

Giving a Genuine Try

Posted by omekhadavar - 26 Oct 2021 14:12

Hi everyone,

This is my first time posting here. I'm going to try and keep it up. The goal is to get to 90 days for the first time. Currently, this is my third day clean. I don't have an issue with pornography, I rarely view it. However, I do have an issue with being mz"l, which is usually caused by seeing inappropriate pictures etc.

I've been thinking of ways to remove triggers. I plan on purchasing a basic phone soon, so I hope that will remove help in removing many triggers. Also, I currently have web chaver on my computer, but I plan on getting a filter as well, so I don't see any triggers by accident. Another one of my main problems is when I'm not occupied and end up surfing the web. This almost always leading to me being mz"l when no one is around. I would like to make a neder for at least 20 days not to use the internet unnecessarily, but I'm not sure how to phrase it. Advice would be appreciated.

-Dvar Ha'emek

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try

Posted by bego - 26 Jan 2022 18:20

[i-man wrote on 26 Jan 2022 18:06:](#)

Don't take it the wrong way , I very much enjoy reading banter involving you and trouble.

Thanks, but I genuinely don't see it as semantics. As HHM argues that this approach can save people. So I'm trying to understand it. To me, those that will succeed, will succeed irrelevant, saying it's not real and you don't need it, isn't going to change it.

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try

Posted by Avrohom - 27 Jan 2022 05:18

I wonder if people experience urges differently. For me this concept was a game-changer,

perhaps a life-changer. In the past, when I had an urge, that meant my body was racked with desire, as if on fire, *with an understanding that I need _____ (sex, a provocative video, etc.)* much like thirst that comes from drinking saltwater (the Chovos Halevovos uses that example, I believe) the thirst is real, but the idea that you need to drink more saltwater to relieve the urge is fake. Combined with urges is a voice that says "I need my fix", and prior to a few months ago, I honestly thought it was true, that there was something inside me, perhaps based on some deep psychological need, that I needed my sexual needs to be met in order to calm/tame the urge. Hunger, for example, is an urge, that in healthy people correctly identifies a need to eat. Even though a person can fight the urge and go a while without eating, there the identification of the urge is a need to eat. With sexual urges, it's simply not true, even though the YH convinces us it is. The difference between the two attitudes is huge. If I have a need for sex that I can fight (like hunger) it's a losing battle between what I need (or at least really, really want) versus what is permitted (or perhaps good and moral). What I need will usually win. But if the need for sex is just a mirage (a mirage is also real in the sense that it does in fact look like water), and though it is an uncomfortable feeling, it doesn't mean you need sex, then you can battle the urge, by letting it go, knowing it's an uncomfortable feeling that doesn't mean much.

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try
Posted by starting - 27 Jan 2022 06:26

[Avrohom wrote on 27 Jan 2022 05:18:](#)

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Beautiful post!

Well put!

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try
Posted by MenachemGYE - 28 Jan 2022 01:52

[Trouble wrote on 23 Nov 2021 15:09:](#)

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one final point: i hesitated many times in this post, for perhaps there might be one fellow who will say, "hey, that trouble fellow from nauru might be speaking the truth, and i have been excited for days, so i can't stop, and therefore, here goes nothing." he will then proceed to masturbate. firstly, even if there is a build up, you can still stop. secondly, you can choose better. thirdly, who would listen to trouble anyway?

Interesting discussion here... there are many many theories about the sexual drive or the lack of it. As one scientist summarized very recently, *"our current knowledge about sexual desire remains partial and vague, with no general agreement between scientists and clinicians."* (pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30803921/).

Prof. Frederick Toates, has a great book called "How Sexual Desire Works", where he criticizes the concept of an intrinsic "sexual drive".

