

When you're with a bunch of girls, what do you do?

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During the past 40 days or so, I've been at home mostly and declined most invitations to go out. I avoided any situations that I thought would be tough.

This shabbos, I spent in a place that was really tough. I went somewhere where there were a lot of unmarried girls who dressed improperly. They were social with boys as well.

My initial strategy was to ignore them and avoid as much conversation as possible. The problem was, I was sitting at the tables with them, across from them and it was really not possible to completely avoid it. Additionally, it was very awkward and uncomfortable the whole time. I was telling myself not to think of pink elephants while they were right next to me!

I did my best but it was really impossible to not have any thoughts come in to my mind. When those thoughts came, it was very stressful.

Basically, the friday night meal was a stressed out emotional fiasco.

I got up Shabbos day and decided that I wanted a different strategy; Instead of ignoring the women and thereby letting them in the back door (by focusing on not talking to them and not thinking about them, I ended up thinking about them), I would talk to them normally and make them normal "people" in my mind. This would relieve all the tension inside of me and also not make me look and feel so awkward and out of place. I implemented this strategy during lunch and immediately noticed that I felt much more comfortable and had no more tension. I conversed a little bit with the girls and this helped to "normalize" them in my mind. They weren't scary any more. Overall, I felt much better about this strategy.

I would like to hear if anyone has any comments on this and can share their own similar experiences. It was really tough and I don't want to be in a situation like that again but I feel that if I am, I want to have a clear strategy and know how to act.

Thanks in advance!

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