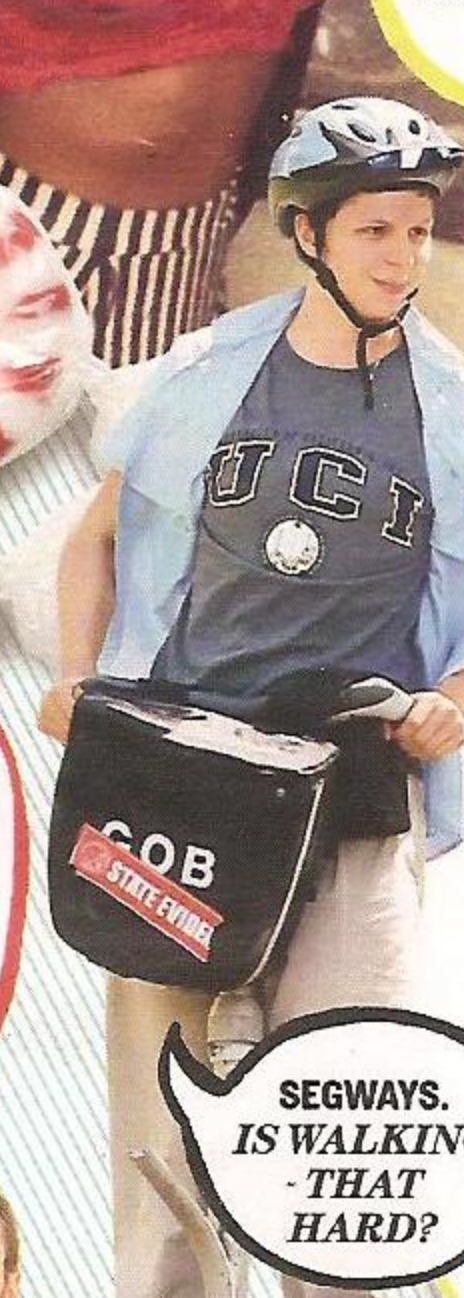




MANDALS ARE
HIDEOUS.
AND THAT'S
BEFORE HE ADDED
THE SOCKS.



WHILE
YOU WERE
WAITING FOR
THE AIRPLANE
BATHROOM, SHE
WAS TAKING THIS
SELFIE.



FLO...MUTE
BUTTON!



YOU BETTER
NOT BE
PAINTING
YOUR NAILS
IN PUBLIC.

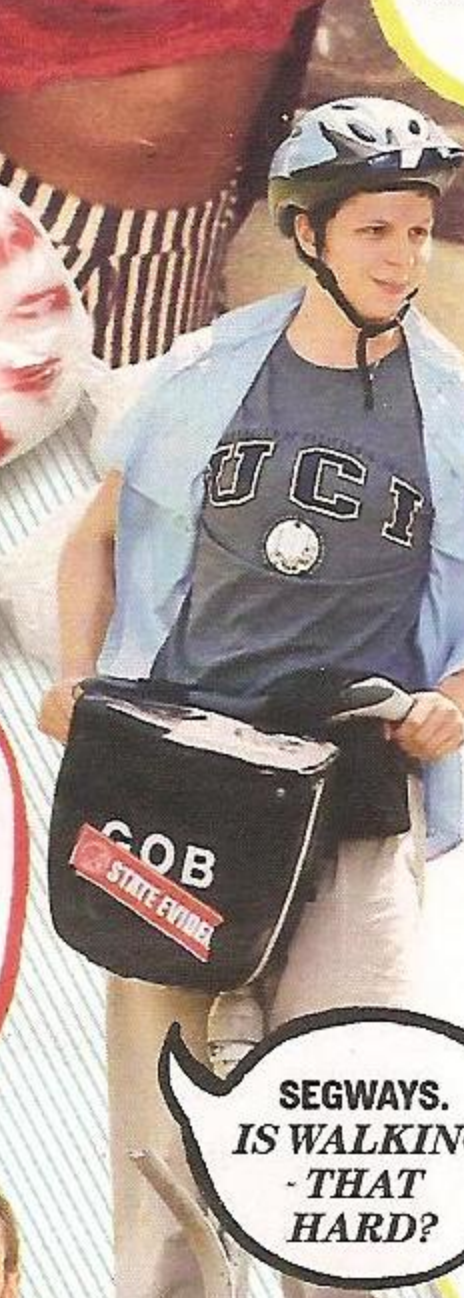


PUBLIC
RESTROOM
(EWW)
SELFIES.

