

Dear John,



Dear John,

I met Kenny 4 years ago and it was instantly intense. Very passionate and also very fiery. Horrible fights, yet deep love. We went through several break ups only to hurt too bad without each other. There were lots of lies and cheating on his end that he confessed to years later. I stayed with him because it hurt too badly not having him in my life. He also said his behavior was because of his insecurity of what I do for a living. I'm an entertainer.

Over the last 4 months he's been promoting a musical group and is out late almost every night. I couldn't handle it. My drinking got worse and the fights got worse. So we split for a couple of days but tried again to work it out and I ended up drinking heavily and yelling and screaming at him and he left. It's over now, for good. He won't return my calls. I know it's dead and it died right on our 4th anniversary.

I carry a lot of guilt for my drinking and anger. If I hadn't done what I did we'd still be together. But I'm trying hard to convince myself that the whole relationship was bad and splitting is a good thing. It is killing me though because of the pain. I have been telling myself it was the worst 4 years of my life and now I have a chance to get my life back on track. But inside I feel like because of what I do for a living and my drinking I will never find anyone else. I am telling myself that I have to deal with this the right way and that is to stay sober but it is so hard because I want to numb it somehow. But drinking just makes things worse. I don't think I've ever felt so low before. I am so depressed I don't want to leave my room. All of my clothes are still in my car and I don't have the energy to bring them in. My life is in shambles and when I look at it I only feel worse.

Signed,

Shamefully in Shambles

Dear Shamefully in Shambles

Long ago, at a time when I was feeling particularly sorry for myself, I visited an old high school friend who I hadn't seen for quite a while. Bob had no job, few friends, and lived alone above a pizza joint in a postage stamp apartment cluttered with dirty dishes. Stepping into his place I immediately felt better about myself, as nothing boosts a depressed guy's spirits more than hanging with someone worse off than he is.

I'm not suggesting you find somebody worse off to hang with. I'm reminding you that we all have our issues. Some are worse than others, but usually there are simple things we can do to help ourselves. For instance, I bet Bob would have felt better just by washing his dishes.

That being said, let's not pretend your problems are insignificant. Luckily for you, you know your issues and are determined to better yourself, and that's half the battle. The other half is stopping the pity party and doing the hard work needed to fix the problems.

You've pinpointed your drinking as your number one stumbling block, and you are right to contend with it immediately. It won't be easy, but nothing will change until you get a handle on it. I bet there's an AA meeting happening near by later today and I suggest you check it out.

Secondly, as you might have realized from experience, fiery relationships like yours and Kenny's aren't always conducive to stable, long term bonds. Passion can produce great sex, but it can also bring cops to the door. For that reason, I agree with your mantra that splitting with Kenny was a good thing.

As for his chronic cheating and lying, (for which he gave a flimsy explanation that you blithely accepted) once you find a way to boost your self-esteem, (i.e., by quitting booze) you'll be less apt to let yourself be a victim. Make no mistake, letting yourself be trampled on will beget more trampling. In the future, stand up for yourself and put your foot down. Giving in to misbehaving boyfriends because you'd feel lonely without them is just plain sad.

Lastly--and admittedly I may be dead wrong here--I wonder about the type of entertainment you are in. Why was Kenny so insecure about it? If by "entertainer" you mean "stripper", you might consider a more stable line of work, especially if you're serious about getting off the sauce.

I'm confident that with perseverance and a willingness to better yourself, you will find a way. Start with the simple things. Just as Bob would have helped himself by doing his dishes, I bet you'd feel better by bringing in your clothes from the car. So start there.

Bring in the clothes, put on an outfit that makes you feel good about yourself, and then run to an AA meeting. Nuff said.

Thanks for playing,

John