

Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used

Posted by yehuda2341 - 15 Sep 2022 19:35

Hi,

My name is Yehuda, and I might be able to help you.

You see, I also went through the struggle, the years-long fight against the Yetzer Hara and its nisyonos.

While working through that struggle I came across and worked on a number of ideas. These ideas were game-changers for me - powerful tools that I used, with HaShem's help, to turn the fight around and eventually move past it.

These ideas aren't mussar - I'm in no place to give you mussar, and I doubt you need it. They aren't either inspiration, encouragement or chizzuk. Those are great, but not my department. My ideas are just facts, perspectives. A deeper, clearer, truer understanding of how we work, how the Yetzer Hara operates, and what it means to be in- and to overcome- a nisayon.

Why does that help? For me, fighting the Yetzer Hara was like learning how to drive on the highway. I had no idea what was happening, why it was happening, or what I was supposed to do about it. And there were big consequences for a wrong turn. The ideas that I worked on became my 'Owner's Manual'; the what's-what and how-to for my nisyonos.

Confusion doesn't breed success, clarity does. These ideas gave me the clarity that I needed to:

- 1) see where and how the Yetzer Hara was distorting my perspective,
- 2) see what it means to have a nisayon, and
- 3) know what I could do about it, how to fight it.

And that saved my life.

I'd like to pass these ideas forward - to me they seem too good, too powerful, to keep to myself. I know this approach might not work for everyone, but it just might work for you. As it did, and still does, work for me.

I'd be very glad and grateful to hear your ideas and any feedback you have, on these ideas or beyond. I can be contacted at yehuda2341@gmail.com, or by phone 443 406 8543 (please leave a message).

Hatzlacha,

Yehuda

Note: Nearly all of the ideas that I hope to present are sourced in Chazal and/or Sifrei Mussar. In this format I don't bring these sources. Instead I try to bring them out through our experiences- to help you see it in yourself and your life, so you can feel it instead of just hearing it. If you are interested in the textual sources please let me know, it's all there and I'll be very happy to share.

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 15 Sep 2022 19:37

Idea #1- The Wish List

You have a nisayon, that means you want to do something. Whatever it is, but it's not a good thing. You want it anyways. But is that the only thing you want? Is it #1 on your wish list?

Let's do a quick test - three theoretical questions - to see what we really want, what's in first place. You'll need to turn on your imagination, take a minute to really feel out these options.

Question #1: Let's say I could offer to take away all your temptation for illicit taavos. You wouldn't want to see or do anything that you should be avoiding. And no side effects. You can still get married and enjoy life, just no Yetzer Hara to push you too far. Or you could stay where you are, struggling against the Yetzer Hara. Would you take me up on that?

Question #2: We'll do the opposite. I'll take away the pain and discomfort you feel from doing those things, the need that you feel to resist the Yetzer Hara. No guilt, no shame, no wishing to be different. You can live your life - same life, community, friends, family and everything. And you can do whatever you want, no consequences (in this world) - internal or external. You'll just be fine with it. And you won't get caught, or no one will care. Or you could stay where you are, struggling. Would you take me up on that?

Question #3: A choice between Option #1 and Option #2. You can either get rid of the Yetzer Hara and live without its temptations, or you can get rid of your drive to overcome it. Either way, there's no conflict, no struggle, no pain. Which would you choose?

* * *

So, I'm assuming you said 'yes' for **Question #1**. Otherwise you wouldn't be here reading this, or trying to do anything to fight the Yetzer Hara. Everyone here is struggling, hurting. We're not ok with doing these things. We want to do right. So why not take the ticket out? (Those who

would elect to keep the Yetzer Hara for the sake of overcoming it are reminded that we are discouraged from seeking nisyonos.)

But did you see that? 'We're not ok with doing these things. We want to do right.' We have taavos, we want XYZ. But that's not making us happy- far from it. There's something else we want. And we want it enough that we're willing to give up on all our taavos for it. As we'll see later, this is really a strong enough want to overcome the Yetzer Hara.

What about **Question #3**? (We'll come back to #2.) Would you get rid of the Yetzer Hara or the Yetzer Tov? Hmm. Either way there's no pain. Why one over the other? So now it comes down to what we want more. Would we rather have a guilt-free life of taavah, or a life consistent with our values, a life of Tahara?

