

Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum

Posted by the.guard - 26 Jan 2009 12:26

After much deliberation, it was decided to start a unique and separate section on this forum for women. I also moved all previous threads by women to the new section. (A special thanks to "Boruch" and "strugglingWoman" for being catalysts to this important step).

Here are the deliberations, the pros- the cons - and the final decision.

1) The 12 Steps groups around the world are intentionally mixed, even though it is known that the opposite sexes do trigger each other in group support - especially for addicts. And yes, this can -and has - led to trouble, but only with those who hadn't really hit bottom or weren't really ready for the groups yet. The idea behind the intentional mixing, is that the men **should learn to stop objectifying and sexualizing women**, and through hearing about their struggles and giving each other support, the men begin to see women in a different light. And this is an important part of the healing process.

2) **HOWEVER** - and this is a big HOWEVER, as from people, we can't take these kind of risks, even if there is some benefit to be found in it. The risk of even one person falling is not worth the gain.

3) On the other hand, a forum is not the same as a live-group, and the risk on a forum is much smaller *le'chatchilah*. Therefore, there is more reason to say that the benefit mentioned above in #1 (of learning not to objectify women by hearing about their struggles too) would perhaps justify the miniscule risk, **even** on a frum forum.

4) Therefore, it was decided to make a compromise by starting a new board for women only, as outlined in the rules below.

Here are the new rules (and I would be happy to hear your feedback):

1) Women will start NEW threads only on the Women's Forum, and Men on the men's forum.

- 2) Both women and men will only be allowed to hook up with "partners" and "sponsors" of the same gender.
- 3) Both women and men may post replies to existing threads on both forums, to offer each other Chizuk.
- 4) Men or women who do post on forum's of the opposite gender will not go into detail about their own personal struggles.
- 5) Men will not send women, and women will not send men, personal messages through the forum, nor will they send each other e-mails, nor will they ask each other for phone numbers, even if the intention is to strengthen one another.
- 6) No one will post graphic details of their struggles on ANY of the forums, so as not to possibly trigger other people's imaginations. If you want to send us your story in more graphic detail (so that others can see that there is hope even when falling very low), you can send it first to eyes.guard@gmail.com and we will decide if/what parts are appropriate. (Note: Members should privately relay to the administrator any triggers they may spot in any post, so we can respond accordingly).
- 7) Anyone found deliberately violating the above rules will be "blocked" from the forum.

And one last "word to the wise". *"Yode'ah Tzadik Nefesh Be'hemto"*... If you feel you may be triggered by hearing about the struggles of the opposite gender, DO NOT ENTER the forum of the opposite gender **even if** you would like to offer Chizuk (you can press on the little "minus" sign next to the words "Internet Addiction Forum for Jewish Men/Women" to collapse it and keep it out of sight).

I think the above is a pretty good compromise. Happy to hear any thoughts or advice.

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by the.guard - 26 Jan 2009 21:52

Because of Battleworn and Shomer's points above, I added rule #6 now.

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by boruch - 26 Jan 2009 23:27

[guardureyes wrote on 26 Jan 2009 15:50:](#)

Boruch, if you have any ideas how to make it even better, feel free to share (remember - kid gloves please :-)

Should I take this personally?

I mean here I was commending your original post and then making a suggestion in what I thought was the most roundabout and diplomatic way and then you are reminding me about the kid gloves? Why, I even went and changed my signature yesterday evening (see my signature below) after the feedback you and Ano had given me and then this is the thanks I get?

(don't worry, as gentle and encouraging as I will try to be on the exterior, I am not exactly about to get all soft, vulnerable and mushy on the inside)

So, seriously speaking, my point really is that my change in tone (I had thought that it was quite noticeable) since your feedback yesterday is not intended to be a short-lived one.

To win the battle against addiction it has to be just one part of the greater war against the yetzer hora. And just as in my battle against addiction I am with the help of Hashem going for no relapses till 120, the same when it comes to taming the beast of aggressive posting on forums. So, thank you for your feedback yesterday and everyone here can breath a sigh of relief because from yesterday on the tiger is caged and from now on it's Mr. Nice Guy only.

