

Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by time2win - 20 Feb 2025 19:40

Hi Holy Chevra.

This is going to be a long post(s), but I need help. Please share your thoughts.

I want to cut through all the superficialities and talk tachlis. **Why do I turn to P and M?**

Because I have a crisis of meaning. I feel like my life doesn't *really* matter. There is a gaping hole deep in my soul, my consciousness that I can't seem to fill. All I can do is dull the gnawing emptiness with P & M. (In theory, it could be with drugs or alcohol, but P is free and more easily accessible and side effects are less noticeable.)

Some background:

The world can roughly be divided into 2 categories of people, the big people who make a real impact and the small people who just kind of well...live and die without really doing anything grand in between.

Examples of big people:

Philanthropists, Askanim, Scientists/Inventors who work on impactful technology, Marbitzei Torah (people who find inspiration in Torah and share it with others.) Rabbanim, Mechanchim, Authors, Comedians, Founders of successful non-profits, accomplished professionals (e.g. Doctors who make an impact, Buisness Leaders), Jewish celebrities (e.g. Singers who bring joy to the masses). etc. etc. In essence, people who have a big circle of positive influence.

Examples of small people:

Adam the accountant. Ed the electrician. Joe the engineer. Carl the computer programmer. **Me.** In essence, people who have a small circle of positive influence.

To elaborate-It's not that my life is totally meaningless. After all, I have a wife and kids who love

me and need me. I find meaning in supporting them and helping raise our children. I pay taxes and give some tzedakah (not as much as I wish I could), am a contributor to the economy/productive member of society. I give a smile to my coworkers, the cashiers at the store etc. and try to make the world a little better however I can.

Nonetheless, despite my best efforts to be big and accomplish something great in life, **I feel so, so small. And that is deeply, excruciatingly painful.** So I turn to P to numb the pain. Until I can fill the hole in my heart, I will never achieve true sobriety from my addiction. (Not incidentally, this is the root cause of my fallout with frumkeit. I have a hard time believing in a God, or at least relating to a God, who created me to be an absolute nobody.)

There are a lot of wise people on this forum. Please share your thoughts. Hope to hear from you soon.

With thanks from the bottom of my heart,

Time2Win

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by youknowwho - 21 Feb 2025 14:23

[time2win wrote on 20 Feb 2025 19:40:](#)

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Until I can fill the hole in my heart, I will never achieve true sobriety from my addiction.

Dear time2win,

I want to thank you for your super articulate posts, expressing your feelings of lack of meaning and faith. I relate to so much of what you are going through.

Just to further elaborate on what eerie and chaimoigen have written, there is a premise in your words that, if adjusted accordingly, can change the whole game.

Is it really true that *"Until I can fill the hole in my heart, I will never achieve true sobriety from my addiction"*?

Some food for thought:

If I would enjoy porn and masturbation, if it would actually add joy and happiness to my life, I am at a stage in my life where I would probably just do it.

I wanna enjoy life right now, and I eat, sleep, watch a good movie and don't stress too much about meaning and faith. Too painful.

But, here's the thing.

I do not enjoy it. At all.

Or else I wouldn't be here, would I?

If I am hungry, I eat to satiate that hunger. Would I eat something that only makes me hungrier, and sick as a dog afterwards?

Feeling horny and hungry for sexual indulgence? Okay, lets go indulge!

But, indulging in all those oh so breathtakingly beautiful images, just leaves me wanting *more*.

More bodies to feast over. More positions. More novelty, more variety. More shock.

Leaves me feeling wasted, empty, depleted, frustrated, a desperate hankering, a feeling of hornyness bordering on the brink of insanity.

Here I go again with that term, but it leaves me feeling like a *rabid, red-eyed racoon* from some zombie apocalypse movie. Scratching at the cage, desperate for more, more, more!

B'kitzur, a slave.

And I have seen firsthand, how things just continue to spiral and progress, it gets riskier and more dangerous...

So, what I've discovered is, that life, whether as a meaningless Joe the plumber, or as a cynical skeptic, is still better and more worth living as a sober man.

