

Stress Management

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 27 Feb 2011 09:37

Im still learning my way around here so I don't know if this is the best way to pick the experts' brains, but tzaddik90 thought it was a good idea. So any complaints go to him! jk

In a different thread I dealt with and received tremendous feedback about hashkafa, which led me to realize that it wasn't so much wrong hashkafa that got me messed but bad coping habits. Now maybe I need a psychologist, but I figured I would let you guys have a try first. It is cheaper

I feel that even though GYE and the forum have been a tremendous help and I have so much more to gain from it, but its almost like Im counting the days until I have another fall. Im sorry for sounding sacrilegious. I know its important to celebrate the victories, but I feel that its also important to find the source of the problem and deal with it. Am I wrong?

For me, M is a knee jerk reaction to stress. Why?

More specifically, what can I do differently to reduce the stress? Im finding myself staying away from M, but not dealing with the stress. Instead I just fall into a depression.

I feel paralyzed, like I can't do anything which just makes things worse because there are things that can be done but I feel helpless. So I do nothing, which just causes more stress because I am even farther behind. It's a vicious cycle. Sometimes the stressor is not that big of a deal but I blow it out of proportion. Maybe I just need someone to hold my hand and walk me through it. I don't know.

So what are the positive proper ways to deal with stress? I know it sounds like a dumb question, but I obviously need to be taught how to deal with it properly. The hashkafa aspect is already registered. I know all the right answers but Lmaaseh, I need concrete ways to deal with it.

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by DesertLion - 27 Feb 2011 11:11

Hey Gesher,

I was recently in a stressful situation myself and Guard sent me this parable,

From the Daily Dose of Dov:

A guy who was a crazy Jets fan missed an important game but his friend taped it for him. By the time he got the tape, he had already heard on the news that his Jets won that game.

That night he set up beer, chips, salsa, closed door, all for watching the game. Halfway through the game his son, a Dolphins fan, came into the room and said, "Dad, are you OK? Every time you watch a game you go crazy yelling at the players, cursing like a sailor, and spilling your beer during touchdowns. Why are you so quiet tonight?"

He answered, "Well, you're right, son. But I already know that my boys will win this game at the end in overtime, so I don't get all emotionally wrapped up in how the plays are going. I mean, it's interesting and fun to watch, but I just can't get carried away like I normally do."

When we start to know that G-d will make everything right in the end, and that everything that will ever happen is for our benefit cuz it's His Will, the personal investment we have in things happening the way we plan is much less. And we start to trust Him a bit, then slowly more and more. Especially when we see that he really does keep us sober.

I still ended up falling due to subconscious stress, but that's not the point. I think what Guard was trying to tell me is that once we've sincerely tried our best, the rest is in God's hands. If we trust that God has our best interests at heart then we no longer need to worry, since everything has been predestined anyway.

Oh and btw, my stressful situation turned out well, completely contrary to expectations so I worried for nothing really.

Have a great weekend,

DL

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by oblum - 27 Feb 2011 14:18

@geshertzarmeod:

1. Unless your suffering from cash overload, there is little that a psychologist can do for

While I can see how stress can be a trigger, its importan to separate the facts from the emotions. Being stressed out sucks. It really dose. And there are ways of dealing with stress (more on that soon). The trick though is not to fool yourself that [SPAM](#) is what is going to release the stress. Sounds simple, eh? As I'm sure you can attest though, it isn't. While I dont know what exactly is troubling/stressing you in life, a lot of stress is in our minds. Two people can do the exact same thing, but one of them can do its stress free, while the other can get a nervous break down from it. Why? In one word: attitude. When we have a positive attitude towards our work/life/job/wife/etc, we can enjoy what we do and grow immensely from it. On the other hand, when we are down and depressed, even the most normally enjoyable things can serve to make the situation worse. Therefor, the number one thing to remember is to keep your head up and smile! Focus on the positive and count your blessings. If you start living your life this way, I'm sure you will notice a change not just in this area, but in all areas of life. On the flip side, people that have a negative outlook on life (even if its not 'intentional/by choice') tend to find everything more difficult. Every ant hole becomes a hill, and every hill a mountain. Thats where the stress begins. Next, the stress breads stress. That stress breads more stress. Its a vicious cycle! We need to break out of it as early as posible. When we dont break the cycle, we tend to start slipping. Slipping makes us feel like helpless losers and you that you cant do yourself. And if too much mula is your issue, maybe I can help the cherry on top comes in the form of depression. Now - as Chasidim say - depression isnt an averia! But what depression can lead us to, even the worst averios cant lead us to...

