

Anxiety

Posted by Workingguy - 22 Mar 2017 20:43

Hello Everyone,

So as I started therapy a few years ago and started working on issues after my sexual issues were discovered, I hatched a new problem- anxiety.

I suffered from some pretty serious health anxiety/hypochondria for about two years and then somehow beat it.

A few months ago, it came back in the form of general anxiety and it's been pretty unpleasant. So here's a few questions for anyone on the forum who's experienced this.

- 1) How did you deal with this? Did you do CBT?

- 2) Did you take meds and what was your experience with that-side effects, etc?

- 3) Have you gotten off meds and done well with that?

Im asking because I may start working with a therapist who's pretty good at working with anxiety but might be pro-medication and I want to hear what the oilam here has to say.

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Re: Anxiety

Posted by eslaasos - 22 Mar 2017 21:06

I'd assume you'll get better replies in a forum that cater to this specifically.

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Re: Anxiety
Posted by Shlomo24 - 22 Mar 2017 21:11

I wrote a long post and hit cancel mistakenly. Oh well.

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Re: Anxiety
Posted by Workingguy - 22 Mar 2017 22:51

[eslaasos wrote on 22 Mar 2017 21:06:](#)

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Probably and I definitely did some looking around on some online for him, but actually I consider it much more relevant to me what my GYE brethren went through. Both from the perspective of having gone through addiction or sexual issues and how that might be connected, and also because it's certainly relates to our Jewish and religious framework very differently then for the people on the Internet.

sort of like I'd rather talk to my brothers about issues and hear their take on I understand them and know them a little bit then discuss them with people on the forum that I don't really have a way to filter or understand.

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Re: Anxiety
Posted by GrowStrong - 22 Mar 2017 23:28

[Workingguy wrote on 22 Mar 2017 22:51:](#)

[eslaasos wrote on 22 Mar 2017 21:06:](#)

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sort of like I'd rather talk to my brothers about issues and hear their take on I understand them and know them a little bit then discuss them with people on the forum that I don't really have a way to filter or understand.

I have dealt with anxiety my whole life, and since you brought up our unique perspectives I will give you mine, which I know isn't practical, but it is good to be mindful of.

It is my experience that to calm down my anxiety, reminding myself that Ha-shem is completely running the world and working generally on focusing on Emunahdikke thoughts has helped, but I have to remind myself to do this because the anxiety gets in the way.

It's also my experience that I get most anxious when I don't have Yishuv HaDaat.

The ways to gaining Yishuv HaDaat and building a strong emunah depend on the person, this is my own experience though.

Drugs (clinical) I am very weary of, valium/xanax are certain to calm the anxiety but they wont fix the core issues.

This is for general anxiety and is useless information if the issue is depression disguised as anxiety.

This should not be considered as medical advice. Always read the label carefully and consult a doctor.

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Re: Anxiety

Posted by Shlomo24 - 22 Mar 2017 23:57

I also struggle with anxiety. Yesterday I was feeling incredibly anxious. My gut reaction was to try and change the anxiety but I did something different. I adopted a 12-step/mindfulness method of dealing with it. Instead of changing it, I just tried to accept it for what it was. I surrendered the defect of fear and I tried to accept the feeling of anxiety. I was able to be conscious with myself but also functional. The anxiety didn't debilitate me like it usually does. I have been praying every night before I go to bed that I should accept everything that occurs during the next 24 hours for what it is. I don't want to change things, just accept things for what they are. I also pray that I can feel my feeling for the next 24 hours. Needless to say, my Higher Power has really been delivering on those prayers. Yesterday was the perfect example.

I also think that it's important to take a step back when necessary. Sometimes I need to just accept it and move on with my day and sometimes I need to take a breather. A couple of weeks ago I felt incredibly anxious in the morning and I knew I wasn't going to be functional at work. I called my supervisor and told her that I was feeling incredibly anxious as a result of a lot of inner work and I that I needed to take the day off. I was completely honest about it with her (see my other long post from today). She accepted it and was really supportive of my decision. She praised me for my self-awareness and my honesty. It was hard to say but it was the right thing to say. It does help that I work in the psychology field, and her reaction may have not been the regular (she's an amazing supervisor), but I needed to take that action. Beating myself up about anxiety is definitely not helpful at all. I'm an incredibly busy person and I'm usually running on all cylinders, but some days I'm not going to be 100%. And that's ok. There's no expectation of me to be Superman. And if I try to be Superman I won't even end up being Shlomo. I had this exact experience in high school and beis medrash. I couldn't maintain my schedule and I ended up imploding (not literally).

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Re: Anxiety

Posted by Workingguy - 23 Mar 2017 00:57

I just want to say that I love all you guys and that is why I posted here – because people on this forum are incredibly brave, incredibly strong, and incredibly honest in the way that they deal with their problems.

Shlomo,

you're really something very special and I really admire the way you deal with it. I am actually having some success dealing with it in both a mindful and letting go type of way, and I am really starting to not be bothered by it the same way.

GS,

I relate to a lot of what you said as well and I'm really working on my connection to Hashem and just talking to him and asking him for help.

my wife would like to see some more progress – I'm completely functional but it's clear that somethings on my mind to her and with the stresses her to see me like that.

anyway anymore input is appreciated and I will also keep you posted and maybe write a little bit more about it.

