

How to break out of depression

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 26 Nov 2020 14:40

Hi everyone, I am looking for advice, tips and ideas for breaking out of depression cycles.

I know what I need to do to be productive and happy but can't find the motivation to do so when I am feeling down. Therefore, I am not looking for reasons to be happy, rather things that will make me happy so that I can then move on to accomplishing what I need to accomplish.

Any ideas on how to be happy?

P.S. I am pretty sure the root of my issue is failure and fear of failure. I tend to feel unworthy when I fail a particular goal and that often spirals out of control. I then find myself really struggling with self worth.

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Re: How to break out of depression

Posted by Youngster - 26 Nov 2020 15:32

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 26 Nov 2020 14:40:](#)

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Just a few thoughts on goals, based on what do you make goals, on what you wanna be, on what you expect of yourself, on what you think you can do?

Based on what kinds of days? Your best days, your average days, or you give space for worst days too?

I'm not clear all together what kind of goals your talking about, so maybe give an example.

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Re: How to break out of depression

Posted by Rebuild613 - 26 Nov 2020 17:34

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Re: How to break out of depression

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 26 Nov 2020 17:42

[Youngster wrote on 26 Nov 2020 15:32:](#)

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 26 Nov 2020 14:40:](#)

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Based on what kinds of days? Your best days, your average days, or you give space for worst days too?

I'm not clear all together what kind of goals your talking about, so maybe give an example.

Just some examples, missing minyan, missing a seder, not learning over Shabbos, etc. but when I begin to feel miserable, everything becomes a struggle.

It seems that whatever space I leave for bad days, it's not enough...

I probably make goals based on how I think I ought to be...

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by Youngster - 26 Nov 2020 19:02

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 26 Nov 2020 17:42:](#)

I probably make goals based on how I think I ought to be...

Do you also make the goals **because** that's how you ought to be?

What I mean to say is that the goal is to be that person which you think you need to be, in order to feel good with yourself, and when you make your goals you feel good already because now you feel your *already* that person, and when you fail, your not upset because you didnt reach the goal, but because you feel like your not the person you ought to be...???

P.s. I'm currently in the same dilemma about goals etc, so I'm not asking to answer, just to discuss the topic, and be clear with myself too.

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 26 Nov 2020 19:20

[Youngster wrote on 26 Nov 2020 19:02:](#)

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 26 Nov 2020 17:42:](#)

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P.s. I'm currently in the same dilemma about goals etc, so I'm not asking to answer, just to discuss the topic, and be clear with myself too.

This sounds too confusing for me, I need to give it some thought.

In general, when not driven by goals, people feel dissatisfied. I don't think that I feel like the person I make goals about before I achieve them if that's what you mean. I do think that I make goals in order to give me something to work towards, in order to feel accomplished.

So no, I don't think I fit the bill of making goals because that's how I ought to be. I make my goals with very thought ought planning but something always ends up triggering this spiraling out of control. Trust me, my goals are not that lofty, simple things like davening with a minyan and learning sedarim, not being selfish and so on. My main issue is finding motivation when I am feeling sour.

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by Youngster - 26 Nov 2020 19:32

I once read I think it was here on gye on a old forum, an idea which might help you.

I think it's from the michtav m'elyehu, that when making a goal, you should also make a low goal, meaning that let's say if you wanna learn shabbos an hour, you should also make a goal that if I dont learn an hour I will definitely learn 10 minutes. That might help it shouldn't spiral out of control, because your still in it even if you didnt get your high goal. Makes sense?

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by Youngster - 26 Nov 2020 20:21

Just trying to understand, you say that your issue is to find motivation while your down, and you wrote that the root of your problem is feeling down after failing your goal. Can you clarify what's bothering you, is it that your down because of your fail, or you fail because your down?

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by Captain - 26 Nov 2020 20:24

P.S. I am pretty sure the root of my issue is failure and fear of failure. I tend to feel unworthy when I fail a particular goal and that often spirals out of control. I then find myself really struggling with self worth.

Try Appendix A at the back of The Battle of the Generation
(<https://guardyoureyes.com/ebooks/item/the-battle-of-the-generation>). It might help a little specifically for this.

