

"Green circle" activities

Posted by chosemyschem - 29 Jun 2025 19:18

Hey.

I was texting with a chaver about giving in to porn qua stress relief, and mentioned that while it doesn't solve any problems, it often numbs me for the time I'm engaging in acting out. His follow up question was what healthy mechanisms do I have to cope with stress. My best answer was drinking. . .

This goes back to a question I've often struggled with - what's the healthy alternative? To put in the 3 circles lingo, what are good green circle activities.

I personally am b"h pretty busy, and in between kids, davening, learning, and work don't see much time to fit in a structured activity. And yet somehow find plenty of time of lust, but that's perhaps a different discussion. But I suspect I'm just not thinking about it well enough.

So here's my question for the oilam: What's your green circle activity?

Curious to hear both productive activities you go to b'shas an urge that can keep you busy with healthy things and productive engaging things that keep you busy so the urges don't develop

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by chosemyschem - 29 Jun 2025 19:25

I'll share mine (besides drinking).

I've been doing amud yomi recently and that's been fantastic at filling up time that would perhaps otherwise have led to sitting by the computer. It's not that the time was empty, but rather that the pace forces me to stay focused and use my time as I want to (without being

overwhelming like daf yomi).

Unfortunately, excess free time (what little of it there is) is often filled with news/blogs/online entertainment which is a very yellow-shading-to-orange type of activity. I do have productive things I can read offline, but often all I want to do is unwind with something unproductive. That's an general issue with de-stressing type of activities too. Yes, davening is an excellent way to unload stress. But davening properly when you feel down and disconnected is extremely difficult. . .

A primary issue for me is that empty/stressful times often come up at work when it's very difficult to get up and do anything productive beyond surfing on the computer.

Anyway. Looking forward to hearing what YOUR green circle is.

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by yitzchokm - 29 Jun 2025 19:44

For me, exercise, discussing my stress with someone and Urge Surfing worked for stress. I don't know whether you can do any of these while in the office.

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 29 Jun 2025 19:47

1) Have a good book handy. Not on the computer but an actual physical copy.

2) Find a topic that you are interested in and a podcast that explores it.

Some examples: Machshavah [there are many diferent forms each of which will speak to diferent people, interesting halachic discussions, Nach, parshah, askafah, Jewish history, science (biology [human, animal, plants, fish, cells, DNA, bacteria, parasites, viruses ect.], chemistry, earth science, astronomy, newtonian physics,relativity, nuclear physics, quantam physics, engineering, electricity ect), US/Global History, US presidents, gedolim stories, music,

cooking, psychology, health, crime stories, sports, military hardware, UFO sightings, conspiracy theories ect.

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by yitzchokm - 29 Jun 2025 19:54

What you are looking for isn't green circle activities but rather if/then activities; if I am tempted then I will...

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by chaimoigen - 30 Jun 2025 03:37

Helping others is an extremely powerful way to put myself in a good place.

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by azivashacheit101 - 30 Jun 2025 13:19

[chaimoigen wrote on 30 Jun 2025 03:37:](#)

Helping others is an extremely powerful way to put myself in a good place.

My sponsor tells me that if I am bored or just going out of my mind I should go to a shul or BM and clean up dirty tissues, put back sefarim and organize the chairs just to help people and get out of my head.

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by youknowwho - 30 Jun 2025 13:46

-True crime podcasts, (Dateline NBC or similar) the gorier the better.

-When I am not too tired, a book on a specific topic I am interested in.

I don't know how productive either of those are, but I would call them green zone activities for when I'm looking to zone out.

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by chosemyshem - 30 Jun 2025 13:54

[yitzchokm wrote on 29 Jun 2025 19:54:](#)

What you are looking for isn't green circle activities but rather if/then activities; if I am tempted then I will...

Call it what you like.

I want to hear what productive activities people have. If they use them as an if/then alternative, then all the better. But I want to hear what people turn to when it's a quiet Sunday afternoon and they've got an unexpected 45 minutes open. My current option mostly seems to be either something super-productive (e.g., learning which is great but sometimes hard to get motivated to do) or killing time online. I want to hear what other people turn to.

I also want to know how people relax/destress. Again, not necessarily when their brain is saying "porn shall set ye free" but if whatever they find to be helpful works in that situation too then all the better.

