

A GENERATION WITH NO
LOVE

**HOW THIS GENERATION HAS
BECOME AFRAID TO LOVE &
APPRECIATE ONE ANOTHER**

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EUPHORIA & SERENDIPITY

People in this generation have become cold hearted and are afraid to love out of fear of being hurt by someone. This is due to how social media popularizes and socializes the “hookup culture.” In response to this tension, I made two series of watercolor paintings, “Euphoria & Serendipity.”

The “Serendipity” series is comprised of four paintings that depict couples in embrace. I painted them with watercolor and refined the images with color pencil and highlight (and, yes, I mean highlight as in makeup highlight). The highlight draws emphasis to the figures to give them an ethereal mood. The couples are of different races; I want my paintings to reach out to more people. My audience, therefore, can feel more connected when they see someone who looks like them. The couples embrace each other with no distractions; they simply appreciate one another’s presence. This series represents the warm feelings that come with serendipity. On the other hand, “Euphoria” is a series of three paintings that narrate the story of a “hook up.” The “Euphoria” series is supposed to seem dull, cold, and lonely. Rather than enhancing the figures with highlight, inanimate objects are highlighted—lingerie, cell phone, and stilettos—as a way to illustrate the lack of connection between the two individuals.

Overall, the paintings visually represent each word’s definition. Serendipity means “happiness caused by coincidence” and euphoria means “a good feeling that can be addictive.” Most people today prioritize a hookup over having a healthy relationship because they think they can avoid being hurt that way. However, my message is, “Do not prioritize your euphoria over your serendipity.”

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What if no one smiled at each other, said hello, good morning or even how are you doing? and instead gave you the cold shoulder or just looked at you with a stone face? All of this would happen at the cost of this generation being afraid to open up and love or appreciate other people? Growing up in this generation it felt as though the older we got the colder we became as the years went by. Everyone seemed to just detach themselves from their emotions, there was a lack of affection and warmth. Trying to survive middle school was a very difficult time for me. The question that would always come up whenever this would happen is “why are people so mean and heartless?”. I never really understood why people were being that way until I got my heart broken by my first boyfriend. I remember as a girl I was obsessed with this idea of love and commitment. I felt as though I was so ready to love someone and support them and act all lovey-dovey with them. I would always watch movies and listen to songs about love and friendship and wished that someday I would be lucky enough to fall into that serendipity. When I did, I was obsessed with him and butterflies raged in my stomach, but that all ended with a few simple words which were “I have a new girlfriend”. Never at that point in my life had I felt such betrayal and heartbreak before. For a while I was sad, did not open up to people and continually said I had no feelings. I guess you could say I hopped onto the “cold hearted band wagon”. A few heartbreaks later, there was a time that I had sworn that I would never fall in love, or let anyone close enough to love me. I went from being obsessed with the idea of love to hating and being afraid of it. I was so unsure and insecure about putting trust in other people and developing feelings because if no one would do the same to me why should I? After a while of being on that wagon I became sick of the loneliness and the coldness, so I hopped off and almost magically everyone seemed to just hop on it. Those who hopped on were more worried about their next relationship rather than thinking about building one with a person right in front of them. The very fact that people were prioritizing casual sex than building a relationship was the start of us adapting the “hookup culture”. The hookup culture according to the American Psychology Association “Hookups — defined in this article as brief uncommitted sexual encounters between individuals who are not romantic partners or dating each other” (Belar 1). Being cold hearted was a trend and had become the new wave and everyone was riding that wave. It almost seemed as if though no one wanted to have a heart. Instead of pondering in my thoughts I tried to look for reasons why people were so heartless. And I came up with some answers which were, People in this generation have become cold hearted because they are afraid of being hurt and this is due to how social media popularizes and socializes the hookup culture.

When did the Hookup culture first start to emerge? The Hookup culture first started to emerge according to APA “ in the 1920s, with the upsurge of automobiles and novel entertainment, such as movie theaters. Instead of courting at home under a parent's watchful eye, young adults left the home and were able to explore their sexuality more freely...Influencing this shift in sexuality is popular culture. The media have become a source of sex education, filled with often inaccurate portrayals of sexuality (Kunkel et al., 2005). The themes of books, plots of movies and television shows, and lyrics of numerous songs all demonstrate a permissive sexuality among consumers.”(Belar 1). The hookup culture revolves around what media feeds us. We are influenced by what we see in movies or hear in songs. This hookup generation only started to become evident after we were introduced to technology, social media and different ways of indulging in the hookup culture through songs, movies, etc. The hookup has had negative effects on people. According to APA, “both sexes also experience some negative affect as well. In a qualitative study that asked 187 participants to report their feelings after a typical hookup, 35 percent reported feeling regretful or disappointed, 27 percent good or happy, 20

percent satisfied, 11 percent confused, 9 percent proud, 7 percent excited or nervous, 5 percent uncomfortable, and 2 percent desirable or wanted (Paul & Hayes, 2002)... In a large Web-based study of 1,468 undergraduate students, participants reported a variety of consequences: 27.1 percent felt embarrassed, 24.7 percent reported emotional difficulties, 20.8 percent experienced loss of respect, and 10 percent reported difficulties with a steady partner”(Belar 2). Just going off of the statistics, it is generally unhealthy to have these types of relationships. Not that it is bad to have casual sex but it is bad to prioritize when it has so many negative effects. Relationships like these make it difficult for other people to get into a healthy relationship or even building one since they are so used to just having sex with no strings attached.

