

Thread in which I share my thoughts

Posted by 5Uu80*cdwB#^ - 19 Oct 2022 23:38

Hi friends. I am creating this thread in which I will share different thoughts about recovery. In this first post, I want to share the DSM-5 criteria for substance use disorder as listed at www.gatewayfoundation.org/addiction-blog/dsm-5-substance-use-disorder/ (that's just where I found the list; I don't have any association with that website or even know what that website is.) I have [approximately] substituted the phrase porn/masturbation for the word "substance" or "drug" every place it appears below:

Criteria for substance use disorder:

1. **Using porn/masturbation more than intended** or using it for longer than you're meant to.
2. **Trying to cut down or stop porn/masturbation but being unable to.**
3. **Experiencing intense cravings or urges to use porn/masturbation.**
4. Needing more of porn/masturbation to get the desired effect — also called tolerance.
5. **Developing withdrawal symptoms when not using porn/masturbation.**
6. Spending more time getting and using porn/masturbation and recovering from porn/masturbation use.
7. **Neglecting responsibilities at home, work or school because of porn/masturbation.**
8. **Continuing to use porn/masturbation even when it causes relationship problems.**
9. Giving up important or desirable social and recreational activities due to porn/masturbation use.
10. Using porn/masturbation in risky settings that put you in danger.
11. Continuing to use porn/masturbation despite it causing problems to your physical and mental health.

Per DSM-5,

* One symptom could indicate an individual is at risk.

* Two or three criteria point to a mild substance use disorder.

- * Four or five symptoms show someone has a moderate substance use disorder.
- * Six or more criteria indicate a severe substance use disorder, which signals an addiction to that substance.

I post this post because I think that a lot of people don't want to call this battle what it is: ADDICTION. What percentage of people on this site meet at least the 6 criteria I bolded above? Probably a very high percentage. And that is among the bnei aliyah who actually make it to this site!

So, who cares that it's an addiction? The answer is that when you realize you have an addiction and not just a "stam" struggle with the yetzer hara, you can begin to approach the problem with clinical rhetoric instead of feeling like you are doomed to gehinom because you can't seem to succeed with mussar alone despite having tried for years to stop. I personally found this mindset very liberating and helpful on my journey. You can say, "I am a ben Torah who loves learning and doing mitzvos. I am not doomed because I am recovering from a substance use disorder one day at a time with G-d's help" instead of "I am a ben Torah who loves learning and doing mitzvos but am doomed because I can't stop masturbating compulsively all the days of my life because I can't beat the yetzer hara in this spiritual battle." Realize that in many ways this is very much like recovering from an addiction to heroin.

I am not saying this is not a battle against the yetzer hara because of course Chazal tell us arayos is a yetzer hara. Rather, I am saying that if you have been stuck for years trying to stop these toxic habits, it could be you need a rhetoric shift.

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts
Posted by Markz - 25 Oct 2022 01:02

Brother, you raise a good point but I think you're mixing medical diagnosis with religion.

For example to consider a health problem "**Using porn/masturbation more than intended or using it for longer than you're meant to**" - is likely referring to someone that masturbates 2-3 times a day. Whereas once / twice a week would not meet the criteria. Same goes for many other criteria.

On the other hand we are religious Jews, so masturbating twice a month is sacrilegious. But don't confuse it with the DSM mental health criteria.

(btw i think 2-3 line signatures look sharper - can you try shorten yours?)

So I beg to disagree with your conclusion that *"I post this post because I think that a lot of people don't want to call this battle what it is: ADDICTION. What percentage of people on this site meet at least the 6 criteria I bolded above? Probably a very high percentage."*

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts
Posted by 5Uu80*cdwB#^ - 19 Jan 2023 18:56

Just listened to the Shovavim Series by Rabbi Meir Simcha Sperling and loved it. I highly recommend it. It's on Torah Anytime.

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts
Posted by 5Uu80*cdwB#^ - 28 Mar 2023 20:21

Thought for the day:

IT'S OKAY TO BE IN PHYSICAL PAIN BECAUSE YOU DON'T GET TO EXPERIENCE EVERY
TAIVA YOU WANT!