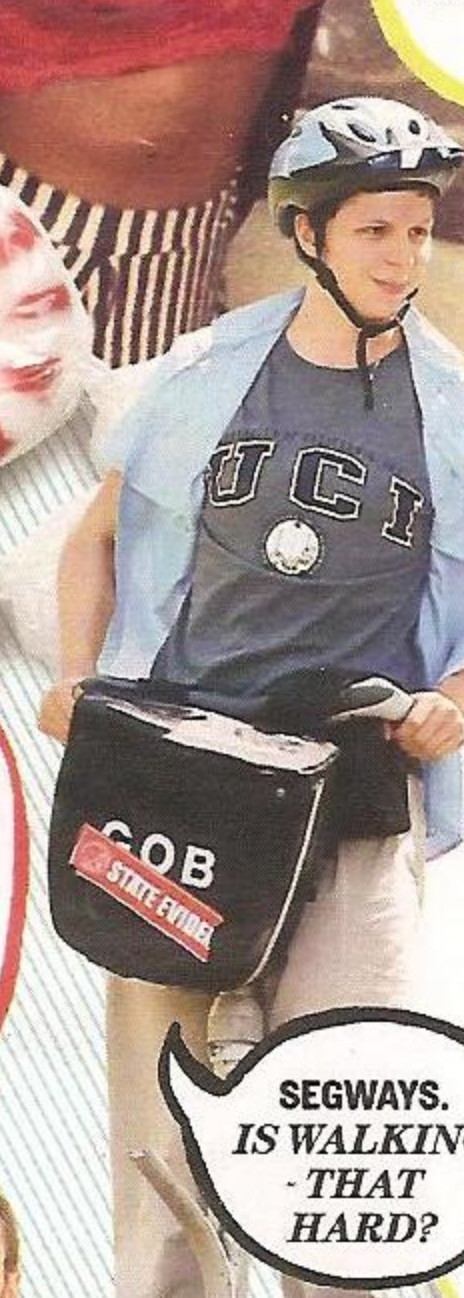
WHY IS EVERYTHING SO ANNOYING?

FROM SPOTTY WIFI TO PUBLIC SELF-MANICURING, EVERYDAY IRRITATIONS CAN BRING YOUR DAY TO A VERY SPECIAL LEVEL OF HELL. LEARN HOW TO KEEP IT FROM MESSING WITH YOUR HEALTH.

BY LESLIE GOLDMAN



DRAGON
BREATH:
MINT THAT
ISH.



SEGWAYS.
IS WALKING
-THAT
HARD?



