# People are twice as likely to approve of exposing an ex than being exposed

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*Most people believe the private details of a relationship should remain private after it ends. New ClarityCheck research finds that this principle becomes far less consistent when people are deciding whether to reveal damaging information themselves.*

A screenshot can settle a dispute over what someone said while creating another dispute over whether those words should have been made public. On social media, private conversations can become evidence for audiences with no connection to the relationship. The person publishing them may hope to establish what happened, but the decision to expose a former partner's messages can invite scrutiny of its own.

A **ClarityCheck** survey of **10,618 adults across the United States, United Kingdom, European Union and Latin America who had ended a romantic relationship lasting at least six months within the previous three years** found broad support for keeping such material private. **76%** said former partners should generally avoid posting private messages, intimate details or personal conflicts from the relationship on social media.

That principle became less consistent when respondents considered their own involvement in a disclosure. In a randomized scenario, participants evaluated an accurate public account of why a relationship had ended that included private details reflecting badly on one partner. **63%** considered publication acceptable when they were the person telling the story. When the identical account was published by their ex and reflected badly on them, acceptance fell to **34%**.

The difference is striking because the accuracy of the account remained unchanged. Respondents were considerably more willing to permit a damaging disclosure when they controlled its publication than when they were the person exposed.

The desire to correct a public account created another exception. Among respondents who supported keeping breakup details private in principle, **56%** said they would make an exception if an ex had already published a false or misleading version of events. Privacy became conditional when remaining silent meant allowing someone else's account to go unanswered.

The intended audience also shaped judgments. Presented with the same screenshot of a personal conversation from a former relationship, **71%** considered it acceptable to show it to one close friend for advice or emotional support. Only **26%** approved of posting it publicly on social media. Respondents appeared to draw a substantial distinction between seeking private support and exposing personal correspondence to a wider audience.

Their reported behavior reflected the importance of that boundary. Among respondents who had discussed their most recent breakup with friends through messages or a group chat, **44%** said

they had forwarded an ex's message or shown a screenshot to at least one other person. Sharing information within a personal circle could coexist with opposition to making it publicly accessible.

The greatest complication for someone hoping to defend their reputation emerged in how observers judged public disclosures. **61%** said seeing someone publish a former partner's private messages would make them trust the person posting them less, even if they believed the screenshots were genuine.

This creates a credibility problem that factual accuracy alone cannot resolve. A published conversation may strengthen someone's account of a breakup while raising doubts about their willingness to respect private exchanges. The audience can believe the evidence and still disapprove of the person who disclosed it.

The findings reveal how unevenly people distribute control over a shared history. Respondents were more prepared to make exceptions for their own disclosures than to accept equivalent exposure by a former partner. Yet publishing private material also surrendered control over how that decision would be judged. Even an accurate account could leave the person telling it with less trust than they hoped to gain.

**About ClarityCheck**

ClarityCheck is an all-in-one background verification tool for phone numbers, emails, and images. Designed for everyday digital safety, ClarityCheck helps users instantly identify unknown contacts, trace suspicious profiles, and check for potential fraud across phone, email, and photo input. By combining reverse lookup and OSINT technologies, it offers a streamlined way to verify identities and protect yourself online.

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