

Eating and Intimacy

Posted by zalmandovid - 26 May 2010 05:09

I was at a lecture recently geared towards single guys in the dating world. The speaker mentioned how you could tell the way a person is when he is intimate by the way he eats. Our eating habits are directly related to our Intimacy health. The idea is that if you eat in a kavodik eidel manner without gorging yourself than you are probably that way behind closed doors. If you are always looking to fill yourself even more and don't stop to consider whether or not your stomach is full than there is a problem. Essentially you are trying to satiate an appetite. An appetite can never be satiated. One should always have an appetite. If you have satiated your appetite than you have basically killed yourself. This is the same with intimacy. We need to work on our eating habits. This is a very intricate elaborate topic that I want to get into more but don't have the time to right now. In the meanwhile chew this over and tell me what your thoughts are.

Regards,

Zalmandovid

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by kanesher - 26 May 2010 06:05

WOW! That seems really...smart. I have to look into that.

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by DovInIsrael - 26 May 2010 13:09

dont know about the eating thing..

but I would suggest anyone you date - who eats and then leans over and makes herself throw up. Based upon what you said .. does not seem like it would be a good match.

here is something else which is very insightful..

draw a capital letter Q on your forehead.

go ahead...try it...

I'll wait right here, for you...

seriously... do it...

it will not take long....

and it will not hurt..

did you do it ??

and notice if the foot points to the left or the right?

In otehr words can you read the letter Q or did you write it so OTHERS can read it.

which way do you think indicates someone self ccentered

which way indicates someone other oriented.

d.ii

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by briut - 26 May 2010 13:22

Your first post on this is GEVALDIG!!! I'm gonna hang onto it. Thanks.

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by yechidah - 26 May 2010 15:47

Zalman Dovid,

Thank you for your post

I have seen in seforim the connection between intimacy and eating,the most apparent is what Yosef said to Potifar's wife "Ki Im Ha'Lechem Asher Hu Oichel" referring to intimacy as "eating bread".It is also no coincidence that the concept "Pas B'Saloh" which literally translates as "bread in the basket" referres to intimate matters .

I have also seen that we use both food and sex as different ways to escape inner pain.some will

eat a whole tub of ice cream while others will watch porn or involve themselves in such activities. Even when one has intimacy with his own wife, a person must use that to give to her and not to escape his own pain and frustration, because while this may "technically" not be wrong, it is still wrong, because it is not being used the way it was meant to be, like those who eat ice cream or cake not as a desert but as a main full course meal which is very damaging in the long term

It is a shame that a lot of good ideas are in Buddhist books, even though these concepts are universal. They stress what is called mindful eating. You are eating less but actually you are enjoying it 10 times more because you are concentrating as you chew, and you are eating slowly, and there is a lot of pleasure to this. Rav Avigdor Miller once elaborated on the physical joy of eating a piece of bread slowly; it's just that no one has the time or the patience to do this in our hectic culture that has been ingrained into our personalities

There is mindful intimacy as well. When one is married and is with his wife, he can train himself to really really be there with her and for her. But we are not taught these things. And that is a very big shame and a very big unnecessary loss within many marriages. This is why many wives still feel emotionally lonely even after the physical intimacy. We were never taught to actually and fully be there with her on all levels--- as a mindful practice. If we would, our wives would not feel lonely or uncared for

I thought about writing about this topic for a while but I need the time to research and think it through

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by commando612 - 26 May 2010 20:13

[zalmandovid wrote on 26 May 2010 05:09:](#)

...Our eating habits are directly related to our Intimacy health...

GYE - Guard Your Eyes

Generated: 9 July, 2025, 07:56

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Now I finally understand why my favorite ice-cream flavor is "Rocky Road". :

Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by yechidah - 26 May 2010 20:17

plain vanilla wouldn't work here

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by oisvorf - 27 May 2010 04:11

I find this thread interesting because, at least for me, I clearly have TWO out of control addictions, namely the one that we are all here for and overeating.

They really are quite related.

