



The downside of dating a nyatsi

Cheating is an issue many couples face, whether they're dating or married. Having another man or woman as a regular partner – otherwise known as a “side dish” or “makhwapheeni” – is viewed by some as being fun and exciting.

People sometimes choose to take on a “side chick” or “side guy” to de-stress and avoid dealing with a nagging wife or husband or because they're bored or angry with their “main” partner. But rather than cheating, there are various healthy ways to tackle pressing issues in a relationship.

Start by openly discussing them with your partner and find ways to resolve them. You could also consider couple's counselling or sending a Please Call Me to the loveLife Contact Centre to chat to a counsellor about what you are going through.

Choosing to cheat on your partner rather than sort out your issues is never a solution and can lead to even further frustration. You also can't fully enjoy a relationship with the girl or guy you have on the side as there's always pressure to keep it under wraps.

Also, cheating increases the risk of becoming infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and can also result in an unplanned pregnancy, divorce or mistrust that takes years to heal.

While you may think that being unfaithful to your partner is just having a little “fun on the side”, it only leads to temporary satisfaction. It's far more enjoyable to be in a committed relationship rooted in loyalty, trust and honesty. You must also remember that you can't try to avoid your partner's flaws by finding someone else – no one is perfect.

Is my partner playing me?

DearMizzB

My boyfriend and I have been dating for two years. I have a feeling that he's cheating on me; my gut also tells me that. But when I ask him if he's cheating, he says he isn't. I still love him. Please help me. – ■ Struggling

Dear Struggling

Being in love with someone has its own challenges. Just because you feel your boyfriend is cheating on you doesn't mean it's true. Trusting your gut feeling can be a positive thing at times, but it can also be

negative. Accusing someone of wrongdoing without proof is pointless and breaks the trust in a relationship.

Doubting your partner can only cause a lack of trust, which may cause a rift between you. Consider going for couples counselling to iron out issues that aren't working well for both of you.

For free and confidential counselling, call loveLife's contact centre on 0800 121 900 or go onto loveLife Mxit at loveLifeMX. You can also send a Please Call Me to 083 323 1023 or contact MizzB on e-mail at mizzb@lovelife.org.za

My boyfriend always blames me

Dear MizzB

I've been with my boyfriend for five years and we have a child together but he doesn't respect me. He always finds something wrong to blame me for. I have to beg him before he does anything for us. When I tell him what he does wrong, he gets angry. I love him and want to fix this relationship. ■ Needing Help

Dear Needing Help

Relationships are based on feelings that

come and go. Some people stay in a relationship that lacks love, support and care because they're doing it for the sake of the kids. Being in a loveless union can be draining emotionally and psychologically, due to everything being one-sided.

You indicated that your boyfriend keeps putting the blame on you when you've done nothing wrong. Things can be fixed only if the people involved are willing to put their best efforts into resolving issues. Consider seeing a mediator who will help.