

I like him, butt...

Dear SSHS, I am 36 and wanting to settle down. I have met a wonderful guy who loves me. He is perfect except that he's a cigarette smoker, and I hate smoking. What to do?

- Nicki Tine, Woodenbong, NSW

She says

ear Nicki, smoking is a biggie, and a potential dealbreaker. As we all know, not only is there a massive health risk, but it also costs a bomb. The odd joint, sans tobacco, is OK, but cigarettes are pernicious.

I also have this problem with Norm. When he told me, "You look so good I could roll you up and smoke you", I realised I didn't have a chance. He was in love, committed and addicted – to smoking. I thought if I could get him to be like that with me, then I would have snagged a good husband, except, of course, for the smoking.

Before marriage, he promised he'd give up by the time he was 50. He's over 60 now and still happily puffing away. When I nag him, he says he's cutting down. Liar! I have had to accept that addictions can only be overcome when a person is willing, ready and strong enough to go through the hellish process. They cannot be bullied into it. Believe me, I've tried! Tobacco is one of the most addictive substances on the planet.

At the beginning of your relationship, while all the love hormones are rampant, you may be able to get him to stop, but after they die down, you haven't got a chance unless he has a health scare which may be too late.

But do you want to lose your potential soul mate due to his addiction? Are you so perfect? I know many women who are still alone well into their senior years, having rejected loving men because they smoked cigarettes, cannabis, or both. Write out a list of his pros and cons and work out whether he's worth it. A good compromise is to ask him to smoke organic tobacco and roll his own. That cuts out many toxic chemicals inhaled from tailor-made brands.

Because of his smoking, I said in my wedding speech "Norm was the man who made me lower my bottom line." Sure, one day we will probably have to deal with his smoking related diseases, but that's the price he, and by default, I, will have to pay. After 20 years with my beloved, he's still in love, committed, and addicted to smoking – and also to me.

He says

ear Nicki, I have to confess that I'm a long-term smoker and in rude health. Matter of fact, I'm having one as I write this. How else would I be able to cope with all the curly questions I receive from the Great Unwashed?

Sir Walter Raleigh is credited (God bless him) with first bringing tobacco back to England from the New World. Legend has it that when his servant brought a carafe of wine to his study and saw smoke billowing from his master's nostrils, he dutifully doused him with the wine. No doubt you would like to do that to every smoker.

I grew up in an age when literally everybody smoked, anywhere, anytime. Those were the days. Even the doctor lit up a fag when you'd sit down to tell him your woes.

Today smokers have been demonized as outcasts and degenerates who should be spurned by the smug, hubristic members of society whose shit don't stink.

Look at all the great contributors to our society over the last 150 years. People like Einstein and Freud, right through to Johnny Rotten. Scientists, physicists, philosophers, writers, artists and musicians, all of whom were smokers. Today they wouldn't get a look in if they were applying for a job or trying to rent a bedsit. Shameful!

So, while I can't defend smoking per se, because I'd be hung, drawn and quartered, I certainly come out in defense of smokers because they are people too. Just because we have a weakness for the dreaded weed doesn't make us any less smart, valuable, or worthy of love.

Surely you can compromise and let him have a quiet fag outside or away from you. As long as he doesn't try to blow it up your arse, you could have many happy years together. Or can you afford to wait another decade or so until Mr Perfect comes along? That is if he, in fact, exists.

"A woman is an occasional pleasure, but a cigar is always a smoke." – Groucho Marx



See no evil, Hear no evil, Speak no evil

The world according to Magenta Appel-Pye

I thought a good resolution this year would be to employ the old adage my mother taught me, "If you can't say something nice about a person, don't say anything at all."

To further enhance my growth, I'm trying to stop swearing. This means dropping a group of women who sit around drinking and bitching. That's not hard, I don't like them much anyway. Oops!

I see I will have to learn some new skills, and fast. I practise saying nothing when someone asks what I think of their new boyfriend and find it only arouses suspicion and their imagination fills in the blanks.

So, is a white lie the answer? I discover that if you don't say anything bad, they can't use it against you, and it never gets back

to that person, thus saving a lot of drama. I'm finding that peace of mind is the real goal.

I read that if people knew what others really thought about them, there would be but two friends in the whole world. But we all have our harsh judgements of each other. We can't help it, we're human. However, we can learn to keep our mouths shut.

I look at the three brass monkeys on my dressing table reminding me to see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil. Is it possible?

It would mean turning off the TV and never reading a newspaper again, except the Nimbin GoodTimes which has mostly positive content.

I look around and see beauty everywhere. I guess it's a matter of what you focus on. Now if I could just keep my bloody mouth shut... damn, oh fuck it!

"If you can't say something nice, say it to your husband... he's not listening anyway."



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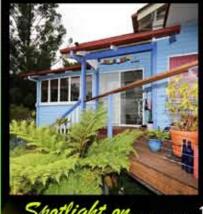
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