

CYBERBULLYING QUOTES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE



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Cyberbullying is all the more vicious because people make remarks online that they'd not say face to face. — Photos: AZMAN GHANI/The Star

Cyberbullying knows no age limit

Adults too need to learn a thing or two about behaving online, so they don't cause harm to others.

By S. INDRAMALAR
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AFTER a disastrous blind date, Cheryl vented her frustrations on Facebook. The next morning, she woke to a barrage of comments on her post. Three people had even shared it on their walls, which drew a lot of responses, too.

Curious about the feedback, Cheryl scrolled through the comments — some friends and strangers sympathised with her, sharing stories of their own bad dates while some wished her better luck next time.

But these friendly comments were lost in a barrage of hateful remarks which Cheryl never expected — jokes and jibes about her personal appearance along with taunts telling her to lose weight and lower her expectations.

The personal attacks, from people listed as her 'friends' on Facebook and people she didn't know, rained down relentlessly on Cheryl.

"At 28, she thought she was past being the target of bullies.

"I am a confident person. I'm good at my job which keeps me busy and happy. But these nasty comments got to me and I felt really awful about myself. It went on for days and I tried to ignore the comments but they became really personal. I was too embarrassed to tell anyone about it," shares the graphic designer who has stopped sharing anything personal on her social media page.

While comments on cyberbullying usually revolve around children and teens, a recent study by Universiti Malaya (UM) lecturer Dr Vimala Balakrishnan

found that adults are also vulnerable. About 44% of the 399 young adults surveyed (aged 17-36) have been bullied online in the last six months. An alarming 35% admitted they have bullied someone online within the same time frame and 70% said that they had witnessed cyberbullying on social media platforms.

Dr Vimala believes that the actual numbers could be higher than the figures polled.

"Still, the poll is a clear indication that (cyber) bullying is prevalent not only in school but even after we leave the school yard," says the senior lecturer at UM's Department of Information Systems, under the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology.

Cyberbullying is the use of digital technology tools and platforms to intentionally hurt, shame or harass another person repeatedly.

It usually takes the form of individual harassment (when a person is attacked through private messages) or public humiliation (when the attacks are public), or both.

Cyberbullies often show no sense of remorse, even when their victims implore them to stop or show that they have been hurt (see sidebar).

Perverse fun

One of the most disturbing findings from Dr Vimala's study is the overwhelming number of respondents (43%) who feel that cyberbullying happens because people view it as a



Dr Vimala Balakrishnan

form of entertainment.

"A disturbingly large number of respondents feel that cyberbullying takes place because it is fun, satisfying and pleasurable. This is very troubling — how can anyone think that harassing or shaming someone is pleasurable? Cyberbullying isn't a laughing matter and the fact that people think it's entertaining is alarming," she says.

Short film director and YouTuber Sidney Chan, 27, knows exactly what it is like to be the butt of such "jokes".

"I was bullied in school because I was different and socially awkward. When I entered university, I found a close group of friends. But one of my course-mates bumped into a bully from high school and they started sharing embarrassing stories about me on my Facebook wall.

I felt betrayed by them and haunted by the memories. At 22, I had done so much with my life and someone from my past decided to bring up my worst moments in school.

"It was heart-breaking but my course-mate just saw it as a joke," shares Chan, a psychology graduate.

It wasn't fun for Chan and it isn't fun for anyone bullied online. Sometimes, the trauma can lead to tragic consequences.

Recently, 20-year-old university student Teh Wen Chun took his own life in Penang after leaving a suicide note on his Facebook page. According to news reports, Teh's father, Beng Hock, 49, believes that his son was bullied online. He shared that his son's behaviour began to change after getting college mates started shaming him online. Teh assured his family that he was fine but a few weeks later, he ended his life.

Chan was fortunate to be able to cope with his bullying. He chose to ignore his friends' posts, even refusing to defend himself from their disparaging comments.

Instead, he focused on his studies and made sure he excelled in his classes. At college, he became active in extra-curricular activities which enabled him to make new friends.

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New cyber-bullying weapon: Mobile phones

Widespread use of handsets make youths an easy target

KENNY CHEE

POLYTECHNIC student Alice (not her real name) got a shock in November last year when she realised that a female classmate had taken upskirt photos of her by using a mobile phone.

The classmate then showed the photos to other students and openly taunted Alice, 19, about it.

Although embarrassed, she ignored the bully.

"Sooner or later, bullies will get bored and switch targets," she said.

Sure enough, the bully stopped taunting Alice last December.

Alice's case reflects an emerging form of cyber-bullying through the use of mobile phones among youths here, social workers said.

A spokesman for the Coalition Against Bullying for Children and Youth said that there are now more bullying cases involving mobile phones compared to four or five years ago, although the numbers are still low.

Touch Cyber Wellness and Sports, a cyber-wellness education centre, does not have figures, but "it is not uncommon to hear of youths using mobile phones to engage in cyber-bullying", said its manager, Mr Poh Yeeing Cheung.

But mobile phones are becoming an increasingly common



COMMUNICATING FEAR: Though cyber-bullying cases involving mobile phones have gone up, phone bullying can be hard to spot. PHOTO: ICFE

weapon, because more young people own them, they added.

Last year, 64 per cent of Singaporeans aged seven to 14 were mobile-phone users, an increase from 48 per cent in 2007, according to the Information Development Authority of Singapore's website.

