

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 BenHashemBH - 26 Feb 2025 03:31

[toughwarrior wrote on 26 Feb 2025 01:09:](#)

Not to discredit Rav Dessler in any way he was definitely a holy yid whose word carries much weight, however to make a sweeping statement that 'mussar' disagrees with my opinion is quite the jump.

I will ly"h look later to see in what context he said it and what his point was, but I'm pretty sure even without seeing it that he definitely did not mean that the receiver gets the same amount of schar as the giver, even if he may receive some sort of minor credit. (There is a ???? to give ???? , there is no ???? as far as I'm aware of to be ???? ???? , if anything we all know that ???? ???? ????).

Either way this whole discussion is totally irrelevant to the point of the thread and to the point i

was making that telling someone he should hold his head up high because he is receiver is dumb, bec even if he gets some sort of schar that doesn't change the main point that its not a dignified position to be in and its definitely not more dignified than being a giver.

Kol Tuv

You are right, I should not have used such a broad label. Just meant to say that there is an alternative view. Receiving is not the same as taking.

We disagree, because I think this is exactly the point. It's not about the scar, it's about avoiding comparisons and being able to accept your life that Hashem gave you.

If you can't accept, then how much will ever be enough?

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning

Posted by toughwarrior - 26 Feb 2025 03:55

Again i didn't say you shouldn't accept your situation and make the best of it, but what does that have to do with the point at hand?

If a person was born without an arm C"V, he should definitely accept his pekel and make the best out of his life, but that doesn't mean that the ????? he has in and of itself is a sense of joy and pride. What **can** be a source of pride and satisfaction is going on with your life and accomplishing things that are in your realm of possibilities and doing things that Hashem gave you the kochos for, but that doesn't make every chisaron you have a mylah.

If you read my first comment on this thread you'll see i wasn't coming to agree with the original question, i was just coming to disagree with the notion that the world is looking at things the wrong way on who's ???? and who's not, to which i strongly disagree with. But yes your point is obviously true that everyone should accept their fate and make the best of it and not compare themselves to others, it just has nothing to do with the point i was trying to make.

Kol Tuv

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by BenHashemBH - 26 Feb 2025 04:39

[toughwarrior wrote on 26 Feb 2025 03:55:](#)

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Kol Tuv

Not sure what got lost in translation, but we seem to agree on what we're saying.

The point in my view was that the OP feels like his constraints are limiting his life, and I'd like to suggest that there is life to be found in (almost) any situation.

Kol Tov Brother

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by toughwarrior - 26 Feb 2025 13:58

What got lost in translation was that I was responding to someone's comment, you then responded to my comment with a totally off topic point which i thought you were connecting to

my point, but turns out you were just trying to make a new point and kind of directing it at me even though it was just another comment to the thread itself.

Kol Tuv

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by BenHashemBH - 26 Feb 2025 14:28

[toughwarrior wrote on 26 Feb 2025 13:58:](#)

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Kol Tuv

I sent you a private message so we can continue the discussion (if you want to).

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by thegrave - 27 Feb 2025 05:03

"The most extraordinary thing in the world is an ordinary man and an ordinary woman and their ordinary children."-**Gilbert Keith Chesterton**

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by time2win - 27 Feb 2025 20:47

[yitzchokm wrote on 20 Feb 2025 20:07:](#)

It looks like meaning for you is defined as making an impact on other people's lives.

Correct. While I have reached this conclusion through independent introspection, I was happy to find this approach in the Intro to Rav Shimon Shkop's Shaarei Yosher (attached).

As an aside, I am not asserting that everyone has to agree to my definition. There are other seforim who take a more mystical approach to the purpose of life. If someone else finds those approaches inspiring, then Kol Hakavod. R' Shimon's olam hazeh centric approach (humanistic if I dare say) particularly resonated with me.

How meaningful would you find it to be free from P&M and to be able to help others who are struggling with holiness and suffering? Would that fill your hole of feeling empty?

I think helping others would actually be very meaningful. Aside from the forums though, I can't do anything in person. My wife doesn't know about my struggle and recovery efforts. All my recovery work is on the down low. Helping others would need to be the same

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by time2win - 27 Feb 2025 20:52

[yitzchokm wrote on 20 Feb 2025 20:07:](#)

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by time2win - 27 Feb 2025 21:55

[BenHashemBH wrote on 20 Feb 2025 20:12:](#)

If I may ask, how much giving would make you satisfied, and how have you come to the conclusion that X is the magic amount?

This is a *great* question! I don't have a precise amount, but I certainly have a feel for what is enough. Its kind of like the height at which a mound of earth is no longer a hill and becomes a mountain. We know a mountain when we see it, and we can also recognize when its still just a hill. There may be gray areas where we are not sure how to classify, but getting back to the topic at hand, I can confidently state that I am not yet a mountain/big person. Still in the realm of a hill.

