

**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**

# STALKING

*Project Empowerment Volume 1, Article 10*  
*September 18, 2022*

**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**

# STALKING BY HAILEY DONAHUE



## A LETTER TO MY STALKER

*or, how society makes me feel like it's my fault I was stalked.*

Here is what it looks like to be stalked:

3 missed phone calls.

*"Hey! You haven't picked up, are you okay?"*

14 missed texts.

*"What's going on? Are you mad at me?"*

3 voicemails.

*"Where are you? I don't see you at work today."*

Someone at work.

*"You're late. You always get here fifteen minutes early."*

Someone who calls to see where you're going to be.

*"I know you were supposed to be here!"*

Someone who waits for you at work.

*"Your coworkers said you weren't going to be in tonight."*

Someone who is always there.

*"But you mentioned working tonight a few weeks ago."*

Someone who will never take no for an answer.

*"I just wanted to stop in and say hi!"*

Someone who knows your entire schedule.

*"Oh, seriously, now you don't want to be my friend?"*

Someone who knows who you're with.

*"It's not fair. You're just like everyone else."*

Someone who is always there.

*"I thought we were friends."*

Always.

*“You know, I had a chance with you.”*

Even when you don't want them to be.

*“I thought you cared about me.”*

Even when you said for them to leave you alone.

*“Thanks for reminding me that I'm useless.”*

Even when you've said you're not interested.

*“I'm so sorry, you know how I'm like.”*

Even when you're busy.

*“I'm so sorry if I said something that pissed you off.”*

Even when you're scared.

*“Everyone says I'm a horrible person. I guess they're right.”*

Even when you're told to appreciate the attention.

*“I thought you were different.”*

Even when you're told it's your fault for leading Them on.

*“I guess I'm the problem here.”*

Even when you know you're trying to think of what you did wrong.

*“If I was dead, you'd be happy.”*

So.

So it's your fault.

So you led them on.

So boys will be boys.

So you know how they are.

So you should've said something.

So you could've been nicer to them.

So you thought you were just friends.

One in seven feminine individuals has been stalked. More than fifty percent of these cases occurred before they were twenty five. I was seventeen when I was stalked. They were a freshman in high school. I'd like to say that I feel like it wasn't my fault, but I don't. We were paired together in a show. I thought we were just friends. I was being myself. I was friendly and talkative and nice. I called people 'dear' and 'love' at the time. I don't do that anymore. I think I'm afraid to.

Okay, that's not true.

I know I'm afraid to. I don't want a repeat of last time. I was seventeen years old when I was stalked. I think it was my fault. I think I was conditioned to think it was my fault. My parents didn't think it was my fault. They thought that I was just trying to be friendly. I think that's what I was trying to do too. But that's not how They took it.

They were young. Of course They were young. They were just a kid. Kids always look up to the older kids. I should be flattered that They thought I was one of those cool older kids. Don't you remember the kids you idolised at fourteen? I do. I still look up to them.

More than eighty percent of the people who report stalking new the person in some way. I never knew that it was such a high number. For some reason, I always pictured stalking as something that's faceless. An admirer of a celebrity in a different country. I guess I never thought it would happen to me. It did, though. I didn't realise it was stalking at first.

Sure, I joked about it, because I was annoyed that this kid I did a show with was still trying to talk to me, but I was still talking to Them as well. It didn't really hit me that something was really wrong until other people pointed it out. They were always there. They called me, every morning, at the exact same time.

I thought we were just friends for a really long time. Okay, it wasn't that long. It was about a month. And then it got scary. I was at work; They'd be there. I was at school; They'd call in the morning. I'd be at home, doing homework; They'd call to hear about my day. They said They loved me; I thought it was just a part of the show. I never really learnt how I was supposed to handle the situation.

I didn't block Them until They said something racist. To everyone reading this, don't wait until They say something racist. Don't wait until They say something homophobic. Don't wait until They say something sexist. It's not your fault that someone is stalking you. It's not just acceptable. It's not just a lonely kid who wants to be your friend.

The moment you start feeling uncomfortable or unsafe, say something. Don't ignore it. Don't wait until you can bow out gracefully. I'm lucky that I didn't get hurt. I'm lucky I only had to deal with stalking. Their feelings are not your problem.

**It is not your fault that someone is following you. Being nice and being friendly and being kind and being sweet are not signals that say that you like someone. Being a good person does not mean that you're interested. Ignore twitter. Ignore Instagram. Ignore them. Ignore Them. Don't listen to people who diminish your feelings.**

**It's not your fault.**

**It's not your fault.**

**Don't tell yourself that you were too friendly. When you said you weren't interested, They should've taken it for what it was: no. Don't wonder if you should've been meaner or if you should've been nicer. There's nothing you could've done differently to change it. It is not your fault because you were friendly. It is not your fault because you were nice.**

**Stalking is sexual harassment.**

**Sexual harassment is never the victims fault.**

**Stalking affects one in seven women, and one in eighteen men. It is not your fault.**

No matter what people say, it is not your fault. Friendliness is not an invitation to be harassed by someone. It's because of this that I'd almost like to apologise to my stalker: I'm sorry that society told you that friendliness is a reason to pursue a person. I'm sorry that society told you that being told no was a sign to keep harassing me.

Here is what I'm not sorry for, and here is what you shouldn't be sorry for either: block their number.

**[SEE STALKING STATISTICS FOR MORE INFORMATION.](#)**