In both cases I

- indulge compulsively
- indulge even though I know at the time that it is not good for me spiritually
- indulge even though I know at the time that it is not good for me physically
- tell myself "STOP, Enough Already!!!", but I cannot
- get stresses at being disgusted with myself and my self-image, yet cannot change
- tell myself "just this once", and "just a little more", when I know full well that I will not be able to stop
- crave the way it feels, without thinking of the after-effect

and so on and so forth

I am not sure that this is a good idea, but I am going to try to achieve sobriety in both areas simultaneously. I am tired of seeing myself as a weak willed ninny, I hope that the tools I gain here will help me with both areas

Thanks!!!!

Shmendrick

Best wishes

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by Jooboy - 27 May 2010 12:27

I have heard more than one addiction specialist speak on the connection between food and sex addictions. Apparently there is a significant amount of scientific as well as experiential evidence indicating that they share a lot of common ground.

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i must say

Posted by muststopnow - 27 May 2010 14:21

this is an interesting post.

there is something quite unnerving about it.

basically, this means that if you look at a man, you will see traces of his sexual addiction in other fields in life. try as he may, a man cannot completely hide what he has done.

maybe this is where the stories of tzadikim who can read a man's face like an open book come from.

thanks.

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by SoHard,YetSoRewarding - 27 May 2010 15:18

I don't know, ZalmanDovid. Despite, obviously, having a "lust" problem, I don't see myself as having a gorging-myself-with-food problem. I'd like to think I have pretty sound eating habits.

Maybe it's just not true for everyone; I might be the exception rather than the rule.

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by yechidah - 27 May 2010 16:07

Here is an important article on the subject

(I had to delete some parts due to graphic content and a few objectional statements-but there is a lot of truth to what this writer is saying)

Feelin' Good

Remember the myth of Tantalus? The gods punished him by immersing him in water up to his neck, but when he bent to drink, it all drained away. Luscious fruit hung on trees above him, but when he reached for it, the winds blew the branches beyond his reach. The Mick Jagger of the ancient world, Tantalus "got no satisfaction."

Humankind is in an equally unsatisfying predicament. Unlike Tantalus, we can reach (or click on) many of the tantalizing goodies we desire: high-calorie foods, sexual stimulation, online gambling, alcohol, and mood-altering drugs. Yet the majority of us are nearly as frustrated as Tantalus, and far more despondent. After all, Tantalus no doubt believed satisfaction was theoretically possible. Many of us have forgotten what true satisfaction feels like or where to find it. We're addicts - and often in worse shape than our ancestors - or people living in cultures where our coveted temptations are not so readily available.

Addiction is endemic in American families. One in ten adults admits to internet sexual addiction.¹ Roughly 40 million American adults have a spouse, parent, sibling or child battling an alcohol or drug addiction.² Two million adults meet the criteria of a pathological gambler.³ 22.1 percent of US adults still smoked as of 2003. ⁴

And what about food addictions? In the USA, 31% of all adults are obese and 65% are overweight.⁵ Some argue that obesity isn't an addiction problem, but merely the result of poor diet (too much sugar, fat and pasta) combined with too sedentary a lifestyle. However, there is growing evidence that humanity's underlying addiction mechanism is at work on waistlines too — and that surgeons can't defeat it with a stapler. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that:

On the heels of a five-year boom in weight-loss surgeries, researchers are observing an unusual phenomenon: Some patients stop overeating - but wind up acquiring new compulsive disorders such as alcoholism, gambling addiction or compulsive shopping. ⁶

Actually, there's nothing unusual about this phenomenon. It is the natural result of the interaction of a very primitive, yet powerful part of the brain with a modern lifestyle for which it is sorely unsuited. The result? We try very hard to feel good by seeking short-term gratification — even though it is guaranteed to decrease overall well-being. Not only do we feel worse, we create a dependency upon, or intense craving for, the very substances or activities that threaten our wellbeing, simply because they promise some immediate comfort.

What's wrong with wanting to feel good? Nothing. The problem is that the primitive part of the brain, which drives us to feel good, is designed for circumstances that are far different than ours. We evolved in an environment where high-calorie foods and mating opportunities were scarce, but advantageous to our survival as a species. There were no quick shops on the corner offering super size sugary drinks, fried chips, pornography, alcoholic beverages, and lottery tickets. Tribal lifestyle offered close relationships, mutual aid, and group endeavors that constantly reinforced an emotional connection with others, helping to balance desires naturally.