2. Number two would probably be to try and visualise your "reward" before hand, and try to ask yourself if spam is really what will reduce your stress. While our logic would immediately tell us that it spam wont help, the YH is very, very strong. R' Ammnon Yitzhok has a simple breakdown on how to deal with life: he says that life is only one second long. How so? Well, lets see. The previous second has already passed and is history. There aint much you can do about that one. The next (future) second hasn't yet arrived - and unless you know something that I dont, there is no way to manipulate the future. All thats left is this current second. Seriously, are we that weak that we cant hold out for just one simple little second??? Stop for a second. Just one. And think to your self: what am I going to accomplish here? Will it really make me feel better? Or will I just be *even more* stressed when I'm done? Just one second... That second is also the time to hit these forums. Reach out. Talk to the "oilum". Hear there stories. Become inspired.

Get your self an accountability partner and give him a call. By this time you have already "won" about 120 times (i.e. 120 seconds). See? You **can** do it! Now try to double that. Like a body builder, keep on working up your "maximum". By living life in watertight compartments, not opening one until the previous one is sealed closed, you'll be surprised how far you can go!

3. "More than the Yetzer Hora want you to slip" R' M. Solomon once said when asked by a boucher on how to deal with spam, "the YH seeks the depression that follows!". So number three is: regardless of the reason (i.e. a slip or just stress) dont allow yourself to be down about it!. We are all humans and humans are NEVER 100% perfect. Only Hashem can reach perfection. "Ain tzadik tov b'aretzasher ya'aseh tov v'lo yechta ("there is no righous man in the land that will do only good and never sin)". It happens, and it happens to the best of us. The trick is to pick your self up, dust your self off, and move on. As a matter of a fact, the posuk says "Sheva yipol tzadik v'kam (A righteous man will fall seven time, and [still] get up)". One p'shat is that the difference between a Tzadik and a rosha is really very slim. They both fall. And they will both fall man, MANY times. The difference is that the Tzadik will pick himself up after every fall, dust off his hat, straighten his jacket, AND MOVE ON. The rasha on the other hand, will just stay down. NEVER GIVE UP - it may sound like Hashkafa - make it L'maysa!
4. While sometimes a change in LIFE is in order to help deal with stress, many a time change is unavailable. There are many smaller activities, both physical and mental, that can help deal with stress. As mentioned before, a change in attitude can help. Science has proven that the physical act of smiling can trigger "happy" hormones in our brain - effectively making us happy. Physical activity (i.e. exercise) can help release built up tension. Reaching a goal - no matter how simple or plain - can help us feel accomplished and content. A goal can be as simple as Daving one more B'rocha with Kavana, finishing a Perek/Masechta of Mishnayos, or even something in the non-spiritual world. Meditation, (re-)organization, rejoicing in the small steps we take in life - all these can help make us feel better and more "on the right side of life".
5. No list on how to gain ANYTHING would be complete without mentioning prayer. If nothing else, remember that according to some opinions, **the main Mitzvah of Davening is specifically when we have issues that trouble us!**. Hashem even may put us in difficult situation specifically because he wants us to pray. Use this opportunity to get closer to Hashem. Talk to him and tell him what you need. Ask HIM to hold your hand. You can't get better help than that!

