

# We Can't Let Them Get Away with This

Cancel culture is the practice or tendency of engaging in mass canceling as a way of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure.

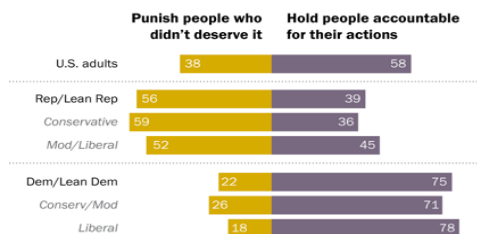
It began as a way of calling out celebrities who abused their online platforms and has branched into the judgment of high-profile leaders accused of harsh crimes as a form of social justice. No matter where it lands on the spectrum, cancel culture has one purpose: holding people accountable for their actions.

Among U.S. adults, 58% believe that calling out others on social media is more likely to hold people accountable, while 38% say it is more likely to punish people who don't deserve it.

Among this majority, there are a myriad of reasons why they believe cancel culture holds people accountable. It is a teaching moment that reminds people that there are consequences for what they say, and silence suggests acceptance.

## Partisans differ over whether calling out others on social media for potentially offensive content represents accountability or punishment

*% of U.S. adults who say in general, when people publicly call out others on social media for posting content that might be considered offensive, they are more likely to ...*



Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 8-13, 2020.  
"Americans and 'Cancel Culture': Where Some See Calls for Accountability, Others See Censorship, Punishment"  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

For years, the social elite have been insulated from the realities of others who struggle through life not receiving the same opportunities. However, as awareness continues to grow, those who deny their privilege can no longer hide from society as demands for new social standards arise.

Cancel culture is an opportunity for marginalized groups to bring truth to power. These groups are accustomed to silence, but social media has given them the opportunity to speak up in a space where cultural norms are meant to be challenged.

In 2015, the utilization of social media for change was sparked when Black Twitter, a virtual community of African American users, created the #Cancelled hashtag. This hashtag was added to problematic posts to bring awareness to morally unethical behavior.

Hashtags are still being used in 2022 by minority groups; specifically, the #metoo hashtag meant to formulate more attention around the issue of sexual abuse. If it weren't for social media, a lot of people would remain in the dark about these social issues. Wouldn't you rather be informed than blind to the truth if someone you follow is performing immoral actions?

Critics of cancel culture believe that we are too harsh as a community and should empathize with people's mistakes. I agree that cancel culture may seem harsh at times,

but its purpose is not to attack people for who they are, but for their actions.

The goal of this practice is not to be an angry mob that marginalizes people but a passionate group who wants to revoke privileges from those that take advantage of them.

Cancel culture has always existed. Victims of cancel culture used to be erased for who they were: for being a part of the LGBTQ community, a woman, or a person of color.

Alice Ball found a cure for leprosy but was a black woman. Alan Turing invented a core element in computer science that helped during World War II, but he was gay. Vera Rubin's work created a new field in Astrophysics, but she was a woman.

All three are examples of people whose lives were erased, not for unruly behavior, but for their identities.

Presently, cancel culture is shifting in favor of the erased. It has become a space for minorities to reclaim their power and fight back, and I encourage you to join them.

The next time you notice someone with a voice abusing it, call them out and stop spending your time and money on them. Only then can they begin to open their eyes and rethink their choices.

# Is Mob Mentality the New Cultural Norm?

“Bandwagon hate and cancel culture is incredibly, incredibly toxic ... It’s very concerning to me that as a society, we’re becoming ok with being guilty until proven innocent instead of the other way around,” said popular YouTuber, James Charles.

In May 2019, Charles’ career was threatened when rumors were started by another YouTuber accusing him of sexual predatory behaviors. Before anyone thought to question the source or foundation of this information, watchers of Charles began to unfollow him and send hate his way. Social media users who had no prior opinion on him also jumped in to make sure his reputation and self-worth were ruined.

Later on, these allegations were proven false, and people began to refollow him and act like they never said anything bad about his name. This switch of emotions, so easily influenced by a single post on social media, shows how overly disruptive cancel culture has become.

In this case, cancel culture was a call-out on social media that quickly expanded into mass shaming. This grew so rapidly because of the ability of social media to make users unsympathetic towards others’ feelings. It’s easy to forget that you are affecting a real person’s emotions when you are typing on a screen from miles away. Society sees this issue on a smaller scale through cyberbullying.



I am not arguing that people, especially those in power, should not be held accountable for their actions. There are many cases where the people being cancelled made comments that no rational person can defend. However, this does not mean we should shut them out of society and return the negativity they sent out into the world. Instead, we should hold them accountable by educating them and being persistent in this action.

## Why is it punishment?

“It’s more important to educate than to post negative comments. Negative comments incite a defensive reaction, where education could invite conversation.”

— Woman, 40s, Moderate Democrat

Pew Research Center, 2021

Cancel culture started off as holding people accountable for their actions and not allowing them to abuse their power, but it has become an unfair rush to judgement

causing hasty decisions. Those on the receiving end of cancel culture are forced to do damage control for their reputations instead of learning from their actions. When they are forced to give an immediate apology to save their name, how can we know it is genuine?

This does nothing to improve society. Instead, it further allows the elite to get away with their immoral behavior.

Kanye West, a popular rapper, continues to get away with immoral behavior despite the inappropriate things he says. Most recently, he was cancelled for saying that “slavery was a choice.” However, he quickly apologized, and his new album was still top trending. This only reinforces that he can continue this behavior as long as he attempts to fix it after. He has learned nothing from repeatedly giving flimsy apologies other than that he has power.

I believe the best apology is changed behavior. We will not attain this without first allowing those who are accused to give their side of the story, and then vow to educate them.

So, the next time before you hit send, ask yourself: Do you want to live in a society that is harsh or forgiving?