I still live with a lack of meaning and confusion about faith...but I will drill and trill this message into my lust infected brain day by day...

Life, whatever that even means, is better without that cumbersome burden weighing down on my shoulders like a load of bricks.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by BenHashemBH - 21 Feb 2025 14:37

[toughwarrior wrote on 21 Feb 2025 03:04:](#)

I don't usually write in but while reading this thread i felt compelled to put in my two cents here.

Whether this guy is right or not he is clearly in pain and has definitely put quite a bit of thought into this question so while it may not be smart to try combatting his thoughts, if you're going to do it the minimum he deserves is a thoughtful comment.

I literally laughed out loud when i read the suggestion that this guy has it all wrong, he thinks the askanim and the big influencers are the important ones, however without the simple people there would be no-one for them to help and give to, therefore the simpletons are the ones who should walk around with a gaava d'kedusha.

This is so ridiculous I'm not even sure it deserves a response, no person has had or will ever have this mindset because its just not the straight way of thinking. In no world should a poor guy hold his head up high **because** he is poor and is the vehicle for which the rich guy can have influence. There are 2 types of ppl in the world there are givers and there are takers, and in no universe will the world ever look up to the takers because they are giving the opportunity for the givers to shine. While its unfortunate to be simple versus influential, and obviously its not up to anyone other than Hashem to decide who is going to make it or not, nonetheless you are most certainly not doing people a favor by being needy, that's just a warped way of thinking.

If you're going to respond to someone in pain who has thought over his question for as long as our ???? has, have the decency to at least make a comment that has a fraction of the same amount of thought put into it.

My Brother, you are right that time2win deserves a thoughtful and understanding response.

The concept might be hard to accept, but mussar disagrees with your conclusion. Indeed, the poor man does get credit as being the one that allows others the opportunity to give tzedaka. He's not a taker, he is a receiver - big difference.

Something you must consider is that when you say it's up to Hashem if he will 'make it or not' you are diverging because what you think a full life looks like and what Hashem considers a full life are now two different things. CV the poor man didn't not 'make it' in life because Hashem did not grant him riches. He is in exactly the place to accomplish his mission. To think otherwise is to believe that you know better than G-d. Should the poor man daven and try to get money, and desire to have a lot of money so that he should be able to give lots of charity? Sure. But his life, his real life, does not require that it come to fruition. Nobody gets left behind. From the rich to the poor, everyone can make it.

?Kol Tov

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by lamaazavtuni - 21 Feb 2025 15:47

My dear t2w!! It's not easy feeling you have no big tachlis in this world, and I feel for you. Considering that you seem to be/hold yourself on the bottom of the tadpole of society. I can assure you that many many people that you call big/important people that do a lot for society and klal yisroel are themselves feeling like a failure (many times because in their private life/middos their not being successful) and sometimes many times that's the catalyst Y their trying to look to the world and to so many important and famous things that they'll be recognized for. So my friend look deep inside because we can't , but you could is the real answer to your Q that your life doesn't have real meaning (either cause of p and m or struggling with faith) but if you would suddenly become someone with a large circle of influence I don't think youll be more content. On the outside you might be but your thoughts might very well be the exact same. This post is not to bash anyone or to look down at successful ppl but it is important for us little ppl to recognize the truth and realize what's driving them . And not feel unsuccessful as people. And I guarantee you that when your honest and really work on what's hard for you in Torah/yiddeshkeit/middos these questions will disappear and you'll be dancing with a different tune.

Hatzlacha my friend. Ah gut shabbos

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by iyh2023 - 21 Feb 2025 15:49

[toughwarrior wrote on 21 Feb 2025 03:04:](#)

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If you're going to respond to someone in pain who has thought over his question for as long as our ???? has, have the decency to at least make a comment that has a fraction of the same amount of thought put into it.

Reading through the forums has always been somewhat hard for me, to read up on the real pain so many people are going through. It genuinely hurts me to see so much pain. But the this kind of pain is different then ,say, physical pain because of the confusion that comes with it, and

what has given me some comfort is that there is also lots of healing.

Just to add on a point.

