

# 30-Something And Over It

## Introduction

### Losing my give-a-shit

**H**ave you ever woken up and realised that you didn't want to go to work?

I don't mean you had a big night and wanted to sleep in, or you've got a boring day of meetings ahead of you that you can't be bothered sitting through, or you'd just prefer to take your dog to the park instead. I'm not talking about mild discontent either. I'm talking about being over it – completely and utterly over it.

I don't know how it happened. I didn't see it coming, but almost overnight I didn't want to go to work any more – not just on that day, but ever again.

This was a shocking revelation for me. I'd always been one of those ambitious over-achievers with something to prove. For the last ten years, I'd slavishly climbed the corporate ladder, loving every rung of it. I'd kept every business card from every job I'd ever had as scalps of my conquests, with my latest card carrying the title of 'Senior Change Management Consultant'. As a change manager, I spent my days advising clients on how to make their employees more efficient and compliant. The prefix of 'senior' on my business card meant that sometimes the clients even listened to my advice. But I suddenly realised that the ladder that had seemed so important to climb wasn't leading *to* anywhere; it was just taking me further away from where I had started.

I had everything I'd always wanted – a successful career and the lifestyle and assets to match. But all of a sudden my job didn't seem that challenging or glamorous. The role I'd been playing of highpowered businesswoman felt inauthentic and disingenuous, and my whole lifestyle had lost its zing. I'd lost my reason to get out of bed in the morning, and I felt like I'd lost a part of me along with it. Right about now would be a good time to accuse me of being a poor little rich girl. What on earth did I have to complain about? I was in my 30s, educated, middle class and white, which was pretty much a passport to whatever I wanted. Sure, I was a woman, and almost as short as Kylie Minogue without the arse to compensate, but other than that all the cards were stacked in my favour.

I know that on the scale of problems such as world hunger and breast cancer, this 30-something crisis, or 'thrisis', doesn't even register. I also know that it was a luxury for me to have been able to even contemplate the concept of job satisfaction when most people in the world have to work just to stay alive. But despite feeling unjustified and indulgent, I was terrified at the prospect of working for the next 30 years in a state of unfulfilled monotony.

I needed to discover why I'd lost my give-a-shit and figure out what I could do to find it again. So over the course of 12 months or so, I read books, spoke to experts, talked to people who were over it and also people who were still into it, as well as dabbling in a whole host of escapist and dysfunctional behaviour. When I started

this journey, I feared I was the only one who felt like this. But once I came out of the closet and admitted I was over it, I realised, to my amazement and immense relief, I was far from alone. I was shocked by the number of people who had lost their ambition and sense of meaning in their work but spent their lives pretending that they hadn't. Along the way, I realised that all the things that I had considered difficult in my life, like getting my education, working long hours and climbing the corporate ladder, were in fact relatively easy. The really hard thing was stepping off the treadmill and taking an honest look at myself and my life: asking who I really was and what I really wanted.

I realised that losing my give-a-shit about work was not a failure or anything to feel embarrassed or ashamed of. In fact, being 30-something and over it was actually the next rung on the ladder of life that I needed to climb and conquer.

This is my story about being 30-something and over it. I'm not an expert, and I certainly don't have all the answers, but if you're 30-something and over it and find yourself wondering what it's all about, at the very least I hope this book will help you realise that other people are as fucked up as you.