Feel free to post your specific stress triggers, maybe those can be better addressed.

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 27 Feb 2011 16:26

Thank you DL and o for your encouragement and suggestions. The trigger is financial, not the

Now I must admit that sometimes we make an issue of nothing. For example I'm afraid of phone calls from the bank or the credit card company or the gmach. And when I finally talk to them they are very accomodating. So yes, alot of it is in my head.

I like the football example. Still it requires a change of definition about the result being good. In other words of course Hashem is doing it all for a good reason, but as my wife says it doesnt answer the bank/ gmach /credit company's demand for their money.

So yes by worrying and being stressed Im being short sighted because thats what I have to deal with. The knowledge that ultimately its for my own good doesn't help reduce the stress.

Talking this out just gave me the realization that since our society is so results oriented or instant gratification oriented, we dont have the tools to deal with these things ???

Dont know how that helps me, but it turned on a light bulb in my head. Let me try to think that one through. We'll get back to you...

To be continued...

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by pinokio - 27 Feb 2011 16:30

Wow, R' O has written quite alot. I did not read it yet carefully enough to critique, and anyhow who am i, but may i make a few humble points.

First of all, Geshet, it is an amazing point that uv'e reached that u r now identifying with the underlying cause of your bad habbits, which rhymes with rabbits. This chiddush will help u the rest of all ur battles. Knowing is half the battle, they say.

Second, in my own battles, which i still am involved in, i took a really long time just to get stable enuff in my life to even get the chance to plan fighting back in my battles. Don't expect to stop falling in a month...or three....or six.... . A GYE named Avreich613 mentioned in a post how many ppl here are involved in becoming self aware but do not proceed to the next step of the 12 steps, a phone conference, or SA group-ie. real professional recovery. I kind of agree with this. True, you may not have hit bottom with addictions, but what do ya lose by intensely focusing on your bad habbits in a real way? And when u do one of those things u may definitely move very forward in recovery. Surely, however, if we don't take these steps, it will take a longer time. Anyhow, dont plan the next fall, but just dont think about it. Read Dov's email from today-when we wrestle with a guy with lice, we get lice. So we can't focus in not falling, rather we can focus

on recovery and taking care of ourselves for these three seconds. Classic GYE theology! Learn more abt it.(the lice mashal is mamesh in tanya abt. lust, eyin sham).

Thirdly, O" wrote what seems to say that a psychologist is a waste of money. Respectfully, i'll share my opinion. While not all problems are fixed with a professional, there are many that are. No one except moshe rabbeinu cld be an x-ray machine and heAl all of your problems. But a good psychologist is an unbelievable tool. Pm me on this. I myself have discussed this with several Gedolim here in EY, and they espouse this view. Also, the GYE handbook mentions therapy as a tool, so its the neighborhood view here too. I know that by going for therapy, it saved my life. And the life of two brothers, an sister, and my mother. A therapist cant fix you, but a good one can give u the tools that u need to develop to fix yourself. I still benefit from goingeven though its been years.

While i do not nec. have the exact nesayon as you, i am probably ranking one of the highest stressed out ppl here. I have thought of suicide, not been able to walk bec. of stress, had anxiety attacks, and more.

There is so much to tell u, oy, i feel i can share alot with you, but right now im busy. Youre post really flushed things out into specifics, which is awesome. Now do it again!

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 27 Feb 2011 16:45

thanks

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by Dov - 27 Feb 2011 23:00

Dear "geshertzarmeod",

Many people I know were helped by seeing and really being totally honest with a psychologist right from day 1. The trick is not to set things up like you are going to go forever, but to focus on a specific problem, like stress.

That having been said, I have seen a shift in my life through recovery from my lust addiction. Over time, staying sober (that's like breathing) and working the steps with a real live sponsor and meeting other recovering people like myself has been a way to open up the door that was closed before.