I heard from R' Naftali Horowitz, a very intelligent man whom has helped hundreds with counseling, speeches and his book. That although this world needs the rich and the poor, nowhere does it say that **you** have to be the poor. Never settle for less on the premise that there has to be a taker, it doesn't have to be you.

@time2win, wishing you the success of clarity and a restful Shabbos.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by kavey - 21 Feb 2025 16:45

Is it possible to come at this question from another angle as, "if I were born into another faith would I be a yid"? Personally, R' Avigdor Miller's series on Chovos HaLevavos was most impactful in this regard for me.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by chosemyshem - 21 Feb 2025 16:51

Very thought provoking thread.

YKW your post hit me hard. Thank you.

T2W, I'm not going to wade into the question of who in life is important. But w/r/t lust. I agree with your point that it's difficult to make changes while all the reasons driving you to act out are still present. But it sounds like you're looking for either 1) a way to become important or 2) to be convinced that you're important the way you are now.

There's a third

option: guardyoureyes.com/tools/kosher-isle/shiurim/category/dov-s-12-step-workshop

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by hashemlovesyou123 - 23 Feb 2025 02:42

Shalom Aleichem T2W,

I think your realization that a feeling of emptiness inside is what is driving you to act out is very true. I once heard a dvar torah that was related to this idea: The gemara, when describing Yosef Hatzadik's monumental feat of refusing to give in to Eishes Potiphar says that he saw his father's face in the chalon. Some explain al derech drush, that the window was reflective, so Yosef was really looking at himself and his own potential, but this does not make much sense, as they likely did not have glass windows back then. Instead, a window was just an empty hole. The word chalon does not mean window, but comes from the shorash that means emptiness. A chillul Hashem is when we desecrate Hashem's name in this world, thus creating a lack of recognition of His greatness and respect for Him, which makes Him, kavayachol, empty from this world. Chullin is something that is empty of Kedusha, and chillul shabos is causing the kedusha of shaabbos to be empty. Chalal is just that, an empty space. And so too, when Yosef Hatzadik looked at the chalon, he was looking at the emptiness in his life. The question is: how do we fill that chalon? We all have a certain emptiness inside, a need for meaning, that is calling out for us to do something. Sometimes, we fill that space with valuable things like torah and mitzvos. IT always need to be filled, so if you are feeling empty and distraught, you will inevitably fill it with artificial sources of meaning such as P and M.

Now, as you said, the simple things in life don't seem to be giving you that meaning you are searching for. Your soul is pining for something greater. While I could tell you that you should appreciate your family and torah and mitzvos and yiddeshkeit, you have already said that these things don't give you meaning, at least not now. As I am very young, and am not yet married, I don't know if I am the most qualified to tell you what you should and should not find meaningful. I would say though, that yes those people may have a very large circle of influence, but you have your own, albeit smaller, sphere of influence that you can have an impact on. You have your family, yourself, your coworkers, and the entire chevra here at GYE. While we may view the people with large influence as being more chashuv or accomplished, it is all about your perspective. I think that if you give it more thought, you will see that there are countless opportunities you have to make an impact on people's lives right in front of you. Your family is the most important thing in the world, and the only way you can have an impact is if you start small, with your closest circle and that will radiate outwards once you fill in the hole of the inner circle.

I do agree that speaking this through with a qualified therapist or Rebbe may be beneficial, as it seems you have thought about this a lot and have been bothered by this question for quite a while.

I wish you much Hatzlachah, and just know that we are all here together on this journey of finding meaning and filling in the gap of our souls. Your post already and the discussion it has raised has already had an impact on many people's lives. You are important and Hashem placed you in this world for a reason. You just need to play your part.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by jewizard21 - 23 Feb 2025 23:48

Hello time2win,

The pain is real. I want to preface this by saying that I am speaking from my own experience and fully understand that it's not simple. Finding a solution and healing takes time, and no one solution works for everyone.

From what I have experienced and observed on GYE and throughout my recovery journey, people often find themselves in a cycle of pain. This cycle begins when a person faces painful or difficult emotions and numbs them with pornography and masturbation. Since these emotions are never truly addressed, they resurface—stronger and more frequent. This leads the person to rely even more on Lust, often escalating to worse forms of it. Over time, they begin using pornography and masturbation as a substitute for dealing with emotions, which only deepens the hole they're in. What they believe is helping them cope is actually preventing them from confronting their emotions and breaking free.

