

Being around girls

Posted by -_- - 25 Apr 2022 22:17

What are your opinions on co-ed events, jobs that involve being around women, and lastly being friends with girls?

Jobs that involve women may have the advantage of desensitizing someone so that he will feel less attraction to women in any circumstance, but also has some risk of zera l'batela. Co-ed seems to desensitize less and have a greater risk (like 50/50). Being friends with girls seems to be a bad idea in most cases.

Maybe these situations are specific. Example -- depending on if a job is in a semi-secluded office (without yichud) or in a large store with female coworkers

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Re: Being around girls

Posted by turning.point - 19 Aug 2022 03:21

What works for me is I'm fairly strict about yichud and shomer negiah even at "co-ed events" and "jobs that involve being around women". Even if I'm around members of the opposite sex, whether they are Jewish or not, I keep a respectful distance. I don't run away like a jerk but I'm not shaking hands either. Sometimes it's awkward. I let it be awkward! I just smile politely. They get the idea to not get too involved.

Basically, whatever situation that I find myself in, don't make it worse by increasing the temptation and risking even more.

About being "friends" with "girls:" Talking to girls can be fun but that is the problem, because it doesn't end there. If I'm in a conversation with someone, anyone, I think about what the goal is. My apologies if this sounds cheesy but ideally every conversation is a path to praising HaShem, so I keep the faith and look for the positive. Is my conversation with this woman or girl leading to that in an acceptable way?

The question that is implied here in this thread is, "Is it OK to just talk with girls?" I think that this question comes from a place of good, and here is what I see, following the logic: The secular have a saying: "don't objectify women." OK, that is all well and good, but what does that mean PRACTICALLY? I mean, how do I DO THAT? Or rather, NOT do that. In the modern era there is a lot of co-ed and shared workplace and all that. Did it ever make me objectify women less? Well, in the sense that I got to understand them as real people, then YES I now see them as people and not objects such as sex objects or home-bound chefs or baby-making machines. Is that good? It can be. However, if I begin to get *too* involved with a conversation with a woman and G-d forbid it leads to a relationship that could hurt her, or me, or both, I have to ask myself again if that is good. It's not...

What works for me is to hope that the young single men that I know will meet a nice Jewish girl that they connect with on a spiritual level, where the basis of the relationship is something much HIGHER than the physical, and the young couple goes on to get happily married, what a wonderful miracle! When one of these men do meet a nice woman for the first time, the conversation will hopefully be about the meaningful connection that they both want to have.

What else works for me is that when I see or meet an inappropriate woman, I wish her well but I move on. It's not always obvious that the conversation is inappropriate but once I figure it out then I stop the conversation. And, for me, what works to not objectify women is going back to basics: tzitzit, modesty, Torah study, and of course not doing any of those harmful behaviors that so many of us are here to fight.

Moving on means that I have goals in my life: to serve HaShem, generally speaking. I have specific ways that I'm trying to do that, and hopefully you will find your goals, too. I'm not saying that I stay busy to avoid a fall, I'm saying that I stay focused on my goals. If I meet people who are helping me achieve my worthy goals that increase kindness in the world, then good, great, marvelous. If they are not helping me do good deeds then I reconsider why I'm there and what I'm doing there.

Hope this helps.

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