The door is to a real, live G-d in a relationship that actually *works* for me. He is for me, as it says *ani l'Dodi v'Dodi li*. The partnership is completely impossible for me if I am still masturbating - it makes me too nuts, as Rav Solomon says. The self-destruction afterward is too unhealthy, and the destruction it causes in other areas of my life (marriage, job, etc.) is just too great to bear...so I saw that I **had** to quit the sex-with-self (masturbating).

But I also saw that I was not able to!

All the chizzuk in the world only got me to the point where I was 'holding on' between 'acting out's'...fighting with Hashem/tahara and with my YH/tum'ah. It was basically a constant struggle that only got worse over the long run. I cannot function in the state of *oi li m'Yotzri, oi li m'yitzri* - that's no place for a nice Jewish boy like me!

Besides, an occasional "fall" as they call it here, with porn and masturbation *is* being unfaithful to my wife - not to mention the worse behaviors that develop after that for many of us, R"l. Exactly how would I feel if I caught my wife staring at a man wearing nothing and using his image to excite herself? How would I feel?

So the approach of continuing the secrecy, the lying and hiding from the wife was not a good idea, either. It is living a lie and must stop for me to approach 'living the good life'. And my wife deserves better. Far better than a lie. besides the destruction of the family that occurs as a result of my being all romantically tied up in my great spiritual struggles. Gevalt...I have met divorced couples where the husband was always 'working on himself' and 'living one day at a time' and 'getting up after the fall - every time - over and over'...never really getting better because he never took it seriously enough and never got help to make the life-changes necessary.

OK. So what I am saying is that stress is part of the garbage that disappears once your relationship with your G-d grows into something more real than the relationship we have as long as we can still get down on that bathroom floor and service ourselves. 'Guilt' is not a relationship.

Find some peace with your best Friend. It is not in your head, not a hashkofah, and *not* something that comes by using the tools you have been using all along *-but harder*. Find *new* tools and use them, chaver.

Hatzlocha!!

Love,

Dov

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 28 Feb 2011 07:17

[dov wrote on 27 Feb 2011 23:00:](#)

All the chizzuk in the world only got me to the point where I was 'holding on' between 'acting out's'...fighting with Hashem/tahara and with my YH/tum'ah. It was basically a constant struggle that only got worse over the long run. I cannot function in the state of *oi li m'Yotzri, oi li m'yitzri* - that's no place for a nice Jewish boy like me!

Well said dov!

That's exactly what I feel like. BH I havent had a fall, but its almost as if I'm waiting for my resolve to dissolve. ???

So lets ratch it up a level. What's my next move?

[dov wrote on 27 Feb 2011 23:00:](#)

That having been said, I have seen a shift in my life through recovery from my lust addiction. Over time, staying sober (that's like breathing) and working the steps with a real live sponsor and meeting other recovering people like myself has been a way to open up the door that was closed before.

OK so help me get there. What's available and how do I get it?

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 28 Feb 2011 08:27

I think this is where I was stuck b4 when the lightbulb went on. I need a deeper relationship with HKBH to be developed with new tools. What I had in the past wasnt enough. The stress is just a strain on a weak relationship, ergo davening becomes difficult. Thanks. Got alot of work to do!

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by pinokio - 28 Feb 2011 09:30

Dear Gesher, you mentioned in a post how u are at a point how u r even afraid to answer the phone thinking it's the bank, etc. I just want to share that i can relate to this phenomena-coming from a broken home, i used to be scared when i'd receive a phone call from chutz la'aretz. I'd assume it's either my mother crying to me abt. her broken state, or a younger sibling who'd call to relate the living hell they were in at home. Those phone calls would leave me a completely broken person, ridden with fear and pain. Fear of the phone call and fear of what's going on with my situation while i was away from the phone.