Another thing I've personally noticed is that pornography, masturbation, and other forms of Lust block a person's ability to truly connect with others. Yes, we may be great husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, and friends—but we don't realize how distant we actually are while under the grip of Lust. This is because of the double life we live when we rely on Lust. Beyond the constant intrusive images and fantasies (even when we don't want them), we always hold part of ourselves back from others. We convince ourselves that if people truly knew what we were struggling with, they would think less of us. This creates an invisible rift in our relationships—one

that may seem insignificant but is actually profound. Until you experience connection without that inner voice telling you that you are a terrible or unworthy person because of Lust, you may never realize how much it has been holding you back.

I will make a bold statement and hope you don't take offense, but I truly believe that no one can have a real connection with themselves, their wife, or their children while using Lust to avoid their emotions. Lust creates a barrier between a person and their relationships. True intimacy is blocked, making it impossible to feel fully satisfied in marriage, for clarification I am referring to the intimacy in marriage and not the sexual connection, but that too is also deeply affected by using pornography and masturbation (sex with lust is the assassin of sex with true intimacy). I believe the connections we build with the people around us are what give us true meaning and purpose in life. You may disagree and say that you give to your family and those around you, but I believe that pornography and masturbation are preventing you from experiencing true fulfillment from giving to those around you.

To truly connect with life—and to truly live—we need to break free from pornography and masturbation. Speaking from experience, as someone who has been free from Lust for over a year, I can say that life is so much more meaningful now that I am no longer trapped in the void of Lust. What I once thought was helping me cope was actually making my life more unmanageable.

I hope this isn't taken the wrong way. I am not saying that you are wrong for the way you feel, nor am I accusing you of being a bad husband or father. I am simply sharing what I have experienced and what I have learned from reading many stories and having many discussions on GYE. The common denominator is that Lust is one of the biggest obstacles preventing people from true growth and satisfaction in life.

Keep on Trucking, One Day At A Time!!

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by 1dayatime1098 - 24 Feb 2025 05:18

Thank you so much for your posts. They're very thought provoking and written very well and clear. I know everyone's struggle has a unique stamp but at the same time many themes tend to overlap for many people.

The sentiment in your post reminded me of a theme in a journal/diary i kept for a while when i was around 19/20. That theme was feeling so lost and asking, sometimes pleading, Hashem to help me understand and appreciate my role in this world and myself in general. I expressed my

fear that maybe I only have a "minor" role to play and I'm not willing to accept it. I've never figured this out and I feel like I've stopped trying to over the years (either I've been distracted/given up/or just not interested in talking to Hashem). That said it's one of the things being looked at in therapy these days.

Now I'm no therapist and I'm about as lost and blind as everybody else. Just some food for thought which may be totally irrelevant. I recall hearing a couple different therapists say that ironically the way to heal from pain (at least alot of the time) is to learn how to feel the pain instead of run away from it (I have not been to good at doing this but when I did manage to do so for a little bit while listening to a certain podcast i found it helped at least somewhat). Rather, with guidance, learning to feel it, experience it, and with time process it. I also heard a trauma therapist say once that one way people can try to avoid their pain is to intellectualize it. I'm not saying that's the case here but figured I'd mention it.

I hope you find the answers you're looking in the many wise and thoughtful responses.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by jackthejew - 24 Feb 2025 22:37

[time2win wrote on 20 Feb 2025 19:40:](#)

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Some background:

The world can roughly be divided into 2 categories of people, the big people who make a real impact and the small people who just kind of well...live and die without really doing anything grand in between.

Nonetheless, despite my best efforts to be big and accomplish something great in life, **I feel so, so small. And that is deeply, excruciatingly painful.** So I turn to P to numb the pain. Until I can fill the hole in my heart, I will never achieve true sobriety from my addiction. (Not incidentally, this is the root cause of my fallout with frumkeit. I have a hard time believing in a God, or at least relating to a God, who created me to be an absolute nobody.)

