

1st April, 2006

HOW TO MEND A BROKEN HEART

DEAR DIARY, I've been single for a year – hip-hip hooray!! I got over the “break up” without cutting my own throat. There were times when I thought I should end it all, but my family would never get over it. They would be so angry with me that they'd resuscitate me and kill me again for putting them through hell. Plus all I have in terms of drugs are laxatives in the bathroom cabinet or Omega 3 in the kitchen cupboard. So I'd either shit myself to death or overdose on fish oils.

Anyway, on April's Fools Day of all days, I had to end my three year relationship. Turns out my boyfriend George was cheating on me with his “friend” Susan! Yes, I did see it coming but rose-tinted glasses are like fairground mirrors; it's not really a true reflection.

When I told my sisters and friend that I broke up with George, they were in total shock. When they found out what he did, they wanted to spill his blood. They thought they were going to be bridesmaids at my wedding and godmothers to our children. In the end, Sheba, Valerie and Jade hated him with a passion far greater than mine. They were holding interviews for months for the position of penis castrator, bastard beater, hit & run driver and funeral director! Valerie was even given the pager number of a man by the name of ‘The Brute’ who spoke about such things as midnight beatings and digging graves in the middle of the woods!

When I met Georgie, he was a fledgling property developer and interior designer. Within two years, he was a hard working, successful developer and designer making friends with the rich and famous! He became a changed man because he had a new found status; this is when he began his love affair with flash talk and available women. This was worrying because I was his woman; but he saw me as part of his old life, he wanted something new and exciting. Unfortunately, Susan excited him. She was rich from inheritance and she wanted to get into property development, or so she said, so they had something in common and spent loads of time together and initially it seemed innocent. Also, quite conveniently, I was working full time and attending evening classes so I was extremely busy at the time so I didn't really notice until late in the game that he'd gone off me.

The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

All his new hobbies were without me. New important decisions were made without me. He started going on adventure holidays like skiing two or three times a year – he said he thought I'd hate it because it was cold! Funny, because I was never asked what temperature I liked my holidays!

He redecorated his flat and it looked like a typical bachelor pad, the focal point being the male "boudoir"! He did everything he possibly could to live as a single man except he kept on saying that he loved me and he wanted us to stay together and told me how paranoid I was becoming which he said he found quite off putting and made him not want to be around me.

Georgie was too tired to go out with me but not too tired to go out. He was grumpy and argumentative with me, but no one else rubbed him up the wrong way. He'd lock himself in the bathroom with his phone 'for privacy'! He had a business trip which so happened to be the week of 14th February. He also had another trip that year which fell on my birthday. I played deaf, dumb and blind to all the signs even though my inner voice wouldn't stop talking to me. I even tried to tell the inner voice to shut up and leave me alone, but it was still there chattering away saying "whose birthday did he miss because he was away? Yours, you dumb Barbie". "Oh and what did you get last Valentine's Day? Did I hear you say nothing? But didn't you get an iPod, perfume, chocolates, flowers, a bracelet and matching necklace and earrings the year before? Mmmm Dumb Barbie, go figure"!

So when I did actually find out from his own mouth that he was playing the field, I was relieved that the truth was out at last and I wasn't paranoid and we could stop this awful journey we were on. In fact, he wasn't quite man enough to confess without a sharp prod; his best friend's girlfriend gave him an ultimatum, either you tell August, or I will.

For ages, I couldn't even mention his name without crying. The day after we broke up, my sister Sheba telephoned my house, she asked to speak to my eldest son. All I saw was my two sons dragging suit cases from the cupboard, they packed nearly everything they owned and then sat in the living room waiting. Within 20 minutes, my sister rang the door bell, my eldest answered the door, they said mum, because you're sick, we're spending the next three weeks with Auntie Sheba and Uncle Tony and off they went.