To those saying help someone or clean up a shul. I'm sure those things are very helpful. But if I *wanted* to be productive I don't think I'd have to ask the question. To be clear, if that's what you

actually personally do to relax then I want to hear that. But if it's just a theoretical platonic ideal, I've got oodles of those already. I wanna hear tachlis.

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by BenHashemBH - 30 Jun 2025 15:14

Well lucky you. A quiet Sunday afternoon with an unexpected 45 minutes open . . . halevai

But I digress and will save further elaboration for the Grouchery.

Having a busy schedule, with both productive and more routine day-to-day activities certainly helps to avoid the voids.

One topic that particularly interests me is Shalom Bayis and Torah Intimacy. Admittedly I've slowed my learning in that area recently, but it kept me pretty busy for a couple of years. One reason it slowed is because I've started attending a night seder and shifted some focus to that.

Some green circle activities I have are more scheduled. I can't drop out of work on a dime and play football for 30 minutes. Nor can I easily get to a gym. Etc. Etc. So perhaps it would be beneficial to split the green circles into two. One group, that helps keep you feeling good overall, and a second for pop-up relaxation. I call that second group my pressure relief valve and use it when I don't have access to other things and need to destress.

My scheduled green circles would be spending personal time with one of my close Ravs, playing football if it's summertime (once per week), walking with my wife and not talking about kid-related stuff, going out when we can, writing my thoughts on a specific topic or idea, researching a topic of interest, for a while I had a weekly meeting with a great group of guys that was a sort of group therapy mussar vaad combo (but it ended), being engaged with GYE chevra, giving to my wife (this seems like a good spot to say that these are not in a hierarchical order), having fun with my kids, helping others, and anything that helps me to feel good and productive about life.

My more impromptu green circles are not as expansive. I like to listen to music and/or sing,

more spontaneous type of writing - maybe a poem or sort of song, this one I am careful to limit but I sometimes play 'kosher' video games. I can't use my phone for this - been there and got swallowed up into a whole world of time-wasting. I have a gaming unit and choose specific games that are fun for a bit but don't pull towards endless hours--nothing online. When asked in the past how I destress, I struggle to answer specifically. My best response is that I think I've BH been able to get better at staying away from stress and trying to let things go. If I'm feeling holy I could say it's Emunah, though there is a healthy dose of go-with-the-flow practicality mixed in.

I always have what to be stressed about, the real problem is if the stress finds a place to nest and then it's in my face if I feel empty or get bored. Talking things out with good friends can help a lot to vent off some of the pressure, keep calm, and carry on.

I do read, and I also like to cook good food and share it with people, but I don't find that to recharge my battery. It's a good pass-time / hobby that brings me joy, but not in a way that relieves stress. Similarly, I enjoy building and fixing, but I don't relax much from it.

Well, this turned into a long response. To sum up, I keep pretty busy, mix in things that help me feel productive, have some fun, and keep a couple of things (ok, one thing) for "special" occasions.

Hatzlacha

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by yitzchokm - 30 Jun 2025 15:15

These are my green circle activities on my three circles plan:

Having a Steady Schedule

Listening to Mindfulness Exercises

Reading TBOTG

Talking to my mother

Kollel, night seder, Chavrusas and learning on my own.

Cooling the House

Good Sleep

Walking Exercise

GYE and HDO forums

Socialization

Some of the things on this list aren't necessary for me at this moment.

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Re: "Green circle" activities

Posted by chaimoigen - 30 Jun 2025 16:07

[chosemyschem wrote on 30 Jun 2025 13:54:](#)

[yitzchokm wrote on 29 Jun 2025 19:54:](#)

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When I said helping other people I didn't mean cleaning up a shul.

I like people and connect well with them.

Based on my various lines of work, I most always have a backlog of people who want to talk with me about something going on in their life. In cases where the people are dealing with a very difficult situation it's not fun, relaxing, or enjoyable - it's downright painful. However, many of these conversations, besides for the Zchus, are also energizing for me. They take away the empty blah feeling and the sucking deep sense of existential boredom that sometimes rears its ugly head; and connecting with and helping people makes me feel productive and good.

So when I'm feeling blah I usually call someone back.

I do that with GYE calls and posting too. I like the people and helping with the work strengthens

me too.

I will also often reach out and connect to one of my kids, or try to get my wife to talk for a bit, too (if she's not too busy).

For me, **connection is the antidote.**

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