

Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by transforming - 28 Oct 2019 04:08

Dear fellow anxiety sufferers,

First some of my background: I am in my twenties, and I am blessed by HKB"H with a good life KA"H. I am completely Shomer Torah U'Mitzvos, have a job and live in a Frum community.

I have first become exposed to Shmutz five years ago. Without getting in to details, my very first exposure to Shmutz took place after I was gruesomely hurt (in a figurative sense) by an individual, who did not even intend to hurt me, yet did so unintentionally. That event led me to Shmutz, which eventually led me to five years of sporadic Shmutz consumption.

I joined GYE nine or ten months ago, and was encouraged to finally open my own forum by fellow member 360gye.

Now that I shared my basic background, let me share with you what I am looking for on this forum;

Over the course of the last few years, I easily detected specifically what triggers me to fall, and what causes me to stay afloat.

Ever since I was a young child I suffered from unreasonable anxiety. The smallest of life incidents terrified me from a young age. For example; I always lived and continue to live in utter fear that any of my immediate family members may die any moment unexpectedly, or may go broke and starve among other fears. Circumstantially, I have no reason to believe this whatsoever Baruch Hashem, yet I cannot get rid of these fears and dozens of similar fears.

Naturally, I have consciously and subconsciously tailored my day-to-day lifestyle to curb these fears, and thankfully, I do pretty well on days that I busy, and am well fed and well rested.

However, I cannot escape my anxiety at various times of the year, and upon various occurrences. For example, Yom Tov can be tense for several reasons, and my anxiety is always exacerbated around Yom Tov time. Similarly, I usually become particularly anxious days or sometimes even weeks before I travel.

Since I have been exposed to Shmutz, I have had some pretty long clean streaks, without falling whatsoever. I have gone as long as 7.5 months without falling whatsoever. The overwhelming majority of my falls was a result of my anxiety [only some of my falls were a result of loneliness and / or boredom]. When I would be in Yeshiva doing well and socializing with others, I would go months without falling, and shortly before Bein Hazemanim would begin, my anxiety would kick in, and I would fall, sometimes even three or four times a day. Then, I would continue to fall Bein Hazemanim due to the heightened anxiety throughout Bein Hazemanim, and then I would return to Yeshiva and be clean for months, until my next anxiety phase kicked in.

This pattern continues in my working life. When I go to work and succeed, I can go months without even urges to act out, yet as soon as life throws me a curveball, and I my anxiety kicks in, I fall.

While I have never been officially diagnosed with anxiety, I am confident [based on several factors] that I suffer from GAD (a form of anxiety).

So dear fellow anxiety sufferers; if you can relate to my nightmares, please help!!! I refuse to surrender to my Yetzer Hora, yet I need a hand...

Thank you, and can't wait to hear from you

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers
Posted by higher - 28 Oct 2019 04:33

sorry to hear about your struggle.

have you tried therapy? (you say you were never diagnosed...do u mean you never even went

to a therapist? i know thats diff...just wondering)

therapy (with the right therapist) is very effective for anxiety, even ocd.

you can call relief for a good referral.

thats if your struggle is really rooted in anxiety.

?ill leave it to the lust experts to analyze your post and see if somethin' else is here.

hatzlacha!

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by David26fr - 28 Oct 2019 08:07

Hello Transforming

First, it's a big step that you managed to analyze your triggers, and under what circumstances the falls occur.

I can recognize me in your problems, because stress and anxiety are also my main triggers to falls.

I improved myself on these issues with mindfulness : did you hear about it ?

Also, Rav Itsak Fanger's books and shiurim helped me a lot. In one sentence : past is dead, tomorrow a total mystery. So, we have to stay focused on present, and stop worrying about future. Because future is only imagination, and ut could be influenced by Yetser Hara and anxiety... And all that Hachem does is for good, so why we think about bad instead of good ?

I tried to summary it, but it's a long time work and there is many things to read and listen about this.

