

# Negative effects of reality shows

[Media](#), [Television](#)



The popularity of reality TV shows continues to grow with every season since the first episode of " Survivor" aired in 2000. Every evening, millions of people sit in front of their television sets to watch the latest episode of " Big Brother," " Jersey Shore," or " Real Housewives." Although not a new genre, reality TV shows since " Survivor" have started a next generation of programming, but the negative effects of these shows may be greater than the actual enjoyment. False Reality Because most viewers actually believe what they are watching is indeed " reality," viewers make a connection with the " actors" on screen, thus acting in the same manner as those on the shows. Reality TV shows are semi-scripted. Although the " actors" are not given scripts or told to act in a certain way, the shows' producers have creative control and can edit the program to alter or distort the actions of the stars. This creative control is often found in the stars' contracts, allowing the producers to change how the audience will see the " actors." Entertainment Through Humiliation A key ingredient in many reality TV shows is the humiliation of the " actors". In " American Idol" where several episodes are dedicated to the rejected contestants, viewer enjoyment is derived from watching people suffer humiliation as they are laughed off of the stage. In other shows, viewers are exposed to and revel in the shaming of the " actors." Furthermore, humiliation in reality TV shows is often mandatory for success. The target audience for most reality TV shows is teens, mostly young girls. This demographic is led to the conclusion that humiliation is a necessary step in which to reach their goals and be successful in real life. Unlike in scripted television, where humiliation is indeed present, the " real life" nature of reality TV gives audiences permission to act in similar ways,

making humiliation acceptable. Entertainment Through Immorality Reality shows such as " Big Brother" or " The Bachelor" illustrate the base immorality found in American society; albeit with an exaggerated point of view. Pleasure is often derived from watching immoral acts that mirror the audience's desire to act in a similar way, giving them permission and precedence to do so. Reality TV caters to voyeuristic desire. Although fictional, scripted television and films allow audiences to hide in the shadows and watch people without being seen, reality TV shows give audiences the chance to be a Peeping Tom, watching real-life people.