

12th March, 2000

AGONY AUNT

DEAR DIARY, sometimes, I think I ought to be an Agony Aunt. I've got so much unsolicited advice in my head; it's as if I hear voices. But I'd like to be the Agony Aunt from straight-talking Hell, just for a day. Cut all that there-there-there foolishness

If someone wrote to me and said: Dear August, my girlfriend is cheating on me. I confronted her and she admitted everything after weeks of interrogation. I thought I could forgive her; I'm both heart-broken and filled with rage. All we do these days is argue. We can't get along, she's always defensive and now she's sleeping in the spare room. I have no respect or trust for her anymore. I can't get her lover out of my mind, but I can't leave her because I still love her and I don't want anyone else to have her. What should I do about our situation? What a normal, caring Agony Aunt would say is communicate. Talk about your fears with her. Get to the bottom of why she cheated on you in the first place. Things will get better in the long run... blah, blah, blah! What I would say is leave the bitch. Leave it. Simple. She was obviously bored to death by you, she doesn't like you anymore so get gone. I know it's not that simple when you have kids, a mortgage, a joint bank account and a Honda Civic in both your names – but I have to be simplistic here. I'd have to ask him what he was waiting for! Things to get better? There is no better? This is the best you're gonna get mister. You got the truth, now put on your shoes and jacket and go. It wasn't that wonderful in the first place if she was cheating. Imagine wasting 24 of your last hours on God's green earth crying over things you can't change? You'll never trust her. You'll never totally forgive her. You'll never get the picture out of your mind of some leopard-print thonged man rubbing his rough hands all over her smooth cocoa-buttered skin. Some handsome, tall, chiseled Adonis squeezing her bosoms and running his tongue all over her everything; and some man kissing the same lips you had your mouth on just yesterday. If you stay, you'll forever be checking her purse, her mobile, her hand-bag and her pockets. Smelling her clothes for aftershave. Checking her underwear for tell-tale signs of sin. If she wears makeup it will be for him. If she comes home five minutes late, she's been with him. If she doesn't answer her mobile phone she's hiding from you with him. Every time you leave the house and you see another man it's him. I think it's better if you just tell her to leave or leave yourself.

Is that what he wants to hear? Hell no. I'd get the sack.

The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

I read some articles written to an Agony Aunt in a well known women's magazine just this morning and one of them that stood out was this scenario. A woman said that her son totally takes her for granted. He swears at her. Takes money out of her purse. Verbally abuses her if she refuses to do anything for him. Her son takes her cigarettes and alcohol. He borrows her car without her permission and he sometimes stays out all night with her car and she has to take the bus to work if he's not back with her car in the morning. She added that she gets panic attacks and finds public transport frightening. She says he brings his friends home at unsociable hours and they're loud and just as disrespectful as he is. He doesn't wash himself and he's lazy. He doesn't do the dishes or laundry or iron his clothes. She has to do all of that or it doesn't get done. He doesn't want to work; apparently, it's a mugs game! She said that she's at the end of her tether, it's making her ill and please don't tell her to chuck him out because she couldn't put her only child out on the streets. She's even considered suicide as her only way out!

Well I wish she wrote to me. Tell a lie. I wish that boy was living in my house. I was taught the old school way of child-rearing by the one and only Roy Mayfield, my dad who now denies all knowledge of being the household Kick Arse. Anyway... my dad is tough and didn't care whether he was beating a boy, girl, man or pet. Roy came from the oldest school of respect. Roy couldn't have any of his children answering with a mere "yes" after having been called by him. It would have to be "yes dad" with a three second window to respond no matter where abouts you were in the house. You'd get six seconds if you were in the bath or back garden because you wasn't allowed to wet up/mud up the carpet.

There was no such thing as back-chat in our house – back chat was attached to serious consequences. My mum was soft but we didn't dare disrespect her because we knew what Roy would have done if we disrespected his wife – the woman who gave us life. The outcome would be worse than playing on a live train track.

If that boy lived with my dad, he'd get the opportunity to swear just once. The ambulance would be parked outside with the engine running. My dad would tell him that's 1% of your punishment, there's 99 sons of bitches waiting for you while you're there lying on your back being fed through a tube in the bliss of a coma.

Steal cigarettes? My dad counted his. If one went missing, every child in the house was woken up every hour from midnight to 6am by torch light and asked "was it you, if it wasn't you then who was it" with the torch light burning out their retina's.

The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

We brought only decent friends home because if we brought home anyone who didn't have any manners, my dad would beat them too. As for being lazy, my dad would remind us that idle time was the devil's playground and we didn't want to play ring-a-ring-a-roses with the son of Satan.

Basically, I would tell that woman that her son's behaviour is her own fault. She'd better chuck her son out because he's ruining her health. She allowed him to get that way because she spoilt his arse. I'd tell her she needn't kill herself as he'll end up killing her anyway. At least if she lets the boy kill her, she might have a place in heaven because God won't let her in if she takes her own life.

Anyway, I am interested in the position of an Agony Aunt; some people just need straight-talking.

August Mayfield