**Unblock the offender**

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Being endlessly phone called by random men, weird and vulgar messages sent via social media channels, stared at in public places, followed home by strangers, sexually harassed in some way; these are somethings each and every woman in our society has experienced in some form.

Females from a very young age are conditioned and taught that it is up to them to protect themselves by acting in a manner that doesn’t allow any of the above-mentioned things to happen. It is solely the female’s responsibility.

Responsibility can look like ‘dress decently so men don’t look at you’ (which isn’t true as they still do). ‘Don’t go out alone so no one follows you home’. They still do. ‘Don’t attract their attention’, as if it’s a choice for the woman to do that. ‘Block the persistent phone calls and don’t engage with them’. ‘Block the indecent messages on social media and block the account’. So the clear-cut message to the woman is: Firstly, don’t let it happen. Secondly if it does, ignore and act as if it hasn’t happened.

[Lionel Messi remains on top of La Liga scoring charts](https://nation.com.pk/26-Feb-2021/lionel-messi-remains-on-top-of-la-liga-scoring-charts)

I disagree. I don’t want to block. I don’t want to brush it under the carpet. I want to confront this harassment wherever I can and send the message across. A very important message that the power this offender believes belongs to him actually doesn’t. I want to walk over to the man staring relentlessly on the next table at the restaurant and ask him why he is doing that. I want to turn around and beat the man who gropes me in a crowd. I don’t want to block anyone on the phone but take the call and talk some sense into the man.

So last week a man called me 13 to 14 times. After unsuccessfully trying to talk some sense into him I decided to call all resources I have to teach him a lesson. I called my brother who, let’s just say, had the access to know everything about the guy down to his bedtime routine (it’s a lame joke). After he calls him, 5 minutes later, the guy calls me and apologises to me.

[BKU warns of rally outside Indian Parliament with four million tractors](https://nation.com.pk/26-Feb-2021/bku-warns-of-rally-outside-indian-parliament-with-four-million-tractors)

Yes, it felt like a small victory. More than that it made me feel empowered and not helpless to harassment that would simply push me into ignoring it as the only option.

Maybe the next time he decides to harass anyone, he will think before acting on his impulse.

We need to expose such behaviours. We need to have more open conversations about such acts. We need to stop protecting these offenders. We need to stop carrying the shame that belongs to them. Why we feel the shame in sharing is because we are constantly taught that we are responsible to protect ourselves. Thus when something happens we assume that we didn’t do enough to protect ourselves.

It all comes to the power balance and it kicks in before and after any offensive act. Once the offense has taken place, our silence gives complete power to the other once again. An inner voice saying, ‘hold your silence’, as if it’s your fault and the perpetrator gets away again.

[China declares ‘complete victory’ over absolute poverty](https://nation.com.pk/26-Feb-2021/china-declares-complete-victory-over-absolute-poverty)

It’s their shame isn’t it, to invade another person’s personal boundary? To not take no for an answer and continue for their own personal satisfaction. And rather than shaming them for this, we are taught to be quiet; to ignore and to block.

The way out of the shame is only by talking about the shame.

It is important to break the silence and stop carrying secrets for others’ wrongdoings and give the shame back to where it belongs.

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