If you still answered that you would get rid of the Yetzer Hara, well I guess that means that you're more interested in a Tahara than you are in the object(s) of your nisyonos and taavos. After all, you just agreed to give up on all your taavos for nothing but the ability to easily avoid them.

Okay, **Question #2**. Do you keep fighting- head right into the guilt, pain, confusion and all that? We know how that feels. Or do you give in, and walk away from the fight with no scratches? Not a light question.

If you can honestly say that you would turn it down, that you would keep at the fight- then you are way, way ahead of the Yetzer Hara. That means that you are willing to suffer- and not just a little bit- to overcome the Yetzer Hara, to live that Torah life. It's not the pain and guilt driving you to fight- you'd do it without that. It's just because that's what you want. Badly. Way more than you want whatever that nisayon is for. For the chance of a Torah life, you'll suffer. For that taavah? You'd suffer for the chance to get rid of it!

So look where we are. We want that thing, we have a burning taavah, a crushing nisayon. But there's also that other want, the want to be rid of it and live a clean Torah life. To be rid of the Yetzer Hara and the pain it brings. Even if it means giving up on our taavos. That was from **Question #1**.

And let's forget the pain. What's actually better, more enjoyable? What do we really want? I'm going to hazard a guess that we had a whole lot of people choosing the Yetzer Tov way for **Question #3**. So now we know- the want for Tahara is stronger. How much stronger? Well, how easy was it to pick getting rid of the Yetzer Hara over getting rid of the Yetzer Tov? That's how much stronger.

Did you turn down the offer in Question #2? If you did, or even if you weren't sure, or even if you had to think hard about it - you're already at the point of mesirus nefesh for Tahara. You're ready (or almost ready) to fight, to suffer greatly, in order to overcome the Yetzer Hara and achieve Tahara.

We want that taavah, but we want something else too. And we want that other thing more. Much more.

It's not 'What I want to do' v. 'What I should do'.

It's not even 'What I want to do' v. 'What I have to do.'

It's 'What I want to do' v. 'What I want to do even more than that.'

We're not here to learn how to overcome our desires, we're here to learn how to fulfill our desires. The bigger ones, the stronger ones. That was my tag-line, let me do it again in bold:

We're not here to learn how to *overcome* our desires, we're here to learn how to *fulfill* our desires.

Shouldn't that make it too easy? Or at least a little bit easy? So, no. That's where the Yetzer Hara comes in; to confuse us, to overwhelm us, to sell us - very convincingly- what we don't really want. And we'll have to figure out *how* it does that, and how to fight it. And it's still not going to be easy. I'm not selling shortcuts.

But now at least we know *what* the Yetzer Hara is doing to us. It's not telling us to do whatever we want. It's telling us to do exactly what we desperately want to ***not*** do.

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 22 Sep 2022 18:32

Idea #2- The Path of Least Resistance

Working off of idea #1 here- we came out that the 'want' to avoid aveiros is stronger than the 'want' for the taavah. So why do we do it? Why would anyone do something that they want to not do?

So I can think of two ways that can happen, I'll focus on one here and save the other for a bit later. For now, let's look at what happens when the nisayon comes. What options do we have, what are we thinking. (Once again, a bit of imagination will be very helpful, try to feel out the options here.)

So here we are, minding our own business, and in comes a *nisayon*- an urge, a drive to do XYZ. But you know you're not supposed to, that you'll regret it, feel terrible, like all the last times. You have competing drives, a smaller (as per idea #1) but very noticeable drive to follow through on XYZ, and a stronger desire to *not* do XYZ. What are your choices?

Option #1: You can just do it, follow through on the urge knowing that you're hurting yourself, you're gonna be miserable about it, more than the pleasure you got (as per idea #1). Think 'Even though this isn't what I want to do I'm going to do it.'

Not a very logical thing to do. (Unless you're being forced- more on that later.) Would you do that?

Option #2: Withstand the urge, just don't do it. Follow through on your stronger want to not do this. Think 'Even though I want XYZ, I want more to not do that kind of thing and live how I know I should.'

