Social Media and Body Image Script - Dawn Culton

\*chill music fades in\*

We all use social media. Whether it be Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or one of literally hundreds of other social media apps, our generation is spending increasing amounts of time looking at other people's lives. Social media can connect us to others, creating thousands of communities, and making us feel like we’re a part of something bigger than ourselves.

However, constantly looking at other people’s pictures can make us compare our everyday life with their highlight reels. People rarely post everyday, unedited, unfiltered photos. Instead, people spend hours manipulating their photos to make themselves look as good as possible.

Looking at these filtered photos day after day, hour after hour, affects our perception of reality. By looking at other people, the way we view ourselves is affected.

“Especially these days we dive in, trying to display only perfection. And then we think the immediate satisfaction that follows. And then we see what everyone else is posting. And then we start to get frustrated. Ugh, she is SO beautiful. That quickly becomes why can’t I be her? It can be overwhelming

When we look at others “perfect” lives, bodies, and selves, we devalue our own experiences. It makes us feel bad about ourselves and our bodies. Thus, many people turn to editing their own photos, often using facetune or photoshop to shape themselves into what they consider a more perfect version of themselves.

Creating fake versions of yourself is damaging.

“People aren’t actually obtaining this body type in real life. It’s fake, it’s a facade, and honestly looking at photos of your body looking one way and then looking at it in real life in a different way can honestly cause a whole host of mental issues. When you’re constantly editing pictures of your body and your face and changing the way you look it can lead to people having so many insecurities and feeling horrible about their bodies in real life. It can lead to unhealthy eating habits, body dysmorphia, and can often lead people to straight up plastic surgery to get this body type permanently.”

Often times people edit their photos using filters on snapchat or instagram. These platforms contain options for beauty filters that are supposed to make you fit better into society’s beauty standards. They make your eyes bigger, smooth your skin, make your nose thinner, and sometimes even put make up on you. This makes it extremely easy for people to edit their photos.

“Now the tricky thing about these filters is that sometimes the effect seems perfectly subtle. Maybe before you never wanted a rounder face or a skinnier jawline but suddenly when you see yourself in this alternate eerie version, your mind can start to prefer that perfect filtered version of yourself. And that’s when I think it can become very bad for your self-esteem and bad for your self perception, when you start to prefer the filtered version of yourself as opposed to your actual self on camera because again that’s debatable compared to what your actual real life self is.”

When people filter images of themselves they are often disappointed when they see a picture of themselves unfiltered. They become accustomed to a face that isn’t theirs, and they start to resent their actual appearance. This directly demonstrates how social media can negatively affect body image.

So what can you do if you don’t want to delete all your social media but you’re concerned that your social media may be negatively affecting your mental health? One thing that you can do is follow body positive accounts. These accounts often post unfiltered photos, and showcase people of various builds, weights, races, and genders, reminding their followers that their body is good enough without a photoshop.

Another strategy is to go down your instagram feed, facebook feed, and so on, and simply unfollow accounts that make you feel bad at yourself. Looking at the photos of an influencer isn’t worth it if it makes you feel bad about yourself.

Overall, just be cognisant of the effect that social media can have on your body image. Remind yourself that what you’re seeing is almost never real. Remind yourself that you are good just the way you are.

\*upbeat music fades out\*

CLIPS

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9U2sVP97TyQ> around min 3
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7mgPKtnYZA> 6:40-7:15
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8tt6NQpJyM> 5:50-6:25