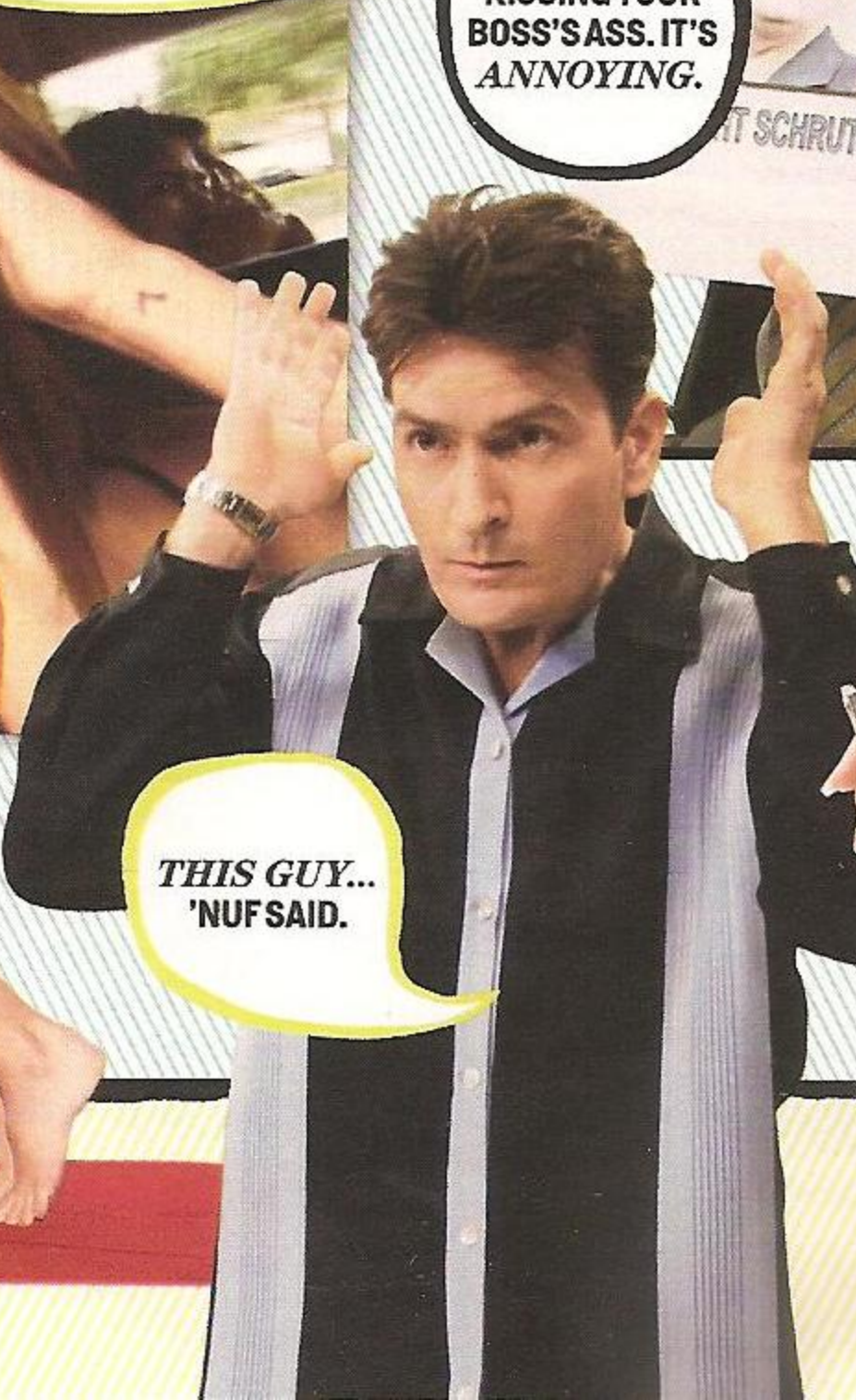
HUGH
JACKMAN,
YOU'RE A
GROWN MAN.
GET OFF THE
SCOOTER!



