

# Lessons I Learned By Settling For Less

By Ugne Giraityte

Not so long ago I found myself in a place I never thought I would be. A two-year-long relationship with the love of my life turned into long months of depression and overthinking trying to figure out why was this not working out.

I questioned what could be so terrible about this relationship? Was it the fact that I had to buy myself flowers on Valentine's Day because he wouldn't? Or was it living together but still not knowing anyone from his family? Was I asking for too much or was I settling for less? The more people I spoke to, the more I learned – people like me, settled, but unhappy. It's not good enough.

My breakthrough came when I had a chat with [Chrysa Koropouli](#), a life coach with over 7 years of experience. Chrysa is more than just a life coach, she is there to help her clients rewrite their consciousness in order for them to learn to live their life to the fullest and build a relationship with themselves.

I met Chrysa at a lovely café on the West side of London on a Tuesday afternoon as she offered a free chemistry session to help me figure out why I was settling for less in my current relationship.

'I believe that the relationship with yourself is the most important one,' she says. 'My clients come for a variety of different reasons, a lot of them are relationship-based. All the work that I do will bring us back to the relationship with ourselves.'

We started the session by me telling the whole story of my two-year-long relationship. I told about the magic of being extremely in love for the first few months. I described how wonderful I felt on every date we had, on every night we spent together, and every time I heard how special I was to him. I even told her about the invitation to meet his parents and our plans for the future together.

But almost two years in, our story has changed. The man I fell in love with is just a great memory and the man I wake up to is wearing his face. I told Chrysa about the times my partner ignored my feelings, refused to communicate about our problems, and completely shut down for intimacy leaving me begging for his love. I told her about the fact that we have now been living together for over a year and the promise of meeting the family became a sensitive topic as if he was hiding something from me. How the same person who once wanted life with me, couldn't even invite me for dinner with his friends and family. At last, I said, 'I finally realised we weren't in each other's lives, we are just roommates.'

Then came the tricky question, 'What do you think the factors are contributing to you staying in the place where you don't feel like the best version of yourself?'

Was I scared of being by myself again? Could I survive living on my own? Will I be able to find love again? I questioned.

Chrysa then explained to me that there are several reasons why people often choose to stay when they're unhappy. Here's what happened, and how it can apply to us all:

## LESSON: FEAR CAN KEEP YOU STUCK

'One of the main reasons why people stay, is because they compare their life before the relationship: being alone, being scared that they won't be accepted,' says Chrysa.

'People are scared they won't be loved. A comfort zone becomes a place you can navigate and even someone being abusive (emotionally, verbally, physically) can feel safe.' The key question we need to ask ourselves, according to Chrysa is, 'When you began the relationship, were you at the table of love or the table of fear?'

I didn't have a clear answer. I might have been switching the tables depending on my mood by having confidence, love, and happiness as well as fear, self-criticism, and ego. Before my relationship, I was a free spirit doing whatever I wanted and only being committed to myself. But the relationship had changed me and made me want to be with someone and be in love.

'You can live single successfully, but it's natural to be in a relationship – we are humans', said Chrysa. She then asked me whether I was comfortable in my relationship. To which I quickly answered 'no'. 'What do you think is the actual reason you were attracted to him?'

'He is very charismatic, fun, he would tell me he will always be there for me and promised to never hurt me,' I said.

Then came her response: 'he wanted to show you and himself that he is the best version. This was the version he would like to be but he couldn't fit into shoes of that because of the lack of self-awareness.'

LESSON: STANDARD OF LIVING IS NO STANDARD AT ALL

She then started to question my reasons for moving in with him and staying when I wasn't happy. 'Do you think the actual cost of living is a factor that keeps you two together?'

Chrysa explained that many people end up in situations where they stay with their partner because living together can often seem easier even when the relationship is unhealthy or abusive and it seems, I might be one of them.

LESSON: NOT TO BLAME THE PARENTS OR ANYTHING...

During our conversation, Chrysa asked me another very important question: 'does your partner remind you of anyone from your past?' I wondered why she wanted to know.

'There are subconscious triggers in situations from our family life, how we grew up with our main parental guardians. The relationship between your mum and dad, the relationship that they had with you – it's all familiar and it can feel like family.'

Thinking about it, there are a lot of things my partner did that were just like the way my family treated me when I was younger when I experienced pressure, judgment, and lack of communication. Even the response I had to my partner's actions and words was similar to the way I reacted to my family issues. However, over the years I have learned to cope with it by trying to communicate my issues first, even if I was terrified. Sadly, in both cases, I would always end up being misunderstood and rejected.

LESSON: STOP BEGGING

Chrysa wondered, 'what do you do when you're feeling sad and ignored?'

I explained that I have a variety of different reactions to my anger and sadness: from shutting down to crying or completely distancing myself, or trying to create an environment where my partner would feel comfortable expressing himself and communicating the issues.

My reactions, according to Chrysa, could possibly be me trying to win back his affection.

'We stay in relationships, as feeling rejected can make us try to win back our partner's affection - accepting the bread crumbs.'

LESSON: STOP LYING TO YOURSELF

I often think that maybe I'm just a bad person and this relationship and the amount of pain I receive are all I'm worthy of. Chrysa thinks I'm not alone.

