

SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 04 Jan 2010 17:16

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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 aryehtahor - 27 Jan 2010 20:06

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Hi Sonic,

I'm also 24, Baal Teshuva, and currently finishing college. (Dropped out for a 4 years in the middle, that's a whole story in itself). I live in America, although my parents are from London. So we have quite a bit in common.

My two cents are that

cent # 1: Being actively involved in the forum, reading and posting, can totally help chase away the YH for porn

cent # 2: The less you feed it, the more satiated it is. So the fact that you've held off on physical relationships may be preventing things from being much worse. I hear that if you cut out physical relationships and porn and masturbation, it can be relatively easy to wait 2,3,4 years before getting married. Especially if you are occupied with kedusha. So make sure you aren't rushing for the wrong reasons.

Keep up the good work!

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by the.guard - 27 Jan 2010 20:43

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Please read: [www.guardureyes.com/GUE/RTwerski/startDating.asp](http://www.guardureyes.com/GUE/RTwerski/startDating.asp)

P.S. Please do something about your avatar, I can't sleep at night. :o

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by sonicReducer - 27 Jan 2010 21:12

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Haha, sorry, will change it. Its kind of sentimental to me, but I understand

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by Kollel Guy - 27 Jan 2010 21:40

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[sonicReducer wrote on 27 Jan 2010 21:12:](#)

Haha, sorry, will change it. Its kind of sentimental to me, but I understand

sR

So is this the new or old one?

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by mekubal - 27 Jan 2010 22:03

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[sonicReducer wrote on 04 Jan 2010 17:16:](#)

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.

If you haven't been told this before, this is a pretty common issue.

One thing is to list exactly what your expectations are rather than any terminology (modern vs charedi) to whoever is setting you up.

For example, say that you have no intention to ever have TV in your home, but you read the newspaper.

-or-

You plan to learn x hours a day and work y hours a day.

And then keep in mind, more often than not, the shadchanim and even friends that set you up will misjudge these kinds of details. So you may want to date people that don't necessarily meet the criteria -IF- your friends or shadchanim think its okay match anyway.

And as you already recognized having an Attitude that you don't fit in is detrimental.

You already realized that you don't fit into the goyishe world by coming here... so you should fit it in ANYWHERE in the world of yidden.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by sonicReducer - 28 Jan 2010 16:24

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I've found that once I'd been out with a few girls, my expectations had really broadened a lot. I got on very very well with a girl from a very different background to me. Even though it didn't work out, I learned a lot from it. I have a decent idea of where I want to go and what kind of home I want, so that helps to keeps things on track.

As for fitting into the community, that's a bit tougher. I found where I am to be quite insular (and I've spoken to a world-famous rav about this issue, and his experience mirrored mine quite closely). I think for now I need to keep in mind where I want to be going - once I'm married and have chosen where to live, that will be the community that I'll need to integrate with. Worrying about it now is silly since I'm not in a good place to deal with it. The girl I end up with will probably also be a big factor, e.g. if she's BT, or FFB and knows where she wants to be.

Its a challenge that I've been tending to view as a handicap, and I'm well aware that my attitude is not as positive as it should be

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by silentbattle - 29 Jan 2010 00:25

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Sometimes it's difficult to be positive, especially when shidduchim aren't working out. But you can try...and work on being more positive!

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by imtrying25 - 29 Jan 2010 10:08

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Hey wats up SR?? wishing you the best in yourr shiduchim!! Have a great shabbos. And dont :D :D

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by sonicReducer - 02 Feb 2010 06:14

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Last few days have been too stressful. Baruch H-shem I'm still clean, but I'm struggling.

My parents are on the verge of divorce. Sad thing is that its been a long time coming. My father hasn't earned a living in about 10 years, and my mother is completely burned out from supporting everyone.

I am very angry with them, especially my father. He asked my mother for a separation on Sunday. He blamed me (yes, ME) for a breakdown she recently had, and for their problems. I recently moved out because I couldn't deal with living there any longer - I was more stressed

out at home than I was at work. Sad thing was I was giving them money while I was there. He blamed my moving out for a breakdown she had (not the 10 years of 12 hour hospital shifts she's had to work while he brings in nothing). He blamed their extra struggling in the last month on me not helping them, not his lack of income for a decade.

He's 'working' on his own little financial deals that he's waiting for some big bank to rejoice about when he presents it to them. It's the financial equivalent of waiting for his rock band to make it. He blames his lack of progress on everyone around him not letting him concentrate.

My mother is going to my sister in another city today for a week. She's given my father 6 months to get something going or its over. I've heard this about 6 times already in the last 8 years, but at least this time there's a 3rd party dealing with them.

My y'h keeps whispering "do you know what would help you relax?"

I haven't done anything I'll regret. Pretty stressed out. Oh, and I have my first exam in about 2 years this morning. Great timing

Have made an appointment with a therapist later in the week, even just to get some of this stuff off my chest.

