

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 trying123 - 03 Mar 2010 00:24

Anyone else?

I envision having a totally open relationship, no secrets but something tells me that this is not always realistic :-\ :-\

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by silentbattle - 03 Mar 2010 01:55

Let me put it this way...you're married for 10 years, and on your way home from work one day, you notice, for a 1/2 second, a beautiful woman.

Do you mention to your wife how beautiful you thought this woman was?

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by G38 - 03 Mar 2010 11:11

Obviously not, she wouldn't understand that it was just a glance and you are not even thinking about her, or are you?

My wife asked me once in the beginning if she has to tell me everything and I said no. She was surprised but I told her that something which I can't help and will only be upset about it will not be beneficial to know.

Same here, you didn't transgress anything and you will need no help coping with it so why bother her?

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by trying123 - 03 Mar 2010 11:32

[G38 wrote on 03 Mar 2010 11:11:](#)

My wife asked me once in the beginning if she has to tell me everything and I said no. She was surprised but I told her that something which I can't help and will only be upset about it will not be beneficial to know.

But I think that people (especially women) don't like hoarding secrets.

You want to know that you can be accepted for who you are (or are not :D)

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by silentbattle - 03 Mar 2010 16:43

I agree - but there are limits to everything, and there are many different ways to express who you are.

I notice that you didn't answer my question - would you tell her?

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 03 Mar 2010 17:33

Sorry! I might have to hijack my thread back :D

I came home today, and my first thought as I walked into my bedroom was "hmm, I wonder what sites my filter won't block", and then proceeded to spend 10 minutes trying different websites.

Unfortunately I did stumble onto some that showed up for a few seconds, but it was enough to spend a few minutes ogling some icky stuff. Afterwards (when I'd calmed down and pushed

myself away from it) I felt pretty disappointed with myself, and grossed out with what I'd seen.

I'm feeling burnt out from fighting this teiva. I spend all day feeling uncomfortable around attractive women and somehow forcing myself not to gawk or look, and then when I come home the first thing I have to fight is my compulsion to stare at p**n.

It just never ends! I don't know how to attempt proper teshuva for this because I keep getting pulled back to it.

I'm also concerned I'm making marriage into a panacea, that it will solve everything and my teiva will be pulled magically into line. I have to keep reminding myself that (at least in the beginning) intimacy will be nervewracking, uncomfortable, pressured, whatever (along with all the positive things too - haven't forgotten about them), and that my attraction for other women will probably even more uncomfortable.

Urgh. My y'h got me afterwards too; "your'e already halfway, what does it matter if you fall, you've done most of the legwork, you're so dirty it doesn't matter ..."

I daven so hard for help and every day is another struggle.

I feel desperate for a loving, intimate (mostly emotionally), caring relationship, and the easiest way to find that (in a messed up way) is via p***. I feel so lonely sometimes - not that I don't know people, but that I'm facing so much by myself

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by briut - 03 Mar 2010 17:46

Aw, man.

I've been sitting on the sidelines and cheering your diligent efforts and successes. I suppose I should stay here when times seem to be the opposite. (Better to share the grief of a shiva than the joy of a chasana, eh?)

You've set your goals. You've set them high. You know a path you think will reach them. You're already in the top 0.5% of frum men. Celebrate.

You've got a path. So, the pebbles make you stumble -- they're hard! So, the Y"H wants to trip you up -- that's the job the RBSO in his infinite wisdom (& infinite sense of humor) gave to him and he wants to do his job well just like you do yours! So you have 'situational' challenges that make all this seem even more difficult? So you're single and have no soulmate to support you in this journey (physically or emotionally)? So you take a few steps forward and a step back. Is that enough to feel bad over?

Man, I wonder how many folks out there would trade for a life story where there's steady progress even despite falls?

There's an old country western song I like: "When you're walkin' thru hell, keep on walkin'"
You'll do fine.

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 03 Mar 2010 22:04

Briut, are you sure you're not a malach? You really have a way of saying exactly what I need to hear, and help me exactly where I need it. Thank you.

I have a terrible tendency to be very hard on myself - I do it with everything. I push myself to be early for davening, do well in exams, in shmiras hamitzvos and how I feel after an aveira. I tend to drop badly when something goes wrong - I feel annoyed with myself if late to shul, I felt awful for weeks once in university after a few bad exams ... etc etc ad infinitum. Possibly if I looked deep enough it would stem from the majority of my acceptance/affection from my father only coming after good academic performance, but whatever.