Makes a lot of sense. But then you're stuck wanting something that you can't have. And you're stuck with an unfulfilled urge. Not fun, not comfortable. Logical, but not easy.

So far no smooth easy path. Either do what I know is bad for me, or suffer. Most people like to do easy, pleasant things. Do you? So we're stuck between a rock and a hard place, we gotta look for something else... what can we do?...here comes...

Option #3: Make it OK to follow through on the urge. It's not bad, won't hurt me because (choose any or all)-

'It's too hard/impossible to resist'; 'everyone does it'; 'I'm just gonna do it this one time'; 'I've already done it so many times, does one more make a difference'; 'I just need a break/release/distraction/bit of pleasure'; 'my wife did/ didn't do X'; 'no one's perfect'; 'it's not *really* assur' ; etc.

Great! Now there's all pleasure and no fallout, win-win. I don't want to do something that's wrong, but this isn't wrong anymore. It's OK. So I get my pleasure, but none of the bad that comes with it. I didn't do anything that's (really) wrong, I have an excuse.

Sound familiar?

This is the way out of that rock-and-hard-place, the way to make both sides happy. A very tempting option- the path of least resistance.

One problem- it's not true. That's not an excuse, it's not OK. And you are going to be miserable afterwards, because you really know it's not OK.

At the time of the *nisayon* we need a way out, so we grab at straws- excuses that we know aren't true- and follow through. We take that excuse and don't let ourselves think about it. 'Cause if I think about it I won't have an excuse anymore, and then I'm back between my rock and hard place.

So I take the path of least resistance to get out from my rock-and-hard -place. Saves me the trouble now, but that path leads straight to the pain of regret- (if I may indulge in another idiom) out of the frying pan and into the fire.

We would never consciously accept the consequences of doing the avaira - Option #1. You wouldn't hurt yourself. To get us to follow through, the Yetzer Hara needs to get us to dismiss the truth, to ignore it for now.

That's the challenge, the real nisayon. To not take the bait, not grab that excuse. To not take the path of least resistance. Because we know where that path leads.

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 23 Sep 2022 15:10

I just wanted to write again that I'd be very glad and grateful to hear your ideas and any feedback you have, on these ideas or beyond. I can be contacted at yehuda2341@gmail.com, or by phone 443-406-8543 (please leave a message).

Hatzlacha,

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Yehuda

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 03 Oct 2022 13:53

Thoughts On Teshuva

These days- the Aseres Yimei Teshuva- are big for anyone who's working on himself. This is supposed to be it- the big chance to turn it all around. To fix everything. The chance to determine what the next year will look like.

So we go all out. Put in everything we've got. Cry real tears.

And it's deep and meaningful and beautiful.

And it's so frustrating. Because it doesn't work. By Sukkos, Cheshvan maybe, we've slipped. And then we're back, business as usual, the old struggle.

And then next year we go at it again- 'This time I'll do it right'- if we can still work up the energy, the resolve. But in the back of our minds is the question- 'Why should this year be different?'

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think this is a pretty common setup- for taava challenges specifically and really for any challenge.

So I've got a few thoughts, maybe they'll help a bit.

First and Foremost- ***Don't think you aren't accomplishing anything.***

If you can work up the energy to stay clean, to get inspired, for 10 days, for 3 days, for 1 day, just for neila- that's big. It has an effect.

However much you put in, however inspired you can get, that's a dent in the taava. You've showed, felt, who you really are, what you really want, the direction that you're headed. You're trying. You know what's right. You haven't given up.

And that makes a real difference. The next year may not be perfect. It may not even be better than last year. But without the work you did now, it would be worse. That sense of 'This is wrong, what am I doing?' would fade away, there would be no struggle left. Having a clean 10,3,1 day(s) is critical. It keeps our compass pointing the right way. It pushes us one step closer to finally overcoming the entire challenge.

The more effort put in, the greater the effect. But every effort has an effect- nothing done these days is going to waste.

Second- building of the first thought. If we're (probably) not going to fix everything right now, can we do real Teshuva, be forgiven for our past aveiros? Teshuva needs ????? ???? , leaving the aveira and committing to never go back. The taava will come back, how can I guarantee that I'll pass every nisayon?

