

Numb?

Posted by RabosMachashavos - 06 Oct 2023 06:06

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Question: Does it make sense that porn can numb me out in my general life?

Basically, I feel like I'm not fully present in this world. It's a strange sensation where it feels like my 2 feet are not on the ground. I feel like I'm floating through life and days and nights are flying by. In Yeshiva, I'll go through a whole day and look back and be like "what did I do today?" In bein hazmanim I'll be on my phone for 11 hours a day and when I'm asked to help around the house Ill say one sec but it quickly turns into 2 hours.

I am currently struggling with a porn addiction where the second my phone enters my bedroom, its game over and I fall over and over. Over the course of the last couple years, every time I watch it, I get more numb to the sensation and by now the only pleasure I receive is from the masturbation (which I really force it sometimes). Also, my parents have a filter on my phone where they see what I'm doing but it doesn't help me at all. So I see this idea of getting numbed out to pleasure in porn where I don't care anymore who knows if I do it. This is very scary because I know I'm supposed to care.

Just curious if my not feeling present in and losing touch of reality can be a result of this addiction?

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Re: Numb?

Posted by frank.lee - 06 Oct 2023 12:18

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Hi, I think it can be related to watching and escaping. But it may be related to something else. Try going free and clean for 2 months and see how it feels! A gut Yom tuv

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Re: Numb?

Posted by davidt - 06 Oct 2023 13:11

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## **How Porn Affects the Brain**

When one struggles with pornography, triggers are everywhere, especially in the hypersexualized media all around us. It often takes just a simple image to set off the chemical reaction in the brain, which first develops by looking at pornography.

Sadly, simply turning off the computer is not enough when the brain has been deeply affected by viewing pornography. If someone continues to view pornography, the effects on their brain can worsen over time and become quite extreme.

According to an article by Fight the New Drug (FTND), "Porn Changes the Brain," the brain is constantly laying down new pathways during new experiences. This process is called neuroplasticity, neuro meaning "brain" and plasticity meaning "changeability." Over the years, studies have found that pornography has a similar effect on the brain as drugs. Studies have found that drugs and pornography affects the brain's "reward pathways."

In another article by FTND, "Porn Affects Your Behavior," it explains that the job of the reward pathways is to reward you by releasing dopamine when you do something that enriches your life with satisfying experiences and relationships. The brain's release of dopamine is what makes us feel pleasure and builds new pathways created by a protein called FosB. This protein enables us to remember what made us feel pleasure by linking a way of thinking to a certain behavior.

In a real, intimate relationship, this is great; but it becomes detrimental if one partner is viewing pornography frequently. Arousal and pleasure become associated with viewing pornography due to the dopamine release, influencing them to continue watching pornography rather than seeking out real intimacy.

Due to the repetitive release of dopamine, the brain becomes overloaded and reacts by cutting down on the dopamine receptors. According to the article, dopamine receptors are the tiny "ears" on the end of the neuron that "hear" dopamine's message. Since a person will need even more dopamine than before to become aroused, their cravings to watch pornography will intensify.

The repetitive viewing of pornography damages the frontal lobe of the brain, which is responsible for decision-making and logic. Any damage to this part of the brain will make it much harder to exercise willpower and self-control. As the cravings increase, it becomes easier to give in to watching pornography more often. At this point, they grow accustomed to the pornography they have already seen and the amount of dopamine released when they view it. Those images will no longer give them the same "high" and they must then move on to more intense (hardcore) pornography to fulfill their needs and increase the dopamine released.

## **There is hope!**

As impossible as it sounds, there is hope. You can overcome a dependency on pornography. As explained in the beginning, the brain becomes dependent on behaviors and changes to cater

to the addiction. One way to change this is by replacing reward pathways with something else that makes you feel pleasure in a different way. These replacements could be starting a hobby you enjoy, spend more time with friends and family etc.

Your dependency on pornography has not always existed. Just like struggling with a drug addiction, this dependency can end and it can be changed! It can take time to figure out what these steps look like but it can be done!

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Re: Numb?

Posted by bright - 06 Oct 2023 23:07

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[RabosMachashavos wrote on 06 Oct 2023 06:06:](#)

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Wow, courageous of you for sharing! Is this a philosophical question or are you trying to use it as a motivation to stop?

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Re: Numb?

Posted by adam2014 - 08 Oct 2023 10:53

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This is an incredible post and so true.... Without going into the morbid details.. This is exactly what is happening to me. I am more turned on by porn than I am with being with my wife. I will sneak off and masterbate instead of having relations with my willing and beautiful wife. Also, the more that I am falling deeper and deeper into porn, the porn that I watch is getting darker and more extreme. Some of the things that it takes for me to get "turned-on" are things that never entered my mind just a few years ago... This was so eye opening, I am more motivated to change than ever.. Thank you for this post

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Re: Numb?

Posted by RabosMachashavos - 09 Oct 2023 03:52

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@Bright, A mix of both:

I have grown more and more accustomed to going to p and m when bored/needing release on something. I have found that as a result, I am getting more numb to the images I am seeing and am not really feeling much sensation anymore from ANY type of images (even extreme). And I am at the same time feeling a lessening of sensation towards things in general in my life (like lack of appreciation, connection, and emotion). I am wondering if it makes sense they are a direct outcome of one another?

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Re: Numb?

Posted by bright - 09 Oct 2023 04:12

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I can definitely relate to the need for more and more stimulation.... Its like that with any addictive substance.... And yes, being numb is related. I believe there are a few reasons prob, but my life was definitely "felt" more after being clean.

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Re: Numb?

Posted by haytrying - 10 Oct 2023 20:05

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I am also numb. I am so numb that I do not have the mood to do anything in general right now.

Is there a solution to get out of the numbness and start working on yourself? Once you start, the numbness disappears, and you have the mood to fight; maybe not always win, but still fight.

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Re: Numb?

Posted by Yeshayahu 41:6 - 10 Oct 2023 22:43

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I wonder if it has a lot more to do with screens in general than with what is on the screen

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Re: Numb?

Posted by Thoughtful - 11 Oct 2023 20:37

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Makes a lot of sense. I've had this numbness yesterday when I kept on watching the news.

When I connect with people, my emotions open up. When I connect with a screen the opposite happens.

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Re: Numb?

Posted by Yeshayahu 41:6 - 11 Oct 2023 22:10

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Well there are many studies that say.....

(that sounds as vague as "shteit in seforim...")

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Re: Numb?

Posted by adam2014 - 15 Oct 2023 10:15

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I am finding that I am also, much less emotional and connected to people, my davening, everything.. I am getting numb to the world... another reason to quit...

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Re: Numb?

Posted by Yeshayahu 41:6 - 15 Oct 2023 14:45

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Well you cant be THAT numb if you're here expressing concern about being numb

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Re: Numb?

Posted by Hashem Help Me - 15 Oct 2023 15:08

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[adam2014 wrote on 15 Oct 2023 10:15:](#)

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Maybe get to know some people here and develop a connection with them. The electricity here should b'ezras Hashem shock you a bit into real life.

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Re: Numb?

Posted by adam2014 - 16 Oct 2023 10:40

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I have met a few guys on here and it has been a big help. There is a lot of knowledge and good advice in these forums and I am looking forward to meeting many more. it is sad but also comforting knowing that I am not alone in this struggle.

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