[Soft ambiance song in the background]

[Sounds of typing on iMessage keyboard softly]

So many people make a new year’s resolution that states, “I’m going to lower my social media screen time” But why would they say this unless using social media was a harmful thing? A thing that needs to be changed?

[background song fades in then out]

Today we’ll be addressing two questions. The first, is social media considered an addiction? The second, if so, should there be an age limit on social media?

Let me first say that there is no official medical recognition of social media actually causing any diseases or disorders.

But, addictions usually have some type of negative effect. And there has been studies on how social media affects its users. Social media can cause depression, anxiety, negative body image, and unhealthy sleep patterns.

Addictions normally form from people using something constantly. A recent study in 2017 found that people spent about two and a half hours on social media a day, which seems like enough time doing something every day to be considered an addiction.

Leslie Coutterand talks about social media addiction in her ted talk saying,

[insert youtube video 8:54-9:23]

[Many study shows that our current social media consumption can lead us to depression, addition, self-doubt, and unhappiness. That social media algorithm creates echo chambers and reduce our exposer to new ideas. So how can teenagers learn to know who they are, develop self-love, and feel free of their own choices if they’re constantly conditions by this addictive media.]

She talks about how the social media algorithm puts us into a never ending loop of constant swiping to see the next post.

If we think about social media the same way we think about other addictive substances, like tobacco and alcohol, should there be an age restriction on consuming it?

Well, there is an age restriction. But it’s not as high as for things like smoking tobacco and drinking alcohol. For Instagram and Twitter you only have to be 13 to sign up.

But, that doesn’t stop children younger than 13 from signing up, there is nothing stopping someone from lying about their age on the internet. We have things like IDs to control the age limit on products like tobacco and drinking, which is only successful because the transaction happens in real life. People don’t need to show any proof of age when signing up for social media.

Personally I think the age limit should be increased for social media, and showing ID when signing up should be included as well. Though this would mean the sign up process would take longer because people would have to start checking all the IDs. Though, this could mean for more jobs.

But let’s see another opinion on this subject

[insert youtube clip] [3:37-4:18]

[What is it that we're really trying to accomplish? And so, probably better than creating a law about what age kids can have access to social media. What we ought to do is do a better job of educating people about the benefits and the negative consequences of social media. Now, that's a real challenge but that's where the solution lies. So, often times, we think that by creating a law, you know is a lot easier because we just say this is what you’re supposed to do or this is what you can or can't do. And everybody's going to follow it. The truth is we know that that doesn’t happen, that not everybody follows all of the laws. So even if we created a law there's still going to be some parents that allows their kids to access social media.]

But this isn’t to say social media is always bad. I can actually think of a lot of good things about it. It’s great at connecting people all around the world, learning about different cultures has never been easier. And, social media can be used as a platform for raising a lot of money for good causes.

So I’m just going to leave y’all by saying this. No matter what the age limit is, with no strict enforcement, it won’t keep the younger children away. Social media is an addictive substance, people use it constantly throughout the day, every day. But like many things there are both good and bad sides. Using social media should be used in moderation.

[song in the background grows louder and then fades back out]