I think you can find some Rav Fanger's shiurim on Torah Anytime website, and he spoke a very interesting shiur in hebrew and french some months ago, I can try to share you if you are

interested.

Behatslacha !

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers
Posted by Need a yeshua - 28 Oct 2019 13:04

I suffer from very similar symptoms and im searching for help too. i can say that as much as i know all the information logically, its hard to tell it to a brain that is wired wrong or now working wrong.

Have you ever taken Medication?

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers
Posted by higher - 28 Oct 2019 17:34

[Need a yeshua wrote on 28 Oct 2019 13:04:](#)

I suffer from very similar symptoms and im searching for help too. i can say that as much as i know all the information logically, its hard to tell it to a brain that is wired wrong or now working wrong.

Have you ever taken Medication?

have you?

im not being sarcastic. and yes i have experience.

it sounds like from your post that you are seeking help but have not found it yet. (meaning therapy, for those that want a formal diagnosis, they can go to a psychologist although in most cases i think thats a waste, u can just go straight to a good (very important), therapist who is well qualified and well referred and he should be able to see if this is anxiety (or in more extreme cases, ocd).

taking meds before going to a therapist is a pity because there are many therapeutic methods that can help, sometimes w/o the use of meds at all.

mindfulness was mentioned. theres also exposure therapy. In some cases the therapist will suggest medicine as well as therapy.

Either way, i strongly believe that this isnt an issue to tinker with over the counter by oneself.

i believe the first step is to find and engage a solid therapist who **specializes** (also very important) in anxiety and ocd.

hatzlacha raba and best wishes for a smooth recovery and a healthy, fulfilling, life.

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by Need a yeshua - 28 Oct 2019 17:41

i was given a therapist but im waiting to get an appointment. i started the meds because i was at a point i could not function. .

thanks for the chizuk.

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by higher - 28 Oct 2019 17:49

ok, and im assuming you got a professional reference as to what meds you should be taking. i personally have not taken meds but i have been around the block heavy duty in this area. (bh it was very quick and with an amazing therapist).

im understanding now that you meant to ask if the fellow who started the thread should consider meds in the meantime because life is unmanageable (if it is).

i hear that. im assuming even so a proper phone call should be made. (and i dont think ur arguing with that, just pointing it out.)

as you yourself are doing, i think that regardless if he takes meds-he should go for a therapist. perhaps he can be weaned off etc.

this is a sensitive topic and there are times when i can be a total jerk (especially when posting)

please do me a favor and call me out if i post out of line. thanks.

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by Need a yeshua - 28 Oct 2019 18:15

i agree completely with everything you said.

i actually am in touch with my Doctor and my Rav. Both are very competent. Not all my issues have to do with shmutz. its a long story and not over yet..... im waiting to see the therapist and hope it will be a good experience and one step closer....

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by transforming - 28 Oct 2019 23:54

Thank you all for your input. It means a lot to me.

I am sure this post will raise some eyebrows, yet I will share with you my thoughts.

In answer to those who suggested therapy or medication, medication is most certainly something that I would like to avoid. With the widespread deadly drug epidemic that is going on throughout the world, including the frum community, the last thing I would want to do is develop a reliance on drugs. Many drug addicts began with prescribed medications, but the reliance on drugs eventually led them to using other non-prescribed dangerous drugs. So medication is not an option for me.

This may sound like a poor decision, but at this point, I firmly believe medication is just not worthwhile for me.

Now, to the recommendation of therapy, I would say as follows: While I have never seen a therapist for anxiety, I have seen therapists for other unrelated reasons in the past. I have seen "solid" therapists who "specialized" in the areas that I needed at the time.

Based on my experience with therapy, coupled with many conversations that I had with other therapy patients, I must say that I have little belief in therapy.

