

It seems to be my fate to meet flakes - not the dandruff kind but the flaky people who confirm an appointment, a plan to meet up with you, then conveniently forget they ever committed to anything. Unlike dandruff flakes, you can't get rid of them with Head & Shoulders shampoo - although you wish you could! The shampoo reference is not my line, I stole it from a magnet that holds my daughter's art work on our fridge. I love the expression because it totally resonates with my life, having to frequently deal with quite a few flakes.

Seriously, the people variety of flakes I am talking about - are part of our social circle, our family, friends - basically the folks in our everyday life. We see them often and wouldn't want to call them out on their flakiness and make a big deal out of it. Mainly because, despite their flaky behaviour they might actually be quite nice and friendly people. If you confront them about their proclivity they might act a bit surprised and hurt. It is as if you're the one overreacting for assuming everyone needs to follow through with each and every plan they make. They have a way of making you look like the 'bad guy' who is rigid and controlling. These people will say things like, "Yes, let's do lunch Friday at noon at so and so place!" or let's have a play date with the kids

in the park for sure next Monday at 10 AM!" with a ton of sincere sounding enthusiasm. She/he might even suggest the plan herself; but you will realize soon enough that it's all carefree talk from the flaky person and is forgotten within minutes after the words are uttered, without any serious desire on her/his part to go through with the plan. Imagine how it feels, when you are all dressed up and just text or call to inform the other person you are about to head out, when she

or he doesn't pick up or cancels for the silliest reasons or worse, simply forgot they ever made any plans with you! Trust me, I'm all too familiar with this situation. I got 'flaked out', 'stood up' or 'ditched' - whatever you call it - at the last minute, so many times by different people, that it prompted me to write this piece. I've also observed that with some people, flaky

behaviour is an annoying habit, almost second nature that they may or may not be aware of.

Of course we all 'forget' appointments and engagements from time to time or have to cancel or reschedule on short notice for unexpected, valid reasons, occasionally. But what about the people who, for whatever reason perpetually fail to keep their commitments and stick to a plan? People who make appointments with friends and acquaintances without really thinking about their priorities or checking their schedules or bother too much if they are going to keep the appointment or not? I can't help wondering whether this group of people is a bit scatterbrained or rude or self-absorbed or - have all three characteristics.

As I write this piece, I am reading a recent text message thread on my cell phone between me and one of my friends. The last part of the thread really annoyed me. We

had been trying to coordinate a lunch date for almost a month and had rescheduled twice already. Then finally we decided on a date. But just half an hour before I was supposed to meet her at a restaurant, she tells me she completely forgot it was her boss's birthday and she must attend. Last week, we cancelled because she 'suddenly' remembered she was religious and had to go to the church with her family on a Sunday that somehow slipped her mind until the last

CALLING OUT ON FLAKY PEOPLE

LAVINA AMBREEN AHMED

Imagine how it feels, when you are all dressed up and just text or call to inform the other person you are about to head out, when she or he doesn't pick up or cancels for the silliest reasons or worse, simply forgot they ever made any plans with you!

minute! On moments like these, I try very hard to stay calm instead of saying something sarcastic that I would later regret. After all, I had to make arrangements with my spouse to be home to watch our daughter so that I could have some 'girl time' having lunch with my friend.

Then there is my other friend, whose daughter is my daughter's friend and we became friends through our kids. She enthusiastically makes play dates with me that most of the time she can't keep. And I get my five-year-old daughter all excited about fun plans to meet up with her friend only to tell her that the play dates are not happening when we are almost ready to leave the house. What is worse with her is, she usually does not respond to text messages on time and I have

them or want to make a plan, I am very conscious of the fact that they are not dependable at all.

A random search on the web led me to some interesting articles with insights into why flakes are the way they are, as observed by shrewd psychologists. Apparently the reasons are varied. They cannot say no to others, have poor time management skills, are not conscientious, do not value other people's time, are self-absorbed, display a self-handicapping behaviour pattern and so on.

I don't want to waste time analyzing the possible reasons. I will leave that job for the psychology experts. Instead of ditching these friends, I have come up with a simple solution to preserve my own sanity. I call the shots from now on. I simply tell them that I

Thank you for being my flaky inconsiderate friend who never comes through and bails on everything.

your e cards
someecards.com



to deal with a whiny kid who doesn't understand why she can't play with her friend! Her excuse? "I'm a spontaneous, free-spirit kind of girl. I always do things last minute!" As if by admitting to being spontaneous, she can absolve herself from ever having to keep any commitments.

You are probably wondering why I put up with these people and that I am foolish for not giving up on them. But as contradictory as it may sound, these flaky friends of mine are seriously, nice people - people who are genuinely fond of me and not malicious. They pour their sorrows to me and listen to me when I need to vent. When we do meet, we enjoy chatting about anything and everything in a relaxed mood. But the only problem is, if I need a favour from

am going to a certain place on a certain day and will be happy if they can make it. But it is fine if they can't meet with me, I will go solo or with my daughter. It also helps to have a back up plan when it comes to dealing with flaky people.

I am reminded of the often quoted, famous Rabindro Shongeeet, "jodi tor dak shune keu na ashe, tobe ekla cholo re!" (If no one responds to your call, walk alone) I take the advice from this beautiful song quite seriously. This song has helped me deal with many exasperating situations over the years. Life is too short to wait on unreliable friends, don't you think?