

making the silent battle...not.

Posted by silentbattle - 04 Dec 2009 04:12

Because isn't that why I'm here? And silent battles are always more difficult to fight. There are very few people in the "real world" (you know, the one where people lie, cheat, steal, and are) that I can talk to about this - so this is my chance, I guess.

I'm in my late 20s, single. I learned in Eretz Yisroel for a bunch of years, and had tremendous success, both in learning, in middos, and general personal growth.

When I came back to america, though, things were different. I didn't have the same social framework of the yeshiva that I'd gotten used to. Most of my friends were married, in a different country/state, or both. And the few friends who were still around were crazy busy with their own things. So there I was, lonely, without any support system to speak of, having trouble with dating, and full of the standard drives that guys have. And no real outlet for any of my emotional and physical needs.

Speaking to Uri and reading his posts, yes, I suppose I have a deeper neediness, and to me, "loneliness" includes that - the feeling of not having people to rely on, not feeling wanted, needed, etc.

So I started going to various websites - I started by using them as fuel for fantasies, but eventually ended up meeting women in real life. And while I was honest with them, and made sure they were aware that it could never become something truly serious (how ironic, that my being frum influenced me even while I was doing these terrible aveiros!), I got involved in one unhealthy relationship after another. They provided a fleeting comfort, and even some support, but nothing lasting, and in retrospect, it's no surprise that my dating wasn't very successful (even though I wasn't in any other relationships at the time of dating, I just wasn't in a very healthy place overall).

And then...Hashem helped me. I'm very close with my rebbe, but I could never bring myself to tell him about this, even though I wished he would somehow find out. Well, he did - and I was horrified, but amazingly relieved at the same time. He directed me to a therapist, and the therapist mentioned this website - so here I am.

So, the major issue I'm dealing with is not meeting people in real life - but while I'm at it, my therapist recommended trying for complete abstinence - and I thought, "why not?" After all, if I'm looking to improve myself on a ruchniyos level, then I should try to stop mz"l too, right? And, so far, so good. Clearly, Hashem has been helping me. I've been clean over a month from unhealthy relationships, and something like 11 days on the WOH.

Thank you, everyone, for being part of this group.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by ur-a-jew - 15 Aug 2011 17:27

[silentbattle wrote on 15 Aug 2011 16:20:](#)

I've been slipping recently. Slipping in a sobriety sense, but more fundamentally, slipping in...everything, I guess. The trouble with sobriety is only a symptom, I know. I feel myself falling apart, afraid, despairing.

Perhaps one of my biggest issues is my fear of life. My experiences have taught me that life rarely, if ever, turns out well. I assume there will be failure, disappointment, sadness, and pain.

And all too often, I'm right, though this is likely a self-fulfilling prophecy. Everything seems to difficult, nothing works out. So why even try?

I'm not sure how to break this cycle right now...

Okay, this is going to be a long one. I recently saw the following story which reading it moved me to tears. There are two hidden lessons in it (probably not the obvious lesson of the

publisher -- project kiruv) but one of which addresses one of the issues you've raised, i.e., the difficulties in life.

"Today I lost a friend, someone who was initially my adversary. Chava Leah Bas Feivel returned her soul to her maker. I miss her already. Our unlikely friendship began five years ago. We were preparing to move into a new home. Right away there was tension and I had not yet even met my new neighbor. She kept calling the police and the building inspector to say our grass wasn't cut short enough or often enough. Or maybe a soda can was left by the painters in the driveway. Everyday was a new summons and a new nightmare. Was this how everyone was welcomed to the neighborhood?

"We are not happy with the orthodox taking over the block. We are reform Jews. Don't even think of trying to influence us!"

Come moving day, my new next door neighbor, a woman in her mid-70s introduced herself. "Hi I'm your neighbor, we are not happy with the orthodox taking over the block. We are reform Jews. Don't even think of trying to influence us!" She left me with my jaw still on the floor. "Hi... I guess." That was just the beginning. The police were called regularly if a ball rolled into her yard. So the kids had to play on the street. Well wouldn't you know it, there is a long lost, rarely enforced ordinance that ball playing on the street is not allowed in my New Jersey town. Guess who made sure it was enforced now? We lived in constant fear of this woman, never knowing what tomorrow would bring.

My husband, who is a lot nicer and more level headed than me, came up with a strategy for defense: let's overwhelm her with kindness! You're kidding, I thought. "Send her Shabbos flowers," my husband suggested, "but have them delivered because if she catches you on her property..." Any how we sent her Purim shalach manos, invited her to our daughter's wedding and our son's bar mitzvah celebration. She had never attended orthodox celebrations before and she had so many questions, needed so many answers. She was so taken by the meaning of it all, how everything had significance. She was moved by how Judaism was a way of life for us, in our celebrations, our mourning, even our rituals upon waking up.

