

hello

Posted by asravinsky - 21 Mar 2017 15:19

Hi Guys, here's my story. I've been in and out of 12 step programs for over 12 years. 11 years ago I got into a great streak of program work. a few series of 1 year stretches of sobriety followed most recently by a 4 year 2 month sobriety stretch. That last one ended this fall. After moving the family to Israel for a temporary job (but not Aliyah) I didn't have a strong enough support network, and couldn't handle the stress, and have been slipping a lot. Lately staying away from the online garbage for more than a week has been a struggle.

So I signed up here to give something new a try. I am accepting the 90 day trial and will take it up. Starting today. I've gotten 90 day chips before and know what I need to do when i am in a "stringing days together" kind of status:

*not use the internet at home

*surround myself with recovery

*work the steps with program buddies

*get to meetings as much as possible

*Prayer, meditation, exercise

*self care

I am committing to this program, one day at a time, and it begins again (or continues) today.

God bless

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Re: hello

Posted by GrowStrong - 26 Mar 2017 16:17

So this is what I am actually saying from my first comment in this thread...

Hypothetically speaking.

Let's say I would have come to you for advice, a few short months ago, before I started recovery, and told you all my dark secrets, and explained to you that no matter what I do, I can't stop acting out when the compulsion takes me over, and in reply you would have given me the following advice;

Be Happy! Nothing gives the addict a knock out punch like some genuine happiness! Who needs porn when life is good?

I would have said back to you, "but I am b'simcha!... In fact very often, when i am really happy, and elated, I go get me some porn **against** my real desires. And my life is great its not just good!

Would you then say to me

My friend, what you're describing is not real happiness. The happiness I'm talking about is simcha. Simcha is a deep inner joy and satisfaction which comes from a good attitude towards life. We don't feel a need to punish ourselves when we feel simcha, and we certainly don't feel simcha when looking at porn. When you feel simcha you won't need "p & m".

I would then have replied back to you saying my attitude is great! And i am really satisfied with life also. I am also a happy person. Ask anyone who knows me in real life.

BUT I CANT STOP MASTURBATING.

To add to it, many people have this additional argument with themselves over whether they should be fighting the yetzer hora or surrendering their lust. They are two VERY different methods. Addicts need to surrender their lust, addicted non-addicts need to fight the yetzer hora which they *could* also do with simcha. But as an addict, simcha doesnt seem to be a tool i can use to get sober.

So my question (as an addict) is, how is genuine happiness going to be a tool to help me to stop

masturbating.

The complexity of my question that complicated the discussion was the fact that there is a vicious cycle which has been brought up a few times in the past 24 hours here in the forum, which kills all genuine happiness when you act out. And that's why I added how do you get to genuine happiness when that bubble bursts after you act out. If its genuine happiness that is going to stop you from acting out.

I ask because i want as many tools in my tool shed as I can gather, and many others may also gain from this advice.

Or as they say on the interwebs.... asking for a friend.

Feel free to say this advice was when you get to step 12 or was for non addicts - but if it was for addicts i would really like some more clarity.

Thank you !

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Re: hello

Posted by workingmyprogram - 26 Mar 2017 16:38

There is not necessarily one single tool to stop acting out, but there are some that are very good ones, including genuine happiness (i.e., simcha). Also, the claim that someone in his active addiction can be genuinely b'simcha...well...I don't buy it. I think you may be getting a feeling of excitement and temporary joy confused with simcha, and therefore need to research what genuine happiness is from a Torah perspective. There are many books on this subject, but I recommend Twersky's: "Simcha, It's Not Just Happiness". It might also help to do some deeper introspection and see if you are really feeling genuine simcha or not. If you are, then you'd be the first person I've met in ten years of being in this program who walked in with a genuine sense of simcha and positive outlook, but is unable to stop acting out. I'm not saying it's not possible, but doubtful. As Twersky says: "I've never met an addict with good self esteem" - and self esteem goes hand in hand with simcha.

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Re: hello

Posted by workingmyprogram - 26 Mar 2017 16:50

To more specifically address your question of how simcha can help you stop masterbating, the answer is that addictions are fueled by a desire to kill pain. That's assuming the behavior is

destructive. If you don't view masturbation as destructive, and you're doing it just because you enjoy it and there are no negative consequences, then that's different. But I'm assuming you're here because something inside you is telling you to stop and you can't. So the question to ask yourself is why am I doing something that I know is self destructive? When we are b'simcha, we can rise above our pain without needing to masturbate it away. A major goal of the 12 steps to change our attitude into one that allows us to have some comfort in life. To feel better without having to resort to our drug. In other words, to lower our pain, which in turn obviates the need for our drug. Letting go of resentments, sharing our pain with others, learning how to have gratitude, these are all tools to lower the inner turmoil which fuels the addiction. For more insight into this dynamic I highly recommend that you connect to Duvid Chaim, either one on one or through his phone conferences. I hope this helps to answer your question.

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Re: hello

Posted by GrowStrong - 26 Mar 2017 17:00

[workingmyprogram wrote on 26 Mar 2017 16:38:](#)

There is not necessarily one single tool to stop acting out, but there are some that are very good ones, including genuine happiness (i.e., simcha). **Also, the claim that someone in his active addiction can be genuinely b'simcha...well...I don't buy it.** I think you may be getting a feeling of excitement and temporary joy confused with simcha, and therefore need to research what genuine happiness is from a Torah perspective. There are many books on this subject, but I recommend Twersky's: "Simcha, It's Not Just Happiness". It might also help to do some deeper introspection and see if you are really feeling genuine simcha or not. If you are, then you'd be the first person I've met in ten years of being in this program who walked in with a genuine sense of simcha and positive outlook, but is unable to stop acting out. I'm not saying it's not possible, but doubtful. As Twersky says: "I've never met an addict with good self esteem" - and self esteem goes hand in hand with simcha.