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 27 Nov 2020 05:33

[Youngster wrote on 26 Nov 2020 20:21:](#)

Just trying to understand, you say that your issue is to find motivation while your down, and you wrote that the root of your problem is feeling down after failing your goal. Can you clarify what's bothering you, is it that your down because of your fail, or you fail because your down?

The root of my problem in general. My reason for starting this thread is specifically for dealing with getting out of the rut that I am currently in.

Although I probably need to change things like goals, what I need right now is to increase happiness in my life and that is what I am looking for. I am really looking for ideas for increasing happiness in my life when feeling down.

Thanks

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 27 Nov 2020 05:38

[Rebuild613 wrote on 26 Nov 2020 17:34:](#)

[wilnevergiveup wrote on 26 Nov 2020 14:40:](#)

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P.S. I am pretty sure the root of my issue is failure and fear of failure. I tend to feel unworthy when I fail a particular goal and that often spirals out of control. I then find myself really struggling with self worth.

Oh boy can I identify with your dilemma,

I can share something which worked for me. Although every person is a world on its own and it might not work for you but why not share if there is a possibility it will work and ease my brothers' pain.

When I realized that whenever my goals fail and spiral down to self-worth and then depression etc. I stopped making goals. why supply your enemy the yetzer with more reasons to make us depressed?

I started focusing on each day as an entity on its own, today I will try my utmost to be a good person/Jew and do whatever is right and refrain from whatever is wrong, NO GOALS for TOMORROW I also changed to that attitude in davening I ask Hashem please give me a good day, oh lord I'm asking just for one day.

My dear friend I attest that my anxiety levels reduced drastically and the road to depression became narrower

Thinking back, I think that setting goals was a direct result of doubting self-worth, I felt the need to set goals just because I felt a need to proof myself or others that I am something.

If whatever I wrote does not apply to you, please disregard my reply.

I really like this. I have adopted this concept in the past where I try not to focus on goals rather in each moment try to focus on what Hashem wants from me right then and there. If I can keep it up consistently it would be great but this has been difficult. It requires a lit of focus in the moment which I tend to lose pretty quickly.

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by Youngster - 27 Nov 2020 17:29

For me the old saying that "happiness is a decision" holds true, although when one is in a bad mood, it's a hard decision to make...

thread [here](#) on the forum...

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Re: How to break out of depression

Posted by wilnevergiveup - 28 Nov 2020 18:34

I know what my issues are, I may even know what I need to do about them, but maybe not. I spoke with my Rosh Yeshiva last week and he made a plan with me but I don't really like it. This morning, he asked me if I was sticking to it and I told him no. I need to speak him again... W figured out that I need to increase simchah in my life, share more with friends and find small things to make as goals to increase my feeling of productivity.

All great, I am just in the mode right now of "getting through the week" and I am too nervous to make new goals in case I don't achieve them which will make me feel like a failure. So now I am doing the motions, too afraid to push myself for anything higher.

I am also reading a great book by Rabbi Twerski "Ten Steps to Being Your Best" that I am finding helpful.

For me the old saying that "happiness is a decision" holds true...

I think for superficial happiness this holds true, that is not my issue, I can have a laugh when I am down. I am referring to the feeling of happiness that comes with feeling satisfied and content, that comes from being happy with myself which I think is the root of my issue. I need things that can make me temporarily happy with myself so that I can then tackle the real things and feel really happy with myself.

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Re: How to break out of depression

Posted by anonymousmillennial - 28 Nov 2020 20:06

I can relate to your feelings.

It really is tough sometimes, having to carry ourselves through each day when we're just not feeling 'it'. Every day is another drag. And when I am in a rut, I feel like this is going to last

forever, and I keep on asking, when is this going to finish.

I am no expert, but some things that have helped me in the past.

1) When feeling down, as hard as it might be, get out of your shell. Stop thinking about yourself. Rather focus on the world outside of you. Help someone else. Think about what someone else might need, and do them a favor. Be busy.

Have a no thinking day, rather more of a doing day. Go out for a walk, do some exercise.

2) You don't need to accomplish something big in order to feel good with yourself. You davened shacharis? Great! Beautiful! You davened with a minyan? Even more beautiful! You learnt something today? Wow! Do you give yourself as much credit for the good things that you do, the same way you're beating yourself up when doing something bad? No? You're not being fair to yourself.