That being said, you forced me to look deeper to further refine the problem description.

I strongly suspect that if all my (ostensibly God given) abilities were to be utilized in life, I would feel content, even if I'm no Yaakov Shwekey, Charlie Harary, Shlomo Yehuda Rechnitz etc. The issue is that although I am giving life my all in the current circumstances, it is clear to me that with some minor Divine Intervention, I would be in a much different place in life, utilizing my full potential. To use an analogy, I'm maxed out on the weights in the gym and am looking, without success, for heavier ones.

In particular, my lack of career success is the primary source of frustration. I have been blessed with a yiddishe kup and exceptional work ethic, graduated with a bachelor's and master's degree in STEM fields with highest honors , but that early success has not translated into professional accomplishment. I make a solid middle-class salary (a.k.a living a frum lifestyle by the skin of my teeth), working a job that is of mediocre social utility. I'm not operating at full capacity, not even close. I'm typing this during work hours actually, because there is

nothing else to do. I got my work done already, so It's either GYE, Netflix or Solitaire. (Yes, of course I have done and continue to due my hishtadlus to improve my lot. Trying to climb the corporate ladder has been like swimming through molasses. Applying to new positions at the moment).

This hurts in my kishkes. It hurts because of the intrinsic and extrinsic meaning that I attach to economic productivity. Intrinsically, it is a measure (admittedly not the only) of the service (a.k.a. good) that you provide to others, ala Rabbi Daniel Lapin's excellent book "Thou Shall Prosper." Extrinsically, it is the means used to benefit society via our tax and charity dollars. I'm also a minimalist and am good at giving away money, but can only give a relatively small amount to tzedakah since I don't have a lot of money.

So that is the issue. I am not asking a "Tzadik v'ra lo" question. First, because I'm no Tzadik, but more importantly, because my frustration is directed towards the heart of my existence itself. How should I relate to God when it doesn't appear that he is involved in my life in such a way that is leading to the fulfillment of my potential? If God created me to be a mediocrity, that's fine, but then don't give me a Type A personality so I need to live in constant frustration. That's just sadistic.

I hear all your questions and responses. This is deep stuff. Hope you find a good mentor that can help you sort and understand it.

I should have added that I have already spoken to 4 therapists and I-lost-track-of-how-many rabbis. So far no luck :-(, but I'll keep on looking

(I'm not really qualified to talk about Oilam Haba, so I'm not going to try and say what it is, but I don't think anyone says the main goal is pleasure as you described it.)

I am curious how else to understand the mesilas yescharims approach in his intro. Seems like I summed it up, albeit with a bit too much cynicism and frustration.

Long post. Thanks for listening to me ramble.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by time2win - 27 Feb 2025 22:02

[simchastorah wrote on 20 Feb 2025 20:11:](#)

So it sounds like you're saying that you suffer from feeling small and insignificant, and you believe that the way to stop feeling that way would be to have a larger circle of influence. And you're calling this meaning. But the real pain is a pain of feeling like you're small.

Correct, Excellent point. So I have meaning, just not enough.

Your reply, along with BenHashemBH in post #431770 forced me to refine the issue in post #432195. In essence, I think the issue is that I feel small vis-a-vis what I feel I can be, rather than just comparison to Ploni Big Guy

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by time2win - 27 Feb 2025 22:11

[youknowwho wrote on 21 Feb 2025 14:23:](#)

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.

This post is gold.

It may ultimately boil down to the need for me to pick up my big boy pants (no pun intended) and just bite the bullet. Life may be blah. God may not exist (or is the "blind watchmaker") for all I know. But in the end of the day, the price for that temporary relief will come back to bite me in the rear end and only makes things worse. It's like the saying goes "We used to drink to drown our troubles. Then we realized our troubles can float, but we couldn't."

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by time2win - 27 Feb 2025 22:15

[iyh2023 wrote on 21 Feb 2025 15:49:](#)

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.

Ah R' Naftali Horowitz, the shpitz example of a big person. Shteitl Shulchanos, and Ish Haeshkolos. I'm jealous of people like him.

You are correct though. No way in Hell I'm gonna settle in life. Always striving for more

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by time2win - 27 Feb 2025 22:18

[chosemyshe wrote on 21 Feb 2025 16:51:](#)

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

Very good *hagdarah* of the potential solutions.

Thanks for bringing this resource to my attention. I downloaded dov's recordings, listened to the first one and will follow up with you when I'm done with all 12.

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Re: Seeking Help-A Crisis of Meaning
Posted by time2win - 27 Feb 2025 22:30

Thank you to everyone who took the time in crafting the thoughtful responses to my post. I appreciate those who proposed solutions, the validation from those who had none, as well as the pushback by those who disagreed with some of my premises.

I was pleasantly surprised by the number of people who reached out to help. That alone is a balm on the soul..

Have a good shabbos everyone. Time2Win

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