**6 Social Media Habits You Should Break Right Now**

Love it or hate it, social media has definitely changed the way people interact with one another. Some social media tools let us keep in touch with friends who aren't physically close to us. Others help us make friends out of strangers through shared interests and goals.

On the downside, social media can become a bit of an obsession, sometimes even taking the place of real, live human interactions. Here are just a few rules to keep in mind to help maintain a healthy relationship with all those colorful little tiles on your smartphone:

1.  **Don't believe the hype.** Apps like Instagram and SnapChat allow people to capture tiny, perfectly procured moments. But keep in mind, those tiny squares of perfection aren't reality. You know how many pictures you take before you get just the right one to post? Well, rest assured, everyone else is doing *exactly* the same thing. After all, hardly anyone ever posts pictures of the mess and chaos of real life.

2.  **Don't compare your worst to somebody else's best.** Along those same lines, don't believe everything you read on Facebook or Twitter. A personal relationship that seems too good to be true probably is. A vacation that went off without a single hitch most likely never happened. Comparing your real life to anyone else's cultivated social media persona is not only unrealistic, it can be unhealthy, too. Maintaining a bit of perspective is critical. After all, we're only seeing what our FB friends and Insta buds *want* us to see.

3.  **Don't replace real-life interaction with screen time.** Nobody expects you to give up your smartphone entirely (except maybe your grandmother), but it is a good idea to limit your time… particularly if it cuts into face-to-face time with real people. Consider using an app like ScreenTime to see how much time you spend online and make sure it's a number you're comfortable with. Then, make it a point to reach out to friends via social media or text to schedule some in-person time.

4.  **Don't take it personally.** On social media – moreso than in real life – we can see what people think of us. We know how many have "liked" a picture or retweeted a clever thought. It can sometimes feel like a personal quest to see how many little heart and smiley face emojis pop up. But when a witty post or gorgeous sunset shot doesn't draw the response you were hoping for, don't take it personally.

5.  **Take the night off.** It's not too surprising to learn that 71 percent of people sleep with their smartphone in their hand, in bed with them, or on their nightstand. Having it so close is convenient, but it also means it's easy to check social media, email, and/or news headlines before you go to sleep… and anytime you wake up during the night. In addition to the distraction itself, your smartphone also gives off  blue light, which suppresses melatonin and leaves your brain feeling stimulated, making it even tougher to fall asleep. So, consider putting your phone a little further out of reach, or at least commit to setting it aside a little earlier.

6. **Don't forget, the internet is forever.** Good or bad, sincere or sarcastic, what you post on social media lives on, sometimes much longer than you might imagine. You've no doubt heard of people who've lost promising opportunities due to posts or pictures from years past. Don't put your future relationships or employment opportunities at risk out of frustration or for a laugh. And don't assume future employers won't see your social media presence—they absolutely will.

Social media can be a great way to make friends, share your creativity, cultivate your passion, and even advance your education. No need to quit cold-turkey. Just make sure you make the most of what those apps can offer without letting them take over your day (and night).