Before you jump on me, let me please explain myself. I certainly believe that therapy has a degree of legitimacy. However, as with everything in this world, I believe that there is also a tremendous amount of flaws and falsehoods both in the therapy philosophy, and particularly in the therapy practice.

Nothing makes me believe this more than the people who I see are becoming social workers, psychotherapists and even psychologists. I hate to say this, but I see plenty of friends who are cruising through school, obtaining degrees in the mental health field, yet these individuals are truly inept and incompetent, and I would never entrust them with my mental health.

By extension, I have little faith in any mental health professional, because after all, since the mental health "professionals" that I personally know are inept; why should I believe that the ones that I don't know all happen to be competent mental health professionals?!

Let me be clear: I am sure that there are some fantastic mental health professionals who can really help me. I just believe that they are so few and rare, that the frustration and financial costs of jumping from one therapist to another therapist, until I find the right therapist, will make me sadder, more anxious and even less hopeful about ever growing out of this.

Indeed, I once spoke to a man who is very affiliated with the mental health field, and when I told him why I don't feel motivated to seek a therapist, he responded; "well that's therapy; sometimes it takes years to find the right one". I can only speak for myself, but I sure have no interest to jump from one office to another office, sharing my life story with each "professional", pay them \$150 a session for "years" until I "find the right one". That lifestyle is just not for me.

Some may argue that this is a poor decision, and I definitely understand them, but I just feel this way very strongly.

And that is what leads me to this forum. Sometimes, tips and even mere sympathy from fellow sufferers can help me further curb my anxiety in ways that I did not know of beforehand.

I welcome further discussion, dialogue and analysis of these points.

Thank you!

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers
Posted by cordnoy - 29 Oct 2019 00:06

[transforming wrote on 28 Oct 2019 23:54:](#)

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Thank you!

Extremely well written. Thought out, clear and on target! Halevay oif untz.

While I don't agree with some of your assumptions and sentiments, your opinion is the one that counts. Our family has had positive experience from therapy. Myself included.

I wish I would know about treatin' anxiety from the basement couch, but I do not.

Godspeed to you

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers
Posted by higher - 29 Oct 2019 03:12

[transforming wrote on 28 Oct 2019 23:54:](#)

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Thank you!

i think cords put it well in terms of the advice from gye standpoint (although i dont know if this was his intention)-ur not getting good advice in terms of treating a real condition of anxiety over here. and theres alot more to therapy than advice.

i agree very much that there are MANY incompetent therapists. i also agree that its very costly. been there done that. i once spoke to a head of a major referral organization regarding seeking a therapist for a particular issue (not anxiety) to my surprised reaction that he only listed around 6 therapists and of those 6 he suggested only 2 or 3 for me, he replied, "oh there are many therapists in this area- i would just never send anyone to them!"

all of what your saying i relate to but i think there is one thing that is being overlooked.

a proven track record.

what about a therapist who has a very high rate of success? obviously hes not incompetent. we believe that only Hashem gives the refuah but that guy must be a heck of a shliach, no? maybe try searching in that direction.

it must be stated that at the end of the day therapy is a like a relationship and for some it has to "click". there are great therapists with a proven track record that are not for me and prob. likewise to you. but this would seem to be the most sensible route. gaurd your eyes is hardly the place where you will be able to treat anxiety-and thats coming from someone who the knows the sugya personally. and for that matter-any support group will give you support and perhaps some book knowledge but in no way compensates for the therapeutic experience. there is lots more to say about this topic but ive rambled and ill see how the conversation plays out.

for the record,i have had extremely positive and very negetive expiriences with therapy and it burned a hot hole in my pocket. but i would be a completely dysfunctional individual (shut up, trouble!), if not for the time that i took the leap and went to the one that was positive.

what are your thoughts?

p.s. while editing, i just want to add one important point. anxiety has various levels and degrees. i dont know how much you are suffering and how much it disturbs your daily life. by me it was completely unbearable. it is possible that sympathy and ideas (good ones) do help for lower level anxiety. i dont know much about that. but you should be able to tell how much its disturbing your life and keep track of that (obviously your not in denial because of what you say in your posts, i was) if you see that somethings broke and it aint being fixed its time to broaden the horizons perhaps.

i wish an amazing life of menucha to you. i really do.

