

A (Humorous) Way to Cure Insomnia: The Purim Intervention

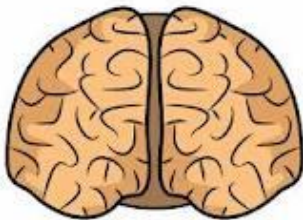
You Will Laugh at the Story in the First Paragraph

A man once came to a therapist and complained that he suffered from insomnia. The therapist instructed the man to clean and wax his kitchen floor each time he could not sleep during the night. The man was instantly cured.

Methods such as these (called interventions, ordeals, etc.) have been used by therapists for decades to alter the dysfunctional, repetitive patterns of behavior that individuals and families find themselves stuck in, like hamsters in an enclosed running wheel. Interventions cause both deviations in the pattern of behavior and a sort of rewiring in the way the client thinks.



In the case of a family that suffered from patterns of physical abuse, an older child would hit his younger brother. The clinical social worker gave an instruction to the older child to scold and domineer over the younger child (which she knew could possibly lead to a physical altercation.) However, the child hit primarily because he was trying to defy authority, and being instructed by authority to hit “short circuited” his thought process, thereby taking away much of the impetus to hit; the family therapy was eventually a success.



Interventions and Purim

One famous therapist instructed his clients to give a gift to someone with whom they had a poor relationship. This caused a deviation from the normal negative interactions and gave an injection of positive feelings, thereby opening the door to possible resolution.

When I read about the intervention, I could not help but think of the mitzvah of mishloach manot, giving



portions of food to each other on Purim. Part of the reason for this unique custom is to increase friendship among our people and, also, prove Haman wrong and show that we are a connected nation, despite lack of physical proximity.

The Intervention

Sometimes it takes a shakeup from outside a feedback loop to disrupt patterns of behavior. Use Purim as the opportunity to break down barriers by giving gifts and having a festive meal with others; use it to gladden those in need with gifts. If you are one of the men who does the *mitzvah* properly and imbibes wine without doing any inappropriate or dangerous actions, know that the effect can be one that breaks down barriers between you and your fellow man and you and yourself.



Give a basket to someone with whom you have not had the best relationship. I have been doing this for years and it has had great results each time (they usually feel the need to give you something bask-yum!). The festive mood of Purim takes away peoples' usual cynicism about your unexpected positive behavior towards them. (If you get a gift basket from me, forget this paragraph).

[to learn more about bettering relationships with others go to the7w.com]

Make a healthy intervention to shake yourself out of negative repetitive patterns. Get into constructive and positive patters and have a happy Purim!!

Ian