Below are some quotes:

When taken to extremes of deprivation another difference between feeding/drinking and sex becomes evident. Extremes of hunger or thirst endanger the body tissues and create pathology, which would trigger us to ingest almost anything that is nutritious or fluid respectively, no matter how odious. In such a state and in the absence of anything to eat or drink, most of us would probably opt for the needed substance by the intragastric or intravenous route, to correct the discomfort and pathology. This highlights the biological imperative underlying feeding and drinking behavior. Sex doesn't seem to be like this (Ågmo, 2007). Even in the extremes of deprivation, there is not an obvious threatening disturbance outside the brain that increases in magnitude over time. Neither does it appear that desire increases with deprivation in the way that hunger and thirst do. [...] According to the argument to be developed in the present book, where a failure to find a sexual outlet is troubling, this arises in the context of desires that fail to be translated into sexual behavior. The trouble starts in the brain/mind, not elsewhere. Any comparison with the bladder and urination makes the same point, though even more strongly. Clearly, the tension of a full bladder and the desire for urination serve an intrinsic biological imperative: avoiding involuntary urination or even bursting the bladder. Under medical treatment, a catheter can solve the problem of excessive pressure. Of course, there is an internal factor underlying sexual desire, which tends to lower its sensitivity for a short period of time following orgasm. It is equally clear that a signal from the genitals can contribute to desire. However, it is the contention of this chapter that for sex no regulatory factor comparable to energy, blood composition, or bladder pressure exists. Rather, the internal factor is best described in terms of the activity of particular circuits of neurons within the brain that are responsive to attractive others and are sensitized by sex hormones and signals from the genitals. This brain system is desensitized by orgasm(s), an event intrinsic to the brain.

Another quote from the book:

If desire were the manifestation of an intrinsic drive we might expect masturbation to occur most frequently in people denied a sexual outlet. However, the evidence suggests that masturbation is not compensation for lack of partnered sex. Highest levels correspond with high levels of partnered sexual activity and the most diverse range of sexual activities (Laumann et al., 1994).

Suppose that sexual behaviour is the manifestation of the brain's desire processes involving the imagination, the sensitivity of which is enhanced by sexual activity (except for a period immediately following orgasm). The enormous variation in masturbation frequency and the fact that it often occurs most frequently at times of a new relationship might be expected.

And a few more:

- Comparing across cultures, or within a given culture, or even within a given individual over phases within a life-time, there are enormous differences in the frequency of sexual outlets, fantasies and desires. [...] **Similarly, males with the highest frequency of sexual outlets had anything up to 45,000 times the frequency of those with the lowest** (Kinsey et al., 1948). This figure arose when comparing males who were living in the same area and leading apparently otherwise similar lives. It hardly points to an internal regulation but is entirely compatible with the notion that desire is the outcome of a complex interweaving of external factors and associations, excitations and inhibitions.
Warning: Spoiler!

- An alternative to the view that we are pushed by something arising within the tissues of the body and then happen upon a suitable means of discharge is termed the incentive view of motivation and is a foundation upon which this book rests. That is to say, people are *pulled* by external stimuli, thoughts about them and their associations [...] To take stock, the essence of the incentive–motivation view is that motivation is triggered by: incentive objects (e.g. a partner); cues associated with them, through classical conditioning; use of the imagination to represent absent incentives, that is thoughts of them. (p. 103-109). Regarding sexual tension he writes, "in incentive terms, the tension was not what motivated the initial sexual desire. Rather the tension was introduced into

the system by the desire." (p. 108).

- Extensive sexual frustration might well have subsequent consequences in the hormones of the body that underlie stress, which could be harmful. Conversely, the achievement of sexual joy and satiety might bring benefits in terms of the body's hormonal balance. It is suggested here that adverse effects from sexual frustration arise in only one body organ – the brain/mind, and do so from *psychological* processing that indicates failure and thwarting of sexual goals. Sexual frustration commonly arises in heterosexual partnerships when one party (usually the male) is denied fulfillment of sexual wishes that are judged as offensive or otherwise unacceptable by the other party. (p. 98)

I'll finish with an interesting anecdote: Did you know that masturbation is non-existent among Aka and Ngandu people in Central Africa? Food for thought.

