

SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 04 Jan 2010 17:16

Evening all (;

I only discovered GUE a few weeks ago, but it's been such a huge help to me. I thought I'd post my own story.

I'm a baal teshuva, and I've been shomrei mitzvot for about 5 years. Becoming frum has been both the most fulfilling and difficult journey I've ever undertaken (still on it!). Although it can be very hard day-to-day, and I've had more than a few moments where I wanted to throw off my yarmi, the Aibishter has helped me to keep going.

My family emigrated from Johannesburg, South Africa, to London when I was about 14. This move was very, very hard on me, especially socially. I left behind a lot of my friends I grew up with, and struggled to rebuild in the UK. For the past ten years (I'm 24 now), I've been quite lonely, and my self-esteem took a lot of big hits (although Baruch H-Shem therapy has helped a huge amount). I was unhappy with my situation, and unhappy with who I was. I think I used p**n and shfichas zera as a pick-me-up, and as an attempt at some kind of intimacy, besides the usual urges and curiosities of a young man.

This continued when I become frum, although frequency decreased (and guilt increased). University was a very difficult time, fashions left very little to the imagination, although I managed to avoid getting involved with all the shmutz that goes on.

I spent a year at a well-known baal teshuva yeshiva after uni. This was to be my greatest length of shmira - just over a year. I fell badly when I came home for pesach - after 9 months in Yerushalayim, the fashions and posters in the UK were just far too much to handle, along with my PC that I had left behind.

Since then, I've really fought (and fallen), and GUE has given me a lot of inspiration. I was quite happy to realise I had been mechavin to the Guard Your Eyes Handbook already about 3 years before I had read it! My browser opens onto the chizuk list, which is really handy.

London is a tough place for shmiras eynayim, and I really daven hard that H' should help me. Baruch H-Shem I'm usually ok but sometimes the y'h just gets too much. My recent best period is about 6 weeks. I found a good filter and I'm really considering accountability software, but I'll see how the next few months go.

A big challenge at the moment is shidduchim - I'd really like to get married (and feel emotionally I'm finally in a good place to deal with it properly). I don't fit in very here - I'm too 'modern' for a chareidi girl, but too chareidi for a modern girl, so it's been hard meeting girls that are shayich. That sneaky y'h gets me here a lot - telling me that it will be years before I find someone and in such a tough environment, who can blame me for giving in? Positive thinking and bitachon are really my biggest weapons here, but they don't come easily.

One thing that really surprised me reading others' stories is how widespread these struggles are, and how wide a cross-section of yidden it affects.

May the Ribono shel Olam give you all the beracha and hatzlacha you all deserve for your truly super human efforts!

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by ark321 - 04 Jan 2010 17:51

Hi Sonic, welcome! You really seem to have your goals set right... You should soon get a welcome pack from the boss. This is really a great place. Here you can speak out your mind, share your struggles and progress, and above all this is where you can finally learn to put it all behind you. Looking forward to hearing more from you...

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sci1977 - 04 Jan 2010 18:11

Good luck and welcome. Keep up the good work. This is a wonderful place. Enjoy it and you'll see how much it helps. Everyone is here to help you.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by Lamplighter - 04 Jan 2010 21:08

Baruch haba Reb Sonic! You made it an entire year! I can't imagine how much nachas ruach you gave the Borei!... and how much you continue to give Him through coming here to GYU and taking steps for kedusha.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by Kedusha - 04 Jan 2010 22:28

Dear SonicReducer,

Welcome to our community! Once you've arrived, there's no turning back. Everyone here will just grab a hold of you and pull you up, up, up!

Scientific studies have shown that it takes 90 days to change a neural thought pattern that was ingrained in the brain through addictive behaviors. Did you join the [90 day chart](#) on-line? Sign up [over here](#).

We get cries for help every day, by e-mail and on the forum. *Tzuras Rabim Chatzi Nechama*
And that is why we created the GYE handbooks (links below). If you read them well, from beginning to end, slowly, and try to implement what you read, you will find the answers within them to enable you to completely turn your life around. **You're worth it.**

Also, join the [daily Chizuk e-mail lists](#) to get fresh chizuk every day, and post away on this forum. You will get tons of daily Chizuk and support. This disease can't be beat alone. It works best when you get out of isolation!

GuardYourEyes also offers various free anonymous phone conferences, where you can join a group of other from Yidden, along with an experienced sponsor. See [this page](#) for four different options. Our conferences are taking place daily, throughout the week... This would be a tremendous step in the right direction for you and help you learn freedom from this addiction. Not only will you learn the secret of the 12-Steps – which is known to be the world's most powerful program for beating addiction having helped millions world wide, but joining the group will be another way of GETTING OUT OF ISOLATION and connecting with others who are going through what you are.