So, maybe that's true. Maybe the Teshuva process for us is years long, with forgiveness only at the end, when we break the habit and have (some degree of) control. So be it, that's what we'll have to do, and hope to make it there.

But I don't think so. I'm going out on a limb a bit, but I think that there can be real Teshuva now.

Habits are hard to break. We're not supposed to jump and say we're kicking the whole thing now. That's a setup for disappointment, which leads back to more failure. We're supposed to go step by step. Try every time, move one step forward with each success and learn from every failure.

That's what we're supposed to do, so does it make sense that that committing to ?? that *is* *???? ??????* , *is* Teshuva?

We can say, 'I know there will be challenges, I don't know if I'll pass every nisayon. But I'll always keep trying, keep working.' If we commit to keep moving forward, to not give up, then we are committing to stop- as soon as we can. We're committing to do what Hashem wants us to do.

That- I think (and we can talk about the words of the Rambam)- is enough to be considered Teshuva for the past, and to set us on the right path for the year.

Third- Teshuva is for aveiros. Aveiros are choices, actions- not feelings. Having a taava is not an aveira, and does not require any teshuva. We should regret our actions (including thoughts that are aveiros), but only those. If a taava comes back after Yom Kippur, that does not reflect at all on any weakness in our teshuva or commitment- unless and until we follow through on it. If a taava comes up on Yom Kippur itself, that doesn't mean 'I'm so low I'm struggling during Neila.' It doesn't mean anything unless and until you follow through. So don't. Don't get down, don't give up. Say, 'Look, I have a taava, and I know not to follow it, I'm strong enough to not follow it.' Then turn to Hashem and say 'That's the real me, that's what I want'.

That's not an aveira, not a sign of lowliness. That's Teshuva.

If a taava comes, it doesn't mean you failed- it's an opportunity for Teshuva.

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 20 Oct 2022 17:07

Idea #3- Against Your Better Judgement

We said last time that the Yetzer Hara traps us by offering an easy way out- 'the path of least resistance'- by inventing reasons that the aveira isn't bad (or isn't "so" bad).

That's true a lot of the time, but not quite always. There's another way the Yetzer Hara can go after us, without needing to make us justify or minimize the aveira.

As we all know, issues with taavos in general are sorted into two categories: 'non-addiction level' and 'addiction level'. I'm pretty sure there's no hard-and-fast definition for 'addiction', it's just used for when the problem is at the next level, when it's having serious negative effects on the person's life.

I'm going to put myself out there just a bit, but I don't personally find that distinction useful. In my way of thinking I prefer to not draw the line between this person and that person- "he's an addict and he's not". I like to draw the line between this nisayon and that nisayon- "this challenge, this temptation, is a different level than normal".

So what are the two levels of challenge? The first is what I described before. Our 'want' to do right is stronger than the 'want' for the taavah, so to go after the weaker 'want' (the taavah) we need to make a compromise, make it 'ok' to do it. I called this 'the path of least resistance'.

But what if we do resist? We don't allow ourselves to believe that it's ok, we know better than that. What's left for the Yetzer Hara to do now?

Often, nothing. For a 'regular' nisayon, refusing to compromise, refusing to accept the justifications, will end the nisayon. But sometimes it doesn't stop there. Sometimes the Yetzer Hara will turn up the heat, apply pressure, make it literally painful to resist. That's the palm-sweating, stomach churning, burning desire that won't let you be, won't go away. Even though you don't want to do it. And you know you don't want to do it, you know the excuses are meaningless, you know the consequences. You can be thinking, consciously and directly, 'I do not want to do this now', and do it anyways, against your better judgement, just to relieve the pressure.

That's the next level. If you've been there, you'll know what I mean. It's different.

When does that happen? I'm not 100% sure, haven't done any studies. But I think that this generally happens to a person who has been involved in taavos for a while. Someone who's used to getting those pleasures, depends on them for happiness/comfort/distraction. Basically, an addict.

So what's the point of all this? Am I ending up with the same thing- addict and non-addict?