The good news is that it is possible to manage this primitive part of the brain, known as the 'reward circuit.' In so doing, we decrease all unwanted cravings. First let's look at why this reward circuit mechanism is such an influential - yet unreliable - pilot. Then we'll consider why better sexual habits may hold the key to genuinely feeling good.

Why the reward circuit?

The reward circuit is at the heart of our mental activity and guides all our behaviours. The Brain (website)

Everyone wants to feel good. And all feelings are synonymous with neuroendocrine activity in the brain. 'Feeling good' means activating the reward circuit in the limbic system (pictured to the right - arrow indicates the hypothalamus). As mammals, we always find ways to activate that reward circuit. If we don't, life becomes a dreary, depressing experience. Worse yet, we hamper our decision-making because the reward circuit is intended to help us steer for behaviors that have proven...well...rewarding. Put another way, the reward circuit needs to be activated for us to drink water, eat food, make love, strive for goals, take risks, feel optimistic, pet a cat, or hug loved ones.

By the same token, we are quite likely to abandon anything that isn't registering as "rewarding," since, at a subconscious level our reward circuit pilot is signaling that it is not a good investment of time and energy. Unfortunately, there is a biological tendency in most mammals to find mates less rewarding following sexual satiation.

Perhaps you can already see that not all reward circuit-based urges lead to sound decisions for the long-term. Certainly, some urges help us maintain equilibrium - such as the desire to engage in close, trusted companionship and affectionate lovemaking without orgasm, the urge to care for others, participate in group activities, engage in spiritual practice, spend time in nature, or listen to uplifting music. Other reward circuit-based urges throw us into addictive cycles - such as binge-pattern eating, pursuing novel sex partners, and using recreational drugs or pornography.

Unfortunately, the reward circuit tends to send us the loudest neurochemical 'YES' for whatever gives us the biggest neurochemical high...regardless of the ultimate repercussions. As one scientist put it, we are designed to see the reward before the risk. Loud 'YES' signals for high-calorie foods and mating opportunities weren't much of a problem for our ancestors. They had no fast food restaurants or computers flooded with pornography - and limited resources and

sexual opportunities.

Our circumstances are quite different, however.

Things that feel intensely good, such as orgasm, sniffing cocaine, or gorging on goodies, have a hidden cost. They send a neurochemical in the reward circuit (called dopamine) soaring so high that the body then puts the brakes on. This causes dopamine to drop abnormally low for a while. Low dopamine is associated with anxiety, depression, a feeling that something is terribly wrong (and fear that it will stay that way), and, above all, a desperate urge to do something - make that anything - to feel better.

Here is where we can slip into addiction. Instead of waiting until our equilibrium restores itself naturally (that is, until dopamine levels recover), we reach for (or click on) something that is sure to activate our reward circuitry. Even if we know better, we don't care what the long-term repercussions are. We just want an end to the distress now.

In the typical addiction cycle, the high points are less and less rewarding at a brain chemical level, so pretty soon we're indulging in our chosen reward circuit triggers strictly to avoid the inevitable pain of withdrawal. We're hooked. And the more we hate ourselves, the more desperate the cravings for short-term relief.

Obviously, we'd be better off if we chose only rewarding activities that do not throw us into addictive cycles, such as connecting with others, spiritual pursuits, creative endeavors, achievement, healthy food, and so forth. That would mean avoiding intense sexual stimuli, recreational drugs and binge foods. The more we opt for healthier choices, the more we come to associate them with the benefits of feeling good. Thus we actually shift preferences over time - toward substances and activities that keep us in balance. It's then far easier to say 'no' to those that over-stimulate us. Of course it helps that we are no longer in that vulnerable place of needing immediate relief from feeling bad.

