# DeathtoStock_Creative Community5sizedYOU CLICKED ‘ATTENDING’ – SO WHY ARE WE A GENERATION OF FLAKES?

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With the ease of hitting ‘Attending’ blindly on events, are we quickly becoming Generation Flake?

A [British survey](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2117762/Half-Britons-admit-social-gazumping-cancelling-friends-minute.html) suggests that at least 65% of last minute cancellations are lies. Even more people will remain silent, not even bothering to keep up appearances. Because we all know that when we click ‘Attending’, it doesn’t have much weight.

Will all 50 people who RSVP’d to your event show up? No way. In fact, it’s a rule with events that you’ll be lucky to get half that number. What you *can* guarantee is that in the hours before the event, you’ll get a slew of text messages or Facebook notifications with flimsy excuses that no one would try on their boss, but think are totally acceptable use on friends.

Comedian Aziz Ansari waxes lyrical about this frustrating habit we’ve picked up since social media and mobile phones made it way too easy for us to expect the possibility something better might come along, (and happy to flake as soon as it does).

But there are occasions where cancelling at the last minute is acceptable. These include severe illness, accidents, an accidental double booking (sort out your Calendar app) and traumatic news – or, simply when you give someone enough notice.

## Everyone’s been stood up

Last weekend, I was left stranded when eight of the 13 people who had said they would attend my house for a meal – which I’d slaved over all day – backed out just hours before they were due to arrive. A further three guests didn’t bother to send any excuses or apologies. I was left with two guests, far too much food and feeling both mortified and gutted. My anxiety kicked in as I wondered if these people who’d I’d invited were really the good friends I thought they were.

I’m not alone. When Rebecca Smith\* turned 18, she invited 50 friends to a trendy pub near her house. Having an end of year birthday meant she didn’t have to worry about anyone still being under age. The event was supposed to start at 3pm and she’d saved up $1000 for the bar tab. At 3:30pm, the first texts with excuses lit up her phone, followed by countless more. She sat alone until 7pm when four acquaintances showed up. Rebecca hasn’t hosted a birthday party since.

Claire Harper\* says she often experiences last minute cancellations, but was particularly upset following a dinner party last year when two guests who had RSVP’d dropped off the radar entirely. “It got to the point where I began to worry about their safety, as they hadn’t even replied to my texts.” She finally got a response the next day, as part of a group conversation between all of the guests, where the two no-shows sent an ‘open apology’, rather than a personal one to Claire, who had spent her day off preparing a three course meal.

\*Names changed because apparently calling out friends for their flakiness is socially unacceptable but cancelling last minute isn’t.

# DeathtoStock_Creative Community8sized5 reasons why people are so prone to flaking last minute

## #1 Our phones

We believe because we have the ability to cancel last minute that we can and should be able to do that (and that everyone knows that). Once upon a time, cancelling or not showing up was an incredible social faux-pas. Our parents weren’t able to cancel last minute, they had to front up at the person’s house or make a phone call, two actions you rarely catch our generation partaking in when we have to cancel.

The ability to hide behind a screen means we think we can waste someone’s time because we can inform them that we’re doing it.

## #2 A better offer

You may have had all the intention of attending but then someone calls with a better offer. Let’s face it, everyone’s guilty of this. But when someone has gone to the effort to organise something and you skip it for a ‘better offer’, what are you really saying? That the person you’ve cancelled on isn’t important or is less important – not so nice when you think about it.

## #3 No urgency to commit

With text messaging and a multitude of social media options, we can commit vaguely to events and because it’s digital, some people say it doesn’t count as a real RSVP – it’s just like a maybe… if you feel like it on the day.

## #4 Straight up laziness

There’s no doubt that after work we’re definitely more tired than we’d prefer to be, but to say that you’re tired is to dismiss the stress and exhaustion that others, especially the host or person you have plans with, are also experiencing. Everyone is busy and everyone is tired, but if we all used this excuse, we’d never socialise.

## #5 Selfishness

Selfishness definitely plays a part in the flakiness of friends. Not attending despite saying you would is a selfish decision to make, because you’re leaving the host (aka your friend) high and dry. When you cancel suddenly, you stop the other person arranging other plans to spend their also precious time with someone else or doing something different.

## What does this mean for our generation?

It’s said that Millennials experience a higher rate of anxiety and depression than their older counterparts and as a result, many find it easier to hide behind their screens. A [recent study](https://corp.badoo.com/it/entry/press/54/) reported that 39% of Americans spend more time socialising online than in person and one third of people say they are increasingly lonely as a result and it’s likely this data would be similar in Australia, too.

Yet spending time socialising with mates is said to improve not only any feelings of loneliness, but also decrease any feelings of anxiety or depression. It’s actually good for your mental health to get outside your head and into the real world, so we should be doing more of it!

## Stop being a jerk – if you’re unsure don’t click ‘attending’

Make a brand new commitment: don’t click ‘attending’ until you’ve cross checked your Calendar – and then actually show up, regardless of how difficult the location is to get to or that you’d rather spend that time in your pyjamas. Not only will the host be thrilled to have your company, your mental health will benefit greatly from the social interaction and fond memories, because you can’t really create memories from behind a screen.