



Social media etiquette regarding my ex

Description

Unfollow, unfriend or block? How to handle social media in a break up

Do you unfriend, unfollow or block?

This is a personal choice and depends on your individual circumstances. If your ex is using social media to harass or intimidate you, you should block, unfriend and unfollow.

Make sure to keep a record of any messages in case you need to seek a Protection Order. A Protection Order, or a personal safety intervention order, is an order made by a magistrate to protect a person from physical or mental harm caused by someone who is not a family member. If your ex is harassing you online, this is an option you can consider.

Unfriending and unfollowing means you should no longer see your ex's posts in your social media feed. It does not necessarily mean they will no longer see your posts or pictures, and they may still be able to send you messages via the social media platform, depending on which platform you are using.

Blocking your ex means that he or she will no longer be able to see your posts or pictures, nor be able to message you using the platform you have blocked him or her from.

First, always consider which course of action is best for your mental health. Then, consider how it might affect any children you share, if they are of an age to be using social media.

What to do with your accounts, old photos & changing relationship status

The different features available on different platforms to help you during this time include turning off "memories", unfollowing, unfriending and blocking.

You can also – if you feel the need – delete prior posts and pictures.

You don't have to necessarily delete everything. The posts and photos from earlier times are still your memories, and it may be nice one day in the future to look back and reflect on these memories,

especially if you share children with your ex partner. Remember that what you're feeling now may not be nearly as intense as what you will feel in the future.

Prepare yourself for Facebook memory feature, or disable it altogether. Some social media and even phone features will show you photos from your timeline, posted a year ago, as a 'flashback'. You can disable these notifications both in the app and on the social media channel.

If you're wondering what to do about your relationship status – change it, leave it, or ignore it – our advice is to disable the status feature altogether, or leave it blank. Whether you are in a relationship or not, is nobody's business. What's more, it's best to keep a minimal profile on social media which tends to collect information about its users to better target ads. The less you share, the better it can be both for your mental health and your hip pocket. Ultimately, cultivating an attitude of living more in the real world than online, will be far superior than agonising over what your friends or followers are thinking or assuming about you online.

What to do if you have children together

If you have children together, especially if they use social media, consider how they may feel if they see your profiles on the platforms you use.

Your children may still want to see family photos and memories. They might feel hurt if suddenly family albums and photos all disappear, or feel frustrated if trying to find family photos if they don't know that you have removed them.

Discuss social media family photos and personal profiles with your ex partner and come up with the best strategy for your children.

Remember, when children aren't told a consistent story by their parents, they often fill in the blanks themselves which can cause them to feel anxious about speaking to you about the other parent.

Posting on social media during a separation

Deciding what to share during a separation can be difficult and highly individual, both with close family and friends, but especially when the audience is made up of colleagues, random people you've met over the years, and people from your highschool who you haven't seen in decades.

However, there are a few guiding principles that can help you determine what to post, and when. Or, even better – not to post.

Be conscious of your audience.

Your social media channels are likely made up of a wide variety of people – your children, mutual friends or acquaintances, your employer and colleagues, and more.

Can your children or children's friends see your social media posts? Remember, if they are too young to do so now, the day will come when they will be old enough to look back over your old social media posts and photographs.

Decide what to keep private. In this case it's also helpful to remember your audience. If you have allowed your ex to remain a "friend" or "follower" and you later have a dispute about parenting, your posts can be saved or screenshots taken and used as evidence by your ex. You can do the same. If your ex is posting anything threatening about you or your children, or harassing you via social media, make sure to save it as evidence offline.

Don't post things you may regret, especially while still processing the experience you are going through. This is a time when emotions will be running high, possibly for both of you. As good as it can feel to be witnessed and heard, you don't want your friends, children, colleagues and potential strangers or mere acquaintances drawn into the dispute. Make sure to seek support offline – talk to close friends, family or support groups who can help and hold you through the ups and downs of separation.

Consider speaking to your GP about seeing a counsellor or psychologist, an independent third party to whom you can vent and discuss strategies to cope with your feelings.

Social media and family law

Remember that anything published online by you or your ex could be used as evidence in Family Law courts. It is especially common for this to occur where there are parenting disputes or family violence issues.

If you and your ex are in a family dispute, don't provide them with anything that could be grounds for them seeking Intervention Orders. An Intervention Order is a court order made by a magistrate to help protect an individual and their family from anyone who is violent or makes them feel unsafe.

Be sure not to post anything on social media that can be interpreted as violent or threatening. Don't harass your ex via social media, don't send bullying messages, and don't post memes or photographs that could be misinterpreted as threatening.

Don't take their posts to heart

Remember, social media is a highlight reel. Whatever your ex might be posting doesn't capture the true extent of their feelings or emotions at this time.

In fact, they may even be using social media to escape their feelings, subtract themselves or artificially inflate their self esteem by posting attention grabbing content.

There is absolutely no need to engage with them, retaliate or even follow them. Consider muting or unfollowing your ex and not engaging with their posts for a while, or permanently.

Taking a break

Is it time to take a break from social media?

If you find yourself looking at your social media feed, searching for your ex's posts, frequently checking their personal profile, or investigating their newly added friends or liked posts, it might be a sign you

need to take a break from social media.

If you are experiencing worry and fear about your social media posts, or having major indecisiveness or donuts around posting yourself, again, this may also be a sign that it's a good time for a social media detox.

Moving on

In the wake of a break up, separation or divorce, it's best to prioritise moving on.

Social media might not be conducive to moving on with your life, and may be adding an additional layer of stress and worry, instead of helping you to look to the future.

How you use social media matters. It matters because you have an audience that may include mutual friends, your employer and colleagues, and even your children. You don't want to regret how you used social media later down the road, or look back at posts or comments that may have caused your loved ones, especially children, any hurt.

There's a huge distinction between using social media to doom scroll, and using it to engage with your communities. If you find yourself doing the former, it's probably a good idea to speak to your support network or take a break from social media for a time.

Always check in with yourself. Is social media use giving you anxiety, making you feel the much dreaded FOMO, making you compare yourself to others, or causing you despair? Or is it inspiring and connecting you with likeminded people? If you're feeling more negative emotions, consider taking a break from your social media for a time. If it's having a positive impact, then continue to use social media and keep checking in with yourself over time.

FAQs

Should I post on social media about my ex?

This is generally not a good idea, particularly if you share children together. Anything you post may be seen by mutual acquaintances and used against you at a later time. Be careful and cautious. You may wish to refrain altogether from any mention of your ex.

How do I treat my ex on social media?

If you have decided you wish to remain connected to your ex via social media, it's probably a good idea to keep any communications businesslike and impersonal, particularly regarding any children you may share.

Is it OK to keep pictures of your ex on social media?

Yes, of course. Pictures captured some of the good times you may have had together. You may regret deleting them later down the road. If, however, your breakup was nasty, you might like to remove those pictures as they may trigger feelings of trauma down the road.

Is it normal for exes to be following each other on social media?

For some, yes. For others, no. It depends on the individual circumstances of your break up.

What should I do? My ex is following me on social media again.

You can “unfriend”, “unfollow” and/or block your ex if you don’t want to have access to your social media posts and photos.

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