Not exactly. An 'addict' can have a regular, not-all-that-difficult challenge here and there. Someone who's life is not being ruined by his taavos can sometimes have the overwhelming nisayon, as described above.

When we fight the Yetzer Hara, we have to focus on overcoming *this* challenge. Different challenges need to be dealt with differently. If we are tempted to justify following our taavos, we have to work to not accept illogical justifications- even if we've reached 'addiction level'.

If we are being pushed *against* our judgement, then it doesn't help to refuse to accept excuses. We already did that. Now the trick is to strengthen our resolve to resist the pressure- and that goes for a non-addict as well.

An 'addict' is just someone who is more likely to have an overwhelming 'against-your-better-judgement' nisayon. But the way to deal with each nisayon is the same for everyone.

I'll talk much more later on about exactly how to resist each kind of nisayon. This piece is just meant to give a picture of what the different nisyonos are, so we know what we're up against.

I will mention one thing, though, for those who experience these nisyonos. The overwhelming nisayon is definitely much harder, no question. But there is a silver lining. The drive, the pressure, of these nisyonos is **not** you. It's not coming from what you want, from what you think is worthwhile. It's outside of your heart and mind, it's all physical. That makes a big difference. As strong as it is, it goes away quickly, much more quickly than your heart-and-mind desires. If you can beat it- and you can beat it- it will go away faster than you would believe.

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by frank.lee - 20 Oct 2022 23:48

Yehuda, thank you so much for sharing these deep ideas!

I think many in the field would differ with your idea that for addiction taavos you need to strengthen your resolve to resist the pressure. There is an idea that once something is an addictive relationship, more resolve and willpower would not be able to resolve the issue.

For some info on defining addictive behavior, please see this post by 5Uu...
guardyoureyes.com/forum/2-What-Works-for-Me/386561-Thread-in-which-I-share-my-thoughts

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 23 Oct 2022 15:36

[frank.lee wrote on 20 Oct 2022 23:48:](#)

Yehuda, thank you so much for sharing these deep ideas!

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Thanks very much for your comments.

I think that any approach to overcoming addiction would require the addict to invest sustained and concentrated effort- and therefore would require the willpower and strengthening of resolve to apply that effort.

Whether willpower alone is enough- I think it's the most critical element. There are definitely important methods that can and should be used, and dangerous pitfalls to be avoided. I do have an approach that I hope to share- stay tuned! – and of course there are many other clinical and non-clinical approaches. I do maintain that the defining element of overcoming addiction is exercising the will to do so, and that enough strengthened resolve and willpower will push an addict to find the proper treatment course and overcome the inevitable obstacles.

As far as defining addiction, it seems that typically (as is the case in the article you referenced) it is diagnosed rather than defined. Meaning that it is identified by its symptoms rather than by its properties or how it operates. This is in distinction to my approach, where a 'next-level-nisayon' is *defined* as one where physical pressure contradicts the conscious will, as described above.

I'm eager to hear your take, please let me know what you think- either here or by e-mail, yehuda2341@gmail.com

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 27 Oct 2022 18:28

Idea #4- Because It's There

I'll start here with something that I assume everyone has heard and experienced: If you're struggling to resist taavos, it's not helpful to have easy open access to the internet.

Why? So the most simple reason is pretty obvious. You know you're going to have a nisayon, an urge. When it comes, and you're trying to resist it, it's much harder to resist when the taavah is right there in front of you. If it would take some effort, some risk, to get to it- maybe you could hold back. But if it's already in your hand...

So that's pretty simple, straightforward. But I think there's something deeper also.

Feel this out, does it sound familiar?

You're having a good day, stayed clean for a bit, not thinking about taavos now, not feeling any urge. And then you see an opportunity- a new device, a way around the filter, someone left their computer open, whatever it is. And all of a sudden, the nisayon starts. Now there's an urge, it's hard, and you can't get your mind off of it.

What just happened? There was no trigger, you didn't see anything, didn't fantasize. You just noticed that there's an open door, an easy way to the taavah. Why should that create an urge?

And the question becomes the answer. The taavah came just because it's there.

Having an opportunity for taavah doesn't just help you fall in a nisayon, it *creates* the nisayon.

