

# Coffee Talk: Two Sugars One Life Sam's Truck

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Sam bought a truck from Facebook Marketplace.

The seller described it as “gently driven by a grandmother to church on Sundays.” What Sam actually got was a four-wheeled emotional support disaster held together by duct tape, misplaced optimism, and vehicular Stockholm syndrome.

The transmission made sounds. Imagine a walrus discovering death metal during a difficult divorce. The AC worked exclusively when you didn't need it. The radio was stuck on a country station playing the same twelve songs about trucks, heartbreak, and trucks experiencing heartbreak.

Sam drove this mechanical catastrophe for two years.

Not two weeks. Not two months. Two. Years.

*If you've ever stayed in something long past its expiration date because leaving felt scarier than the daily dysfunction, congratulations. You're Sam. We're all Sam.*

Here's the thing: Sam isn't stupid. Sam developed sophisticated coping mechanisms. That grinding noise when shifting into third? “She's got personality.” Random stalling at intersections? “Performance anxiety. Happens to everyone.” The oil leak that started after his ex moved out? “We're both processing.”

Sam's glove compartment was basically a mobile hardware store. Duct tape, WD-40, zip ties, and a flashlight with batteries that died during the Obama administration. Sam's browser history read like someone in an abusive relationship with physics: “transmission sounds normal or dying,” “can you fix cars with determination,” “when car makes whale sounds emergency?”

Sam described the truck's issues to mechanics with careful euphemisms. “She's got

some quirks.” “We’re working through some issues.” Basically conducting couples therapy with an internal combustion engine.

I laughed at Sam. Judged Sam. Felt superior to Sam in that special way you feel superior to people making obviously terrible decisions while you’re making your own terrible decisions in a slightly different font.

Then I looked at my own life.

The job I stayed in three years too long because “at least it’s stable.” The friendship I kept resuscitating because we’d “known each other forever.” The coping mechanisms I’d duct-taped together that made whale sounds under pressure but technically still worked if you didn’t look too closely.

*Loyalty to dysfunction isn’t noble. It’s just familiar. And familiar feels safer than change, even when familiar is actively trying to kill you.*

Sam’s truck eventually gave up entirely. Just stopped. No warning. No death rattle. Done. Like it finally won the argument.

And Sam? Sam got a different truck. One that worked. One that didn’t require constant negotiation and creative interpretation of warning lights.

You know what Sam said?

“I can’t believe I waited that long.”

We always say that. After we finally leave the job, end the relationship, stop the behavior, change the pattern. We look back and wonder why we spent so long white-knuckling something that was never going to get better no matter how hard we believed in it.

The answer is simple: familiar feels safe. Even when it’s grinding your gears and leaking oil and making sounds that concern wildlife.

Here’s to recognizing when it’s time to stop conducting couples therapy with our dysfunction and find something that actually runs.

Cheers, Clayton

*Coffee Talk 2.0: For everyone whose check engine light has been on for emotional years.*

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