But phone bullying can be hard to spot, said Ms Tan Lee Joo, deputy director of the Singapore Children's Society's Student Service Hub.

"Children and teens see mobile phones as status symbols and a way to connect with friends. So, they might be willing to live with phone bullying and hide it than risk losing their phones if their parents found out (about the bullying)," she said.

Parents have to be non-confrontational when addressing such issues with their children, she added.

Australian freelance writer Steve Clark, 52, wrote to my paper recently to urge schools to ban mobile phones among students, so that they would not use these devices to intimidate their schoolmates.

Asked if mobile phones should be banned in schools, an Education Ministry spokesman said: "Schools are empowered to make policies regarding disciplinary matters to best fit their school situation."

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A CHANGING WORLD

With the world becoming increasingly digital, access to the internet is now widely considered to be a necessity rather than a conscious decision. Regardless of choice, our lives revolve around technology. We believe that everybody should have equal opportunities to embrace this technology and develop as an integral part of our new digital world without suffering abuse, harassment, or intimidation.

It's easy for people to equate fame, fortune, and beauty with happiness. However, Celebrities are just regular human beings with feelings. It is easy for haters to anonymously bully famous people through **social media**. Sometimes, celebrities quit social media to avoid the cruelty of strangers.

When people, especially children and teens watch celebrities on stage or in a movie, they often think that these people are the luckiest in the world. In reality, many of them have been harassed online and have suffered the same way or even more during their teen years.

This article is dedicated to inspire children/teens... to stand up to cyberbullies through the testimonials of the today generation teen celebrities and other well-known famous people.

**Demi Lovato's
Experience with
Bullying**

[https://youtu.be/
hu9Z5naWaEw](https://youtu.be/hu9Z5naWaEw)

**Celebrities
Talking About
Bullying and
Stopping it**

[https://youtu.be/
lvhRPkvyXxA](https://youtu.be/lvhRPkvyXxA)

In a world full of technology, it can be hard to determine what is just average online interaction for children / teenagers and what crosses the line into cyberbullying. When someone is cyberbullied, you can begin to feel alone in a large world of nameless opinions and cruel comments. In today's day and age, with more adolescents and teens having access to multiple mobile devices like Androids, iPhones, and iPads, statistics show that over half of these children have been bullied online (and about the same number have engaged in cyber bullying themselves.) But you are not alone when it comes to cyber bullying, because even today's most famous celebrities are not immune to the horrible comments that come from anonymous attackers online.

Justin Bieber | Canadian Singer/ Dancer

“You should help out because you can be next”. He also admits to be bullied at school because of his sport achievements: “Whenever I was better at something than others, I was bullied, they called me show-off. And I also didn’t have many friends ever since I can remember. You just have to support others, don’t ignore when notice others being bullied, stand up for others”.



Ed Sheeran | English Singer-Songwriter.

“I go on it and there’s nothing but people saying mean things. One comment ruins your day. But that’s why I’ve come off it”.



Zayn Malik | British Singer”

Nasty things [were said] because of having an immigrant Pakistani Muslim father, and a White British mother of English and Irish descent like I’m a terrorist, and this and that," "How can you justify that? How can you call me that and get away with it?" "You can say whatever you want about me, I’m not really bothered, but when it starts to upset people, I care about, then that’s a problem”.

Adele | British Singer/Songwriter

Daily Mail quoted one nasty Twitter user as posting, "Aw Adele gave birth to a baby. Is it fat and handicapped lol? Just m*rder it already lol. “I was, and I was body positive then and I’m body positive now”.



Lesile Jones | American Actress

“I became a victim of personal attacks related to my race, appearance, and even my deceased sibling. Bullies went as far as comparing African Americans to monkeys by posting pictures of apes. I feel like I’m in a personal hell. I didn’t do anything to deserve this. It’s just too much”.



Miley Cyrus | American Singer, Actress

“I went through a time where I was really depressed, I even locked myself in a room, so my dad had to break my door down. My bullies were girls only, challenging me to fight by pushing and calling me names”.



Zendaya Coleman | AMERICAN SINGER / ACTRESS

“I have recently experienced a great deal of backlash from online cyberbullies after being cast to portray Aaliyah in an upcoming Lifetime movie. Haters were concerned I *couldn’t play this role to its full extent due to my small acting career, and others picked on my bi-racial background*”

Taylor Swift | American singer-songwriter, [...] philanthropist, and actress.

“It was tough, and I was often alone”. Music is a great form of therapy, and I am able to write everything out and forget about my problems while I am singing and composing music”.





Tom Daley | British Swimmer

“Only moments after finishing my synchronized diving event in the Olympic Games of 2012, my failure to win a medal found online hate pouring in.

“As an LGBTQ athlete, I was especially vulnerable

to bullying, and my sexuality was targeted and aggressively mocked numerous times in harassment and trolling”.



Millie Bobby Brown

“I have dealt with situations both in real life and online that are soul-breaking and it genuinely hurts reading some of the things people have said”.

Lorde | New Zealand Singer

“I'm not completely impervious to insult.... I'm a human being. The way I dress and carry myself, a lot of people find it strange or intimidating.

“I think my whole career can be boiled down to the one word I always say:



Demi Lovato |

“Sitting behind a computer gives people a sense of anonymity, but everyone needs to realize that words-even the ones they write online- have a strong power to hurt people.”