'Where does the story originate from,' asked Chrysa. 'A relationship that takes away from you is not a healthy relationship. People tell themselves a story and, I think, the key stories you tell yourself is what creates your reality. If you change your story, you change your reality.'

I asked Chrysa whether it's possible that what I have now is good enough and the ideal partner simply doesn't exist.

For Chrysa that sounded like a lack of universal belief which she said was an important factor for many people settling for less. 'Your lack of knowledge when it comes to universal laws thinking it's impossible in life for the universe to be a place of scarcity. But it's a place of abundance. Also, your narrative and lack of faith.' She then explained, 'we attract what we believe.'

LESSON: LOVE YOURSELF!

'But how do I change it?'

'What are your priorities in life, what are your desires, what's your life recipe?' Chrysa asked. Everyone has their personal recipe for the solution to settling, according to Chrysa. What she means is that you must figure out why you're telling these stories to yourself and become more self-aware which will help to find a seat at the table to love and build a relationship with yourself.

As she continued, 'the healthier the relationship with yourself the healthier your other relationships are. Reboot and elevate the quality of the relationship with yourself.'

Chrysa explained that sometimes the journey of working on yourself takes time. She told me that in order to change my current reality I must start valuing the best version of myself. As long as I work on myself and have faith it will eventually help me to attract the right love into my life.

But the most important thing that Chrysa told me is that in order to be able to find the right answer I must be willing to try: 'you have to be clear with yourself first and you have to be prepared that if he cannot show up the way that you feel is right for you, that you would then end it.'

By the time we finished our session, I felt like a changed person, not only did I know why I was accepting my partner's behaviour, but I was also aware of the way I could change my belief system, which is about to put me on a brand new journey of self-love.

As for my relationship, we are still together, at least till we figure out what to do next...

Chrysa offers a free 'chemistry' session to anybody in their twenties wanting to build a relationship with themselves.

To learn more: <https://therelationshipbridge.com/>

We decided to speak to a few more TWENTYSOMETHINGS who agreed to share their dating experiences with us to remind each other that we are not alone and the dating world can be a real challenge sometimes.

#### Nishaben, 24, Is Dating a Guy Who Has Been Pocketing Her For Years

‘I met my boyfriend at 16. We were both serious from the start and things were great. He was patient with me, knew how to communicate, and made me laugh, feel appreciated, and happy. Around ONE OR TWO years into the relationship, he knew all of my family and close friends whereas the only friends I knew of his were the ones I happened to know from before I had met him. I asked several times and each time it led to an argument. In hindsight, strict parents within the South Asian community are prevalent, and bringing someone home can have consequences if the partner is not approved. Around the time we both went to University, there were lots of differences, and the main argument of me not being introduced was continuously brought up to the point where I started to lose feelings. I felt that he was not serious about our relationship and that he was taking me for granted. I ended the relationship but we still had a strong connection. Two years went by since we had broken up and we got back in contact through friends again and decided to retry. I'm now three years into this new relationship and I have still not met his parents however I have met siblings and friends recently so things are slowly starting to move forward. The whole situation left me feeling constantly anxious and upset. I was so scared of the future with his family if this is the family I moved into.

Fortunately, I'm supposed to meet them soon and I'm terrified!’

#### Silvio, 24, Found Out That His Long-distance Girlfriend Had Been Cheating On Him

‘We were in a relationship for a while. Although we were in a long-distance relationship and mostly communicated through messages and calls, we developed feelings for each other. At least I thought so...

I soon found out that she had been seeing and sleeping with other guys. When I confronted her about our situation saying that I wasn't comfortable with that, she blocked me and ghosted me. It was devastating but I'm still young and I'm trying to heal from my heartbreak.’

#### Ria, 26, Found Out Her Husband Sleeping With Prostitutes

‘I was married at the time and found out that when our baby was six months old he'd cheated with a prostitute using our money. I found out months after whilst he was away on tour with the army, to he was also cheating on me out there.

It tore me apart. I felt empty and like my whole world had crashed down around me. I had to move home, move towns and make a whole new life which was so scary at the time, plus I had £14,000 of debt of his in my name to clear too as a single mum.

But it all happened for a reason, I paid off the debt in lockdown 2020 by myself, got myself a new home, am now in a loving and incredible relationship, and have never been happier.’

#### Augusta, 22, Was In Love With a Ticking Love Bomb

‘It took me a while to realise that I was being love-bombed. At first, it seemed like a sincere love and affection from my significant other until I realised he had other intentions...

I spent THREE years in, at first sight, a perfect relationship: expensive gifts, trips abroad, fancy hotels and restaurants, designer clothes and accessories. Unfortunately, I had no idea that behind all this love and gifts was an abusive man who only loved himself. That's when I found myself in an abusive relationship. Every time he hit harder, yelled louder, and threatened more. ‘I will never do this again,’ ‘I will never hurt you,’ ‘Give me another chance’, - these were the things he would promise me while I was sitting in tears and pain. Every time I forgave him, it would only get worse until I couldn't deal with it anymore. I just wish I recognised that at the beginning of the relationship. But how could I know, if I constantly heard him saying that I was the best thing that ever happened to him and that he never loved anyone else like this before? It was all just a trick to keep me interested so he could play with my heart.’