The Effects of Social Media

Does social media make or break peace? Social media is definitely a place to communicate and stay close to friends and family all over the world. However, it may not always be the most efficient way to communicate.

Social media is any platform on the internet or any app on your phone on which you can interact with other people. This means you can stay connected with family and friends who live far away. Social media gives you a platform to express your thoughts. Many people do not feel they are heard when trying to express themselves to a group of people face to face. But when they use social media as a place to communicate their thoughts and feelings, they are heard and understood more by people who also relate. Reason being the algorithms of social media apps such as Tiktok and Instagram show users things they want to see based on how users interact with posts and material. Additionally social media is also a great place to spread positivity and show kindness. People often share things they were or are struggling with on social media. Users who come across these posts and relate to them often show kindness and support. This is the positive side to social media. `

On the other hand, social media isn't always a great place for teens and even adults to interact with others. Spending too much time on social media can have its downsides too. Cyberbullying has become quite popular due to the use of social media by teenagers and sometimes adults. According to Pew Research Center 59% of teens and 40% of adults in the U.S. have experienced some type of cyberbullying. Social media posts give people unrealistic views of other people's lives which makes them feel bad about their own. Users mostly only post things that make their lives look almost perfect. People who view these posts typically compare themselves and their lives to these photoshopped and altered photos. People who use social media often may see others experiencing things that they may not get to. This develops FOMO or the fear of missing out, and too much FOMO leads to depression and anxiety. This also results in users isolating themselves from others. This is the dark side of social media.

At thirteen years old I have had some of my own experiences on social media. I have family members that live all around the world. I have an uncle who lives in

Australia and I sometimes call or text him via Whatsapp. Similarly, I may contact my other family members who live in India. My friend Alice, transferred schools and I am still very close with her to this day. We talk and text each other through Snapchat. It feels good to connect with her and check up on her after a while. Even though social media is a great way to stay connected with others I still have had some bad experiences on these platforms. A group of girls who were not very fond of me posted a video about me on Tik Tok. This wasn't even some confrontation telling me what their problem was, it was just a slide show of bad pictures of me and after every picture they wrote something rude or something that wasn't true. Worst of all they posted this slideshow/video from an anonymous account. I found it was them because the of girl's that made the video told me and laughed in face about it. Looking at these pictures and comments upset me. This experience for me was a wake up call that social media may not always be a good place to spend my time on.

Overall, social media has its ups and downs, it depends on how you use it. We should use social media to our benefit. It should be used as a place to bring people together not as a place to destroy a person's mental health and their relationships. Social media can make or break the peace in the world and in our daily lives but it is in our hands.

Sources
Pew Research Center
Child Mind Institute