Let me tell you a little about the two GuardYourEyes handbooks. They lay down the cornerstone and foundation of our work, and they make our network much more effective and helpful for people.

You see, until now, people would often get "lost" when coming to our website, not knowing what tips and techniques to try. For example, a beginner wouldn't jump straight into therapy or 12-Step groups, while on the other hand, someone whose addiction was more advanced wouldn't be helped by the standard tips of "making fences" putting in "filters" etc... So it was essential to develop a handbook which details all the techniques and tools to dealing with this addiction in progressive order. Now with these handbooks, anyone can read through and see what steps they've tried already, and if those steps haven't worked, they can continue on through the handbook where the steps become progressively more powerful and "addiction-oriented".

And the second handbook, called the "Attitude" handbook, can also help anyone, no matter what level of addiction they may have. Often people write in to us saying that had they only known the proper outlook & attitude that we try and share on the GuardYourEyes network when they were younger, they would have never fallen into an addiction in the first place! So we hope that through this handbook, many addictions will be prevented.

The handbooks are PDF files, set up as eBooks, and they have bookmarks and hyper-links in the Index, to make them easy to navigate.

Note: You might want to print them out to read away from the computer. Keep in mind though, that if you do this, you won't be able to click on the many web links in the articles. But you can always come back to them later. The truth is, it's anyway good to go through the whole handbook once without clicking on links, just to get an overview of all the tools available. Once you did that, you can start again from tool #1 and read each tool through more carefully, click the links and study each technique and assess whether you have tried it fully yet or not...

Right click on the links below and select "Save Link/Target As" to download the handbooks to your computer.

1) [The GuardYourEyes Handbook](#)

This Handbook details 18 suggested tools and techniques, in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this addiction, and continuing down through increasingly earnest and powerful methods. For the first time, we can gauge our level of addiction and find the appropriate tools for our particular situation. And no matter what level our addiction may have advanced to, we will be able to find the right tools to break free in this handbook!

2) [The GuardYourEyes Attitude](#)

The Attitude Handbook details 30 basic principles to help us maintain the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle. Here are some examples: Understanding what we are up against, what it is that Hashem wants from us, how we can use this struggle for tremendous growth, how we can deal with bad thoughts, discovering how to redirect the power of our souls, understanding that every little bit counts, learning how to bounce back up after a fall, and so on and so forth...

May Hashem be with you!

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 06 Jan 2010 15:53

Last few days have been really tough. The y'h has a habit (tactic?) of nagging me and wearing me down. Doesn't help that I can't stop looking at pretty girls. Explicit posters and newspaper pictures are easy enough to dodge, but just looking at pretty girls it's like I'm in a slalom, and the boulders are easy to spot and dodge, but I just keep slipping on pebbles.

Frustrating. Hate fighting this

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by G38 - 06 Jan 2010 16:20

Welcome home, dodger!

This is our home, because once we enter we are hugged with such warmth only a home has.

And living in London and pursuing your own agenda unknown to those around you earns you the name "dodger".

This site has some usefull tips for your problem, but let me tell you that it will become easier as you move along so it pays to fight as you are for sure the winner.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by silentbattle - 06 Jan 2010 17:32

First of all, welcome, Reb Sonic!

Glad to have you on board! It sounds like you've had tremendous success over the years, and hopefully, you'll have even more success now! I look forward to hearing from you!

I can understand the feelings regarding shidduchim. I have thoughts like that myself sometimes, like "who knows how long it will take? It could be years!"

I've been in the parsha for a few years, maybe I can offer some thoughts - feel free to post, or PM me. If you like, you can share more about your balance between modern and chareidi.

Do you use a shadchan, do friends suggest shidduchim?

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by DesertLion - 06 Jan 2010 21:33

Hey SonicReducer,

I can totally identify with your situation, since my circumstances mirror yours quite closely. Atm I'm also 24, single and I live in London.

University was also a very difficult time for me. I wonder if we've walked past each other in the street and not realised it, lol!

Btw, have you started dating/are you dating girls atm? I'm not thinking of marriage any time soon, but I do think that I'm old enough now to have an idea of what I want.

They say misery loves company. Often, I hate this struggle, but at least we're in it together.

TC and best wishes,

DesertLion

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 06 Jan 2010 21:42

@ silentbattle:

Thanks for the welcome (; So far I've used both shadchanim and suggestions from friends. My frustration is that the process has so far been sloooooow. Met 3 girls in 6 months - really expected it to be busier. I often feel marginalised - even tho I'm a pretty good catch, I dont feel like I fit in so well, so finding girls that are shayich is not easy. I'm already thinking I might need to head to Israel or the States just to meet girls.

Might PM you in the near future, thank you for the offer.

@ DesertLion

It's very possible we've rubbed shoulders at some point. I admit 24 is pretty young to get hitched, but I've thought about it a lot and discussed it with rabbaim and therapists, and its something I want quite a lot. Although I find myself wondering again if I really am ready - H' will get me where I need to be at the end of the day.