When something like what happened today happens, I tend to look at it from the ideal: I'm meant to be shomer habris and shomer aynayim, so any deviation is bad news. I don't look at it from the other perspective; how it used to be once a day, to 3 times a week, to once a week, to a whole year of shmira! Sure, I've dropped from that, but compared to where I used to be I'm doing really really well, especially considering the hectic fashions and adverts around me *all the time*. And this is something I tend not to remind myself about.

This teiva is particularly hard because there's no 'kasher' outlet. If I walk past a mcdonalds and think "oh my gosh, that looks so good", at least I can pop into a kosher establishment and get a burger there. But with shmiras habris there is *nothing* outside of marriage, and marriage is nisht pashut. I used to go to bed (sometimes still do) hoping hoping hoping that I would have keri while I slept, so at least I could have *some* kind of outlet for that I wouldn't beat myself up about.

As for the loneliness ... unfortunately, for whatever reason, loneliness has long been a theme in my life. At school, after emmigration, at university, now, I've long struggled to find my 'place'. I think marriage in a way will be good for me in that it will drastically shift my social focus (I discussed this with a rav a few years ago already). But, I think my frustration stems very much from impatience - I've had so many years of feeling lonely and frustrated, and if marriage will change that (not perfect it, but change it), AND the RBSO taka WANTS me to get married, why shouldn't I feel frustrated that getting there isn't working out as well as I'd like?

Very much a case of relying on my Creator, which is not so easy. After all, He ordered my life like this and made me how I am.

Anyway ... I'm pretty zonked and probably rambling more than a little.

kol tov, hatzlacha rabba

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by silentbattle - 04 Mar 2010 03:31

I think that your drive to succeed is good, but needs to be tempered by an appreciation of the work you're doing, and the growth your experiencing - and you realize that, and you're already working on it - that's awesome!

I hear you on the thing of not having an outlet. Trust me, I hear you. And I can't promise that things will be easy. One thing we do know - what we're facing is exactly what we need to grow...

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by teenagehelp - 04 Mar 2010 03:44

hey sonicreducer,

just wanted to say a couple things. first of all, just know that the simple fact that you've got so much on your plate is a sign that Hashem knows that you can do great things, as you're never given a test you dont have the means to pass. and judging by your success and your personal battles, keep up the good work and just stay fighting.

i feel like i can relate to you b/c i also at times feel like i have no outlet. but one idea thats helped me with this concept is just knowing that others before us have been able to cope with it and the fact that we're trying to do the same even with the intense lure of many aspects in the world (i.e. internet, relaxed tznus in general etc.) is surely something that Hashem will grant success.

best of luck!

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far
Posted by trying123 - 04 Mar 2010 05:02

Hey R' SonicReducer,

I for one am still here rooting for you...

I used to have very perfectionistic tendencies; they were just like you described...

Perfectionism can be beaten...

For more on this topic:

see http://drsorotzkin.com/pdf/pursuit_of_perfection.pdf

and http://drsorotzkin.com/understanding_perfectionism.html

Peace and Love My Holy Bro...

Please keep us posted...

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by sonicReducer - 04 Mar 2010 06:22

Just wanted to say thank you to everyone, for all your support and chizuk.

Will see how today goes - please G-d should be a bit easier :D

Kol tov!

sR

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by silentbattle - 04 Mar 2010 17:07

I'm glad that I have someone as wonderful as you to "be there" for!

Hope today is a good day - not easy, necessarily, but one that leaves you feeling good and satisfied!

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Re: SonicReducer's story so far

Posted by briut - 04 Mar 2010 21:00

I see some others here have picked up on your perfectionist tendencies. They've even confessed to having the same. They also get pretty down on having them. I take another tack, by the way... namely,

If I start criticizing myself for my perfectionism, or if I make it a goal to eliminate perfectionism, I fail. Why? Because I've just made that my new goal to obsess over, to be perfectionist about, to be down on myself for failing to achieve. The Y'H loves to use my own perfectionism as one of my biggest problems.

Instead, I'm willing to accept that my goal is to reach the stars. And that I won't make it. But then, and here's the chiddush, to take a minute to celebrate the fact that I've made it onto the first tree branch and a few feet off the ground! If it took my setting the stars as my goal to make this progress (in my own sick and twisted mental attitude?), then I can live with that perfectionism. As long as I can take some pleasure in what I do, indeed, achieve. (All of which comes only with G-d's help and support, of course.) Celebrate!!

So I'm only speaking up to ask you to ask yourself -- are you perhaps fighting a tendency toward perfectionism with even more of a fight for perfectionism? I'm hoping the answer is 'no,' but since the answer within me is sometimes 'yes' (if I'm being honest with myself), I decided to check in.

Sounds like you're building a fan club here. You think it might be because you deserve it, and Hashem wants you to have it, and it might be a good foundation for the jump to a higher level? Enjoy!

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