

## **Where did we meet? Well...**

The internet brings so much opportunity to communicate with people from all over. Specifically, online dating has taken over the dating world these days. In fact, 1/3 of marriages in the United States were started because of online dating. Unfortunately, like most things, there can be a downfall. With the spike in online dating, there has also been a spike in catfishing. Catfishing can lead to many problems both with the one committing the act and the one on the receiving end.

## **So what is catfishing? No, Justin Bieber did NOT just message you.**

This is when a person creates a profile using fake information, including fake pictures and maintains relationships with other people using the said fake information.

## **Inside the mind of a catfish**

In a lot of cases with catfishing, the person committing the act is struggling with internal issues. In a study done by Eric Vanman, 41 percent of people that were asked why they catfished mentioned loneliness. A lot of the people interviewed said they felt the need to tell their partner who they really were, as well. Others mentioned self-esteem problems, childhood loneliness, and rejection they have experienced in the past. The problems they are experiencing are real and hurtful; however, are they forgivable excuses when they are projecting pain onto others? That is up for others to decide but it is important to find out why they are committing this act.

## **The real cost**

For the most part, once you discover you have been catfished the relationship is likely to end, although there have been cases when this has not occurred. In general ending, a romantic relationship can cause plenty of physical and emotional problems to someone but adding the deception of catfishing to the hurt can cause long-term trauma. Anytime a breakup occurs it is probable that they will experience the same steps of grieving that someone experiences when a person passes away. However, it is different because the griever is faced with what they could have done to prevent it, unlike death which is permanent and inevitable. A lot of times when a breakup happens with someone that has been catfished, they are shamed because they are often told they should have known better. It is important to remember that when someone is catfished they are to be taken seriously and supported just like any other person going through the grieving process.

## **Practical tips to stay off the hook**

There is no one answer because this is an ongoing problem. However, there are some ways to be able to see the person you are talking to online. Video chat applications like Skype and Facetime, as well as image sharing apps like Snapchat, help to provide evidence that the person is who they say they are. So does asking someone to meet you in a public place if they are in your area. These are all suggestions to keep in mind when starting an online relationship.

<https://phys.org/news/2018-07-catfish-people-onlineit-money.html>

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