MAIMONIDES on Ba'ale Teshuba and verbal abuse

In the Seventh chapter of Hilkhot Teshuba Maimonides discusses the tremendous merit of doing Teshuba. He also discusses the status of the "penitent" or ba'al teshuba. A ba'al teshuba is not just a person who repents for one or two mistakes he has done. Usually, a ba'al teshuba is a Jew who, for a variety of reasons was not observing Tora and Mitsvot and now he is. A ba'al teshuba undergoes a drastic change in his lifestyle, and he must face some big challenges. Beyond the personal difficulties of studying the basics of Tora at a more mature age and other intellectual and spiritual predicaments, sometimes he also has to face some "social" challenges. His friends, his former friends who, usually moved by their own insecurities, might make fun of him or hurt him with their words.

Maimonides refers to this case and describes it in three different steps:

First, in halakha 4 he explains that to God's eyes, the penitent is as great as someone that was always a righteous person, or perhaps greater than him

"A ba'al-teshuba should not think that he is far from the level of the righteous (tsadiqim) because of the sins and transgressions that he committed. That is not the case. A person who repents is beloved and esteemed before the Creator, as if he never sinned. Furthermore, he has a great reward for he has tasted sin and yet, separated himself from it, conquering his [evil] inclination. "

Second, in Halakha 8, Maimonides describes how the ba'al teshuba needs to process the embarrassment and the mockery, considering it part of his process of growth, a very humbling experience.This is what he says:

"Ba'ale teshuba should be very humble and modest. If fool people shame them because of their previous deeds, saying to them [now you show yourself to be religious, but don't you remember that yesterday you would commit such and such [sins]? "

The ba'al teshuba should not take these words to their heart.

On the contrary, when hearing this abuse they should rejoice in their hearts, knowing that abandoning their previous lifestyle, means a great merit for them.
Finally, in the same halakha, Maimonides warns people never to remind the ba'al teshuba of his past. This is considered a great sin, a type of a verbal abuse [hona-at debarim] explicitly forbidden in the Tora.
"It is a great sin to tell a ba'al teshuba, "Remember your previous deeds?" or to recall them in his presenceand embarrass him or to mention the surrounding circumstances or other similar matters so that he will recall what he did. This is all forbidden. We are warned against it within the sin of verbal abuse which the Tora has warned us against, as is stated in vayqra 25:17 : "A man should not abuse his peers"