

Facebook-Induced Depression – Comparing Friends – Script

Ana: Madeleine Grimes from Salon has written this piece about Facebook. Facebook has become a „disaster show“. It's become a place where we see snippets of people's lives and we judge ourselves based on what our friends are doing. Of course you have friends who are the overachievers, people who brag about their successes at work, their successes at marriage, having new children; and then there are the people who you are not necessarily friends with but you recognize them from middle school or high school, you decided to friend them anyway. And their lives are complete and utter mess based on what they are posting. And those are the people who make you feel better about yourselves. Now Samantha and I have been talking about it a little bit during the break and she is like „Oh my God, that is absolutely true!“ and you kind of find yourself, you know, first of all, I hate friending people who I don't communicate with regularly. It's like the worst thing because I don't want people knowing what's going on in my personal life. And I don't wanna judge what's going on in their lives but at the same time I feel like it's kind of human nature, because we are competitive beings, so you do see other people, you do see what they are doing and you can't help but compare yourself.

Samantha: This is a whole new social phenomenon. We've never had to deal with this. This generation has to deal with so much more than the previous generations and the fact that you are in your face being compared to your peers. So, yeah, when you're having a shitty day and your peer is off in paradise or celebrating their marriage and you're waiting for your boyfriend to propose to you, you can feel even more like shit. On the flip side, if you're having a shitty day and someone else is having a shitty day, you feel better. Misery enjoys company. But, what's really interesting about this is, the author brings up a very interesting point with the fact that we do, especially with some of the friends, where I say "friends" loosely, because like you said, it's somebody that you know from middle school, well, it's just these snippets of their lives. And even with your own friends, it's almost an edited version of a more glamorized version of their life, so it makes it even more difficult. And I really think that Facebook and I'm really sure that there's statistics and studies that can lend proof to just how much does Facebook cause anxiety, how much does Facebook cause depression, because a lot of people are stuck comparing themselves to these unrealistic and edited versions of their friends.

Ana: Since we don't have these studies right now, let's...

John: We've talked about one before.

Ana: Oh really? OK. That's interesting.

Samantha: What did it say?

John: I don't remember the exact numbers, but it was about depression. About the people who are constantly on social media tend to be more depressed. Because they're comparing themselves to fake versions of real lives.

There are a couple of things here, so like, I think it's one thing where people have to post photos of their vacations or whatever and so you're seeing their life as you said, as a more glamorous version and how can you compare to the fake thing that they're showing you. That's one thing and I think that I probably do that too. When I am having a good day or watching a movie, I'll say something about it. I don't often update „Hey, I just did nothing for three hours“ or „I slept way too late and I have a shit life“ Like I don't post that, that's true.

Samantha: On the opposite side, people do. We have to talk about that. I can't stand those people. Constantly complaining.

Ana: Yes, I have a few of those people on my Facebook account and, first of all, I've already hid them from my feed because I don't want to read how depressed they are and how much life sucks. But you have like this culture of oversharing now because of social media. People don't just post about their ham sandwiches anymore. They post about like something as serious as „I had a miscarriage yesterday, I'm very depressed“, stuff like that. And it's unbelievable, right?

Samantha: It's unbelievable what people are sharing on Facebook nowadays and an author brought up an interesting point at the end when Paula supposedly posted all the stuff about her husband being in prison and what not and he was curious to the fact that: was she posting it to get attention or was she posting it because she didn't care what other people thought? It's to get attention. It's always to get attention. If you don't care what other people think, you're gonna post anything. It's 100% to get attention. I can't stand that.

John: I don't disagree with that. Look, I don't know if the cause is nature or nurture, and I'm not gonna go into details because I haven't thought about that enough. I think that men and women approach that very differently. In terms of what you were talking about getting like a good feeling because they have drama or something, you're saying you feel better when you're taking something.

Samantha: Now always, you know, I'm just being honest. There are those times when you feel really crappy

John: I'm not judging you. This is a place of compassion. I do think that men and women do use social media differently and....

Ana: Men are better evolved so they probably don't, you know, focus on the petty stuff, it's only about women.

John: Maybe men are so emotionally dead that they don't know they can get some good feelings, but I do think it's different. I'm not saying whether it's better or worse.

Samantha: When you see one of your Facebook friends continually posting „Oh, I got into a car accident today“ or „Oh this is going on to me, woe is me, woe is me, woe is me“ and all they do is focus on....

John: They're hidden.

Samantha: Oh, they're hidden?

John: They have to be pretty damn attractive to not be hidden at that point. They have to go on beach trips constantly not to be hidden at that point.