in a healthy way is the way to go(easier said than done - I know). "getting it out of your system" with a 24 hour binge WILL NOT WORK. I've tried mastubating many times a day, and it does not help in the long run. It may help for a day or 2, but the urges will come back with a vengeance. I'm sure many here have had similar experiences.

Chazal tell us that "one who satisfies it becomes more hungry, one who starves it is satisfied" or the way it's put here "the more you feed it, the more you need it".

I can relate to the perfectionism part. Take a look at the Dr Sorotzkin link in my signature. He has some really good stuff on it.

Excercise is a good outlet. Calling friends is good too.

Do you have someone in your life who you respect and trust to talk to? A rebbi, parent, friend?

You have come to a place of understanding and support.

Keep us posted!

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Re: Anxiety anxeity anxeity

Posted by gman613 - 14 May 2014 11:12

Thanks for the reply, much appreciated. The reality is that I dont have anything in life that I find unbearable TG, but suffer from an anxiety disorder (as a result of various hangs ups and issues related to my perfectionism.) The anxiety increases my labido and the only way to stop the physicall symptoms of the anxiety (heart palpitations and a heaviness in my stomach) is through the release masturbation brings. I know that fighting the urge is what I'm meant to do but the fighting only causes more anxiety and mental fatigue. I know what Chazal say on the matter as you quoted below, and chas ve shalom I would enterntain the notion, that on my lowly level I know more than they do, but seeing how I have struggled trying to starve it and not succeeding (in fact only making it worse for myself because the fighting drains me mentally and phycologically as well as having an adverse effect on my middot)I am inclined to think that maybe what my therapist has said about getting it out of my system, and to stop constantly flirting with the idea, has merit. I think that the allure is so strong because of the constant fight to not do it and maybe by not fighting and just allowing myself to do it will make it less of an attractive release and allow me to explore other means to calm myself. (Again, could be the yetzer hara talking). This is the second therapist who has told me that they think this is what I should do and despite the fact that I believe strongly that what they are saying has a lot of merit and could possibly cure me of this, I dont think any Rav would give me a heter to conduct the experiment. I could try rationalise that the situation is analagous to a person who is told by thier doctor that to cure thier desease they must eat treif which halacha permits doing, but again that could be my yeitzer hara talking and not emesdik at all.

Thanks you for all the encouragement.

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Re: Anxiety anxeyity anxeyity

Posted by Imperfection - 14 May 2014 20:14

I must say, that with all due respect to your therapist, a 24 hour binge is one of the stupidist ideas that I have ever heard.

Anyone who experiences lust addictions knows that fulfilling the lust gives no relief, it just makes it worse. (This is apart from halocho. I don't believe that there is a heter, although there is some discussion in ??? ???? about masturbating in order to prevent a worse aveiro. The main point here is that it will not work).

What I can very much identify with is the point that you are making is that fighting the urge is also counter-productive - it just builds up until one can no longer resist.

In Rav Dessler's words, simply resisting the Yetzer Horo is like pressing down on a spring - it will spring back with greater force!!

So, does that mean that we are stuck? **NO!!!** It just means that we need a radically different approach.

What helped me was to try to work on stresses and annoyances in a different way, learning to accept that everything is from Hashem. We can talk to Him, ask Him for help, but always accept that what He sends is for our good (even our lust addiction). In this way our **need** for lust begins to disappear.

On a practical level I would advise you to make a list of ten steps to go through BEFORE you

act out. These can include going for a walk, saying some Tehillim, talking to Hashem, doing Chessed for your wife etc. (See the GYE handbook for more). In this way, acting out becomes less "necessary" and you will slowly learn to redirect your stresses in a different, more positive and accepting way. Even if at the end of the steps you act out, your dependence becomes greatly reduced. According to my experience and that of others, usually you will not act out at all.

Joining a phone conference might be an idea. Why not join one in Israel or UK, they are similar time zones!

I believe that Chazal's dictum of starving the Yetzer Horo applies here as well. The horrible thing is that by resisting the Yetzer Horo and focussing on it, we are actually feeding it by giving it importance. What Chazal meant was not simply resisting. They ment starving it by redirecting our energies in a more positive way. For Torah, for our spouses. For Hashem. We must focus on living, not on "resistance"

Hatzlocho! May Hashem help you! Trust in Him! Pass your stresses onto Him - He can deal with all of our stresses - we cannot!

