

An open letter to a co-worker

Posted by connected - 08 Jun 2022 22:31

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(Although I'm well aware that this will be read by anyone but her or others in her situation.)

Esteemed Bas Yisrael,

I'd like to start off by acknowledging your dedicated work. You've been a fast learner and a diligent worker from the day you joined the team. Your contributions are an immeasurable part of our success.

Given the subdued environment in our company, I (BH) don't know much about your personal life. I certainly don't have enough information about your background to reach any conclusions about you. Or your personal style, which is what I want to discuss. I understand very well that it can stem from a certain childhood/family, a circle of friends, your husband's demands, or perhaps something that I cannot even think about.

My journey toward a better me has taught me to keep an open mind. So I try to do just that and not pin blame or pass judgment.

However, at the same time, in my journey, there are certain things that I cannot afford. Things that even a year ago would've delighted me. Things in which I used to invest much energy and thought.

For instance, (and this is just a small example) since I was about six years old, a certain part of the female body elicited (still elicits) a particular response from me. Whether I saw it or even just thought about it. I've speculated about this phenomenon extensively, and I found no original reason (thus far) to explain it. I've come to accept that this is how our creator wired me. For years, I would spend considerable amounts of energy trying to get a glimpse of that body part, attempting to satisfy a confused and misunderstood need. I'd ride my bike up and down the block; I'd spend hours staring out the window at the passing cars, all whilst hoping for a satisfying exhibition. I did this for close to ten years without understanding neither the cause nor the effect. By the time the concepts started clearing up and solidifying, it was an integral part of

me, and if we're totally honest, I enjoyed it too much to even consider stopping. So I continued with a deeper understanding and appreciation.

More recently, I started understanding the negative effects that this action was having on me, and I started trying to break this "habit". After numerous crushing and failed attempts, I can finally say that I have a clearer grasp of this pattern of behaviors and its many moving parts. I've also learned that I need to stop blaming external factors and start focusing on my role and what I can/need to do.

As I said earlier, I'm not blaming you for the way you dress, but I hope you can understand my awkwardness when interacting with you. You see, the above-referenced body part is on full display, and it's quite triggering for me. I hope you don't take my looking away as an insult. I have nothing personally against you, Chas V'Shalom, but I have so much to lose by even taking just a taste of the visual feast laid out (perhaps unknowingly) for me.

So, in conclusion, as the wretched Costanza Jr would say, *"It's not you, it's me"*.

But I mean it seriously.

Sincerely,

Connected

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by Larry Bird - 08 Jun 2022 23:58

I thought this would be someone demanding upset that a girl was dressing provocatively. Instead I was surprised to see a very non judgmental person just trying to stay on the straight and narrow.

props to you, my brother.

The tayva is all over. Telling someone to dress modest doesn't help you. You'll look other

places unless you master self control.

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by connected - 09 Jun 2022 01:47

[Larry Bird wrote on 08 Jun 2022 23:58:](#)

Telling someone to dress modest doesn't help you. You'll look other places unless you master self control.

Amen to that!

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by sleepy - 09 Jun 2022 02:35

[connected wrote on 08 Jun 2022 22:31:](#)

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-poor daughter of israel who has learned from the daughters of the land to show something that should be covered,-etc etc, unless she is all covered up properly and you are imagining to see things , and by the way saying someone has learned something from goyim is not judgemental, its just galus

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker

Posted by Markz - 09 Jun 2022 03:01

[connected wrote on 08 Jun 2022 22:31:](#)

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Hi Mr C, can you explain.

What the point of this long winded letter?

To a Jewish girl letters like this serve no purpose and are only demeaning. I hope no girl gets any message like this - ever!

If it's to highlight our struggle, I get that.

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker

Posted by connected - 09 Jun 2022 03:04

[sleepy wrote on 09 Jun 2022 02:35:](#)

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From a purely technical perspective, you're right.

What I was trying to focus on is the innate goodness in even those of us who are blind to society's brainwashing (more than others).

I think the fact that she learned from the daughters of the land, is quite evident by the rest of the post...

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by connected - 09 Jun 2022 03:13

[Markz wrote on 09 Jun 2022 03:01:](#)

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Among the conscious points are:

- I was in the mood of a long winded post.
- To highlight our struggle
- To give perspective to guys struggling with the same thing, but are stuck blaming "them" for falling (whoever "them" is).
- To clear my thoughts (and my chest).

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by committed_togrowth - 09 Jun 2022 04:48

It was therapeutic to read, so I'm guessing it was therapeutic to write too. Speaks to the truth

and takes a non-judgmental stance, thank you for sharing

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by Larry Bird - 09 Jun 2022 09:23

How was this demeaning?

he was simply clarifying that he has to look away and he's not trying to disrespect her.

He didn't give her mussar.

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by y ellis - 09 Jun 2022 10:11

whilst a man has to work on his own tayvos, a woman definitely has an achrayus to do her bit to ensure shes not being machshil others. that's the whole concept of tznus

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by Shmuel - 09 Jun 2022 10:42

[Larry Bird wrote on 09 Jun 2022 09:23:](#)

How was this demeaning?

he was simply clarifying that he has to look away and he's not trying to disrespect her.

He didn't give her mussar.

I did not chap where the letter was going. Till the last paragraph it sounded to me very much about the woman...

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by Shmuel - 09 Jun 2022 10:45

[y ellis wrote on 09 Jun 2022 10:11:](#)

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Tznius has nothing to do with that!

Tznius exists by men and woman and not just in dress...

There is however a mitzvah of lifnei iver...

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Re: An open letter to a co-worker
Posted by connected - 09 Jun 2022 14:04

I appreciate everyone's perceptions of the letter.

Selfish reasons aside, I hope this post provided perspective to my brothers-in-arms who find themselves in similar, triggering situations. We must remember that genuine, lasting change has to and can only come from within.

Introspection, mindfulness, honesty, and strategy are some things that will make us big.

Righteous indignation, blaming, and waiting for others to change first are some things that will

keep us small.

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I definitely feel a lot of the same feelings as you. At my work there are many frum women and I'm basically the only man, besides my boss in his own office. They're very frum and dress very modest. One thing really gets me is that the chatter all day about narishkaiten, often discussing personal lives and husbands and kids and schools and wigs and yom tov and shopping and babysitter and doctors and in laws. I find it so horrible to sit there. They're loud and unprofessional. I'm basically thinking about them all the time, because I'm hearing them all the time. I tried headphones but, I'm not interested in sitting from 9-5 with things in my ears. At this point there's not much to do.

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I feel your pain, brother.

Although my work situation is not as extreme, it's close enough.

I have earphones plugged in most of the day. I alternate between music, TorahAnyTime (when I can concentrate on two things simultaneously), and just silence.

My ears feel very uncomfortable at times; I'm considering investing in good over-ear headphones.

Gotta do whatcha gotta do (Honestly, I'd also enjoy better-sounding music, but I'm cheap, so, yeah...)

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