



Detox Your Social Life

Being thoughtless online is way too easy. Choose the decent route instead.

By Marygrace Taylor

Just as IRL (in real life), happiness on social media spreads like wildfire. “Emotional contagion is a fundamental aspect of our biology. We’re hard-wired to respond to others’ emotions, and we do it online just like we’ve done it offline,” says Nicholas Christakis, a physician and sociologist at Yale University. That means the posts that pop up on your feeds (and the stuff you share) affect your mood and the moods of those around you.

Pick Positive

Nine percent: That’s how much your odds of feeling chipper increase, one study found, for each happy friend you have in life. Online, we suggest marking positive pals as “close friends” on Facebook so you’ll catch their uplifting updates more often. And unfollow Debbie Downers (don’t worry, they won’t know if you do) to hide their posts.

lol

Don’t Trust “Like”

Counterintuitive fact: “Liking”

organizations and causes makes you less likely to support them in person; throwing real-life support to an organization brings you true happiness.

Say Hi to Happier

Founded in 2012, Happier is a snark-free zone made solely for users to share the big and little things that bring them joy – minus the usual pressure to impress. Create a free account at happier.com.

Favor Fair Weather

A bright, sunny day is the best time to check your news feed. More negative posts pop up on rainy days, and nighttime exposure to the blue light emitted by electronics can make you and your network of friends more susceptible to feeling crummy.

And Yes: #GetReal

Yes, racking up friends, likes, and retweets feels satisfying. Just make sure you don’t lean on your online circle too heavily, because having more in-person friends than virtual ones means a more positive outlook.

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PORTRAIT BY PETER ROSA. THUMBNAILS BY OLLY/SHUTTERSTOCK