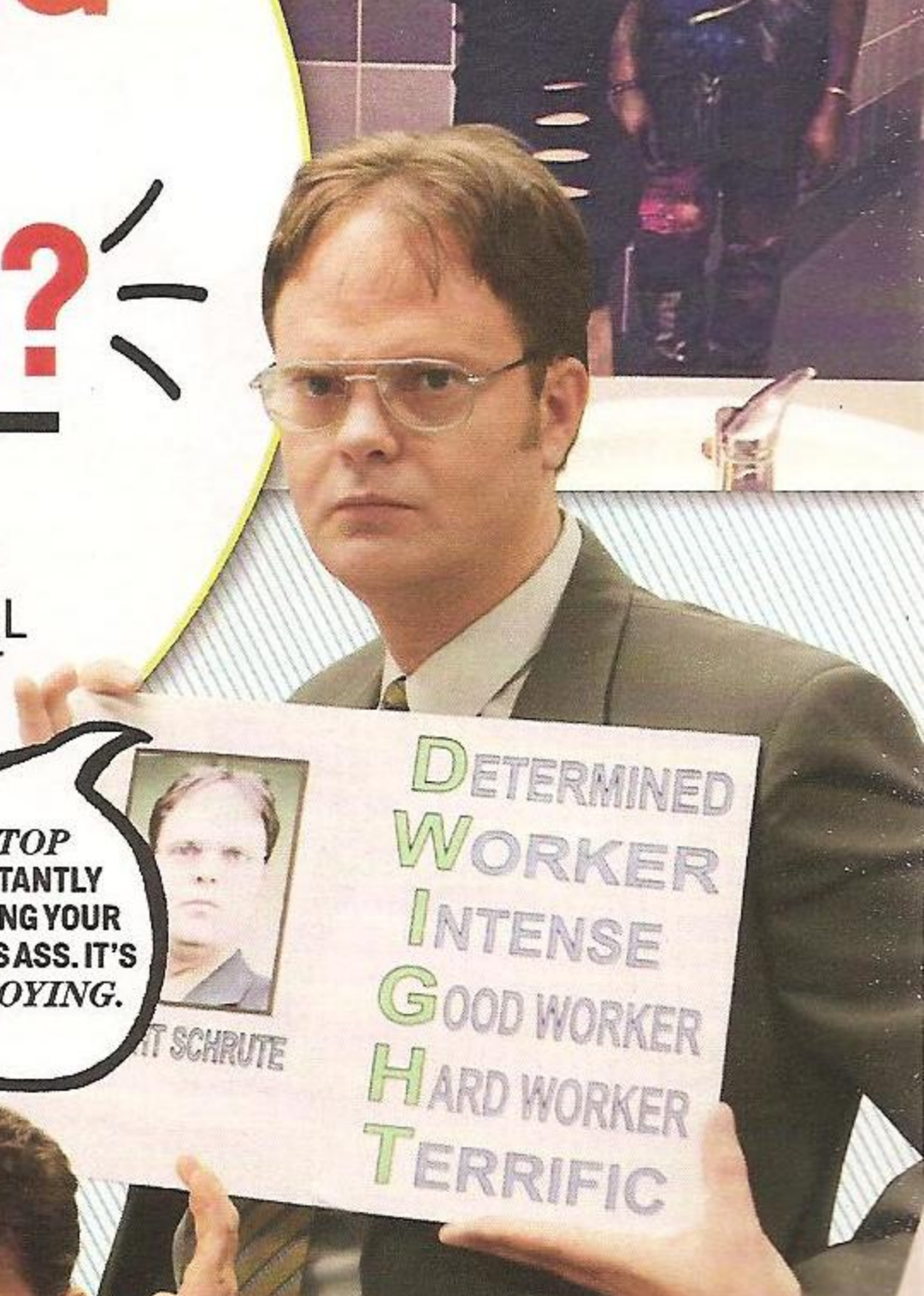
WE GET
IT, YOGIS.
YOU'RE
REALLY
FLEXIBLE.



#NO
MAKEUP
RIIIGHT.