This is the first time in a while that I've been on the forum. Just here for a quick haunt. Your well thought out, and deep post definitely made me think. Welcome!

The primary responses on this Holy forum will of course be concerned with both the Mussar and the religious aspect of Kedusha and relationships. I'd like to take a slightly different tack.

Steven Covey's bestselling "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" seems to me to be very on the nose in terms of addressing the feelings you are expressing. To Quote a summary of the book: (www.oberlo.com/blog/7-habits-of-highly-effective-people-by-stephen-covey-summary)

"During his 25 years of working with successful individuals in business, universities, and relationship settings, Stephen Covey discovered that high-achievers were often plagued with a sense of emptiness. In an attempt to understand why, he read several self-improvement, self-help, and popular psychology books written over the past 200 years. It was here that he noticed a stark historical contrast between two types of success.

Before the First World War, success was attributed to ethics of character. This included characteristics such as humility, fidelity, integrity, courage, and justice. However, after the war, there was a shift to what Covey refers to as the "Personality Ethic." Here, success was attributed as a function of personality, public image, behaviors, and skills. Yet, these were just shallow, quick successes, overlooking the deeper principles of life.

Covey argues it's your character that needs to be cultivated to achieve sustainable success, not your personality. What we are says far more than what we say or do. The "Character Ethic" is based upon a series of principles. Covey claims that these principles are self-evident and endure in most religious, social, and ethical systems. They have universal application. When you value the correct principles, you see reality as it truly is. This is the foundation of his bestselling book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*."

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by adreamingyid - 24 Feb 2025 23:51

I saw this post the other day, and just logged on to make this exact recommendation of seven habits as well! +1

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by misgaber96 - 25 Feb 2025 04:38

I am a sexaholic, I struggle with meaning and P&M really took meaning away from my life as that was all my life was. The truth is that Hashem cares to make an eyelash, why?to keep dust out of my eye BH he didn't make them a millimetre higher or lower because then they would loose their effectiveness. Something so simple Hashem cares about on a moment to moment basis. So why do I find this message doesn't cut deep? Why do I find I can't connect? Something that has worked for me was to take 5 minutes and meditate on it or another point on my own with a timer. This is helpful. But I had to stop P&M and most importantly surrendering to lust in my mind to Hashem by telling him exactly what my thoughts are. Hashem knows them anyway, how come we can never just take the simple step to admit it to Him? Once I have admitted it to Him I can come to the table as me, good and bad, then I can ask what He wants from me.

Thank you for letting me share, my last post may also be relevant, just click on my name.

Meir.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by toughwarrior - 25 Feb 2025 20:02

@BenHashemBH I'd like to challenge you on this so called mussar that you claim as fact, please post a source if you have one. If you were born poor and have done nothing other than put out your hand to receive gifts, while you aren't a bad person per se, i still find it very unlikely that you get much credit or schar for that matter for being ever so gracious as to put out your hand and to accept it. until proven otherwise i respectfully disagree.

As I'm going through your post line by line i see pretty clearly that you didn't go through mine very well, which is ok i don't blame you but just know that you twisted what i said.

I never said that the only way to 'make it' is if you have money or are rich, CV! all i said was while a rich man can receive credit and feel accomplished through his actions of giving, the opposite is not necessarily true. A poor man wont receive credit or a sense of fulfillment through just being poor and receiving money, yes he most definitely can accomplish many many great things in life and 'make it' through many other means that are just as important as ???? if not more, however just because he can accomplish doesn't mean his situation as an ??? by default is his defining accomplishment.

To equate a rich man giving up his money for ???? to a poor man being ever so 'generous' as to receive money is ludicrous, again no one is faulting the ??? but that is mutually exclusive from receiving praise for it.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by BenHashemBH - 25 Feb 2025 21:07

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Shalom Brother,

Rav Dessler discusses this in his essay on givers and takers (and receivers). If there is no one to receive then no one can do the mitzvah of giving, so the receivers get credit for the giving.

I'm sorry if I misinterpreted your post.

Kol Tov

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