When i went for therapy, one of the first goals was to be able to pick up the phone and not ignore it. We cannot run away from the nisyonos u and i have-we must learn to cope with them better-because what is really killing us is the fear, not the lack of money or psycho father. This amongst all else that we must learn is all in the same direction-to learn how to function better and live a happier and more efficient life, managing better our resources and managing better in these painful situations. The later goal was to talk to my father on the phone. The next was to call him, and so on. AND here i am today, getting better each day! You can too! Come ride with me, iv'e got an extra seat in my trailer home. we can eat grits together and hunt deer in montana.

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by geshertzarmeod - 28 Feb 2011 10:14

tzaddikel You are soooooooooo right!

I really think I need to work that out as well

You are such an inspiration!

So when are we going to Montana?

btw that pic cant be Memuchan...

he looks too happy!

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by pinokio - 28 Feb 2011 13:58

it was before mordechai didnt bow

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by DovInIsrael - 28 Feb 2011 14:31

hey gesher -

when i was younger we used to go the big movie megaplex (family time! problem was the complex was so big, and nobody really wanted to spend any time with anyone anyway - so we all usally went to see a different movie - hows that for a dysfunctional family)

anyway - one time me and my brother were early for our show - so we snuck into another movie - already in progress..until ours started. It was a horror movie...something about a human spider...or something like that.

well scary horro movies are not so scary if you walk in in the middle.. so here we are.. the music is playing.. the spider is getting closer and closer...(my brother and I thought it was really dumb - we were about to leave, when...) a black guy stands up and starts yelling, "GURL, DONT GO IN THERE, GURL ! GURL... DONT DO IT GURL...GURL, I'm TELLING YOU!! DONT GO IN THERE!!! "

as if this was not funny enough... she opens the door, and the spider proceeds to eat her!

then the guy sits down all disappointed.. and exclaims, "D*** GURL!!! You dont listen!! I told you last week NOT to go in there, and you did it anyway. NoW, look what you did!!"

rule 1 for Stress management: Lighten up!! A sense of humor is a good thing!

rule 2 - you can win any game you play, if you are the one making the rules

(parallel - make some rules you can WIN!! and praise yourself for!)

rule 3 - establish 3 SECOND goals! and build up from there.

rule 4 - When you feel yourself being pulling into the battle -

YELL OUT: DONT GO THERE!!! DONT DO IT!!

Cry out to Hashem to help you...

dov.in.israel

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by oblum - 28 Feb 2011 14:49

[tzaddik90 wrote on 27 Feb 2011 16:30:](#)

Thirdly, O" wrote what seems to say that a psychologist is a waste of money. Respectfully, i'll share my opinion. While not all problems are fixed with a professional, there are many that are. No one except moshe rabbeinu cld be an x-ray machine and heAl all of your problems. But a

good psychologist is an unbelievable tool. Pm me on this. I myself have discussed this with several Gedolim here in EY, and they espouse this view. Also, the GYE handbook mentions therapy as a tool, so its the neighborhood view here too.

1. I never said it was a waste of money. I said it depends on the objective of your money. Sure, therapy can help. THIS IS THERAPY - all thats missing is the \$150+ p/ hour price tag
2. Indeed, the "Gedolim" of EY (just like else where) are so, so diverse. From Women of the Wall at one end to Neturei Karta at the other, you can always find a "Rabbi" to take your side. VIP's can order a "Gadol".
3. While I dont want to get in to it now, the job of a manhig **is to be able to a "x-ray machine"**. There is a shmooze from R' Brevda that explains the logic about the connection between Moshe Rabenu going after the stray sheep (and caring it on his shoulder to bring it to the river to drink), and why Hashem chose him to lead the generation.
4. Again, without getting in to it (and making my previous post seem short) there are a lot of issue with psychology/psychologist. Sure, the Hamon Am of the modern/progressive West wont admit it - but that doesnt make it right

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Re: Stress Management

Posted by oblum - 28 Feb 2011 15:12

@geshertzarmeod,

I can't think of anything, ANYTHING, more therapeutical to your mind, body AND soul than Sha'ar Habitachon of Chovos Halavavos. I can guaranty that once you internalize it there will be

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