

Of emotions and addictions

Posted by bright - 18 Sep 2024 18:20

Hey, everyone! I've been here for a bit and I haven't noticed a topic specifically targeting the link between mental health struggles and pornography and how it exacerbates or even is the root cause for the issue. There are studies on this, but it should be self evident. When someone has a mental health issue in their desperation for an escape they can easily turn to their drug of choice. That compounded with the emotional strength needed to live can makes it so much harder to give up their fix. In general, even if the oilam talks about it, its almost agav, when in a way it can be the life of the party. So anyone who feels comfortable sharing how their struggles affected their flight to freedom, please do. Its a great chizzuk.

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

Posted by bright - 18 Sep 2024 18:24

Kreyna digrasa... so Ill jump in. Recently been suffering from very strong depression and anger at Hashem. The world is dark and I feel I have no joy in my life. It made it so hard not to watch porn because that was the one thing that did make me feel alive. Being angry at gd only made things worse, I mean why should I even care, right? What helped me a little was not having easy access and concentrating all my energy at doing the exercises I learnt in therapy to pick my mood up thanks for listening!

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

Posted by aron stern - 18 Sep 2024 20:29

Hi Bright

thanks for shining a BRIGHT light on this crucial topic

I think its cricial to realize that for most of us addicts the root cause is something mental, because if we were to be mentally stable we wouldn't need to escape to this drug/addiction

most of us using this drug are suffering from depression, mood swings, a feeling of emptiness, bipolar, PTSD, etc.

so its crucial for us to recognize the mental instability that pulls us to this drug/addiction

for me as you can read in my thread it is mood swings and depression that makes me feel so down and low that I have to run to porn to forget and be distracted from my situation

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

Posted by yitzchokm - 18 Sep 2024 23:34

By me bipolar sure was the root cause. My struggles weren't coming from lust at all. I posted a lot about my struggles with bipolar and how I treated bipolar through tools on GYE and other tools to avoid M on the following thread:

<https://guardyoureyes.com/forum/19-Introduce-Yourself/329691-bipolarmzl>

With the help of these tools I was able to overcome my negative moods and with new medication and everything GYE gave me I don't have depression or anxiety anymore which were my reasons for struggling with M. I have hypersexuality when I am manic. I haven't had mania since a while before joining GYE and I hope that I don't have severe mania ever again. If I would have severe mania I would try journaling and Urge Surfing. I think this should make the mania more bearable even for someone who doesn't get hypersexuality.

Since 41 days of my current streak I have low hormones but I still used all the tools for my symptoms the same way I would have if I still had sexual urges because of them. For instance, I did Urge Surfing exercises and my urge was my negative mood even though it wasn't sexual anymore.

I had sexual PTSD because of bipolar and my wife's behavior. I posted about it once to get it off my chest but I deleted it after a few days because it was very personal and the 4 people who knew my story could have identified me. I also posted a few of my beliefs about intimacy that developed because of my wife's behavior. They were refuted on the forum and I learned the healthy approach to intimacy. I still have PTSD regarding work and davening and it is very debilitating but regarding sexual PTSD I fully healed. I used the forum instead of psychotherapy and it was very effective. I still have my therapist but I didn't need him for this part of my PTSD. A long post from HHM about bedroom life also helped set things straight and helped me heal.

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

Posted by bright - 20 Sep 2024 03:35

Thanks for sharing. I appreciate it. Honestly, what you are saying is true. At least for those of us who are going through significant emotional challenges, we may not be the typical addict/lustaholic or whatever. (This may get me in trouble...) What works on them may not work on us and a certain delicateness is definitely required. I honestly wondered for a while why there wasnt more mention of it. Thanks to Richtig for pushing me to post.

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

Posted by richtig - 20 Sep 2024 04:54

[bright wrote on 20 Sep 2024 03:35:](#)

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Hey Bright, important topic! Thanks for entering this pretty scary area. For sure, guys whose main issue is ogling in the street and would have difficulty online too, but basically can maintain themselves- for these perhaps lust talk is appropriate. But for guys who use porn as an escape from some kind of hell, rather than as an escape to an amusement park, it can feel degrading and unnecessarily judgmental to focus on the lust aspect. The main point may be the pain the person is running from.

The problem is... the porn is likely only making the person dig themselves deeper into pain, just as it soothes it. And once started and hooked, even if core issues may be addressed, the bad habits, accrued over many years, may not go away as quickly. So quitting the porn first may actually be the way to go (I'm pretty sure this is the standard in alcohol and drug recovery; it is understood that the addict was likely using a substance as an escape from pain, but they will not be able to cure their deeper wounds as long as they are using drugs).

Part of the difficulty then, may be that there is no substitute. That loneliness needs to be acknowledged. Many guys drink on Purim, enjoy it, and have no issue keeping it to once a year. I'd wager it's similar with porn too. If a guy can't stop, he may have serious inner pain that should be dealt with concurrently. I did not grow up with trauma, but I grew up feeling unseen and largely irrelevant. I could not confide in my parents or siblings. Didn't have friends much. People who know me only as an adult may or may not discern that, but I still often feel like a gornisht, and somewhat dissociated from my current circumstances. This isn't even to allow porn, it's to acknowledge that this shmooz should not just focus on YH, or lust, or objectification...

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

Posted by yitzchokm - 20 Sep 2024 05:09

I was struggling with M and as you can see in my posts I didn't actually run away from M. M was my medicine and pacifier. I exchanged M which soothed me but didn't treat my moods with tools that treated my moods and made me heal. I did have to make a conscious decision not to fall for M when I had urges and I did have to switch modes to use the tools instead but I never felt pain from not doing M once I learned how to use the tools. I found a better solution instead.

I realize that you were discussing running away from pain and not from M. I just wanted to point out that whereas an alcoholic is stuck facing his deep pain that was causing him to drink while he doesn't have a way of soothing himself until he learns new techniques, I learned new techniques as I stopped M and healed without having a significant period of pain.

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

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Im really sorry for what you are going through and went through. From our brief conversation it seems to me that to some extent you bravely turned your pain into self transformation. That is really inspiring and special. I agree and love what you wrote. I would add that another difference with us "running from hell" is that the way to deal with triggers may be different. If I am very depressed or angry, doing something like urge surfing may only help temporarily because the real problem is the anger or sadness. It can be worthwhile to do just to get out of the desire state, but for me at least, it needs to be followed up with some work to change my negative state.

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

Posted by yitzchokm - 20 Sep 2024 18:23

The journaling I posted about actually heals anger. It stops it before it gets out of control and heals it. I have been at risk for a panic attack and got the anger down to level 2 or 3 through journaling. Regarding depression, I don't recall whether I posted about it on GYE but socializing, exercising and behavioral activation which are my tools for clinical depression actually cause healing.

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Re: Of emotions and addictions

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Did I mention urge surfing? I'm not sure I remember what it is

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