As soon as we recognize the possibility, we have to decide whether to pursue it. Deciding whether to pursue it means weighing the options, pros and cons. Weighing the options means thinking about what we could get, which means thinking about whether we would enjoy the taavah. We would enjoy it, at least on some level. And now we're thinking about that. That's already a nisayon.

What difference does this make?

First- It means that it's *never* a good idea to have access to taavos. Even if we're having a great day and we're very inspired and have been clean for a while etc. We can't say 'I'm not interested now, so it doesn't hurt to have a bit of access, I'm not gonna do it anyway'. Because once we have access, we will be interested. Having access will start up the nisayon again.

Second- Thinking about it this way can actually help us resist the taavah. Let's say we're in a situation like I described- where there was no nisayon until the opportunity turned up. So now I can think to myself, 'Is that really a reason to fall? Just because it's there? I don't even really want it- I was doing fine before. So why should I mess up just because someone left their computer open?'

That can be a very powerful tool, I'll encourage you to try it out and see.

And this also plays out with real people also. We're much more likely to 'fall for' a neighbor, co-

worker, family friend etc. Why? Because they're around, because we know them, we feel like we have 'a chance with them'. And that feeling of possibility, of availability, *creates* the attraction.

But if we can see that the nisayon is just a product of its availability, then we can see that we don't really need it, we don't really want it. It's just there. We can see that an infatuation has nothing to do with personal compatibility. She's not really 'the one'. She just happens to be there.

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 03 Nov 2022 19:51

Idea #5- False Hopes

Any camp director could tell you that how fun an activity is depends a lot on how much you hype it up. If you can make it new, cool, exciting- everyone will have a great time, no matter what it is.

Are we like that too? How much of the pleasure that we get from taavos is really coming from the hype that the Yetzer Hara builds around it?

Imagine you only had access to one video (or any other kind of taavah). You could watch it over and over again, but never anything else. How interesting, how pleasurable, would that be the second time? The fifth? The tenth? Would you even keep watching it or would you just get bored and stop?

Why is that? The first time you were very interested. Before you watched it there was a days/hours/minutes long struggle- you tried to resist, but the temptation to watch this was just so powerful and overwhelming. You *had to* see it, you couldn't resist. And now it's right there and you don't even want it? What happened?

Because there's no point. You already saw that. You know what it is, nothing new and exciting there anymore.

Sound right?

Ok, there it is. Without excitement, without being new, we have barely any interest. It's the same video, but now that it's old it's nothing.

The appeal, the pleasure, is in the hype, as much or more than in the content.

A huge part of the drive for taavos is fake. I don't really enjoy it that much, it's just the excitement of seeing something new.

You don't want to eat the same food- even your favorite food- every meal every day. But once a day is probably fine, at least for a while. And if it's been a week since you had it, you'll be excited to have it again. You like trying new things, but if it's the old favorite you don't think 'What's the point? I already ate this last time!' Because you really like it, so you want to have it again.

But with these taavos, it's not like that. Once I've seen it, I'm done. On to the next thing. I don't care about it anymore because it's not new anymore.

Because most of the pleasure is in the novelty- **not** because you really like it. You don't really like it as much as you feel you do. If you did, it would be pleasurable without the novelty.

[As an aside, we can take it a step further. Even the novelty is fake. Is the next video really different? What are you going to see that's more pleasurable than the last thing? It's just the same thing over and over again, with different details. If you've seen one, you've seen 'em all.]

What's the difference between the video that I'm dying to watch and the one that I can't be bothered to watch? One I've seen, and one I haven't seen. That's it.

And that's why we can never be satisfied. We're not looking for anything real that we can have and keep. We're looking for novelty. Novelty lasts one second. Then we have nothing left. We have to start again.

It's an endless cycle. We have the urge, the Yetzer Hara tells us 'You want to see that and then you'll be happy.' Not true. False hope. That won't make you happy.

What's the truth? 'You want to see that and then something else and then something else and then something else, and on forever.' So when do you get to be happy? Never. Just spend your life chasing empty novelty, fake pleasure.

When do we get to be happy? When we get what we really want, what we really care about. When we have a good day, do what we should be doing. That's real. That stays with you.

