

Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by Holy Yid - 12 Jul 2010 20:36

You read the title, that's right I want to know what you think about this question

Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?

Anyone involved in raising a child knows the evil of labels, so why are we labeling ourselves?

Even if people think this behavior constitutes an addiction they can refer to it as showing addictive like behaviors and thinking patterns, why the label? It is so depressing to think of your whole self as an addict.

I know this is a hot topic but I feel it is important to discuss.

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by Holy Yid - 12 Jul 2010 20:57

The real hot bottom issue that I want to discuss is **ARE WE REALLY ADDICTS?**

How do we define addict? Yes this is hard, Yes it takes a lot of work, Yes sheer will power won't help us at this point, Yes awareness and self acceptance are very important, but does all that make us powerless addicts.

And one last hot button **does thinking we are powerless make us give up faster than we should?**

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by Jooboy - 12 Jul 2010 20:58

For myself I find that without a stark realization of who I am it is all too easy to fall into a comfortable place of "Oh I just have a little difficulty with _____ and I've been just fine for a while now" and then do things or go to places that are not safe for me. If I realize that I'm an addict and that once I start playing around with _____ I lose all control and don't have the ability to stop myself then I approach things very differently. I stay away like it's going to burn me up and kill me. That keeps me on the straight and narrow.

For myself I have had to give up reading the news on the internet. If I'm just a normal guy (not a lust addict / alcoholic) who did some things that I wished I hadn't done what's wrong with some news on the internet /(kiddush wine). But if I'm a lust addict/(alcoholic) then internet news/(kiddush) could kill me spiritually/(physically).

Just my two cents.

What do you find to be the downside of the addict label other than some discomfort of the label?

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by yedidya aleph - 13 Jul 2010 00:25

once I start playing around with _____ I lose all control and don't have the ability to stop myself then I approach things very differently. I stay away like it's going to burn me up and kill me. That keeps me on the straight and narrow.

My dear brother Holy Yid,

Our Holy Brother Jooboy has hit the core of the issue! this diagnosis helps remove a certain

sense of guilt and self-deprecation. Once we realize that we have a disease.,then we take the responsibility to seek out our treatment and take our medicine. **However, powerless does not mean hopeless or helpless.**

We can not dare use the label of "addict" as a cop out excuse to sit back and expect the rest of the world to accomodate us and pity us. (as easy and tempting as that is) No, we don't want their pity. We want respect from others and we want to regain our own self-respect. Baruch Hashem. 12 steps and Dr. Twersky's books have helped me tremendously over the years to understand who i am, and to begin to appreciate my value and potential as a tzelem Elokim despite my disease and past mistakes. I can even believe that Hashem still loves me and is ready to accept my teshuva, something unfathomable,if i were still berating myself and beating myself up because of my misdeeds, leaving my easy prey for the Yetzer Haroh while i wallow in self-pity and non-kosher guilt! (not to mean i do not feel charotoh as part of the teshuva process). I can appreciate my neshomah t'hora which is is a chelek Eloka m'ma'al with unlimited power.

the other part is to realize that recovery is a life long process,and we contiunue to identify as a recovering addict to remind ourselves that relapse is only a momemt away Chas V'Shalom!!

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Re: Do we harm ourelves by calling refering to ourselves as addicts?????
Posted by ohr_ireuven - 13 Jul 2010 01:04

No. There is a chazaka of the 12 steps working, in which the first step is to come to the realization that you are an addict. The steps work, hundreds of people testify to it. Maybe not labeling ourselves as addicts can also help, but its not certain nor backed by a chazka of working. Its best I suppose to stick to what has been proven to work efficiently and properly, and not put our souls in a method thats a sofek... but could be..

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Re: Do we harm ourelves by calling refering to ourselves as addicts?????
Posted by trying123 - 13 Jul 2010 04:09

It's funny because I was just talking to a therapist today about going to self-help meetings like DA and CodA.

He said that the down side is that they make you feel like there is something fundamentally flawed about you... Not a very healthy thing especially since I am not an addict.... I do have basic control, I am simply not perfect -I am human....

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by Holy Yid - 14 Jul 2010 21:02

when I label myself an addict I feel flawed and damaged. I feel there is something very wrong with me. I recently discussed my struggles with a person who is knowledgeable in this area and familiar with the website. They thought calling ourselves addicts went way to far. They asked if someone has a hard time not speaking lashon hara or waking up for shachris are they a lashon hara addict or a sleep addict?

Regarding our judgement and avoiding triggers, the urge for pleasure is very strong and we have made it stronger. busy will continue. . . .

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by Jooboy - 14 Jul 2010 21:11

I think a basic difference between an addict and someone who does other behaviors that are damaging is - as an addict I can find myself doing things that

- 1) I intellectually know are bad for me
- 2) that I don't want to do
- 3) that I do because it feels good
- 4) even though I know it will feel horrible afterwards

5) and sometimes feel horrible even while I am doing it (which I am supposedly doing because it feels good)

I don't think lashon harah would fit that description.

I wonder if a lot of people who are uncomfortable with the label of addict have little or no exposure to other recovered/ing addicts. They are some of the most amazing, great people one could ever hope to be like. Overcoming great adversity creates greatness. Many of them consider themselves blessed to be addicts for the growth recovery has gotten them.

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by Shmu - 15 Jul 2010 07:44

You are assuming an addict is a bad thing! There is no value judgement in the word **addict**.