I continuously kept asking myself the question over and over again and when I was finally tired of trying to come up with my own answer I turned to social and tried asking the public their thoughts on the question “do you think that this generation is afraid of love? If so, why?”. Many people responded to this question. Most responses were very self-centered and only talked about their own feelings, when I was trying to have them give me an answer on the bigger picture they only talked of them self. The answer I felt was most satisfactory and actually had some insight on the issue at hand was from Dainika Balan; she says, “This generation is afraid of commitment and love. They let their ideas about love be based on what they see on social media. It’s the stuff like “I don’t need nobody” or “Sis, you don’t need him” that really fucks people over sometimes. Because there is a fine line between having respect for yourself so you don’t put up with BS and then just straight being prideful about how oh so “independent” you are, and that’s that shit that makes people afraid to fully commit, because they don't wanna get attached and are too afraid of either heartbreak or how hard they’ll fall in love.” I am in complete agreement with Dainika’s answer because her answer touches upon different topics, for example how our generation is very easily influenced and how social media is perpetuating this idea of “independence” but what social media is promoting is not independence but cold heartedness instead. Many people do not realize the power that social media has on the outlooks on relationships. If a celebrity goes and says “fuck relationships” what do you think the automatic chain reaction is? a lot of people are seeing this across the nation and are feeding on these thoughts. Because these celebrities are so influential, that if they put a negative connotation on an idea, like relationships, then people are no longer going to value them. The Telegraph reports that a new survey says, “One in four teenagers admit they are more influenced by celebrities than people they know....Musicians, sports stars and actors were the most popular role models among those polled, with reality TV celebrities, models and entrepreneurs also ranking above politicians - who received the lowest number of votes.” This clearly shows that we are more influenced by celebrities than anybody else. Not to mention 81 % of our population has some sort of social media profile. And an average teenager spends nine hours a day on social media (Asano 1). So when a celebrity or someone we look up to says “fuck feelings” or “fuck bitches get money” a lot of people are seeing that and adapting to that idea.

Back then we would see how having a relationship full of trust and love was the ideal and best thing that could happen, but now ever since the infamous line “fuck bitches, get money” became a part of the discussion no one wants to love anymore. It seems as though this generation is against the idea of being with another person. This generation would much rather hook up with someone with no strings attached than actually getting to know a person on a personal level and building a relationship. The whole idea and trend of being heartless is reasonable in this sense. If people just want to hookup and no one is willing to sit down and try get to know you why should you? People are using the heartlessness trend as a means of surviving the hookup culture and a

loophole out of “catching feeling” and getting hurt, which feeds into the selfish nature which is why we are afraid of getting hurt that we push others away and don’t think of others and just ourselves. When did it become such a taboo to “catch feelings” for someone? We play games, We wait hours for the other person to text us, then take even more time to text back so that we feel like we’re in control. If we’re in control, we can’t get hurt, right? Whoever cares less wins. Our idea of a “date” is definitely not what it used to be, but that’s OK, because the less time we invest in a person, the less likely we are to get hurt. We’re afraid to show any emotional investment in a person, or, as we might put it, we’re afraid of “catching feelings.” Because once you catch feelings? You guessed correctly: you can get hurt.

If we continue this way the and disconnection that we have as human beings will slowly but surely start to sever itself. Social media is promoting a heartless personalities to its users and us as consumers already take in mass amounts of this information as it is. What kind of generation would we be or will be if we continue to prioritize the hookup culture than a healthy relationship. We keep trying to protect ourselves from being hurt by this hookup culture but it is actually not making the situation any better. We have made being emotional such taboo because it is weak but what we actually need is vulnerability. We need people to take down these stone walls they hide behind. Having feelings is not a bad thing. I learned that the hard way. Being cold and heartless is probably the worst thing you could do to yourself. It is the worst to feel like you can't trust or confide in other people because you are too afraid of getting hurt but if you don't risk it or try and make mistakes how will you ever learn? Instead of trying to avoid mistakes make all the mistakes you can. So think about the next time someone is trying to get to know you. Are you going to give them the cold shoulder or will you engage with them.

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