Source: <https://www.healthyway.com/content/5-questions-to-ask-yourself-before-posting-to-social-media/>

**There is no escaping social media in today’s world. According to the Pew Research Center, virtual connection has become a common part of our cultural milieu, with 59 percent of internet users posting on at least one social networking site. From social media to online dating, we have landed in an online world of social interaction well beyond what we’re psychologically prepared for.**

-          There are no rules and no specific forms of etiquette to follow when it comes to social media, leaving all of us vulnerable to a broad spectrum of online posting behavior and the psychological aftermath that comes with witnessing certain content. While we are able to control the content that comes into our feeds on some level, we cannot control what other people decide to share on any given day. Sometimes it’s intriguing or enjoyable, but there are times when we question the quality of what we’re seeing.

-          Facebook has been linked to depression and also has been described as a haven for narcissists. Instagram, and the widespread use of “filtering,” has raised concerns about how these digitally altered photos leave many people feeling envious or bad about themselves.

-          While there are no statistics yet on why any given social media user chooses to post what they do, we can generalize and say that the majority of content is impulsively shared without reflection. The main motivation is to “share” a particular idea, picture, story, or experience, but what would happen if we took a mindful pause before sending a post out into the world? What if we really considered what we’re posting and why we’re posting it?

-          Most of the things we do on a daily basis are either habitual or impulsive. We wake up, have coffee, go to work, schedule an appointment, eat a meal, and check our phones all without thinking too hard. Social media use has become part of this way of functioning.

-          The most impulsive population are young adults aged 18-29 who use social media more than any other age group. Some 93 percent of teens use the internet, and more of them than ever are treating it as a venue for social interaction with a minimal capacity for reflection due to their underdeveloped brains. Being the biggest users of social media combined with having the greatest tendency toward impulsivity leaves this population even more vulnerable to mindless posting.

-          One of the ways I help people who are presented with a decision–and often the urge to act impulsively–is through teaching them the idea of pausing. Taking a moment for reflection before jumping into a choice leads to less regret and a more satisfactory outcome. We have to create the space between the thought and the action because that moment doesn’t organically happen for many of us. In life, there are some choices that can be reversed, but there are also many that are irrevocable; social media posts fall somewhere in the middle.

-          Next time you share a post ask yourself these five questions and see if it shifts your decision to share that particular content, picture, or thought.

**1. Why *this*?**

Ask yourself why you’re choosing to share before posting. What is the intention behind the post? It might be to share an important idea, or it could be to make an old boyfriend jealous. Taking a brief pause and doing some self-inquiry before posting will slow down your process, which is a great practice for being more mindful and less impulsive.

**2. Who will see this?**

Taking a moment to reflect on who will see your post will help you to discern whether the post is appropriate or beneficial to your social standing. You may have to consider whether your accounts are private or public, or whether it’s a business or personal profile. A post that’s intended for the family will also be seen by all of your other followers, so you’ll want to be aware of this before sharing.

**3. Would I want this on the front page of the *New York Times*?**

As much as we trust the internet and social media, when you post something, it’s out there. If you make the presumption that everything you post could potentially be front-page news, you can get a sense of what you’re willing to expose. We are a sensationalized culture, and anything shared online is considered fair game. Don’t live in denial that a private account is truly private.

**4. How will others feel when they see this?**

This is a great question for tapping into a moment of empathy or for being more sensitive. We often post without realizing that there are many people seeing what we’re sharing beyond the people we are holding in mind. Becoming aware of how your post will affect the broader culture may shift what you share.

**5. What do I expect?**

One of the most depressing moments for many social media posters is not getting a “like.” If you’re expecting people to approve or value your post, then be prepared for disappointment. Getting clear about your expectations before posting is another great way to discern between valuable posts and posts intended for improving your self-worth.

*Provided by:*

**Ms. Megan Weinkauf**

Instructor of Management

Oral Roberts University