Hope everyone is having a better time than me (;

kol tov

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by briut - 02 Feb 2010 16:28

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Wow. Just... wow. It's beautiful.

Do you even HEAR what amazing experiences you are conquering?! Listen to yourself!

Family dissolving. Attempts to blame you for that. Family financial woes thrown onto your own delicate shoulders. Re-entering school. Entering shidduchim. I think I've forgotten a few more, but you know.

And you're still here, to continue with your life. To take the school exam, and apparently to pass the other life exams, as well.

And on top of it all, you can report to your buddies here at GYE that you've been staying clean.

Whatever you've been eating for breakfast, or whatever shmira you might have gotten from a departed relative, or whatever else it is... I sure wish I had some.

I hope you can take a moment, maybe 10 seconds on the chime of each hour, to reflect on just how amazing it is that you're moving through such Big Events without serious stumble. You deserve that moment.

And I bentsch you that Hashem provide you with teflon coating for your battle clothes so that any possible stains will simply roll off and not make a permanent impression. You are a victorious warrior -- perhaps a bit battle-weary this week (duh!), but still a man of true grit. Sh'koiach.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by sonicReducer - 03 Feb 2010 15:48

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Briut, your words of chizuk really blew me away. Thank you, they were really what I needed to hear

Things have calmed down a bit, but still very stressful. Thankfully, the GP said I need to take a



few days off work (for something unrelated), so at least I have 4.5 days to just catch my breath.

Am still clean, but today has been tough. Need to soldier through, will make it with H's help

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by briut - 03 Feb 2010 16:39

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SR: Well, I figured my comments were mostly a description of what I was seeing. After all, when I see the grandeur of the Alps, I might feel awe but I doubt the Alps really need to get the compliment. I'm pleased, though, if you got some chizuk out of hearing my perspective. From strength to strength.

I wish I had any practical advice, but that's hard for me. You probably can't carry a laptop all day to read chizuk from GYE, so maybe you could think of a couple of simple things you could do on your own.

For me, the method I put in the earlier post works well -- set my watch to chime on the hour and use the signal to say some nice things to myself for a few seconds. You'll know what works well for you (or ask the therapist): admire your strength, or feed yourself a chocolate or tell yourself 10-nice-things-about-you or....

Another thing I use as a last resort: write my current "me" a letter from a much older (wiser?) "me." In other words, how would "me" at 50 want to mechazek the me at 25, if only they could meet. Hard to describe how/why this process works, but for me it's helpful.

I hope you'll use your time off for something important. (Gee, you think maybe the GP was acting on instructions of HKB'H ; have you thanked Him? LOOK HOW HE LOVES YOU!) Can you play some frum music or shiurim or whatever helps give you some chizuk and calm? You might want to make a formal schedule to use the time well.

Every arrow that's thrown in the path of this soldier and misses, simply reinforces how strong

you are. And you are a soldier in the Army of Hashem - victory is assured. You'll do fine.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by silentbattle - 03 Feb 2010 23:39

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I'm just echoing Briut's words here, but you are incredible - in the face of tremendous pressure, you're focusing on doing what's right. Fantastic!

You don't need me to tell you this, but I think you did the right thing by moving out. It still must hurt and make you feel bad when your father says things like that. Seeing a therapist is probably a good idea - are you going to someone who's been recommended by people you know and trust?

I hope your test went well...

As far as your time off, that's good - but make sure you keep busy doing things, get out of the house...no reason to be in a place of temptation all day, right?

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far  
Posted by sonicReducer - 04 Feb 2010 09:45

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Thanks guys ( ; had a tough morning but managed to get through it. Coming up on 40 days, which is a geshmack, a good milestone I think.

I did actually fail my exam, but I'm not so down about it. It was far far tougher than I expected, and it wasn't really particularly necessary either (not a school exam, but a company's qualification). I can rewrite whenever I feel ready, although I'm reconsidering doing it since it's not really in an area I work in - it was more of a 'nice to have', but we'll see.

Being off from work, as you said silentbattle, is a bit of double-edged sword. Yes, I have a chance to things a bit easier, but more free time can mean more temptation (thank G-d for my filter/whitelist). I have stuff from work to get on with at least, as well as a bit of cleaning and hobby stuff lying around that I enjoy. I treated myself to some new music. And booked a bit of time to catch a schmooze with one of my rabbaim, whos been really supportive.

Bit worried about my brain (!), have been having a hard time with migraines and symptoms that haven't really gone away. That's why the GP told me not to go into work - screens there were playing havoc with my head. I've been refered to a neurologist (brain doctor!), but please G-d it should be nothing, or something trivial.

Am seeing therapist tonight - I went to him already a few times and he's very good. He's frum which helps a lot, so he understands where I'm coming from.

Thanks a lot guys, your support has really helped over the last few days.

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