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by yehuda2341 - 11 Nov 2022 14:29

Idea #6- the painful truth

So this one's a bit counter-intuitive, but I think it's very true if you take the time to think it over and feel it out.

Another disclaimer, because of the nature of this idea, I'll have to use slightly more direct language than usual- you'll see what I mean.

Ok, so here we go. Indulging in a taavah comes with two forms of pleasure- stimulation and release (in that order). Those are very different, really opposite, sensations. One is exciting, engaging; the other is relaxing, calming. Which is the bigger pleasure? Pretty sure we can agree it's the release.

Now, I understand stimulation. Most pleasure comes from some form of stimulation, physical or emotional.

But release? Release from what? Where have I been locked up that I need to be released?

Of course, the answer is it's a release of tension, pressure. But why am I so tense? I thought I was enjoying myself...

And the answer...

The urge to reach the release is pressure, tension. I have to get there. Can't think about anything else. I need it. Badly. Now.

In any other context that line of thought would mean you're way over-stressed. Too much pressure on you. Not so healthy.

But here that's the name of the game. A bit of stimulation creates an urge, some pressure. So we follow the urge, go for more stimulation. And that makes the urge bigger. (When you're hungry and you eat a little, you get less hungry. Here you follow the urge and get more 'hungry'...) - So we go for more stimulation, and the urge gets even stronger. And again and again.

Until the climax, the pinnacle of pleasure. And what is that? Release. No more urge, no more pressure. You can relax.

That's it.

It's not actually pleasure, it's just removing - very temporarily - the built-up tension stress and pressure.

Nothing positive being added, nothing being experienced, just a removal of pain. Don't believe

me? Think about it.

It's like if someone is twisting your arm behind your back, really hurting you. And then they let go. Does it feel good that they let go? Yes. Would you call that 'pleasurable'? I wouldn't. Just not painful anymore.

Would you sign up for that? Come on over, I'll twist your arm and then let go. Tempting...

So why do we do it, and even enjoy it? Two reasons.

One: because the pain, the urge, comes with pleasure- the stimulation. It's sugar-coated. It feels good at the time, just it also creates a stronger urge, a tension and pressure afterwards.

Two: This is the main one. Because we *didn't* sign up for it. It came by itself. We don't really think there's an option to not 'have our arm twisted', so we resign ourselves to aim for the 'pleasure' of release from the tension. Better than just sitting in the pain. Best we can do.

But it's not. The pressure, the tension, the urge- all of that comes *because* we're involved. If we could resist the first step, not get drawn in, then we wouldn't have the discomfort- really the pain- of the urge in the first place. We wouldn't *need* to be 'released'.

I think this is a very powerful idea. We think of the urge as our natural state, a drive to receive great pleasure. That makes for a real temptation.

If we can see it my way, the urge becomes an enemy, a torturer. And the pleasure at the end isn't pleasure at all, just a break from the pain. And that's not very tempting.

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by cordnoy - 11 Nov 2022 14:51

[yehuda2341 wrote on 11 Nov 2022 14:29:](#)

Idea #6- the painful truth

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Posted by Teshuvahguy - 11 Nov 2022 15:06

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Re: Game-Changer Ideas & powerful tools that I used
Posted by cordnoy - 11 Nov 2022 18:21

[Teshuvahguy wrote on 11 Nov 2022 15:06:](#)

[cordnoy wrote on 11 Nov 2022 14:51:](#)

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Posted by yehuda2341 - 14 Nov 2022 01:13

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I guess I'll have to change it to "I think many of us would agree that it's the release. In any case the release is definitely a big part of it." I think the rest of the idea still stands and has value... I did notice that all of the things you mentioned are emotional pleasures that are built around the physical action ('the hype', as I labeled it in the previous post). If we would talk only about the straight physical pleasure would you agree? How about in personal acting out (with or without visual stimulation), where those factors you mentioned are much less relevant? To bring out my point from a bit of a different angle- If you would get all the pleasure of stimulation etc. but would be stopped right before the climax, would you consider yourself to have had the best part of a good time? Or would you think of that as torture? (see Sotah 9b vis a vis Shoftim 16:16) As always, I'd love to hear what everyone thinks...

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I stand corrected