

We Are the Generation That Doesn't Want Relationships

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We want a second coffee cup in our Instagrams of lazy Saturday mornings, another pair of shoes in our artsy pictures of our feet. We want a Facebook official relationship everyone can like and comment on, we want the social media post that wins #relationshipgoals. We want a date for Sunday morning brunch, someone to commiserate with during the drudge of Mondaze, a Taco Tuesday partner, someone to text us good morning on Wednesday. We want a plus one for all the weddings we keep getting invited to (how did *they* do it? How did they find their happily ever after?). But we are the generation who doesn't want a relationship.

We swipe left in hopes of finding the right person. We try to special order our soulmate like a request on Postmates. We read *5 Ways to Know He's Into You* and *7 Ways to Get Her to Fall for You*, in hopes of being able to upcycle a person into a relationship like a

Pinterest project. We invest more time in our Tinder profiles than our personalities. Yet we don't want a relationship.

We "talk" and we text, we Snapchat and we sext. We hangout and we happy hour, we go to coffee and grab a beer – anything to avoid an actual date. We private message to meet up, we small talk for an hour only to return home and small talk via text. We forgo any chance of achieving real connection by mutually playing games with no winner. Competing for "Most Detached", "Biggest Apathetic Attitude", and "Best at Being Emotionally Unavailable", what we end up actually winning is "Most Likely to Be Alone".

We want the façade of a relationship, but we don't want the work of a relationship. We want the hand holding without the eye contact, the teasing without the serious conversations. We want the pretty promise without the actual commitment, the anniversaries to celebrate without the 365 days of work that leads up to them. We want the happily ever after, but we don't want to put the effort in the here and now. We want the deep connection, while keeping things shallow. We long for that world series kind of love, without being willing to go to bat.

We want someone to hold our hand, but we don't want to put the power to hurt us in their hands. We want cheesy pick-up lines, but we don't want to be picked up... for that involves the possibility of being set down. We want to be swept off our feet, yet at the same time remaining safely, independently, standing on our own. We want to keep chasing the idea of love, but we don't want to actually *fall* into it.

We don't want relationships – we want friends with benefits, Netflix and chill, nudes on Tinder. We want anything that will give us the illusion of a relationship, without being in an actual relationship. We want all the rewards and none of the risk, all of the payout and none of the cost. We want to connect – enough, but not too much. We want to commit – a little, but not a lot. We take it slow: we see where it goes, we don't label things, we just hang out. We keep one foot out the door, we keep one eye open, and we keep people at arm's length - toying with their emotions but most of all toying with our own.

When things get too close to being real, we run. We hide. We leave. There's always more fish in the sea. There's always another chance at finding love. There's just such a little chance of keeping it these days...

We hope to swipe right into happiness. We want to download the perfect fit like a new app - that can be updated every time there's a hitch, easily compartmentalized into a folder, deleted when we have no more use for it. We don't want to unpack our baggage – or, worse, help someone unpack theirs. We want to keep the ugly behind the coverup, hide the imperfections with an Instagram filter, choose another episode on Netflix over a real conversation. We like the idea of loving someone despite their flaws; yet we keep our skeletons locked in the closet, happy to never let them see the light of day.

We feel entitled to love, like we feel entitled to full time jobs out of college. Our trophies-for-everyone youth has taught us that if we want something, we deserve it. Our over-watched Disney VHSs taught us true love, soul mates, and happily ever after exist for everyone. And so we put in no effort, and wonder why our prince charming hasn't appeared. We sit around, upset that our princess is no where to be found. Where is our consolation prize? We showed up, we're here. Where's the relationship we deserve? The true love we've been promised?

We want a placeholder, not a person. We want a warm body, not a partner. We want someone to sit on the couch next to us, as we aimlessly scroll through another newsfeed, open another app to distract us from our lives. We want to walk this middle line: pretending we don't have emotions while wearing our heart on our sleeve, wanting to be needed by someone yet not wanting to need someone. We play hard to get just to test if someone will play hard enough – we don't even fully understand it ourselves. We sit around with friends discussing the rules, but no one even knows the game we're trying to play. Because the problem with our generation not wanting relationships is that, at the end of the day, we actually do.

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