

You, Even Better



# You Can Run Away From Your Problems

Fleeing a sucky situation has a bad rap as being a cowardly way not to face things. But sometimes, it can be the fastest, smartest route to getting on with your life. Later, bitches!

BY MOLLY TRIFFIN

► When you're struggling with an issue—whether it involves your guy, your job, a friend, whatever—your instinct is probably to dig in your heels and figure out how to fix it. But one tactic might not have crossed your mind (or if it has, it seemed like chickening out): just up and walking away. Seriously. “Most of us were taught that we should keep on trying until we make it work,” says Christine Padesky, PhD, coauthor of *Mind Over Mood*. “Yet sometimes, as counterintuitive as it seems, giving up is the key that leads to success.” We lay down when and how to jump ship.

## Why Does Running Away Work?

For one, some problems become increasingly intractable the harder you struggle. “If you’ve tried and tried to solve an issue and it’s still not coming together, accept it and move on,” Padesky advises. Say you’ve been working your butt off for a couple of years, but your boss is blind to your potential. The more you invest in your job, the more her lack of recognition bothers you...and your repeated attempts to get on her good side end up feeding your frustration. Send out your résumé.

Another time it’s wise to cut your losses and leave, according to Padesky,

is when you’re having problems in an area of life that’s normally relatively smooth for you. If you have a good track record with guys but you’re angsty over your current BF and find yourself asking friends for advice more than usual, that’s a sign it isn’t working.

Going in a fresh direction can also make sense because the place, career, or guy that was right a year ago might not be a good fit today. “You have to readjust course constantly to keep heading toward the life you want,” says Darlene Mininni, PhD, author of *The Emotional Toolkit*. Maybe you moved to a big city after college because you were ready to kick-start your next phase in an exciting environment. But a few years in, you have some experience under your belt, and the chaos is getting to you. So now you crave a more balanced life in a smaller town.

## Here’s How to Do It in a Smart Way

We’d never tell you to skip out on a whim—only once you’ve concluded your problems can’t be better fixed some other way. To determine that, look to the past. Remember that most experiences start off exciting, and then the thrill wears off. So don’t dump something hastily just because you aren’t getting the buzz you used to.

“First, brainstorm ways to recapture that passion,” Padesky says. Like, if you and your boyfriend have been getting into lots of dumb fights, go on creative dates to reenergize your relationship and feel closer. Have an honest conversation with him about how to improve things. If that fails, at least you know you gave it a fair shot.

Once you decide to make a change, you’re not necessarily going to be sure where to go next. Here are some guidelines: Deter-

**OBSTACLES YOU SHOULDN'T SHUN**  
If you keep encountering the same issue, you must address it. Otherwise, it will follow you wherever you go.  
SOURCE: DARLENE MININNI, PHD

mine what *kind* of switch you need. Sometimes it might be literally picking up and moving...but leaving your job, meeting a different pack of friends, or finding a better guy can be enough to set you on the right path.

Then point yourself in the direction of something that's totally new and in line with your goals. "That way, you won't run into the same issues," says Yvonne Thomas, PhD, a psychologist in Los Angeles who specializes in relationships and self-esteem. Meaning, if you're unsatisfied with your job because your boss micromanages you, look for a position that will grant you more independence, such as a bartender or even a freelancer instead of a personal assistant.

and offering you exactly what you'd been angling for: Your boss promotes you, your man wants to put a ring on it, your backstabbing friend shows up with flowers. Ironic, right? "People may not have realized how much they didn't want to lose you until they were faced with it," Mininni says. "Just listen to your gut. There's nothing wrong with giving things another try, as long as you're sure *you* want that." And be on alert for any red flags so you won't get mired in the problem again.

Also, expect that the closer you get to making a change, the more nerves you'll have. "Don't start second-guessing it," Padesky urges. "Keep in mind why you wanted to leave in the first place." And check your expectations.

## Be sure to make your exit gracefully, since you never know how things will shake out in the future.

Give yourself a three- to six-month deadline so you won't put off the move indefinitely or fall back into the habit of just dealing with the issue. But make your exit gracefully, since you never know how things will shake out. "Don't do anything impulsively," Mininni warns. "You'll wonder later if you blurted it out too soon; plus, you might say something you'll regret." So if you're pissed because your guy went MIA again, that is *not* the moment to tell him he can kiss your ass.

Take that time to get your ducks in a row: Set up job interviews, find a new apartment, etc. "Having plans in the pipeline will make you more excited about the next step and alleviate your anxiety," Mininni points out. "Things will play out more smoothly."

### What to Do If You Get Cold Feet

It's not always the case, but you may notice that after you announce you're leaving, people start acting supernice

"It takes time to adjust, and if you think things are going to be perfect, you're setting yourself up for disappointment," she explains. "Focus on the positive parts of your new life."

We bet you'll be glad you made a change, but whatever happens, running away is like a latte for your confidence. "It's liberating to know that you're in control of your destiny," Thomas says. You're not going to let a problem paralyze you—you're going to turn it into an adventure. ■

### Moving?

Plan a blowout going-away party for yourself. Celebrating gives you an extra boost of happiness, and since that positive mood is contagious, you'll be predisposed to be really psyched in your new location.

SOURCE: DARLENE MININNI, PHD