

Go ahead and call me 'crazy'

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By Rachel Khona October 26 at 12:00 PM



(iStock)

"Did you try to hook up with anyone while we were on a break?" I asked casually, hoping not to give away I knew what was up.

"No baby, you're crazy," he said with a smirk.

I wanted to rip that smirk off his face. He had left open his Facebook page, where the message he sent to his ex was there for me to see while he was working late one evening.

But in the interest of behaving like an "adult" and not like a Telenovela character, I remained calm.

"Are you sure you didn't e-mail or text or call anyone?" I pressed, giving him one last chance to redeem himself.

"Nope," he responded nonchalantly.

And that's when I went "crazy."

"I'm going to take that [expletive] laptop of yours and throw it out the window," I said. "I know you e-mailed your ex." It was less the hookup that bothered me and more his inability to tell the truth.

"You're [expletive] crazy!" he shouted back, igniting a screaming match that ended with him grabbing his laptop and storming out of my apartment.

In my experience, the "crazy" talk often goes like this: Woman asks man a question. Man lies. Woman confronts him with the truth. Man doesn't like that he was found out. Woman gets angry, sad, frustrated (otherwise known as expressing natural human emotion). Man calls woman crazy, psycho, emotional, hysterical or melodramatic.

Sound familiar?

This handy equation of sorts can be used in many situations in which a guy doesn't like the truth he's been confronted with. I took a brief informal survey of my friends to find out when they got called "crazy" or "psycho" or "emotional." Here are some of the responses:

He was threatening to kill himself, and I told him he needed help.

I found out he hooked up with men, and I confronted him.

I told him it was lame he stood me up.

I told him he was really closed off, and we weren't really communicating well.

I was dating someone else, yet this guy told our entire class I was in love with him, so I confronted him.

I found another girl's T-shirt in his apartment, so I went to the bathroom and peed on it.

He went completely MIA, missing a trip we had planned, so I told his brother I was worried something happened. Turns out his phone just died, and he went on the trip without me.

I wanted to have sex.

After I dumped him for cheating on me, I hooked up with someone else, and he found out.

Okay, that T-shirt incident sounds a little unhinged. But the other instances are merely about women expressing their feelings or concern for their partners, or inquiring about their relationship histories or simply their lives.



Of course, not all men respond to emotion by lobbing the C-word. But it's a common enough trope that it can make it hard for women to express emotion without getting shut out for being irrational.

Dr. Julie Holland, psychiatrist and author of the book "[Moody Bitches: The Truth About the Drugs You're Taking, the Sleep You're Missing, the Sex You're Not Having, and What's Really Making You Crazy](#)," says there is a biological component behind women's expressions of emotion. "Women by virtue of their estrogen levels are more sensitive to things around them," she said. "It makes sense in terms of evolution. For a woman to take care of a baby, it helps if she has emotional sensitivity and empathy."

Unfortunately the message from Big Pharma and our culture at large is that being emotional — or being perceived as emotional — is a sign of weakness. It's irrational, pathological, embarrassing and crazy. One in four women are prescribed a psychiatric medication, [Holland points out](#), as opposed to only one in seven men.

"Calling a woman crazy is a way to take away her power," Holland said. "It's invalidating her. It's considered irrational to be emotionally expressive. As though you can't be rational and emotional."

Men are called "crazy" sometimes, too. But it's almost always for the sort of overly bombastic behavior you expect only from a megalomaniac. Donald Trump, for example, [gets called crazy](#) when he speaks about building a wall along the border, and Kanye West gets the label when he unleashes an [incoherent rant on national television](#).

The word "crazy" isn't going anywhere — and that's fine with me. If having emotions, thoughts, opinions, or calling someone out for lying makes me crazy, so be it. But more important, let's stop engaging with people who think any emotion equals instability.

I realized somewhere along the way that the only guys who were calling me crazy were also the ones with "psycho" exes. If a guy is rude to a waitress, he'll probably be rude to you, too. And if he thinks his ex was crazy, it's only a matter of time that he thinks you are, too. In continuing to look the other way when it came to this admission, I was equally as culpable. Because a real man — one who is emotionally stable and secure — would never call a woman crazy.