

# I QUIT!

An unhealthy relationship, a 20-a-day smoking addiction, a lateness habit... whatever your Achilles' heel, it doesn't have to trip you up forever. Read our real-life quitting stories and prepare to get kicking.



**Xolile Bhengu, 27**, explains how it feels to say goodbye to love that's gone stale.

**T**here I was, crying my eyes out over another man who'd broken my heart. I'd spent two years trying to rationalise why I was made to feel inadequate, ignored and cheated on. Eventually, I started getting angry, especially because the only person to blame for this mess was me.

"In the beginning, X and I were inseparable. He bonded with my family and we spent every moment together. I felt complete. But after five months I had to leave Durban for a career opportunity in Port Elizabeth.

"Looking back, the signs were always there. As our communication dwindled,

## “I QUIT A BAD RELATIONSHIP”

When you've given your all to make it work, it's hard to walk away. But there is a silver lining.

I got used to hearing, 'I was meaning to call, but...' I decided to take the 13-hour bus ride back to Durban more often, to improve our relationship. We had constant arguments and soon it became normal for him to disappear for weeks on end. I chased after him while he blamed his disappearances on 'personal issues' – which meant partying with other women.

"A year later, my PE days were over. Geographical distance was no longer the issue, but it felt like we were further apart than ever. It took a year and a half until my illusions began to

**“Even if X did come back, he still wasn't the right man for me.”**

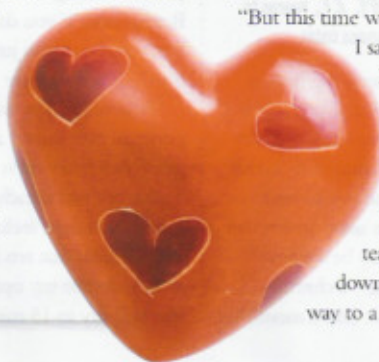
crack, but I was totally in love with him and desperate to make things work, and avoid another breakup.

"The day before Valentine's Day, after a week of trying to track him down, I decided I'd had enough. He'd been spotted with yet another woman, and had started switching off his phone – a clear sign that our relationship was over.

"I had confronted him before, but on those occasions I secretly hoped that his lies were the truth – that other people wanted to ruin what we had.

"But this time was different. When

I said, 'I'm tired and I don't think we should spend Valentine's Day together. It would only be a lie,' he agreed. When the tears stopped flooding down my face, they gave way to a new sense of ►



## ● G REAL-LIFE

freedom – I'd no longer be miserable day in and day out.

"The first three months of change were scary and hard. I had no one to blame, worry about or share my fears with. Despite X's flaws, he had been someone I could talk to.

"My first step to recovery was buying Greg Behrendt's book, *He's Just Not That Into You* (HarperCollins, R133, Exclusive Books). After reading the last page, I wept over the truth that was hard to swallow – I was one of those pathetic women, still waiting for their X to wake up and come back.

"That's when I agreed to go out on my first blind date. It's an evening I'd prefer to forget, but at least it was a step in the right direction – away from X.

"My secret hopes about him continued until I stumbled across a clairvoyant while walking through a flea market. He told me what I already knew – that even if X did come back,

he still wasn't the right man for me – but he also told me that I would find love eventually; I just needed to let it happen without trying too hard.

"A year on, I'm proud and relieved to say I'm over X. The experience encouraged me to set new boundaries for myself. My hardest lesson was that people treat you the way you let them treat you, but nowadays I speak up when I'm unhappy. And I have a life beyond the social expectation to wed and breed now!

"Singleville certainly has its share of frogs and psychos, but it's still better than being in love with the wrong man. Ironically, just as the clairvoyant had predicted, X did come back to profess his undying love to me, and he even asked me to marry him, but I'm delighted to say that I wasn't letting him into my life again.

"After years of giving too much to someone else, I'm now focusing on learning to give to myself."

### YOUR RELATIONSHIP BAROMETER

Are you better out of your relationship than in it? "Relationships shouldn't be a struggle," says Marc Steinberg of Creative Consciousness International. "You should feel empowered, not paralysed. If you answer 'yes' to seven or more of these questions," says Marc, "it's time to quit."

- 1 IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP A BURDEN?
- 2 DOES IT DRAG YOU DOWN MORE THAN UPLIFT YOU?
- 3 DOES IT FEEL HEAVY, NOT LIGHT?
- 4 DO YOU FEEL TRAPPED?
- 5 DOES IT FEEL CLAUSTROPHOBIC?
- 6 DO YOU HAVE SEX, NOT MAKE LOVE?
- 7 HAVE YOU COMPROMISED TOO MUCH ON WHO YOU ARE?
- 8 DO YOU FEEL TWO-DIMENSIONAL?
- 9 HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING MORE THAN FIVE TIMES?
- 10 DOES HE MAKE YOU CRY IN SECRET?



**Naomi Greenaway, 27, learns to conquer her lifelong lateness habit.**

**I**f your makeup bag lives in your glove box, your watch is set five minutes early – only for you to continually arrive five minutes late – and you haven't caught a movie trailer since *Spider-Man* was a cartoon, you may be a fellow sufferer of the late bug – a chronic condition, part genetic (sorry, mom!)

## “I QUIT THE LATE BUG”

When being on time is a thrilling thing.

and part self-induced. As for all you 'punctuals' out there (probably reading this because you're irritatingly early for your next meeting), I know what you're thinking. As my punctual friend Rachel asks, "If you don't like arriving late, why don't you just get there on time?". If only it were as simple as that!

"Believe me, I've wanted to be punctual ever since I arrived at the grade two fancy dress competition and Tinkerbell had already been crowned. I dread that tight feeling in my throat and the guilt that sets in as time falls away – despite my optimism that my hair will dry in 15 minutes and a 10-

minute journey will take five if the robots behave. I've tried before to shirk my delusional calculations (like the one that time stands still when you're deciding which shoes to wear), but it's time to call in an expert.

"Would you say you're a high energy, optimistic person?" asks capacity building consultant Stephen Jacobs when we meet for a session. "Hmm, just as I thought, you're a Yellow". A Yellow? Stephen explains that, according to Insights personality profiling we all fit into one of four colour categories and Yellows, along with other characteristics, are often late. "Yellows