Hatzlacha rabba bud

Thanks to everyone else so far for the warm welcomes (;

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by Kollel Guy - 06 Jan 2010 22:50

I think I'm gonna call you RebSonic.

It sounds like a company which makes Rabbi Robots :D ;D

WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY!!

You have a great deal to learn here. You have found the very best place in the world for someone like yourself. What you are witnessing is a *neis nigla*! Never before have observant jews been able to get together to share knowledge and *chizzuk* and tools on how to fulfill H-shem's will against all odds, and against all opposing currents.

What people intend to get here when they first arrive, is usually just "ridding themselves of their undesired behavior". Surprisingly enough though, what we start aiming for gradually changes with our realization of what's really going on in our lives. We start seeing the behavior - not simply as "something we shouldn't do - yet can't seem stop", but rather as a mountain we were put here to climb. And the height we will be at when we finally reach the top of the mountain, will be a place we never could have gotten to if not for the mountain being there.

It's not only about "Beating the bad habit", because success tends to evade those who only focus on it as an isolated issue.

It's about growth. Opening our perceptions. Starting to live, and live *for real*. Recognizing our amazing capabilities, and the even more amazing meaning and value they have.

What do you do if your child refuses to learn how to walk, and is perfectly content with crawling?

You can talk to him, and give subtle messages, and try rewarding him, but when these things don't work, you don't give up. Because you love him, and want him to reach his full potential. So you place a little block in his path, which he cannot pass unless he stands up and walks over it, and although he will find it difficult and frustrating, eventually this will be his path to growth.

I hope you gain like the rest of us have!!

Hatzlacha Rabbah,

KG

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by silentbattle - 06 Jan 2010 23:09

I mean, I live in america...but I'm sure we'd have what to talk about. And if you're ever interested in coming to the US, maybe I can help with info.

Things often start off slow. Do you tell your friends that you're looking?

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 10 Jan 2010 19:33

Shalom all,

shidduchim should please G-d pick up in the next few weeks - I had taken a bit of a break due to feeling down and being so busy with work/classes/moving house/etc, so was feeling very unsettled. That's all calmed down a bit, so hopefully will get moving. One of the shadchanim I'm dealing with a lot also took a break - she has small kids and wanted a break over school holidays, which is fair enough.

A friend also had a suggestion that might be worthwhile investigating.

Not really the reason I'm posting. First thing is that I'm almost clean for 2 weeks - 2 weeks tends to be a bit of a marker, sometimes difficult, but I'm feeling pretty confident at the moment. the 90 day chart helps quite a lot too

Secondly wanted to write about my ... interesting day. A friend asked me if I was free to help make a minyan at the levaya of the grandmother of a guy we knew from shul. I agreed (better than spending the afternoon playing video games or something). It took us a while to get there as it was pretty far, and we arrived when they had already left the hall.

This funeral wasn't so sad - I think she was quite old and had been very sick, so her ptira came as a bit of a relief. It's only the second levaya I'd been to - the first was my grandmother's when I

was about 14. It was freezing freezing cold, and my friend said it reminded him a lot of a trip to Aushwitz he went on a few years ago.

However, there was a second levaya straight after the one I was at - and they were short a minyan. My friend and I agreed to stay to help make up the numbers. This one was much sadder - it was an elderly lady, and almost everyone there was also fairly old. The only person saying kaddish was her brother.

I'm quite glad we stayed, I really think it was a bit of a test from H' and I think we chose right.

Going to the cemetery wasn't as much of a shock as I expected it to be - it really reinforced my belief that this world is for work, but H' takes us back and looks after us once we're done - no matter who we are (obviously living properly in this life is important).

One wierd thing that happened tho - as we drove in, the first row of graves by the road to the hall face the road so you can see the names. One of them was a lady that had the same surname as me. I doubt its a relation (not a hugely common name), but it was still a bit of a surprise. Not a scare or a shock, but more like a tap on the shoulder and a message "nu! get one with it, don't waste your chance".

Anyway, pretty tired. Please G-d the next few days should keep going smoothly, have been careful about looking at girls and my teivah has leveled off, not as bad as usual.

Kol tov everyone, have a good week

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by Kollel Guy - 10 Jan 2010 23:24

It's really great to hear that your doing well. I hope your success continues and grows, steadily and healthily.

Yeah, levayos always get the heart to wake up for a while. The trick is to catch the awakening and hold on to it. Because if you don't - you can lose it the VERY next day. Awakenings are very precious, you have to totally take advantage of them as they come across your path.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by silentbattle - 11 Jan 2010 02:00

I'm glad to hear from you, and even happier to hear that you're doing well!

Good luck with shidduchim!

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