[guardureyes wrote on 26 Jan 2009 15:50:](#)

I don't know if I should bother Rabbi Twerski about this. I explained the reasoning of the compromise in 4 clear steps above. Remember, there IS still a benefit to see the struggles of the women, and so I think we are balancing it pretty well now **thanks to y'all**.

In this particular instance the chances are good that Rabbi Twersky will agree wholeheartedly with your approach. I personally suspect that you have struck a good balance.

But would it not be much fairer to be able to reassure those like MDM and battleworn who whether or not we agree with them wholeheartedly have certainly raised legitimate issues? Wouldn't they and no doubt some others feel much more comfortable if we could reassure them that they do not need to rely on Guard or boruch, who with all good intentions do not have Rabbi Twersky's expertise, but they can rest a little more secure in the knowledge that we have the backing of Rabbi Twersky, with all his experience.

I think that in general, as a matter of policy, if we want to welcome everyone here, including the most Frum and make them feel comfortable, we would probably do well to make them feel that they don't have to rely on the Daas Torah of Guard or boruch or whoever else. So in general it's a good thing to be close to Rabbi Twersky and have his approval. I think that he certainly will not be too machmir and we can only gain from his input and experience.

As far as bothering Rabbi Twersky, I have no doubt in my mind that he will be only too pleased to hear from you. He will certainly not consider this issue to be a trivial one that we should just have taken care of ourselves.

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by the.guard - 27 Jan 2009 11:38

Here I was commending your original post and then making a suggestion in what I thought was

the most roundabout and diplomatic way and then you are reminding me about the kid gloves? Why, I even went and changed my signature yesterday evening (see my signature below) after the feedback you and Ano had given me and then this is the thanks I get?

Yes, I noticed your change and I am happy about it. Still, you sound (below) like you are walking a tightrope trying not to be critical, so I am reminding you to "relax" :D

So, am I glad that I have not heard that the Professional and Religious direction has been charted with the help of experts? I would be much more comfortable to hear that it had.... and

Could we do better, of course we could, but let's support any move in the right direction.

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by the.guard - 27 Jan 2009 11:50

Ok Boruch, you convinced me to write to Rabbi Twerski. We'll see if he has time to answer.

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by boruch - 27 Jan 2009 22:58

[guardureyes wrote on 27 Jan 2009 11:50:](#)

Ok Boruch, you convinced me to write to Rabbi Twerski. We'll see if he has time to answer.

Now, finally I can relax... and you now have my unqualified and full approval...

Yeyasher kochachem for a tikkun godol made by someone who is in the process of becoming an odom godol... (make no mistake about it, it's no simple matter to take advice when you run the show)

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by the.guard - 27 Jan 2009 23:21

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by the.guard - 28 Jan 2009 00:24

I received an answer from Rabbi Avraham Twerski. Here is what he writes:

It seems that there are sufficient safeguards to prevent improper contacts, but this must be watched carefully. The only questionable item is having a man with strong recovery sponsor a woman. The yetzer hara is powerful enough to make this a source of trouble. Sponsors-sponsees should be of the same gender.

I have modified the rules above accordingly.

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Having Boruch's unqualified and full approval is no simple matter

Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by me - 28 Jan 2009 07:54

He's right. B"H you did ask him for his advice.

I heard of a story of a Rav-pretty well known. He also met with women to help them. You know the type. Willing to help the broken hearted and down troden. Well, in the end he went all the way with a married women. The Y"H is too smart for us. First he has a thinking that we are doing a mitzvah, and giving rachmanos to the lady, and in the end, all of sudden he turns the tables.

The chassidim of the Rav couldn't believe what happened. And all he could say was...nafalti.....nafalti.....

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by the.guard - 28 Jan 2009 10:34

OK, so what we need now are WOMEN who have good recovery, that can act as sponsors for other women. Do you hear, Strugglingwomen? You definitely have it in you. Determination, wisdom, and not afraid to face the heat. We are pinning great hopes on you. You were a catalyst for Rabbi Twerski's answer, and you will be the first Rebbetzin Sponsor for women on Guardureyes. Meanwhile, you can act as a "partner" for other women. Once you hit 90 days though, we will give you a place on the "Wall of Honor" chart and you will become a sponsor for others. And through this, you will uplift your past and turn past falls into great merits. **Mi La'Hashem Ailai!** Are you with me?

