



Why Must I Leave My Job?

People often ask, “I understand that it is not *ideal* to work in an inappropriate environment, but why do I need to be so extreme and actually quit a job over something like this?”

We can answer this question with the following analogy. If someone were to wake up in the morning and find mouse droppings on his floor, would he just sweep them up and forget about it? Or would he immediately go out and buy a few mouse traps and set them out in all the corners of his house?

The answer is obvious. Of course he would take the matter very seriously and he would put out mouse traps and poison.

But why? After all, he didn’t see a mouse. All he saw were small signs of a mouse’s existence!

The answer is that when a person sees signs of a mouse, he knows for a fact that mice are around somewhere, and if he doesn’t do anything about it, the mice will reproduce and multiply. Before long, he will have a few generations of mice living in his walls! And once that happens, it will be much, much harder to get rid of all of them.

The same concept applies in this case. We mentioned previously that the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Even Ha'ezer 21:1*) writes that one should distance himself from potentially problematic interactions with the opposite gender “very, very much” – a terminology only used twice in the entire *Shulchan Aruch*! The *poskim* explain that these strong words are used here because there is a particularly strong *Yetzer Hara* to transgress these *halachos*. If one is not very careful to avoid potential pitfalls and instead allows himself to fall into detrimental situations, it will be extremely difficult to extricate himself.

Even if one only allows himself to be influenced a little bit, he has already fallen into the *Yetzer Hara*'s trap and he will have a very hard time getting out of it. Therefore, one must distance himself very, very much from any possible pitfall. One must guard himself on all fronts because the *Yetzer Hara* is very wily and acts very quickly. Once any sign of a problem comes up, huge problems can follow – just like the small droppings of a mouse indicate that huge problems will arise very soon if nothing is done immediately!