I think what we need to focus on is the **truth**. Am I addicted to lust or am I not. What is the emes. If I am, calling it something else just to spare my feelings will not benefit me if I am truly an addict. If I am an addict I must attack the problem like an addict, ie work the 12 steps.

All I know is, is that every single time I am at a stop light. I assume the woman in the car next to me is the most beautiful creature on earth, and I just need to confirm that. If I am dishonest, I can say, "If I just take a quick look, it doesn't mean anything." For me at least, if I take a look, I believe that triggers other things and starts me on a path I no longer wish to go down. So yes, I am an addict. As a result I need to remember that, or I will not deal with my problem appropriately.

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by silentbattle - 15 Jul 2010 22:07

What's the point of labeling ourselves? So that we can be treated. A patient with cancer worries,

and may get depressed, or may even give up - none of those are good for his health, or his long-term prognosis. Yet, he needs to know his condition, so he can treat his disease.

The problem with claiming that we're not addicts is that we can continue to fall into the same old patterns, never noticing the trap. As soon as we accept that we are (or at least, we could be) addicts, we open ourselves up to hearing about all the traps of addiction.

Your question about lashon hora, etc, is a good one, and we can discuss that over a few beers, sometime. For now, though, it's just a distraction. It's only now, after months of being clean, that I can finally accept and realize just how compulsive some of my behaviors were. Whether or not lashon hora has that same issue is irrelevant.

Interestingly, there is no psychological diagnosis of "addiction." There is, however, a diagnosis of "substance dependence" and "substance abuse." Although those are talking about physical drugs, check them up in the DSM-IV (the book psychologists use to diagnose patients), and you'll find that most people here fit those criteria, or at least come close to it.

So yes, I'd say that we're addicts. The idea being, that we have an allergy, and the reaction will be bad if we come in contact. We could get sick, end up in jail, ruin our lives, even die. Especially die, perhaps, because if we don't get free, we'll be trapped and continue to destroy our lives until...we die, stuck in the dirt.

Or, we can choose to break free, something we can do. Powerless doesn't mean we have no choice. What it does mean is open to discussion, but I understand it to mean that I can't put myself in situations where I need to trust myself. I can't assume that I have control.

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????
Posted by trying123 - 16 Jul 2010 00:10

[silentbattle wrote on 15 Jul 2010 22:07:](#)

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So yes, I'd say that we're addicts.....

I think that many on the forum are addicts... but the act of joining does not qualify to make someone an addict...

There are people here, myself included, that come for the chizuk, inspiration, and courage to be the best they can...

Am I an addict? No.

Says Who? A few professionals I spoke to...

If someone occasionally Mast... it does not constitute addiction. It may be wrong and something to work on, but is not necessarily addiction just as someone who sometimes gains weight is not automatically a food addict...

is someone who sometimes wakes up late, misses Zman krias Shema a sleep addict?

No, he is someone who has to work on himself in those areas!!!

Labeling can be detrimental to some!!!

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by tehor_einayim - 16 Jul 2010 17:02

I like to think of myself as an addict, b/c of the lack of control I have over this issue. However, I don't call myself an addict to others. The idea is that conventional yeshiva mussar seforim will not do the trick here. It requires something else as we all acknowledge. If you can recover without seeing yourself as an addict, kol hakavod, but for many, thinking of ourselves as addicts

can be helpful. If you have a sickness, do you have less self-confidence? No, you simply go to the doctor and take the prescribed medicine. Calling ourselves addicts simply diagnoses our illness and informs us that we need the prescribed medicine of GYE and our Rabbonim.

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by kosher - 18 Jul 2010 04:26

To add some perspective; many people are addicted to nicotine (cigarettes) or even caffeine (coffee), they meet the measure of addiction by every description. I don't think they (or we) think of the whole person as an "addict", merely a normal person addicted to a specific behaviour.

I think we can view the addiction here similarly. (And also in regard to the challenges and ability to change that behaviour to some extent.)

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Re: Do we harm ourselves by calling referring to ourselves as addicts?????

Posted by Holy Yid - 18 Jul 2010 08:37

I agree that the urge here is very strong and it clouds our judgement and we made it stronger and clouded more of our judgement by our behaviors. To start to think straight at all about this we need a heck of a lot of intellectual honesty. We need to be so honest that it is appealing and compelling to act the way we know is the truth. We need to really be honest to realize all the lies we tell ourselves about why we are going online and why we are looking at this and that and that THIS is the LAST time (really!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!) and that we can use unfiltered web only this time or maybe twice or maybe maybe maybe only this week (I really have been good this week and can't imagine I would EVER do that kind of thing again, ever in my life).

Addicts are amazing in the degree that they are honest and in the degree they pursue honesty (and I really, really respect Dov, and that was with complete honesty, really) but the Kotzker and the balai Mussar also demanded complete intellectual honesty not for addicts but for everyone in Klal Yisroel.

Once we are on the topic I heard that a prominent Rosh Yeshiva said the much of the mussar

taught in Yeshivas today lacks real intellectual honesty. Anyone who was zoche to come in contact with an adam gadol knows that he lives his live with total intellectual honesty.

Back to topic, a real Jew needs to be intellectually honest as does an addict so why can't I be a Jew and not an addict?

I also feel bad, funny weird, flawed being an addict so i will try to be intellectually honest, when I remember, but I do not know if I am an addict.

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