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by Ano Nymous - 28 Jan 2009 10:37

These stories of great people who fall so heavily deliver a very important message. These are not necessarily bad people, but people who underestimated the power of the Y"H. We, who have been battling the Y"H for so long, have to be very careful not to underestimate the Y"H when we think we have subdued him. We have not. He is still there, waiting for us to think we have subdued him so he can launch a new attack and bring us down again. DON'T fall for it!!

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by mdmjersalem - 28 Jan 2009 16:44

Thanks guard for the patch

Now it is considered safer ground

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by the.guard - 28 Jan 2009 17:07

Ashrecha MDM. You have literally made my day, with [this post](#) - and with the one on the Announcement about the cutbacks! :D

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by mdmjersalem - 28 Jan 2009 17:19

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum
Posted by boruch - 28 Jan 2009 20:55

[guardureyes wrote on 27 Jan 2009 23:21:](#)

[me wrote on 28 Jan 2009 07:54:](#)

B"H you did ask him for his advice.

As much as there is a Yetzer Hora to fall in, sink to new depths and become worse there is an even greater Yetzer Hora to prevent us from getting better. Nowhere is this as clear as in the very powerful yetzer to avoid asking advice. Guard is right, even Mr Nice Guy boruch doesn't give unqualified and full approval just like that. He had a big nissoyon. The yetzer has the following toolkit to prevent us from learning from those with more wisdom and experience than ourselves:

1) Lo habayshon lomeid... the yetzer makes us feel very self-conscious about asking for advice, it will look silly, I will be bothering the Rabbi who is so busy and over-stretched with such trivialities...

2) Lemai nafko mino? What difference will it make anyway, we have thought this through so well, with so much input that the Rov will anyway agree to it (and if Chas Vesholom he would not then he'd just be making a mistake anyway, so what's the point)

3) Besides, how will we ever get experience if we don't once in a while work it out on our own, how else can we learn?

And here's why I am fully behind Guard:

1) He publicly backed down and agreed to ask Rabbi Twersky... Guard is no bayshon when it comes to self-improvement

2) He accepted the possibility that he would be told something that he didn't exactly want to hear and he went and did what was right anyway

3) He realized that the way you get experience is that you *first* work the issue as thoroughly as you can and come up with what you believe is the very *best* option and *then* you go to a Rov who shows you how you can improve beyond your very best... now that's real experience...

Wait a moment!!! This has gone far too far... What is this??? a hesped??? Guard is still with us and should be until 120, Chanifo??? Chas vesholom...

So let's reframe a little bit. Yes Guard is great, but that's not the point. The point for all of us is to take his example and see what we can gain when we ask an odom godol (and there is no question that Rav Twersky is an odom godol meod).

Now that Guard asked, everyone now feels better about the new rules, as enhanced by Rabbi Twersky, especially those who had originally been triggered by the idea of a women's forum.

We are an even holier forum than we were before.

And now we have witnessed a kiddush shem shomayim befarhesyo. When you ask an odom godol after you have first done as much work as you can on the issue (there's no mitzva to be lazy, and no mitzva to waste the Rov's time), and when you ask a Rov who knows you and understands your situation then you can really learn the power of asking as we have all done here and get the benefit of it at the same time.

So, going forward, let us remember how well we did by asking and let's keep it in mind for the next opportunity, be it here on the forums, or in our own personal lives.

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Re: Announcing the new WOMEN'S Forum

Posted by mdmjerusalem - 29 Jan 2009 16:40

Dearest Boruch

Hi friend, we are really happy that another Yid joined the fight, and that we can learn from your experience and messages. However it is not for a friendly letter that I sat down to write in middle of a busy day, absolutely not. It is due to **Kovod Hatorah** that I must utilize my time to denounce your action.

Sorry to disappoint you, I realize you like feel tough and enjoy to sound brave. Nevertheless you performed like a guest which supposes to comprehend the town's ins and outs on his initial stopover.

Do some research you will perceive that our Rebbe Guard has never had the slightest problem of agreeing. Precisely the opposite is true the Rebbe is too flexible, always trying to find some truth in the other's declaration.

His hesitation to ask Rabbi Twersky is rooted in his form of action; to respond according to his group; and at their request everything is easily done. So please study our language and partake in our group properly.

I feel sorry for offending you. And hope it is for the better.

Your Pal

MD

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