

The Impact of Social Media on Our Society

Social Media is any website or other online means of communication that are used by large groups of people to share information and to develop social and professional contacts. But that's just the technical term, what is Social Media to you? Is it Snapchat? Instagram? Facebook? Or maybe even TikTok? Social media can be many different things to many different people, some people see Social Media as a good thing, others see it as bad. Social Media is a huge part of all of our lives! I, my friends and over 81% of teens around the world spend hours scrolling through Instagram, Snapchatting our friends and trying TikTok dances over and over until we get them to be perfect. Which can have both a negative and positive effect on us depending on how you look at it. The top three most used Social Media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Do you use any of them? There are plenty more, the list goes on and on, the question is how do these Social Media platforms affect you, your family, friends, and community? What are the negative effects? What are the positive effects?

Generation Z will enter adulthood completely dependant on Social Media, scientists have yet to figure out what today's technology is doing to our brains and bodies, yet it is quite obvious that Social Media has become an unhealthy obsession for society. One story I have that stands out to me is the time my friend got her eyes forced open to see how society really is and how Social Media isn't the most important thing in the world. We will call my friend Emily. It was in August of 2019, she decided to put a Yolo on her Snapchat story which is a thing where you put a question(s) for the title and

people can swipe up and answer the question(s) anonymously. So Emily decided to put a Yolo on her story and the title was "What is your opinion on me, my looks, and my personality?" but we waited a few hours to look so there would be a bunch of them. Then after it had been two to three hours she decided to look at them and they weren't what she was expecting. There were some nice ones like "You are super pretty!" and "You are just the sweetest person I've ever met!" but most of them were negative, people were saying how "fat" she was, how her body looked like "a sack of potatoes" how "Nobody likes you because you think you know everything" and she was "Too nice and liked to kiss butt to the teachers" because she "Wasn't smart enough to get a good grade on her own" which was not true at all. Emily is the smartest girl I've met. everyone loved her personality and were always telling her how pretty she was. But of course, reading all of this made Emily feel horrible and insecure, I tried my hardest to keep her in a good mood whenever I could but it always seemed impossible. Things just kept getting worse and worse, Emily put a Yolo on her story almost daily just to see what negative things people said so she could "fix her flaws" and eventually she turned to vaping, smoking marijuana and even cutting her wrists. Whenever I was over at her house and caught her trying to do any of these things I would stop her and usually take her vape, pipe, bowl, etc. and her razor blades and got rid of them however I could but eventually, it just got to be too much. I couldn't be with her every second of the day and I knew she did it when I wasn't there and when I had found out she tried committing I told her mom who I was very close to everything that had been happening over the past three or four months. It was hard for me to tell her because I knew she'd get sent

somewhere for a while but I knew I had to it wasn't fair to Emily and it wasn't fair to myself. We both learned a lot in those months, the most obvious thing is that Social Media is not always a good thing. But Emily is still away and will be for a couple more months but she is getting better by the day.

Social Media can give individuals an environment where they can feel free to express their ideas, feelings and to receive a different view on a subject. Many people use Social Media for positive purposes such as Charles Kolin. Charles was bullied when he was growing up but today he is using Social media as a tool to advocate tolerance, kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Ivan Boyers, Andrew Goodrum, and Ariel Kim are furthering the acceptance of disabled children by promoting education. My sister, our aunt, and my grandmother started a business in 2007 that I later became a part of called Snuggle Me Organic which started as baby loungers but when we started advertising on Social Media Snuggle Me Organic became much bigger! Now we sell support pillows, swaddles and way more! Also, I have my own little thing on Snapchat which I started in the middle of March of last year, every day I put a picture on my main Snapchat story that says "Swipe up if you want to be added to my private story! If you are added to this story you can get advice or it can just be a place to spill your guts out! I post a Yolo on this private story every day and since it is anonymous you can spill anything you need to get off your chest then you put at the bottom if you want feedback or not and I will give you my advice on the subject!". I get people swiping up all the time and everyone knows it is a safe place to share! There are plenty more people who use Social Media in positive ways and plenty of more ways you can do it! If more people

used Social Media in positive ways it would just help the world in general. Everything would be less aggressive. We could all share what is on our minds and not feel like we are going to get shut down or ignored plus way more!

So over 2.65 billion people are scrolling through their feed, snapping people back, making weird dances and who knows what else each day, but we haven't figured out the right way to do it? Not one person has found a way to make all Social Media positive? To block out all the negative energy? To make this world peaceful and fair? Over 2.65 billion people are on these websites and apps daily and we haven't realized how addicted we are and what it is doing to society? How it is messing with the teenagers' minds? Making them think they can hide behind a screen and bully someone for whatever their dumb reasons are? Over 2.65 billion people are on some type of Social Media platform every day but nobody has realized all the positive things people do with Social Media too? How easy it is not to be negative? How much of a difference it would make in our world if you just kept that rude comment you thought of in your head, not start arguments over the small things and not hide behind a screen and making someone feel horrible about themselves? How can that be that there are over 2.65 billion people on some type of Social Media platform each and every day but we still have all these problems we know how to fix but are choosing not to fix? I think if we just fix all these problems, these problems that are actually quite simple the world could be a nice peaceful and fair place. I mean think about if you know that you shouldn't be calling people "ugly" or "annoying" you know how that would make you feel but people still do. We know that we shouldn't be spending over 4 hours a day on our technology,

but plenty of people still do. We all know that we can be nice, keep those comments in our heads and this world would be a much better place but we choose not to. That's the thing we are choosing not to do the right thing and that needs to change.