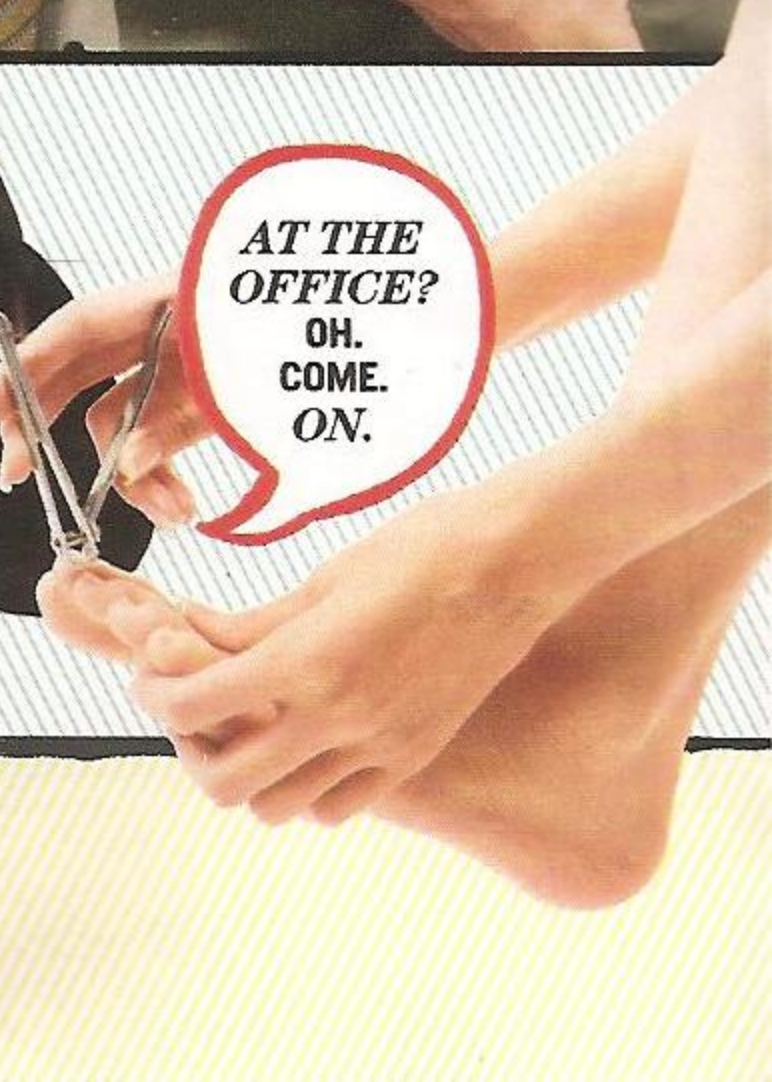


THIS GUY...
'NUF SAID.



STOP
BLATANTLY
KISSING YOUR
BOSS'S ASS. IT'S
ANNOYING.

DETERMINED
WORKER
INTENSE
GOOD WORKER
HARD WORKER
TERRIFIC



AT THE
OFFICE?
OH.
COME.
ON.

HERE'S WHY I FEEL LIKE I NEED TO POP A XANAX BEFORE EVEN STARTING MY WORKDAY: WALKING TO MY LOCAL STARBUCKS, I'M FORCED TO PLAY SIDEWALK FROGGER BEHIND PEOPLE WHO SUDDENLY STOP TO TEXT. A CAR DRIVES BY BLARING "WHAT DOES THE FOX SAY?" WITH THE WINDOWS DOWN. AT THE COFFEE SHOP, THE WOMAN IN FRONT OF ME ORDERS A HOT VENTI, THEN DRINKS WITH A STRAW. IN THE CORNER, A HIPSTER COUPLE SHARE A GLUTEN-FREE SCONE WITH THEIR TODDLER...NAMED WOLFGANG. **SO ANNOYING.**

By 8 a.m., my annoyance meter has hit DEFCON 1 status, and it's not just me: A quick scroll through Facebook and Twitter reveals a real-time stream of bitching, about everything from crazy weather patterns to people who use the word *moist*. But annoying stuff has been around forever. So why are we all so ultra-pissy now?

As with most modern problems, technology gets some of the blame. We're devoted to our devices and our social-media streams, but no one agrees on the rules of etiquette for using them. Your date thinks it's cool to Instagram his cocktail, while you find it tacky. Your little sister loves tagging you in pics, but all you see is your three chins. The woman next to you at the movies thinks it's a convenient time to send a text, and you start to have visions of violence.

Even worse, your date, sister, and neighbor at the movies may not *care* that they're being annoying. In an age of self-celebration, they may take pride in it. "Reality TV glorifies the

idea that it's cool to be a pest," says Ramani Durvasula, PhD, a psychology professor at the California State University at Los Angeles. Even at work, bosses reward those who "think outside the box" and "shake things up." Being disruptive is not just acceptable; it's become trendy.

It also doesn't help that we use our devices to vent all the time. "People are more likely to complain than to comment on the positive—it's how our brains are wired—and thanks to social media, we hear about peoples' annoyances even more, and it becomes like an infectious disease," says Durvasula.

Emotions spread among friends (and mere acquaintances) on social networks in a quantifiable way: a sad pal makes you 7 percent sadder, according to the *British Medical Journal*. Being annoyed might be similarly contagious...and possibly bad for your health.

Try not to be annoyed by this. There are actually ways to feel calmer.