Learn to appreciate the small things. You are much better than you think you are. You can allow yourself to be proud of yourself even for the small things.

3) No one is perfect. Yes, even you and I aren't. And guess what? We'll never be perfect. Learn to accept yourself with all your flaws. It's ok. Hashem doesn't expect you to be perfect either. You have so many great qualities. Do you know at least five? If you don't, start making a list. What are your passions and hobbies? What are the things you enjoy doing, the things that give you emotional energy? Do you spend time doing them?

I, when feeling in a rut, sometimes just turn on the music and dance. Freestyle mode.

4) Be your best friend. Talk nicely to yourself. Leave out all the 'shoulds' , 'musts' , 'always' ,... You're doing your best and that's what matters. Yes, we can always do better, but that shouldn't hold us back from appreciating who we are and the good we've done. We end up focusing so much on what we must do that we never see what've done already.

Another problem is that we measure our successes by results so when the results aren't up to our expectations, we feel bad. But truth be told, our success is not measured by the results, rather by our effort. And for me sometimes, it is really hard to make that effort, so if I do make it, even if the results aren't great, than that is also ok.

Also if we focus on results, we end up comparing ourselves to others. And that can be really toxic, because at the end of the day, we are not them. We have our koiches and our challenges and they have theirs.

The point is: you are so much more than you think you are. You might not see it, but it's a fact. For heaven's sake, you're created in the image of Hashem! You're a prince!! And there is nothing you can do about that to change it. Embrace it.

IY"H, this rut you're in now, is only a temporary thing and I truly believe that you'll make it through. Keep it up.

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Re: How to break out of depression
Posted by wilnevergiveup - 29 Nov 2020 06:44

[anonymousmillenial wrote on 28 Nov 2020 20:06:](#)

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Thank you so much for your response, I really appreciate it.

I really like what you wrote, it's really nice. Here are my thoughts on what you wrote.

1) I think this is the key. It's not so much fake it till you make it or watching a comedy show, rather actually doing something productive but different. Doing something that will really give me

a boost emotionally like giving to someone else. You also suggest no down time which I think is key for someone with low self esteem, no time to think about how awful I am.

2) Working on this but a constant struggle. As someone with low self esteem, I struggle to see how anything that's not perfect is worth it. Yeah I know it sounds ridiculous but it's the world I live in. You can call me a perfectionist, I don't know.

3) I guess this is the same as #2 in reverse. I know my qualities, I know what I am capable of, part of the issue actually. I am smart in the sense that I can learn very well (in what's considered a very good Yeshiva) I have a grasp on concepts that many have a hard time understanding.). In secular studies too I am above average. I take care of myself, I exercise, go biking, can do more in the gym than most people with my BMI. I know that I am a good husband and father, that I am respectful to others and care for them. I know that I am a good person I now need to feel it too.

Here is the thing, all these things aren't goals in my life and therefore don't bring me any satisfaction. Is the way to proceed making these things my goals?

About passions and hobbies, this is a sore topic. There is one thing that I am very passionate about that for whatever reason I have not been able to pursue recently and this causes me some stress. I know there are other things like working out but as a perfectionist, I tend to obsess with working out when it becomes a goal (normal: 3-4 times a week 45 min.-60 mins. obsessive: 6 times a week 1.5-2.5 hours).

People like me (when I let them get close

I have many hobbies but none of them give me satisfaction. I like to try things that people think are too hard to do. Many related to food which all leave me empty. Making beer, which is fun and rewarding (accomplishing something that most people wouldn't even try) but in the end it doesn't make me happy. I am thinking of starting a beer gemach with all my beer, probably a good idea anyway because I have way too much beer to drink. I guess a beer gemach can bring me satisfaction from this hobby.

I guess the concept here is that pursuing hobbies that increase selfishness and physical pleasure leave a person feeling empty but when channeled towards chessed, the same things can bring satisfaction.

4) I think "doing your best in the moment" or "doing what Hashem wants from you right now" instead of based on yesterdays mistakes or tomorrows goals, sums this up nicely.

Thanks again for your reply, I plan on posting soon about how I am implementing these and other things into my day.

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