Dear John,

Dear John,

    I dated a guy for eight years and am two years older than he is. We started dating very young and he always acted immaturely and selfishly. He cheated on me, broke up whenever he felt like it, lied at every turn and stayed out late while I sat home. He continually complained he did not have the freedom he needed. Meanwhile, I was the perfect girlfriend. I was honest and never hurt him. If I went out with friends, I was home when I said I'd be.

We were on and off for many years before finally breaking up for good four months ago. Lately we've started chatting again, and I confess I enjoy it. But I'm mad at myself for not hating him after how he treated me. Why am I nice after all his cheating and lying? I think about him all the time, but not about the bad times. I have a hard time being with anybody else, even when several nice guys have asked me out.

My guy broke my heart many times, and now I act like it was okay to do it. I love him way too much, I guess, and he knows it.

John, please help me. What the heck am I doing?

Signed,

Giving In Instead Of Giving Up

Dear Giving In Instead Of Giving Up

    Weakness in one partner sometimes brings out ugliness in the other. In your case, you gave your ex no reason to change, so why should he? Shame on him for treating you disrespectfully, but shame on you for accepting it.

Examine your own weakness in the relationship. What psychology motivates a woman to accept such mistreatment? What insecurity leads her to love someone who, on paper at least, sounds entirely unlovable?

Your letter to Dear John demonstrates a realization that you deserve better. Take advantage of your insight and stay strong. The bad apple you clung to is rotten to the core. Branch out to those nicer guys, as they sound far more appealing. If you nurture one of those relationships and let the seeds grow, my bet is you'll come to enjoy the fruit of your labor.

Thanks for playing,

John