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try
Posted by MenachemGYE - 28 Jan 2022 02:31

[Trouble wrote on 25 Jan 2022 14:32:](#)

it's a type of logic that is prevalent in the orthodox community, sadly. it's a type of brainwashing. similar to nathan, the spokesman from new orleans: michael wants to remain with the community, michael wants to be back with his wife and children, michael needs his community, despite his struggles now, we know what michael truly wants.

now, regarding the masturbation urge, i would say: it is real, breathe thru it, use other tools, for although the urge is strong (and, at times, can be overwhelming and all-too-powerful), you can get to the other side - it has happened before.

The test to know what you "truly want" is to ask yourself - when you're mind is clear - what your values are. Values can change over months or years, but not moment to moment. When we experience an urge to act against our values, which of those desires is more "real"? Which is internal, and which is external? Which could be considered "me", and which is just a fleeting experience?

Since the 80s it's been standard to teach recovering addicts to consider their urges as temporary "experiences" and externalize them. The same approach is used in cutting-edge therapies today.

To keep religion out of this, let's use an example of drinking. If I am happily drinking, and have no problem with it, my urges and your values perfectly align, and my urge *reflects* what I truly want. But when I've realized that drinking goes against my values, it makes perfect sense to treat the urge as an "experience", and to remind myself that it's not "me". Why would that be brainwashing? In fact, it's the *urge* - dopamine release in the reward pathway - that is brainwashing me. It's disguising itself as my true desire, when in fact I want the opposite.

On top of that, it can help to remind me that unlike urges to eat or sleep, which will come back to haunt me if I just try "breath thru it" for too long, sexual urges are in a wholly different category. Nothing at all will happen if I don't give in, and after a while, I'll adjust to it.

Overall, whether you like the term "real" or not, the idea itself is solid.

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try
Posted by MenachemGYE - 28 Jan 2022 02:59

[bego wrote on 27 Jan 2022 17:39:](#)

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What I'm reading from your post is that it is simply another mental barrier. the truth is irrelevant, you simply use it as a means of stopping yourself. Others use their wives, pictures of their fathers (hamavin yovin), gehinnom or gan eden. You use the idea that you don't have to.

But when you do give in, what happened? You really didn't have to. But you did?

I think the idea he is conveying is that this mindset and self-talk reduces the internal conflict, and makes it easier to make the right choice. External factors (like schar v'onesh, dmus deyukno shel aviv) overpower the urge by brute force while countering the self-talk in the way Avrohom describes takes less energy and is easier to accomplish.

In the midst of an urge, there is self-talk, like "I neeeeeeed this", or "I can't take it anymore", "I'm about to explode", "this is killing me." Although these statements are exaggerated, we don't exactly think rationally during an urge (the prefrontal cortex is switched off), and our brains react to these thoughts with an urgency as if these thoughts had some truth to them, and it becomes more likely that we'll act on them.

When using the strategy of countering your self-talk, you can't use statements that you don't believe to be true. I can't tell myself, "Yes, I need it... but let me tell myself that I don't...". If you do believe that it's a need on some level, there are plenty of better ways to deal with the urge.

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Posted by Avrohom - 28 Jan 2022 05:34

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Thank you. Yes. Precisely.

I have read a lot (I can't find where right now, but this is a key point in SMART recovery) about how the key to stopping addiction is changing the musts, needs, shoulds in our life to I want, I would like, I will be uncomfortable if I don't etc. While that isn't the main point of the above discussion, it highlights that one of the key drivers to why people act in self-destructive ways is because the voice within says "I need it", and that usually trumps "it's bad for me". It doesn't mean I think I'll die without it, there are many things that I would describe as a need, but I can survive without.

Furthermore, in fighting the YH, you need to fight on his level, on his terms. The YH operates in the present, what I need and want now, and he blinds us to any concern for the future, so Schar V'onesh, wrecking your marriage, destroying your relationships, etc. can all be disregarded when in the drunken-stupor that the YH places us in. You need to address his argument that "You need this, and you need it now." Like an itch that "screams" to be scratched, it's not enough to say, but it will bleed, make it worse, that will only help you to white-knuckle it, and most likely cave eventually, you need to tell yourself it's ok to live with the uncomfortable feeling of having an itch, I can handle it. Not sure, it I've added anything here or just said the same thing from another angle, but perhaps it strikes someone a little differently.