I will read it and report back on my findings while doing my best to remain honest with myself.

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Re: hello

Posted by GrowStrong - 26 Mar 2017 17:07

[workingmyprogram wrote on 26 Mar 2017 16:50:](#)

To more specifically address your question of how simcha can help you stop masterbating, the answer is that **addictions are fueled by a desire to kill pain**. That's assuming the behavior is destructive. If you don't view masturbation as destructive, and you're doing it just because you enjoy it and there are no negative consequences, then that's different. But I'm assuming you're here because something inside you is telling you to stop and you can't. So the question to ask yourself is why am I doing something that I know is self destructive? When we are b'simcha, we can rise above our pain without needing to masterbate it away. A major **goal of the 12 steps to change our attitude** into one that allows us to have some comfort in life. To feel better without having to resort to our drug. In other words, to lower our pain, which in turn obviates the need for our drug. **Letting go of resentments, sharing our pain with others, learning how to have gratitude**, these are all **tools to lower the inner turmoil** which fuels the addiction. For more insight into this dynamic I highly recommend that you connect to Duvid Chaim, either one on one or through his phone conferences. I hope this helps to answer your question.

So you are saying that Simcha isn't only a result of these tools, but its also a tool to use these tools....

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Re: hello

Posted by tzomah - 26 Mar 2017 18:41

i am not sure i am fully understanding the discussion but it sounds like the question is if it is possible to have simcha even if what your doing is wrong

what does that have to do with these issues more than anything we do wrong

i'm adding a file from r' tzodok i think he says it is surely possible

simcha has many dimensions and is more than just a word or idea

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Re: hello

Posted by GrowStrong - 26 Mar 2017 18:54

[tzomah wrote on 26 Mar 2017 18:41:](#)

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simcha has many dimensions and is more than just a word or idea

My question was whether Simcha can help you to stop acting out. I then got sidetracked talking about the levels of Simcha and how achieving real genuine Simcha (let's call it greatest highest levels of simcha) is hard before you get into recovery. And how many times I fell after moments of what I felt (and believe still were) real moments of Simcha.

I was told that it was a fake simcha and we went in circles a little.

I need to meditate more on this thread so sorry for recapping it again I guess I'm the one going

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Re: hello

Posted by tzomah - 26 Mar 2017 19:20

ok i think based on what r' tzodok says there that simcha can help you stop acting out

and that it is definitely possible to have real simcha while acting out

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Re: hello

Posted by gibbor120 - 28 Mar 2017 17:22

Welcome! Your recovery efforts should be blessed.

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Re: hello

Posted by workingmyprogram - 29 Mar 2017 07:01

[tzomah wrote on 26 Mar 2017 18:41:](#)

i am not sure i am fully understanding the discussion but it sounds like the question is if it is possible to have simcha even if what your doing is wrong

what does that have to do with these issues more than anything we do wrong

i'm adding a file from r' tzodok i think he says it is surely possible

simcha has many dimensions and is more than just a word or idea

I agree that the disproportionate guilt we feel after acting out is really the work of the yetzer. We tell ourselves we feel bad because we sinned, or we angered Hashem, etc etc, but it that's true then why don't we feel the same sense of shame after speaking loshon harrah, getting angry, or any other aveira we do? A rav of mine from by bachur days actually pointed this out to me when I told him how guilty I felt about acting out. So let's at least be honest and not dress our guilt up in a tzaddiks clothing, but rather recognize him for the tricky scoundrel he most likely is.

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Re: hello

Posted by tzomah - 29 Mar 2017 14:35

is loshon hora an **addiction?**

do peoplr trying to stop have the same hard time as this ?

is there the same enjoyment ?

i think the y"h wants to fall in this area more hence more guilt

i think I'm also different because its accepted by society you also automatically need someone else so there is less guilt

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Re: hello

Posted by workingmyprogram - 30 Mar 2017 03:25

I don't see how any of those things you mentioned mean that we should feel any more guilty regarding acting out than any other aveira. In fact, most of the the things you mentioned actually mean we should feel LESS guilt.

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Re: hello

Posted by GrowStrong - 30 Mar 2017 03:52

[workingmyprogram wrote on 30 Mar 2017 03:25:](#)

I don't see how any of those things you mentioned mean that we should feel any more guilty regarding acting out than any other aveira. In fact, most of the the things you mentioned actually mean we should feel LESS guilt.

What does guilt have to do with it.

i think I even specified we were not talking about guilt a bunch of posts back.

It was not guilt that disconnected me from Hashem and simcha.

It was me being disconnected from myself and from my family and my life by escaping into self love which is selfish and inconsiderate and many other words.

But I did actually say this wasn't a discussion about guilt.

Guilt is as hopeless a feeling as resentment.

Its negative and gets us nowhere.

Guilt didn't stop us from going to porn again, it just made us feel even worse about it.

In fact I would suggest that guilt is just another device of the YH.

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Re: hello

Posted by tzomah - 30 Mar 2017 12:39

[workingmyprogram wrote on 30 Mar 2017 03:25:](#)

I don't see how any of those things you mentioned mean that we should feel any more guilty regarding acting out than any other aveira. In fact, most of the the things you mentioned actually mean we should feel LESS guilt.

of course we should feel less guilty but then we would be able to stop witch is something the y"h doesn't want

we don't feel guilt based on reality that would be constructive and get to change we feel guilt based on preconcieved notions that have no basis in reality the coreect word would be **shame** there is much less of that in other aveiros probaly if we would suffer from a tayvah for avodah zora it would look simial to the tayvah of arayus

i think what gs means not connected to myself might be shame

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