

Gchat Venting Is Only Making You Madder

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New York Magazine:

There is really only one way I deal with indignation, be it righteous or ridiculous, if I happen to be at a computer when it happens: I take it to Gchat. I find a friend with the little green dot next to their name, and I'm off, maniacally pouring my (often misspelled and typo-ridden) frustrations into the little chat window. *Melissa is typing. Melissa has entered text.*

But it's all fair. Sooner rather than later, I'll likely be on the receiving end of a similar rant from a friend, talking (typing?) them down about some irritating thing their boss or boyfriend or whoever did. For me, Gchat has become a near-perfect medium for venting: It's immediate, it's intimate, and there's just something so satisfying about the physical sensation of *typing very, very hard*, taking out my annoyance onto my poor keyboard. But there are so many alternatives, too. You can text out your anger to a responsive friend, tweet your frustrations to everyone you know (and plenty of others you don't), or use WhatsApp or Kik or whatever else the generation younger than me is using these days.

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Venting "just doesn't work the way people think it does," said Jeffrey M. Lohr, a psychologist at the University of Arkansas. Most people think that it's psychologically healthy to *let it all out* or *blow off steam* — but if this were true, then after a venting session, you should feel calmer and less angry. But research dating back to the late 1950s shows that the opposite is true.

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And yet, venting *feels* so great while you're in the middle of it, and people sincerely believe that it will make them feel better, according to research by Brad Bushman, a psychology and communication professor who studies aggression at the Ohio State University.

Read the whole story: [New York Magazine](#)