Even scientists are starting to recognize the importance of balance to well-being. One researcher recently called on society to protect children from the toxic (addictive) diet that has evolved in the West. Is this admonishment based on science? Yes. When researchers feed rats sugar in a binge pattern, the rats become addicted to it. That is, if the rats don't get the sugar, they behave like opium addicts going through withdrawal, with chattering teeth and tremors. Yet, this reaction never arises if the rats are fed a moderate diet at regular intervals. Perhaps this "balance" factor explains why some people report benefits from the Shangri-la diet. The diet calls for regular (small) servings of fructose and oil, substances our reward circuit is designed to

crave.

But what if we're already caught in the snare of the addictive cycle, looking to 'feel good' by any means? Sex may hold the key.

Although it currently tempts us into an addictive cycle, if used strategically, it becomes a life raft.

Why begin with sex?

The pituitary is called the 'master gland,' but the hypothalamus (located just above it) tells it which hormones to release. Sexual thoughts and activities stimulate the hypothalamus (a key part of the reward circuitry), which then signals the release of desire hormones throughout the body. This is how intense sexual stimuli can hijack the command center and seize the controls.

Here's some evidence that supports the concept that sexual discipline may counter addiction in general:

Teens who are sexually active use more recreational drugs than those who are not. Again, the reward circuit that governs sex is the same one that drives all addictions. And, as one Princeton professor explained, highly potent sexual stimuli can activate the dopamine system with nearly the potency of addictive drugs.⁹

Our ancestors generally lived in stable communities of extended family and other familiar acquaintances. Their daily activities called for lots of mutual aid and social interaction. Humans are designed to find such intimacy rewarding. It actually offsets cravings because it encourages the production of an extremely beneficial hormone: oxytocin.

In other words, healthy social interaction and service to others helped keep our ancestors in balance, and countered, to a degree, their innate potential for addiction. In addition, until recent times, temptations were less prevalent and not promoted with advertising carefully crafted to erode willpower. Even so, addictions have plagued humankind for centuries.

Short-term 'feel good' solutions are more readily available now than at any time in history - and counterbalancing factors are fewer. We are living a new experiment in human existence, and judging from addiction rates, we are not well-equipped to handle our changed circumstances. Clearly we need drastic measures of some kind to help us restore well-being.

Love and intimacy are the most accessible antidotes to the emotional isolation of modern life. Isolation is not harmless. It leaves us very susceptible to addictive substances and activities. If we can't 'feel good' through close relationships with extended family or friendly contact with familiar acquaintances, we lose the 'connection rewards' on which our tribal ancestors thrived. Then we opt for the riskier options that promise the joy missing in our lives.

We need human interaction to function optimally. For example, insecure emotional attachments in childhood appear to result in changes to the brain that throw one into a lasting bias toward self-preservation. This is the start of a downward spiral. Selfish people and those who seek pleasure in ways that don't involve others (alcohol, pornography, unhealthy food, etc.) tend to lose their ability to form emotional bonds. Sadly, the tendency can easily worsen with each generation as children watch their parents choose risky isolation rewards over healthy social interaction.

The good news is that the human brain is very plastic. By actively training ourselves to interact with a lover generously, and without using him or her to set off an addictive, high-dopamine cycle via orgasm, we experience the neurochemical rewards of generosity-based connections with others. At the same time we balance our brain chemistry and increase willpower.

The changeover takes time and self-discipline, but it can potentially pull us out of the search for happiness where it does not lie - namely in empty, addictive high-dopamine activities and substances. As one man discovered after weeks of sexual discipline,

I get more sensual joy just from being alive! [And I realize] the only means I have for being really deeply satisfied is through the heart. - Scott Blossom, Yogi Times article

Controlled intercourse not only keeps us off the dopamine roller coaster in the reward circuit. It also makes novel partners less appealing because an existing relationship continues to register as rewarding at subconscious levels.

The science of "feelin' good" is in its infancy. At the moment mankind is generally moving in an unhealthy direction. Most of us blindly exploit the short-term means of relief that sweep us into addiction and pull us away from the rewarding emotional connections with others that would help to balance us and counter cravings.