What (and Who) Annoys You?

Much like a *Real Housewives* marathon, annoyances are defined as being out of our control, unpleasant, somewhat unpredictable, and not easily stopped. To qualify as an annoyance, it also must be relatively minor—it can't be something that could potentially hurt you (that's actually a threat). The quintessential annoyance: a mosquito buzzing in your ear. "It's not going to kill you," Durvasula says, "but it sure can ruin an afternoon of cocktails at the beach with your girlfriends."

Some annoyances are universal: When eHarmony surveyed members about their dating pet peeves, four things consistently ranked high: tardiness, sloppy kissing, bad breath, and getting wasted on a date. They're universal buzzkills, Dur-

vasula says, "because they are violations of what society considers to be good manners, good grooming, and good behavior."

Poor cell-phone etiquette is also a hot button. Three out of four people deem texting or e-mailing in a meeting unacceptable, reports a new University of Southern California study. And overhearing one side of a cell-phone conversation was found to be even more obnoxious than listening in on a duo chatting in person, according to researchers at Cornell University. Again, there are widely relatable emotions behind our annoyance. Phones in meetings feel rude because you get the impression your coworkers would rather be talking to someone else. And listening to one side of a cell-phone convo forces your brain to fill in

BIKERS RUNNING
RED LIGHTS
SO NOT COOL

PEOPLE MAY
NOT CARE THAT
THEY'RE BEING
ANNOYING. IN AN AGE
OF SELF-CELEBRATION,
THEY MAY TAKE
PRIDE IN IT.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: GETTY IMAGES; INSTAGRAM; GETTY IMAGES (2); WARNER BROS./GETTY IMAGES; INSTAGRAM; KAT BOREHART/THE LICENSING PROJECT (CLOTHES); ELECTRIC YOGA; WAGNER AZ/PACIFIC COAST NEWS; MIGUEL AGUILAR/PACIFIC COAST NEWS; GETTY IMAGES (2); INSTAGRAM; GETTY IMAGES (2); YOUTUBE; TIM ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES.





I'M
WINNING
AT CANDY
CRUSH!!!!

GUYS, THIS
IS TOTALLY
RIDICULOUS!

ONE SEC,
UPDATING MY
FANTASY
BASEBALL
TEAM.

CAN'T TALK.
POSTING MY
BREAKFAST ON
INSTAGRAM.

THIS TERM
PAPER IS
MAJORLY
IMPORTANT.

the gaps, which causes frustration.

Annoyances can also be very personal. "They are expectation mismatches—you expect someone to act a certain way, and when they don't, you feel annoyed," says Flora Lichtman, coauthor of *Annoying: The Science of What Bugs Us*. Journalists and teachers tend to get irked by poor grammar; waitresses hate bad tippers.

You might also feel like you're looking in a mirror. Durvasula says we tend to get irritated when we recognize characteristics in others that

we don't like in ourselves. Could it be that the friend who orders like Meg Ryan in *When Harry Met Sally* reminds you of your own food neuroses?

The Science of a Bitchfest

The real problem with annoyance—a blend of irritation, impatience, resentment, and more—is that it's actually the prelude to anger, explains psychologist Michael R. Cunningham, PhD, a professor at the University of Louisville. "You feel frustrated. You might raise your voice and clench your fists as you think

about it and complain to others. You might have fantasies of retaliation and violence."

That's what happened to Katie Morrison, a 29-year-old hotel sales manager in Chicago who had two coworkers who clipped their fingernails at their desks. She daydreamed about screaming, "Do that at home! It's inappropriate and disgusting!" Morrison grew so annoyed that she stole the clippers, landing herself in trouble with human resources.

By letting her blood boil, she might eventually wind up at the doc-

tor's office too. Daily, unchecked annoyance may harm the body in the same way that chronic anger does, explains W. Robert Nay, PhD, a clinical associate professor of psychiatry at Georgetown Medical School. Say a baby is crying on a plane and you're dying for a nap. "The noise triggers a fight-or-flight response because your brain perceives it as a threat," Nay says. As the crying in 14C turns to wailing, the blood empties from your stomach to fuel your leg muscles, which are desperate to flee the racket—priming you for a stomachache. Next, you crank out low levels of the stress hormone cortisol, hiking your heart rate and blood pressure. Constantly putting our bodies through this gauntlet can lead to weight gain, depressed immunity, and heart disease.