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 29 Oct 2019 11:25

Welcome to GYE. May Hashem help you find menuchas hanefesh here. As with any profession, there are therapists that are super and others who are simply not. BH I was fortunate to be directed to an excellent anxiety/depression therapist who helped me immensely. Relief is an organization that researches psychiatrists, psychologists, and therapists, and carefully tries to make a "shidduch" for a client with a mental health professional who they feel one will benefit from. Many rabbonim/roshei yeshiva/mashgichim are also well connected with great people in the field.

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers
Posted by transforming - 29 Oct 2019 15:11

Again, thank you all for the responses.

Firstly, I would like to address the degree of my anxiety. As I wrote in my first post, I have tailored my day-to-life to avert the various anxiety triggers that I suffer from. Practically, that means that I made several changes in my lifestyle to alleviate the day-to-day anxiety.

Assuming a year has 275 – 300 regular uneventful business days, I struggle very little during those 275 – 300 days. Of course there are various anxieties that pop up, but mostly, the anxiety is not debilitating, and I can function normally during those days.

It is specifically the remaining 75 days of the year; when it is Yom Tov time, or other "abnormal" days when I suffer from debilitating anxiety, and I just fall and fall during those days.

Secondly, and most importantly, to those who are suggesting that I should not expect GYE to be a substitute for professional help: I am fully aware of that. I did not begin this forum to seek professional help. Rather, I am seeking guidance from individuals who have similar experiences as myself – NOT to alleviate and heal my anxiety, but RATHER to share with me how they prevent themselves from falling while suffering from increased anxiety.

So far it seems, that a few ideas were given:

1: Mindfulness. If anyone can provide me with more information on this method, I would appreciate it.

2: An individual advised me to listen to Rabbi Yitchak Fanger's lectures. [I looked him up, but his lectures are in Hebrew, and I cannot understand Hebrew that well].

3: Treat the underlying issue of anxiety through medication or therapy, both of which are

methods that I don't prefer, as I wrote in my previous post.

Thank you all for responding, and I would love additional suggestions and tips.

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by higher - 29 Oct 2019 17:28

sounds like you mostly have your life well under control (you know what i mean.) bh.

i dont think i would want to go to therapy if i was in your shoes either.

as i said, i dont know much about such a level of anxiety-significantly lower than what i dealt with-and although its not uncommon that people go for therapy on such issues, i dont really have an opinion on the matter.

mindfulness in a nutshell, (the way i was taught), is to analyze the feelings of anxiety, pain or discomfort during an anxiety "attack".

this means that you imagine yourself as a third party observing the pain etc. how does it feel, where is it, is it moving, imagine how it looks color etc. eventually the feelings should get less and with practice become less frequent and second nature to control.

mindfulness is used for many other unwanted thoughts, feelings, and emotions as well such as anger and even pain.

you can also combine this with an exposure therapy technique which is to matter of factly accept the worst case scenario of whatever your worrying about (which deep down you may know is irrational) example: what if that suspicious looking guy on the plane is a terrorist and he blows himself up?! so you say "ok then all will blow up". to ppl that havent suffered from anxiety this may sound funny (and for the sufferers too,) but with enough repeating to oneself this can also help subside and control the feelings of anxiety.

more to say, especially analogies to make that will make this more relateable but will stop for now.

hatzlacha!

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Re: Dear fellow anxiety sufferers

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 29 Oct 2019 19:21

Two things that helped (and still help) lower my anxiety levels: 1. exercise 2. speaking out my anxieties with an objective outsider who can help me refocus and get out of the obsessive thought.

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