

## **“Face it, dont facebook it” - Teaching Teens How to Break Up Nicely**

*By BENOIT DENIZET-LEWIS, New York Times, 3. August 2011*

Late last month, 200 teenagers from Boston-area schools gathered to discuss the details of Facebook breakup etiquette. Should you delete pictures of your ex after splitting up? Is it O.K. to unfriend your last girlfriend if you can't stop looking at her profile? And is it ever ethically defensible to change your relationship status to single without first notifying the person whose heart you're crushing?

These pressing adolescent questions were part of a one-day conference on “healthy breakups” sponsored by the Boston Public Health Commission. 15 high-school students came together for a session on “creating online boundaries.” The girls outnumbered the boys, and they didn't hesitate to gang up on a charming 17-year-old named Roberto, who proclaimed that “racing to update your relationship status after a breakup” is a healthy behavior. That was just one of a handful of scenarios the teenagers debated and placed into “healthy” or “unhealthy” categories: others included “posting mean/embarrassing statuses about your ex” (unhealthy) and “rushing into a new ‘Facebook official’ relationship” (understandable, but still not healthy).

“Roberto, you're really going to run all the way to your house after school to change your status?” a 16-year-old named Lazangie asked, shaking her head. She knows a thing or two about Facebook-related breakups: her last relationship ended, she said, because her ex-boyfriend couldn't handle her male friends posting niceties on her wall.

“When I'm done with a relationship, I'm not going to wait a day, an hour or even 10 minutes to update my status,” Roberto told the group. “When it's over, it's over. I'm done with you.”

“The key word here is ‘racing,’ ” another girl replied condescendingly. “Is that really healthy? Breaking up shouldn't be a competition!”

Organizers encouraged the crowd to avoid parting ways over text message or Facebook, the most common teen breakup methods. When one of them suggested that teenagers meet with “and come to an agreement” with a soon-to-be ex, a skeptical 19-year-old nearly leapt out of her chair in protest. “So, you're telling me that you're crying at night, you're not sleeping, you're eating all this food to make you feel better, and you're supposed to just come to an agreement?”



**"Face it, don't facebook it" - Explain the slogan in relation to the text and give further examples of issues to watch out for when you want to behave well online.**

## Writing a text-based composition

According to the text ...

Breaking up nicely is, however, not the only thing to watch out for when you want to behave well online.

The first thing you should know is ...

It is also important to ...

Last but not least ...

In conclusion ...

## a student example

According to the text ...

many teenagers have trouble setting limits online. Therefore some adolescents from Boston talked about the topic at a one-day conference. They had different opinions about breaking up online, which is the most common teen break-up method. However, this way of parting often includes embarrassing posts or negative comments. This is why “face it, don’t facebook it” is recommended.

Breaking up nicely is, however, not the only thing to watch out for when you want to behave well online.

The first thing you should know is ...

that you shouldn't believe everything you find online. Almost everybody has access to the internet today and some people think it's funny to post false information on the net to confuse other people. When you do research or prepare for a presentation at school, you should always compare your results with other websites or books, so that you can be sure of getting it right.

It is also important to ...

understand that you text with an actual human being, and not just with a device. You can't see the other's face, so maybe you feel less bad if you write negative comments on their Facebook wall. But be sure - the comments will hurt the other person. It's a weak and cowardly way of giving somebody a dressing-down; and it's also an unfair one. If you want to tell someone off, tell them face-to-face, so they can respond.

In conclusion ...

it's not always easy to behave well online, but it is certainly possible. Before you start typing, you should think it over. Would you say it like this in person? Don't forget that you still deal with another human being.