CONFESSIONS: What Drives You **NUTS**

"People who use **YOLO** in conversation. Please stop." —EDIE NELSON, 25, LOS ANGELES, CA

"It drives me **NUTS** when someone you slept with *once* still contacts you from time to time even **SIX MONTHS AFTER** you hooked up." —EMILY WEISS, 22, NY, NY

"When people bounce their legs or tap their foot...it makes me **NERVOUS**, like they're going to get up and run away." —ANGELINA KEATING, 22, SKOKIE, IL

"I **HATE** it when people come back from a trip abroad and continue using the lingo they picked up. Your shoes are **NOT** called trainers, your roommate is **NOT** your flatmate, and it's **NOT** the loo. It's called a bathroom." —COURTNEY HARDIN, 23, CHICAGO, IL

"I've heard older people refer to hooking up with someone as 'servicing' them. That is just **so disturbing**." —AVERY STEFAN, 21, ORINDA, CA

"Nail biters. I gag thinking of the **bacteria** they are willingly munching on." —TAYLOR LUTKEWITTE, 28, ST. LOUIS, MO

➤ Annoyance ➤ may harm the body in the same way that chronic **ANGER** does.

Allowing yourself to become annoyed carries another risk, affectionately known as bitchy resting face (see Kristen Stewart). “Fifty-five percent of the message we send to others is with our face, and they can immediately detect annoyance, just like they can detect sadness and fear,” Nay says. Narrowed eyes and a perma-frown make those around you feel uncomfortable and on guard.

Keep Your Cool

Being annoyed may be an inescapable part of life, but you have the power to protect your mood—and your health—from the weirdo on the bus who keeps clearing his throat. First, consider what Nay calls the five S’s that underlie annoyance:

sleep, stress, sustenance, substances, and sickness. Taking a moment to real-

ize you’re in an S situation can sometimes be all you need to relax. It also reveals areas for improvement to avoid getting irked in the first place.

Next, figure out how to change an annoying situation. If all your cousin’s Facebook posts feature an inappropriate hashtag, unfriend him. If Morrison can’t escape for a quick walk when her coworkers break out their clippers, she could put in earbuds to drown out the noise.

You can also ask yourself, *Is this behavior being directed at me personally?* The screaming airplane baby and the boyfriend who texts only one word responses no matter how many kissy emoji you send him aren’t intentionally trying to piss you off. Understanding that can be both calming and liberating. “If he remembers your birthday and treats you well, take those as

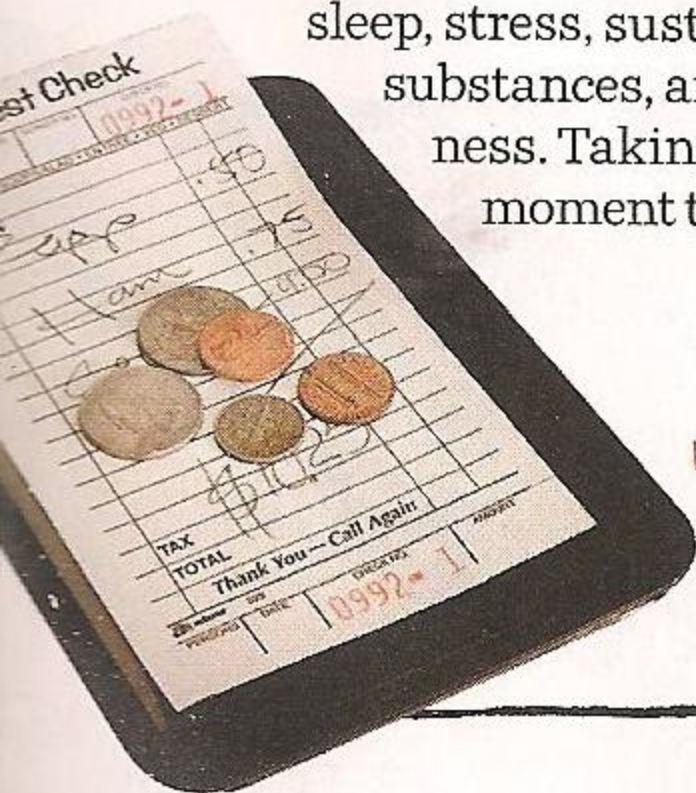
your signs of affection and respect and don’t read too much into other stuff,” Cunningham says.

