

Sign up and win the new Motorola Xoom



THE NEW, FREE, DAILY EMAIL FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE *STYLIST*

CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP TO **Emerald STREET**



Read this week's issue

HOME FASHION BEAUTY NETWORK PEOPLE LIFE PLACES WIN

LIFE



1 2

WE QUIT

First-hand accounts of how quitting can change your life

Being too comfortable in a career or relationship can lead to feelings of being both trapped and unhappy, and all too often we tell ourselves to just 'stick with' something, as quitting is quite often viewed as 'failing'. However, as discussed in this week's issue of *Stylist*, sometimes it is OK to quit - and we've spoken to two women who completely transformed their lives by simply having the courage to quit something that made them unhappy. Read their inspiring stories below...

"I QUIT MY JOB AND FOUND A VOCATION"

Silk & Sawdust founder **Claudia Orrell, 35, lives in Norwich**

'After a decade working my way up the publishing ladder I had all the trappings of a successful career. I earned a great salary, spent a lot of money on clothes and holidays and all my friends and family loved seeing me in this glamorous job. But the novelty had begun to wear off; the sense of achievement I got from doing well or from being able to afford that new dress just didn't compare to the idea of having the time to make something real of my life.'

Then, in 2006, voluntary redundancy came up; in that moment I realised I could do something about it. Even thinking about it made me panic, the work colleagues I told thought I was crazy and my parents kept questioning if I'd really thought it through. But I took a blind leap of faith that something else would come up and told my manager I wanted to leave.'

Sign up and win the latest Motorola Xoom



Emerald STREET

THE NEW, FREE, DAILY EMAIL FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE *STYLIST*

CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP TO EMERALD STREET

STYLIST'S SHOE FORTNIGHT

Today's prize:
House of Harlow
1960 heels

CLICK TO ENTER



THE BEST PLACES TO EAT TONIGHT

STYLIST'S RESTAURANTS OF THE WEEK IN ASSOCIATION WITH

toptable

"The novelty had begun to wear off, the sense of achievement I got from doing well or from being able to afford that new dress just didn't compare to the idea of having the time to make something real of my life."



'As I served out my notice I had nights awake worrying if I was making the right decision. I had no idea what to do next and the prospect of not having a regular salary was terrifying. To calm the panic I wrote down ideas – I could live in another country, become a writer or start a dressmaking business. The day I left, closing the door on the career I'd built up was hard. But I just threw myself into planning my next move. I spent hours on the internet, making a schedule and an excel spreadsheet; I was strict with myself and careful with my finances, living on my redundancy money and savings. For months I tried to keep myself busy so I wouldn't realise I was unemployed. Then, through the mixture of relief and panic, I remembered **VSO**, something I'd thought about doing for years. I applied for a two year placement in Bangkok.

I was so excited, but when I arrived, seven months after I'd quit, I felt so alone and vulnerable. The enormity of quitting my job finally hit me and I had a crisis of confidence, a delayed grief for the life I'd left behind. I realised the big company had become a security blanket, it was completely bound up with my identity. Everything in my life had been built around what's familiar, and in Thailand I was stripped bare and starting from scratch. For a while it was terrifying, I even started to lose my hair. But as I learnt more and started to cope, I discovered how to be myself amongst the people I was with and take pleasure from simple things. It was a life-changing experience that I've never regretted. It inspired me to start my own business when I got home, designing clothes made in Thailand. For the first time, I feel like I'm not squeezing myself into other people's boxes and I can lead my life. Finally, I've found my vocation.'

'I WALKED AWAY FROM MY PARTNER AFTER 13 YEARS'

Actress Sally Corbett, 40, felt stifled by her long-term relationship and ended up starting a new life on the other side of the world. She now lives in London with her partner Roli.

'Three years ago I was in a relationship that, to the outside world, looked fantastic. We were great friends, shared lots of interests and had supported each other through very difficult times, including my mother dying.

Then we started to drift apart. I became increasingly frustrated by his lack of adventure. I wanted to travel and have new experiences, and he was happy with his job, his friends, his life. He started doing his thing and I'd do mine; soon we were just passing each other in the corridor each day. In my heart I knew it wasn't working, my stomach churned as I realised I just couldn't go on living this way anymore. But despite my unhappiness, I couldn't bring myself to leave.

There was definitely pressure from society to stay, powerful messages that you should get into and then stick in a relationship. Because people want to see you settled, and when you have been together for several years there are definitely assumptions that this is it. And you like that part of a relationship too; it's good to say 'we are the good couple, this is what we stand for, everything is alright.' A long term relationship can be like a shield against the outside world, it protects you.'

"I ended up curled up on the bathroom floor sobbing. That was the turning point; I just walked out – no discussion, no hesitation."

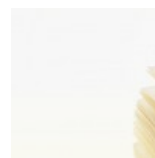


'Then one day, after we'd been together 13 years, we were watching a programme about intimacy in relationships and he brought up the fact that ours was by now non-existent. I ended up curled up on the bathroom floor sobbing. That was the turning point; I just walked out – no discussion, no hesitation.