Shortly after, she fell ill. She left a message on our answering machine, "I'm sick in the hospital, don't really know who else to call, thought you may want to come visit."

Really? You want me... to visit you? And so I did. I went to visit her a few times until she returned home. While in the hospital, the Jewish chaplain left several books on my neighbor's bedside on various topics on Judaism. Some were complex and she asked me to explain these

concepts to her.

Once she returned home I would try to go over each day to bring some meals and provide some good cheer, but she wanted me to explain to her the concepts in these books.

It came to the point that if I was not able to make it one day, there was a message on my answering machine, "Where are you? I need my fix of Torah."

We learned the weekly Torah portion and the wonderful lessons gleaned, we discussed the purpose of life, the soul after death, the reasons for certain mitzvot, studied the meanings of various prayers, about the holidays, and any questions that came to her mind.

As she recovered we had her and her husband over for Shabbos meals. "Your children sit with you at the table for three hours every week?" she asked in astonishment. "They sing and laugh together every week? Your six-year-old knows the parsha each week?" I explained that the secret is the Shabbos itself.

My neighbor became a regular at our home every Friday night, on time to light the Shabbos candles with me and to study the weekly Torah portion. I would take her to various Torah classes in the neighborhood that I thought would be of interest to her. She would often come to sit in my kitchen on a Thursday to smell and taste the food being prepared for Shabbos as we discussed all kinds of philosophical concepts. My new friend left no stone unturned, never had a question she didn't ask. The police were never again called and my children became her "adopted grandchildren."

"So, what is your daughter wearing for Shabbos this week?, Isn't your son graduating high school this month? Isn't the older one ready for a shidduch soon?"

This is the story of my friend who spoke with God each day. My friend who sought out to help others. To cheer up everyone she met, to enlighten them by urging them to consider the higher purpose for which they were created. My friend who got sick and told me she sees the hand of God is with her every moment. My friend who got sick and could not hold on any longer.

We said the Shema together when she could barely speak anymore. My friend, I will miss your

messages on my machine and joining us on Friday nights. You studied so hard to make up for all the years you did not know. And now you know. Now it's all clear to you. I will cherish all the times you challenged me to become a better version of myself. To study harder, to prepare more, to do more research to quench your thirst for yiddishkeit. When we started you didn't understand that the end of this life is the beginning of something on an even higher realm. Now you know. My dear reader, perhaps you have a neighbor, a co-worker or relative who seems antagonistic toward Judaism and observant Jews. They may actually be calling out to you. They may see the beauty in the life you lead and yearn for it too.

See past their anger and sarcasm. Reach out to them. May this be a merit for the neshama of Chava Leah Bas Feivel My friend."

Two things struck me about this story. First, if I can overwhelm an antagonist with kindness, I can certainly do it with those close to me. But the more important lesson was what do you think was going through the mind of the writer when she was going through the story before she knew the end of it. Each time the cops knocked with another ticket. The very notion of having just bought a house and learning that your next door neighbor hates you. The reality is that these tickets, and disappointments turned out to be the writers ticket to self-growth and ultimately olam haba. All of Chava leah's learning in those five years accrued to the writer's benefit.

The point is that life may have disappointments, sadness and pain. But under all of them is probably opportunities. Seize the moment. Hatzlacha.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 15 Aug 2011 17:49

Silentbattle, i feel for you.

will include you in davening.

at the very least, you brought out some wonderful posts from Bards, Dov and UAJ, thank you for that

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by Dov - 17 Aug 2011 04:13

Feeeeeear the Ninjaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by silentbattle - 17 Aug 2011 05:33

Thank you :D

Thank you UAJ, you're right, of course. And I know that doing the best I can is my job in life. It's just not always easy when I don't see the light at the end of the tunnel (no train cliché here), I worry that my marriage will never get better, I'll never be a success.

And Dov, you're definitely right - I guess when we're in touch with our fears and weaknesses, that's our chance to really face them and move forward, that's our opportunity to reach out to Hashem. It's past time, right? Way past.

ZS, thank you so much, for always being there for me. Your tefilos are appreciated, always.

Reb Bards - Great to hear from you! You're right, absolutely. And even though I'm still in the thinking stage, the "what if I..." stage, you're right - I know it won't lead to happiness. I guess.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by Eye.nonymous - 17 Aug 2011 06:33

[silentbattle wrote on 15 Aug 2011 16:20:](#)

I'm not sure how to break this cycle right now...