It’s tempting, but don’t make a scene by declaring your annoyance, especially with a stranger. “Venting feeds anger,” Durvasula warns—the offender could lash out.

Since venting or daydreaming about yanking the phone from the d-bag’s hand will probably hype you up, what *can* you do? If the offender is someone you know personally, you could gently approach him using what Nay calls an “I” message. Making it about you is less likely to put him on the defensive. To the friend who’s attached to her cell, you could say, “I love being with you, but when you’re on the phone, I feel so distracted. Can we ditch

our phones during dinner tonight?”

If you’re truly on the verge of throwing a hissy fit, literally get Zen with a practice called “get big,” suggests San Francisco meditation expert Do-On Robert Thomas. First, sit down—it’s hard to feel as annoyed in a chair as when standing because your brain understands a seated position as relaxing. Look toward the sky—even if you’re indoors—and picture yourself as part of a much larger universe. “There’s so much more out there,” Thomas says. “In the big scheme of life, the fact that the person with the time-consuming order at Starbucks is making you wait five extra minutes doesn’t matter that much.” ■

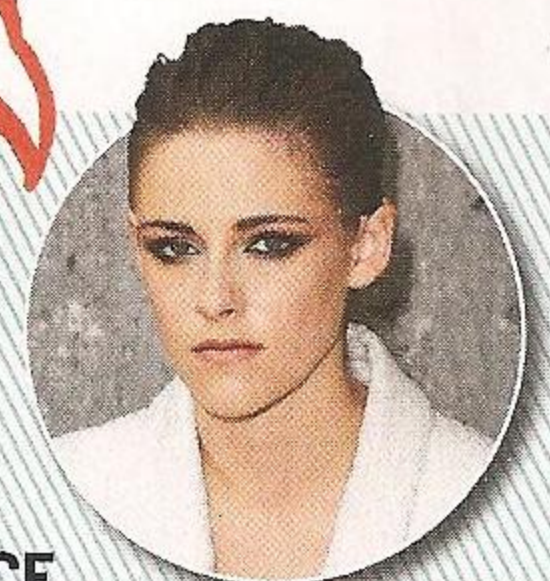


STINGY
TIPPERS
**SUPER
UGH**

ENTER
**BITCHY
RESTING FACE.**
*COUGH*KRISTEN
STEWART
COUGH

55%

OF THE MESSAGE WE SEND
TO OTHERS IS WITH OUR FACE.



“People in a rush: **YOU** are the one who’s late; **YOU** knew all day and probably all night that **YOU** had to be somewhere.”

—AISHIA STRICKLAND, 34, CHICAGO, IL

“Girls who pop their birth-control pill **during** class.”

—SARA PANARIELLO, 22, PHILADELPHIA, PA

“When I am driving and let a car cut me off, but they **DON’T** wave *thank you*.” —JULIA FIELDS, 24, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

“I can’t stand it when people reply ‘k’ or ‘lol’ as a response to a text. **You may as well have not responded.**”

—KARI FLEISCHAUER, 21, VANCOUVER, WA

“Hearing people chew their food...when it’s **squishy** and **gummy** or you can hear their **jaw cracking**.”

—STEPHANIE SCHWARTZ, 24, COLUMBUS, OH

“People who bring their **own pizza** to a party.”

—OLIVIA LEE, 29, NY, NY

“When people say Wimbledon, and it’s just...it’s a **D!** It’s a D.”

—CERI ROBERTS, 22, NY, NY

“Kissing-selfies with boyfriends. **Vom.**”

—VICTORIA ZUZALO, 21, PHILADELPHIA, PA