The break up felt awful: shame, pain, confusion, anger, self hate, hatred of men collectively, bitterness and loneliness. I didn't know what to do with myself. I was having a different

The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

emotion every 15 minutes which went from mad, to sad, to confused, to tearful and right back to mad again. I thought I was going to go off my head. I can now actually laugh about some of it. I spent two days in bed and only got up because my own body odour was making me sick. I spent days crying on and off. I did contemplate just weeing in the bed but some kind of sensibility kicked in and said no; that's just taking things too far. I didn't answer the front door or phone. I didn't want to face the world, plus Georgie had the cheek to continuously call me 'to see how I was' every frigging day. He was the last person in the whole universe I wanted to speak to so I changed my phone number. Sheba and my friend Jade kept me sane. Without them, I never would have bounced back so quickly. I was forced to eat, talk, dress, laugh, they really kept me going. They dragged me absolutely everywhere even though I always said I don't want to go anywhere. We went clubbing, shopping, restaurants, wine bars and even a raucous weekend away. Those girls were fabulous.

Towards the end of my grieving period, I reached a low point emotionally one day where I said God help me because I have three more days before my children return home and I need to remove some of this pain in my heart to fully function again. I sat in the bath and looked down at my stick thin legs. I had stopped eating regular meals and was mostly drinking camomile tea or brandy. I went from 9 stone to 7 in a matter of weeks. When I saw I was loosing my figure and my brown skin was looking ashen and grey I let out one piece of bawling in the bathroom. The acoustics made it all so melodramatic, but I needed to get it all out in stereo. The tears came from the depth of my soul and I couldn't stop. I thought Lord, please I beg you; help me heal before I run out into the street wearing nothing but my un-matching underwear and my Porkie the Pig slippers, brandishing a hammer!

I think God heard me because in no time I was wrapped in a towel, sitting at the computer, on the net ordering books from Amazon. I read day and night over several days. By day three, just before my children returned with their suitcases, I can honestly say my whole outlook changed. It's better to be single than in a destructive relationship.

SOME TIPS ON HOW TO MEND A BROKEN HEART OR AT LEAST START TO HEAL

1. Read Paul McKenna & Hugh Willbourn's *How to Mend Your Broken Heart*. Also try to read any story where the main character is much worse off than you are but it has a happy ending like *A Piece of Cake* by Cupcake Brown or Chris Gardner's *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

2. Brandy (or your favourite tippie); no chaser, no ice at 2 hourly intervals.
3. Good friend(s) with broad shoulders and Kleenex. Make sure it's a friend who's stable; one who isn't going through their own drama or you'll end up being two bitter and twisted witches sticking pins in dolls.
4. Retail therapy: shop until your fingers bleed from the carrier bags – go home in a cab, don't even think about slumming it on the tube.
5. Snog a gorgeous man or woman you've only just met and will probably never meet again.
6. Write a long list of all the things you hated about him and after every bullet point say to yourself "thank goodness I never have to put up with that sh*t again".
7. Beauty therapy: get a Brazilian so that you're crying for a good reason.
8. Bunk off work on Friday and Monday every other week for two months or until someone senior calls you into their office. This might also be a good time to get your CV up to date.
9. When you bunk off work, colour your hair bright red, go into work knowing they all know you wasn't sick but bunking off at the hairdressers. Who cares, your heart's broken!
10. PURGE yourself of any reminders of the "little sh*t", get a box and put all the old mementoes in there and put it in the attic/cupboard – somewhere far, far away. I myself am a little more absolute; I put every reminder in the garden and set light to it and do a bare foot dance around it.
11. Teach yourself confidence tricks, like trying to be pleasant at all times, smiling at strangers, dressing nice and smelling like perfume even if you're just going to the corner shop and tell yourself all the time, I am a beautiful person inside and out, and tell yourself today is going to be a good day even if something goes wrong!
12. Buy a "rampant rabbit" and a box of AA batteries.

The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

So that's me, my broken heart now 90% mended. I still have a tiny bit of work to do; I keep forming unnecessary emotional attachments where my poor little heart is searching for something to attach itself to – like falling in love with a pair of shoes! I even fell in love with my new Vax! I'm beginning to fall in love with my bed and have a thing about crisp clean sheets and the smell of fabric softener. I actually get into bed and think this is the best feeling ever!

I can honestly say I never ever thought I'd be happy again. I feel happier now than I've felt in a long, long time. It's amazing how the past 12 months have developed. Time truly does heal.

August Mayfield