Start with the most troubling issue. Take on one issue at a time. **Get some help.**

[Or, it might be easier to start with the easiest issue. [b]Get some help[/b]. Resolve it. Then move on.]

--Elyah

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by Yosef Hatzadik - 17 Aug 2011 15:23

When I am in such a position, I NEED to be in almost constant contact with me dear friends from GYE.....

You have my phone number. You can use it for text too.....

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by gibbor120 - 17 Aug 2011 16:36

[silentbattle wrote on 17 Aug 2011 05:33:](#)

And Dov, you're definitely right - I guess when we're in touch with our fears and weaknesses, that's our chance to really face them and move forward, that's our opportunity to reach out to Hashem. It's past time, right? Way past.

One of my rabbeim once said, that you will know that you are learning mussar correctly when learning mussar is the last thing you want to do. In other words, it hurts to change. The pain is a siman that you are changing. KOT.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by silentbattle - 23 Aug 2011 11:47

Still hanging in here, still working to take the steps forward that I need to take.

What do you do when there's a part of you that assumes (based on experience) that every situation is probably going to end badly? This fear of mine obviously leads to a feeling of helplessness and despair...

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by an honest mouse - 23 Aug 2011 12:34

It's great to hear you're still hanging in there. I wish only the best for you.

Would it help to sit down by yourself and right down all that you fear and all that you're worrying about it.

I've noticed with myself that when stuff stays in my head, it seems infinite, it grows and recharges all the time, when i write down, it comes out - it becomes finite and i can start to see more clearly what i need to deal with.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by silentbattle - 23 Aug 2011 13:04

Hi, HM! Not sure if that would help, my fears are pretty big...

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by gibbor120 - 23 Aug 2011 13:37

[silentbattle wrote on 23 Aug 2011 13:04:](#)

Hi, HM! Not sure if that would help, my fears are pretty big...

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Re: making the silent battle...not.
Posted by ur-a-jew - 23 Aug 2011 13:53

[silentbattle wrote on 23 Aug 2011 11:47:](#)

What do you do when there's a part of you that assumes (based on experience) that every situation is probably going to end badly? This fear of mine obviously leads to a feeling of helplessness and despair...

You focus on all the brocha you have in your life. And I'm sure with focus you'll see there is a lot after all youre alive, married, living in Israel?, with a nose, toes and host of other good things which if you're anything like me you don't deserve at all. Yet Hashem in his complete kindness gave it to you. Well if He did that He is certainly capable of resolving all of your fears favorably.

Positive grateful thoughts and actions lead to positive favorable outcomes and or least the ability to view all outcomes in a positive and favorable light.

[gibbor120 wrote on 23 Aug 2011 13:37:](#)

[silentbattle wrote on 23 Aug 2011 13:04:](#)

Hi, HM! Not sure if that would help, my fears are pretty big...

Took the words right out of my mouth.

Continued hatzlacha

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by silentbattle - 23 Aug 2011 19:38

I didn't say that the list was long, I said that the fears were big. In other words, I don't think that putting them down on paper is going to take the "oomph" out of them.

When all I can see is unhappiness, and i don't see any way out of it, or anything I can do to make things better, there are times when I daven to hashem to just take me out of this world, because I don't know what to do anymore. I feel like I'm stuck in a dead-end situation, with no way of improving things. So it makes it kinda hard to focus on the brocha in my life.

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Re: making the silent battle...not.

Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 23 Aug 2011 20:24

Silent Ninjaman, pull up a chair and dim the lights. pull the guitar out and sing along to these wonderful words. they should sound familiar...

Woke up this morning, I'd been living in the past,

Didn't know what time it was, and I was too tired to ask,

Tired of yesterdays, I've got to finally get away,

I'll break these rusty chains and try to find today...

CHORUS: Heard you came around here, looking for someone,

Heard you came around here, looking for me,

Well, I hate to tell you that he doesn't live here anymore,

I hate to tell you that's no longer me.

Walking towards the future, my shadows stay in front of me,

They look familiar 'cause I've been with them so long,

Turning to the sun now, I realize it's in front of me,

Though it was casting shadows, realized I was wrong...

CHORUS: Heard you came around here, looking for someone,

Heard you came around here, looking for me,

Well, I hate to tell you that he doesn't live here anymore,

I hate to tell you that's no longer me.

(Bridge): You're knocking at my door, I'm nowhere to be found,

No forwarding address, I'm simply not around,

You're standing at my door, you're standing there alone,

You're knocking at that door, but I'm not home!

CHORUS: Heard you came around here, looking for someone,

Heard you came around here, looking for me,

Well, I hate to tell you that he doesn't live here anymore,

I hate to tell you that's no longer me.

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