Ayyy, it hurts! YES, IT HURTS, AND THAT'S OKAY!!!

Wishing everyone hatzlocha in coming to deeply internalize that enduring physical pain is often necessary to become someone great.

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts

Posted by 5Uu80*cdwB#^ - 23 Jul 2023 19:51

Thought for the day:

Let yourself call this entire experience what it is: ADDICTION. You want to stop but haven't succeeded despite years of trying. It's ruining your life. What's that called: Addiction. No more qualifications needed. And, IT'S OKAY TO RECOGNIZE YOU HAVE AN ADDICTION.

We don't only tell heroin addicts to muster their will power and "beat the yetzer hara". That approach works for almost no heroin addicts. Rather, we tell them they have a disease called addiction and direct them to highly qualified clinicians for recovery with proven tools that help addicts of all substance types break free.

Of course there is a yetzer hara for arayos. Of course Judaism and halacha are true. Of course all these things are still a serious aveirah even though you are addicted to it. Of course you still are liable for your actions even as an addict. But it's also a disease called addiction and you need to recognize this fact in order to win long-term and change yourself.

I will tell you from first-hand experience that that realizing this is an addiction was the turning point in my success. Don't be ashamed to admit you are addicted. It might just help you break free for good.

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts
Posted by DavidT - 23 Jul 2023 20:13

How do you look at this Ohr Hachaim on Acharei Mos?

It is known that all the Mitzvos that Hashem commanded his holy nation are Mitzvos that a man can stand by and cause himself a desire to do, **besides for the Mitzva of staying away from arayos (illicit relations) which is something that a person craves and his desires forces him to act**, unless one makes an effort to stay far away from two things: (1) Seeing with the eyes, (2) Thinking about it. However, if a person does not keep away from these two aspects (sight and thought), **a man will not be able to control himself** and rid himself of it.

As long as one does not stay away from looking, even if he stays away from thinking about it, **he will not be able to control himself and rid himself of the inevitable desire**. As we can see from the story of R' Amram, the Rebbe of all Chassidim (Kidushin 81a), that even though he was far from thinking about these things, he was won over by the aspect of "sight" . And we can also see this from the story of Reb Masya Ben Charash (Yalkut Shimoni; Veyechi) who chose to blind himself when he felt that he would be forced to come to bad deeds through the sight of his eyes, even though he was surely far from thinking of these things - as is clear in the story.

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts
Posted by chaimoigen - 23 Jul 2023 20:32

The Ohr Hchayim is a critical point in this struggle.

A similar point is made by various Meforshim explaining how the saintly soldiers in the Milchemes Mitzva become INCAPABLE of resisting the lure of the Yifas Toar, although they were on an incredibly high level and had never previously sinned, and the reason is because they were in the battlefield and NEEDED to LOOK and see her. From there comes the inevitable fall.

I'm not sure that this proves the point that the heroic and unpronounceable warrior write in his

post- that having this problem is necessarily and inherently an addiction, though....

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts
Posted by 5Uu80*cdwB#^ - 24 Jul 2023 03:09

[DavidT wrote on 23 Jul 2023 20:13:](#)

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Thanks, DavidT, for sharing this Ohr HaChaim. It's the first time I have heard of it. Obviously the Ohr HaChaim doesn't need my haskama, but it sounds like ??? to me. As I always say, fantasy is at the root of it all. I see that theme in his words "... (1) Seeing with the eyes, (2) Thinking about it...".

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts
Posted by chaimoigen - 24 Jul 2023 17:36

The incredibly powerful thought that you have written about numerous times regarding fantasizing and guarding one's mind has been extremely helpful for me. I want to thank you.

I also wanted to quote you, but I couldn't be sure how to spell or pronounce your name. "Unprintable" doesn't sound good.

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Re: Thread in which I share my thoughts
Posted by 5Uu80*cdwB#^ - 24 Jul 2023 23:55

He Who Shall Not Be Named is a little ominous.

Maybe 5Uu8 for short.
Does "He Who Shall Not Be Named" work?

Shteig on!

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Thank you for your warm and encouraging words