@Bego, I think there's part of your argument that I'm not understanding. What do you mean by "since you failed, it must be the urge was real, and you had to do it"? Just because you failed

doesn't indicate you were compelled to fail. Rather, it means you fell for it this time, but you didn't have to. It doesn't show that the urge has power. It shows that we thought it had power, so we caved.

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this menachem guy is pretty smart; good stuff he wrote. i didn't quite understand the very last sentence please; thanks.

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good stuff once again, but i'd like to point out a distinction between what you are saying and to what reb hhm says: you say that it's not me, it's the urge and experience; he says that you don't need sex and you don't need to masturbate, for that urge is not real. the (solid) ideas are similar but not identical.

hence, regarding brainwashing: when one feels the ~~need~~ urge to masturbate, if you tell him: hey, that urge is not real, you don't really have to do this right now, that is a type of brainwashing, for he actually does wanna do it right now, and the need/urge is getting stronger (and certainly cut out the baloney that there is no such thing as getting stronger, for it's like all other physical wants), but rather you should say (and it might not work, but it's the truth): i understand that you are experiencing a strong urge right now, and if you let it subside it may come back stronger, but nevertheless, the real you does not want this, for you wrote down or told yourself/others what your true values are, and this does not shtim with that, so let's see if we can peel that outer layer away and get back to the core.

will it work? sometimes.

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- Extensive sexual frustration might well have subsequent consequences in the hormones of the body that underlie stress, which could be harmful. Conversely, the achievement of sexual joy and satiety might bring benefits in terms of the body's hormonal balance. It is suggested here that adverse effects from sexual frustration arise in only one body organ – the brain/mind, and do so from *psychological* processing that indicates failure and thwarting of sexual goals. Sexual frustration commonly arises in heterosexual partnerships when one party (usually the male) is denied fulfillment of sexual wishes that are judged as offensive or otherwise unacceptable by the other party. (p. 98)

I'll finish with an interesting anecdote: Did you know that masturbation is non-existent among Aka and Ngandu people in Central Africa? Food for thought.

also very good; thank you. ever since the australian government turned nauru into a detention centre, it is difficult to obtain accurate information regarding the people of nauru. the guards at the centre would subjugate the assylum seekers to all forms of abuse (which we will not get into here) and some of that has spread to the lagoons, beaches and limestone areas. be it as it may, i would love to turn back the clock and be raised as a teenager in aka.

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try
Posted by MenachemGYE - 29 Jan 2022 19:04

[Trouble wrote on 28 Jan 2022 14:52:](#)

this menachem guy is pretty smart; good stuff he wrote. i didn't quite understand the very last sentence please; thanks.

I meant that different methods work for different people, and there are other methods that don't rely on insisting that there is no need. For example, with other urge surfing, you don't judge the urge, you just try to observe and describe the sensations to yourself, and watch it increase/decrease until it's gone. The same goes with the Unhooking (defusion) technique, where you recognize that you can experience many different feelings, thoughts, and sensations at the same time, but that you can "detach" from them (????"?), and follow your values. The same goes with the SOBER technique (Stop, Observe, Breath, Expand, and Respond), where

(Overcoming Your Alcohol or Drug Problem: Effective Recovery Strategies Therapist Guide)

In other words, *over time*, the less you masturbate, the less intense the urges will be.

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try
Posted by omekhadavar - 30 Jan 2022 05:13

Day #20

Going pretty strong. Slipped up last week and broke one of my gedarim and went onto YouTube. B"H came out unscathed.

Signing off for the night,

-Dvar Ha'emek

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Re: Giving a Genuine Try
Posted by joetyh - 30 Jan 2022 07:04

Dont think too much about it!! keep on rocking!!!

(if YouTube is "important" for you to access once in a while maybe make a tnai that if you need to use it someone must sit with you and download the videos (watching on youtube may send you down the rabbit hole)

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