

Help! I'm in a situationship and I can't get out!

Ah, situationships: the modern masterpiece of half-baked romance, brought to you by our very own people, the emotionally elusive Generation Z.

The very reliable and professional Urban Dictionary defines it as "when one or two motherfuckers take part in a relationship, but out of fear of making things serious or messy, do not label it, leading to said relationship, ironically, becoming more serious and messier."

It is not dating or exclusive, but it's the perfect flavor of "what are we?" for people who thrive on romantic ambiguity and can't resist 3:00 a.m. validation via Snapchat. This dynamic blurs the lines between emotional connection and the absence of defined boundaries. Why settle for clarity when you can revel in the thrilling chaos of almost-commitment?

Having often found myself caught in the whirlpool of situationships before, I can tell you it is a unique kind of emotional limbo. It is the middle ground between "I like you, but I do not want to date", "Let's just see where this goes" or the classic "I just do not feel emotionally stable enough for a relationship right now" aka where feelings linger but boundaries go to die. It is a rollercoaster of emotions that can leave you spiraling and manic.

Let's be real: one person in every situationship LOVES the ambiguity. They thrive on it. No labels? No problem! Commitment? Overrated. Emotional availability? Non-existent. They are out here living their best no-strings-attached life, watching TikToks while ignoring a text from their attention-starved, sort-of-but-not-quite partner because it is not serious, right? RIGHT?!

The kicker is that they cannot be held responsible for their lack of communication and inability to be vulnerable because you guys are not official! It is the perfect relationship without

accountability. They are emotionally detached masters, professional ghosters and experts in dodging the “what are we?” talk like it’s the plague.

Then there’s the other person left to navigate the murky waters of confusion. You know the type: constantly checking their phone, analyzing every emoji, trying to decipher the latest cryptic text, always typed out in all lowercase, that reads, “i like u sm, idk if i wanna be exclusive it’s not u tho i swear lmao.”

If you are reading this article, you are the type in question (I have been too). Face it, you decided to read an article called “Help! I’m in a situationship and can’t get out!”. There’s no way you are NOT the one being manipulated. We are always trying to figure out if “I like you so much, but I don’t want to be official” actually means something profound or if we have been led into an emotional labyrinth with no map. Spoiler alert: it usually means you’re getting ghosted, but in a miserable, drawn-out, “it’s not you, it’s me” way. I, and probably most people, would rather be cut off than dragged slowly to the inevitable ghosting that awaits every situationship.

They (you and I included) want clarity, direction and maybe even (*GASP*) a label, but all they’re getting is “aura” and “energy.” They’ve been led into the Bermuda Triangle of romance, where love vanishes without a trace. But at least you have someone to “hang out” with when your night gets lonely.

While one person enjoys their carefree, no-strings-attached existence, the other spirals into existential dread, overthinking every ambiguous word. The best part is when your situationship treats you like you’re their partner of years, with dates and the occasional bouquet of flowers that will die within a week (just like your situationship). A classic move is them sending you cutesy romantic memes on Instagram, like a picture of two cuddling kittens and saying “us.” But don’t get roped into it. IT’S ONLY CASUAL.

“Are we just hanging out? Are we dating? Are they seeing other people? Why do they still have Hinge downloaded? Or, heaven forbid, are they using the quintessential situationship excuse, ‘I just got out of something serious and need to focus on myself’?”

Wake up; they are focusing on everyone but you.

At its core, the situationship embodies everything Gen Z allegedly loves—flexibility, freedom and a refusal to conform to outdated social norms. We don’t need labels! We’re SO progressive! It is SO innovative and different! We say this as we sink deeper into the confusion. We don’t confine ourselves to society’s ideas about relationships! Except for the fact that situationships make a long walk off a short dock look really appetizing. In reality, this “freedom” often leaves at least one person (usually the emotionally invested one) grappling with insecurity and frustration. Sure, it’s nice not to be tied down, but at what cost?

It is all very ironic. The very same people who shy away from commitment are often the ones shedding tears into their oat milk iced coffee when their situationship of six months suddenly decides they ‘aren’t ready for anything serious.’ You are putting in all the effort but not getting anywhere, except emotionally drained and possibly bitter about investing time in someone who “was not looking for a relationship” (but also did not say that until it was far too late).

So, is Gen Z the generation of chill, go-with-the-flow romantics, or are we just a bunch of confused, emotionally unavailable individuals too afraid to admit we want something more? Maybe it’s both.

Here’s the truth: if you are happy with no labels, no strings and no expectations, then congrats; you have mastered the art of living in the not-a-relationship type of relationship, and I hate you for that. But for the rest of us who like a little more clarity (and a little less emotional

confusion), let's all take a moment to admit that we sometimes just want to know what the hell is going on. Because, in the end, isn't it nice to see if you are a part of someone's story...or just a pit stop on their journey to someone else? You are the one suffering through them figuring themselves out, preparing them to be perfect and emotionally stable for the person they actually end up dating, who will probably be the person they meet right after you.

I strongly suggest you all listen to "Casual" by Chappell Roan and really think about your actions. She sings, "I hate that I let this drag on so long, now I hate myself. Hate that I let this drag on so long, you can go to hell." It rings a bell, doesn't it? Overall, situationships don't just embrace the gray area of dating; they pull you into that gray abyss, costing you your emotional stability, yet somehow, we all keep coming back for more.