

Name _____

Class _____

Why Young Adults Are Taking a More Mindful Approach to Social Media

Jessica Matlin

About this text

In this article, which originally appeared in *Teen Vogue*, the author interviews teens about social media.

Purpose for reading

To learn about why some teens are changing their relationship with social media.

Vocabulary

Let's pronounce these words together as a class:

Anxiety (ang-**z**ahy-i-tee)
 Compel (kuhm-**pel**)
 Consume (kun-**soom**)

WHOLE CLASS READING

DURING READING QUESTIONS

[1] Today, we are more connected than ever — the Internet has given us a peek into one another's relationships, breakfast bowls, makeup routines. Still, it's clear that social networks¹ can stretch only so far. That's why some teens are souring on them and choosing to invest their time becoming reacquainted² with people in the real world.

[2] In fact, unplugging may be the chicest³ thing you can do right now: Justin Bieber, Kim Kardashian West, Selena Gomez, Kendall Jenner, Miley Cyrus, and Gigi Hadid have all recently taken a hiatus⁴ from Instagram.

[3] "A lot of the world feels so much entitlement⁵ in other people's lives, which is so crazy," Gigi has said, on a social media break of her own to focus on her work and the relationships that are meaningful to her.

VIRTUAL REALITY

[4] When Faith, 17, moved from a Philadelphia suburb to a new school in New York City ("one of the ones that Gossip Girl was based on," she adds), the first few months were rough. "It was hard for me to make friends." Feeling insecure, she used her phone as a PR tool, posting perfectly captioned stories that made it look like she was having the time of her life.

[5] "I wanted to make people back home think I made friends instantly," she says. "In reality, I was struggling." Now that she's found her own crew, she's grown more skeptical⁶ about social media. She also doesn't feel **compelled** to get it all on

Paragraphs 4-5

Turn & Talk: What does the author's interview with Faith suggest about social media?

¹ **Social network** (*noun*): examples of social networks include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.

² **Reacquaint** (*verb*): to become familiar with someone again

³ elegant or fashionable

⁴ **Hiatus** (*noun*): a break

⁵ **Entitlement** (*noun*): the belief that you have a right to do something or have something

⁶ **Skeptical** (*adjective*): having doubts, questioning

film. At a Coldplay show, she sang instead of Snapped (“I’d rather enjoy the music”), and sitting down to a recent dinner, she and her friends piled their phones in the middle of the table (“It made the night so much better”).

INDEPENDENT READING

CONNECTING, IRL

[6] “Young adults are beginning to take a more mindful⁷ approach to social media,” says Jacqueline Nesi, a researcher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who studies teens and social media. “This may explain the rise in apps like SelfControl and Anti-Social.” (Both prevent you from falling into a Facebook hole.) And that no-phones-at-dinner policy? Nesi says we are likely to see it popping up on more tables.

[7] When Olivia, 20, found herself glued to virtual acquaintances’ Snap stories, it bugged her. “I was always picking up my phone and wanting to see what other people were doing all of the time, and that curiosity wasn’t normal,” she says. She eventually deleted her Snapchat.

[8] Ananda, 17, had the kind of Insta-following that any start-up⁸ would kill for. Before long, it became a total chore. What started as a place to share vegan recipes and cute outfits quickly became her “brand,”⁹ something that demanded daily upkeep.¹⁰ Her fans constantly direct-messaged her with praise and invites to meet up.

[9] “It was really sweet,” she says. “At the same time, it was so time- and energy-consuming — it wasn’t how I want to build friendships.” As she started posting less, her following dropped. (“That gave me **anxiety**,” she says.) Finally, she just closed her account. “I do miss it, but I have time to spend with my real friends.”

[10] “Social media relationships aren’t real relationships,” says Faith. “It’s always weird when you see someone who follows you and you follow back, but you don’t say ‘hi’ to each other when you see them in real life.”

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraphs 6-10

A. Write: According to Olivia and Ananda, how had their connections to people on social media similarly affected their lives?

B. Write: What does the inclusion of paragraphs 6-10 suggest about the author’s point of view?

C. Poll the Class: Do you agree or disagree with Faith that “social media relationships aren’t real relationships”? Be prepared to defend your response.

- A. Agree
- B. Disagree

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⁷ conscious or aware of something

⁸ a company or project started by an entrepreneur as a business

⁹ **Brand** (*noun*): the way a person wants to be seen and thought of

¹⁰ **Daily upkeep** (*noun*): the work you do to maintain something