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Re: Anxiety

Posted by workingmyprogram - 23 Mar 2017 04:19

Many doctors are prescribing SSRI's for anxiety and I know several people who have found them very useful. I would be careful with taking the benzo's (google them if you're not familiar) because your body develops a reliance on them and once you stop the anxiety can come back much worse than before (although after some time off them your body should adjust, but this can take weeks to months of literal hell). Either way, medication alone is probably not the solution. Exercise, sobriety, and prayer and meditation have been really helpful to me. And did I mention exercise??!!! Hatzlochah!

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Re: Anxiety

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 23 Mar 2017 04:48

Everyone is different and there is no one size fits all remedy for anxiety. I can only share my own experience. You may want to look at my thread on the balei batim forum titled "My story and G-d bless GYE". You may also want to read an article I authored in Hamodia's Inyan magazine Chanuka edition 2 years ago titled "From Darkness to Light". I suffered from debilitating anxiety and depression. Finally I went to a top (and very expensive) psychiatrist that saved me by prescribing a cocktail of a few medications. Once I was stable, I religiously went

weekly to therapy to work through many of the underlying causes of my anxiety. Obviously, high levels of anxiety exacerbated my acting out, and acting out added to my anxiety..... I therefore also went to a therapist who specializes in sexual obsessions to work on that. BH I found this site. I am here for a little over 90 days. Since joining and really "getting into it", I am off of both anti anxiety medications. My doctor wants me to try and wean myself off of the low dose anti depressant I am taking, but I am not ready yet. For maintenance, I will probably remain on a high dose of L-methylfolate, a vitamin which deals with a gene mutation I tested positive for, which marks a predisposition for depression and anxiety.

So to answer your question. If necessary, medication works - but deal with a Cadillac doctor. You are playing with your brain. Therapy, especially CBT works. Eating healthy works. Exercise does wonders - but do it religiously and intensely - until you shvitz. And GYE works! Connecting with people is a stress reliever too.

Mental illness is the pits. May Hashem help you feel good fast! Any questions, feel free to PM to me.

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Re: Anxiety
Posted by Workingguy - 23 Mar 2017 13:13

HHM,

Thanks for the share; i'd love to read the article.

Here's what I'm doing so far and I'm making a lot of progress but still think I might need something more. First, not only did acting out create a tremendous abnormal amount of anxiety but even later when I was not acting out but sometimes cheating by looking at movie clips that I knew I shouldn't or rated are a type of media, I would still get tremendously anxious because I knew that I was lying to myself.

I've started doing exercise pretty religiously and a little bit more intensely and that's been helping a lot. I also do mindfulness meditation although I'm not sure I know what I'm doing even though I follow a guided audio, and that really helps to clear your mind and brain.

And then I am going to CBT therapy which has not been as effective as I would've liked so far, but that might be my issue – I spoke to the therapist about it last night and he felt that I have to come in with more of a direction of what I would like to work on because otherwise he just listens to me vent.

The reason why I've been asking about the medication is because my wife feels like all of this would be Band Aids and that there is more internal work I have to do and the guy that our marriage therapist recommended is pro pills and I would love to avoid those if possible but if that guy is really the guy who's going to help me find peace and serenity, then maybe it's worth it.

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Re: Anxiety
Posted by Shlomo24 - 23 Mar 2017 16:04

Medication can be a band-aid, but band-aids are very useful sometimes.

What I mean is that just because something isn't permanent doesn't mean it's not a viable solution for right now. I have learned that I don't have to do everything the hard way.

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Re: Anxiety
Posted by cordnoy - 23 Mar 2017 16:05

[Workingguy wrote on 23 Mar 2017 13:13:](#)

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Once again, honesty is so precious.

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[Shlomo24 wrote on 23 Mar 2017 16:04:](#)

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So true Shlomo; I struggle with exactly that – not having to do it the "right way" and not having to always do everything the hardest way.

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Re: Anxiety

Posted by mggsbms - 23 Mar 2017 17:44

I have been suffering from anxiety and was on some med for a while it helped me some, but then I got extremely restless so I stopped them. Things didn't quite down much after that and the withdrawal was pretty harsh.

The last half a year or so the anxiety has subsided notably, I changed jobs and am much more content (even though sobriety is still not in the mix).

Just my two cents of experience.

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Re: Anxiety

Posted by workingmyprogram - 24 Mar 2017 14:28

[Workingguy wrote on 23 Mar 2017 16:48:](#)

[Shlomo24 wrote on 23 Mar 2017 16:04:](#)

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So true Shlomo; I struggle with exactly that – not having to do it the "right way" and not having to always do everything the hardest way.

I'm smiling as I read this because I used to feel the exact same way. Everything had to be the hard way. G-d forbid anything should be easy! My sponsor had to be tough, I was always putting myself in difficult situations, facing confrontation head on instead of avoiding it. A couple years into sobriety I went back to school and was really struggling with concentration, so my doctor prescribed ADD medication to take while studying. I remember I felt so guilty about taking something that made me feel so good. I told my wife how I was feeling and her simple reply was "God wants you to feel good". I guess because I was acting out for so long I started to associated all pleasure with my acting out, therefore believing that all pleasure was bad. Now I see it's not true and believe that Gd wants us to feel good, albeit with things that are good for us. Another thing to keep in mind is that Hashem sends us shlichim in the form of doctors, therapists, spouses, etc...If a therapist that you trust and who knows you well is recommending that you try something, that may be Hashem Himself making a recommendation.

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