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Re: Anxiety anxevity anxevity
Posted by TalmidChaim - 14 May 2014 20:51

Hey Gman613 (Giants fan?),

Let me first tell you that I am clinically obsessive-compulsive and suffer from generalized anxiety disorder. My OCD was downright crippling when I was younger (there were times when I couldn't leave my room, or sleep even an hour), and my anxiety disorder has stayed with me, in one form or another, to this day.

Obviously, I am also a sex addict, as I'm here on GYE trying to curb indulgences similar to yours.

I have been to non-religious therapists as well, and have come to this conclusion about a good majority of them... Psychotherapy, at least the type taught in secular graduate school programs, is intrinsically atheist, or at least, agnostic. That is, therapists are trained to see religion as a *necessary evil*, or crutch, in their patients. If a patient with unwavering religious inclinations starts therapy, then the therapist will work within the matrix of that particular construct, because it serves as some sort of healthy coping mechanism or ontology. But if a patient is on the fence about being religious, expresses misgivings about the stress and frustration that some religious practices engender, then the therapist will suggest NOT practicing at all, or moving away, slightly, from religion. This has been my experience with a number of therapists, and jives with what I have learned in the psychology courses I have taken.

That's not to say that psychotherapy is bunk; psychologists have a sound scientific understanding of brain mechanics and human behavior, and we could learn a lot from them. However, the entire practice of psychotherapy is predicated on very un-Jewish ideas (though Freud incorporated some secularized Torah ideas into his models). So we have to be very careful with their advice.

As a scientist, I approach psychology with great caution. It's a science, insofar as it utilizes empiricism and experimentation to verify data, but it's also an "art" (for lack of a better word), that has subsumed some very, very weird thinking in the last century. I've heard of modern psychologists who subscribe to shamanism, wacky hypno-therapy, and of course, Jungian principles (which, if you haven't read about, are WAY out there!).

So just because your therapist tells you to do something, that doesn't mean you have to do it. I could go off on a very long rant about the real danger posed by a lot of licensed, credentialed therapists, and the utter lack of control and oversight with which they operate.

Maybe switch to a religious therapist, who works within the framework of, and sees the value in, halacha.

And of course, hatzlacha. Feel free to message me if you need someone to vent to! I think I can relate.

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Re: Anxiety anxeyty anxeyty

Posted by gibbor120 - 14 May 2014 21:40

[gman613 wrote:](#)

The reality is that I dont have anything in life that I find unbearable TG, but suffer from an anxiety disorder (as a result of various hangs ups and issues related to my perfectionism.) What are you anxious about? It sure sounds like you find something unbearable, like not being perfect for example. That causes you anxiety. You seek to releive the anxiety by acting out.

If you work on the perfectionism/anxiety, the urge to act out will ~~go away~~ be much less powerful.

The acting out is a symptom of the problem. You are trying to address the symptom (acting out), instead of addressing the problem (perfectionism/anxiety). Did you follow the Dr Sorotzkin link in my signature?

That is just my 2 cents, based on what you wrote. Does this ring true?

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Re: Anxiety anxeyty anxeyty

Posted by SIB101854 - 14 May 2014 22:37

There are many frum therapists who can help you discuss your specific issues that lead to anxiety and your battles-and who can help you develope an approach, as opposed to a non-frum therapist, who may or not have respect for Torah values. There are huge differences between a non-frum therapist who advises you that you are being too hard on yourself, and a frum therapist who can help you discuss what leads you to your issues. There is a wonderful article by Dr Simcha Feuerman on this site in that regard that is worth reading in this regard.

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Re: Anxiety anxeyty anxeyty

Posted by SIB101854 - 14 May 2014 22:50

For those interested, see the annexed linked article. www.torahmusings.com/2014/04/the-dangers-of-misdirected-piety/

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Re: Anxiety anxeyty anxeyty
Posted by SIB101854 - 21 Apr 2015 01:16

I agree completely-once you start binging, you are headed right down that bad old rabbit hole of masturbation and porn.

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Re: Anxiety anxeyty anxeyty
Posted by cordnoy - 21 Apr 2015 03:36

[SIB101854 wrote:](#)

I agree completely-once you start binging, you are headed right down that bad old rabbit hole of masturbation and porn.

I guess if it's 'old,' then it's not 'twin,' or perhaps 'bad' is what nullifies the 'twins,' but then again, maybe if it's bad and old, then that is the definition of the 'twin' rabbit holes!

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