Worse yet, the pharmaceutical companies and medical professionals are eager to cure any addiction-related ills with risky drugs or (weight-loss) surgery. For example, drugs are being developed to mimic dopamine in the brain so women taking it will want sex all the time. In other words, this drug creates an addiction. At the same time drugs are being developed to cure addiction by countering the effects of dopamine in the brain. This type of reckless manipulation, reminiscent of Alice's travels in Wonderland, is both absurd and dangerous. Such drugs do not change our fundamental direction toward balance in the reward circuit. Nor do they confine their effects to the symptoms for which they are proposed - as Parkinson's patients and restless leg

syndrome sufferers discovered when they took dopamine-elevating drugs and developed sexual obsessions and gambling addictions.

The holistic solution of moving toward closer union with careful management of sexual energy not only balances the reward circuit, it makes emotional connections ever more rewarding. The sooner we move in this direction, the shorter the climb out of current unhealthy patterns of behavior based on seeking short-term thrills. "Just say 'no' to drugs" is a fine slogan, but if we want to continue to feel good, a better one would be "Just say 'yes' to mutual support, hugs, and careful lovemaking."

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by yedidya aleph - 28 May 2010 19:53

[shmendrick wrote on 27 May 2010 04:11:](#)

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Thanks!!!!

Shmendrick

Best wishes

First of all, a big hug for you my holy brother! You have found me! Believe it or not there are more members to our special family of strugglers, are in fact true benei aliyah who identify with this thread and want to grow in ruchniyas. Not Chas V' Shalom in waist size!!! ;D

This is a Gevldige thread and a major problem for many guys. I have struggled with binge eating for years and even went to Overeater' Anonymous for help. It's not poshut. I did have some physical recovery (followed a food plan and lost weight) and a lot of emotional and spiritual recovery. Meanwhile, I am now very much in relapse with the food with the excuse that we are under gefairlich level of stress at home and shakey shalom bayis. I don't even need a reason to act out with food it could be anger, sadness, frustration loneliness, boredom ect. or it could come when I am in a great mood having a great time on Yom tov. I would not admit it, but once my therapist described the food my "mistress".

My wife feels like I prefer overeating to intimacy!!! That is not quite the case. But since I am talking about this I must confess, that during my episodes of late night binge eating alone in the kitchen or dining room, I have been compulsively looking out the windows to peep on the goyishe neighbors. B.H. I have not seen any real n* but it is very bothersome and wastes time. Hope that doesn't shod my day count!

Yo... drop the weak willed garbage like a pot which is way to hot to hold!!! We are not weak

willed. Read Dr Twersky's book about overeating called The Thin You with In You. It might help you. It changed my life. Buddy, we have a 'machaleh'. We are powerless. We are addicts! We don't appreciate our gevaldige kochos hanefesh. (ie low self-esteem) We need to reach out to HKB"H and to our chevra of recovering folks for the understanding, support and nurturing we so desperately need. We have a big "luch" which we are trying to fill with food s**, lust, ect. Zei G'Bentched. Please think about me over Shabbos! Maybe, this Shabbos will be different. I've got lots of excuses to keep bingeing but maybe I can find some powerful reasons to recover. Have a look in The Orchos Tzakim Shaar ha Teshuva who says something very sharp about overeating!

Please check in with me on Tuesday. I will be off-line until then because I have a chasuna on Monday.

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by 5770 - 29 May 2010 01:09

this is a great thread. there is a huge link between eating, lust and other addictions (the lust to win, the lust of anger....)

I eat, and eat and eat. My wife is a great cook. She loves to feed me.

That (sadly) is where our shared intimacies end, for then I retreat to the private world of masturbation.

NO POINT trying to fix the masturbation/porn on it's own. We need solutions for the whole enchilada (so to speak).

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Re: Eating and Intimacy

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 30 May 2010 05:41

i was just thinking about this topic during krias hatorah this past shabbos (behaloscha). where it says that the bnei yisrael were complaining about the Man, how they missed the fish,

cucumbers, onions, watermelons and more that they ate in mitzrayim, and then it says that Moshe say them crying, bocheh le'mishpechosav, and rashi explains that they were crying because of the arayos that became assur to them.

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