I was petrified and confused as I packed my bags and loaded up my car, I didn't even know where I was going. Stopping the car a few minutes later I sat on the side of the road and cried. I had nowhere to go. In the end I called a girl I used to work with me and moved in with her while I worked out my next move. It was hard being without Mark, we'd supported each other in so many ways, especially in the early days, and I missed him terribly after we'd shared so much. But I got myself through it by writing my plans and feelings in my journal, and I realised that what I really felt was relieved that I wasn't a failing girlfriend anymore.

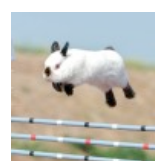


Viewed | Recent



The best 100 opening lines from books

There's nothing quite like a book that has you...



Bunnies take flight

While sporting events involving jumping may...



Stylist's Shoe Fortnight Giveaway

We've gone a tad shoe mad at Stylist - following...



Win a brand new Toshiba netbook

Looking for a durable and portable netbook that...



YOUR VOTE COUNTS



Are you planning on going to any festivals this summer?

Yes, I love a good festival

Yes, if I can do it in a Winnebago

No, Portaloos aren't for me

SUBMIT

It was a difficult time. I'm adopted, and I'd just lost another part of my identity as someone's partner. Gradually, I realised I felt liberated; I could be more authentic and honest. Eight months later I met Roli, when he was visiting Melbourne. We fell in love and I moved to the UK to be with him last year. If I hadn't taken the step of quitting my relationship, I wouldn't have rediscovered my sense of self. It gave me the confidence to make this fresh start.'

Tags: work/life balance, relationships

Share on

Like

...or [email to your friends](#).

COMMENTS

Add a comment

Kathryn Reilly

Added: 17 May 2011 - 17:17
BST

[Report this comment](#)

Silk & Sawdust

It's sad Claudia had to go through so much to find her vocation but good news for us fans of her clothes – beautiful, flattering and absolute bargains for all that tailoring and hand-finished loveliness. Thanks Claudia! x

Amy Dibben

Added: 18 May 2011 - 08:22
BST

[Report this comment](#)

Silk and Sawdust

Claudia's success is an inspiration to all of us taking the plunge and trying something new! Well done, and thank you for sharing your story!

Katie Richardson

Added: 19 May 2011 - 11:31
BST

[Report this comment](#)

Quitting your relationship

I read Sally's story with tears streaming down my face, as I'm facing exactly the same situation with my partner of 7 years. I always thought we'd get married, but recently have found myself drifting away from him and having doubts about our relationship. Sally has showed me that I must be brave and do what my gut has been telling me to do for months: walk away and move on with my life. Thank you for helping me find the strength to do this.

Genevieve

Added: 19 May 2011 - 12:02
BST

[Report this comment](#)

Quitting your relationship

I too, have found this article has come at just the right time. I have been with my boyfriend for 5 years, we had a bit of a wobble at the start of the year, and are "trying again" although I just know in my gut it's not working. It's a hard thing to do, I'm facing giving up the person who I once thought I was going to spend my life with, but it's true what they say, if you don't grow together, you grow apart. So it's back to square one for me, thank you Sally for sharing your story and providing a light at the end of the tunnel.

Kay

Added: 19 May 2011 - 16:38
BST

[Report this comment](#)

Quitting your relationship

I can feel real empathy with Sally and with those of you who know its the end of the road for your relationships. I have been with my Fiance for 7 years, the difference thoug, is that we have two small children. If you think its hard to walk away when you have no children..... Well, I get brave occasionally and then I think about how selfish my actions would be for the children... We are so different now, want such different things, its quite sad really. Especially when he is such a good man and a good father. Life is never easy x

Allison Post

Added: 19 May 2011 - 17:04
BST

[Report this comment](#)

Silk & Sawdust

As a personal witness of Claudia's journey in Thailand I can attest to the excitement, the dynamic ideas and at the same time the struggles she encountered. She constantly amazes me and reminds me to challenge myself. What a powerful woman!

Molly

Added: 14:06 BST
[Report this comment](#)

Response to Kay re: quitting your relationship

Kay - I understand you feel you can't leave because of your children. I just want to say that my mum wanted to leave my dad all throughout their marriage but didn't because of me and my sister. They split when I became 20 and independant but I had to endure years of childhood with my parents whose relationship was not true to themselves. Children to pick up on this and feel it regardless of how parents hide it. I said to my mum I just wish you left when you wanted to and not stay in an unfulfilling relationship because of me. When you make your eventual split from your partner Kay, you run the risk of your children feeling guilty of being the cause of years of your unhappiness. Even though they are clearly not and you want whats best for them. Mothers provide better relationships with their children when they are

MORE RELATED CONTENT



Fiction prescription: Newly single

Sound like you? Download the fiction prescription



Keep calm and don't carry on

Women's struggle with the notion of being a...



Reclaim your time

Our top time-saving tips



Two minute relaxation challenge

Get some downtime at your desk

happy and not giving off the negative vibes of unfulfilment.

ADD A COMMENT

Name *

Email address

Subject *

Comment *

Submit



Keep calm and don't carry on

The job you loathe, the relationship that's going nowhere... why do we struggle so much with the notion of



Alternative career paths

When it comes to choosing a career path, it's likely you were heavily influenced by your careers councillor, who...



How to be a travel writer

It's the dream job: travelling for a living and writing about it. But it also requires perseverance and...