

A Letter to Adults

Dear adults,

As a fourteen year old teenager, I know a lot about what teens think, feel, stress, and care about, one of those things is social media. Being born into a generation of technology, most of us rely on our phones and the apps that come with them. There's Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, Vsco, etc. All of these different apps and more can be really fun but also very dangerous, especially to people as young as we are. Teenagers now a days post funny or surprising things that happen in their lives onto social media and that's perfectly normal, however, that also leads them into getting used to the idea of posting everything onto social media, sometimes forgetting that the whole world sees their content. Soon enough, they get to the point of posting their entire lives onto the web and don't even realize it until the adults or parents notice that it's an addiction.

I admit, I have an addiction to my phone and I'm not proud of it, there are times when I lay in my bed after waking up and spend almost four hours on my phone, before even getting any breakfast and I know I'm not the only one. I go to restaurants with my family at times and see kids my age out with their families and they're on their phones. Things like this only prove one thing - that you adults are right when you say that our generation is addicted to technology. Some of you may not even know why we're so attached to it and sometimes I don't either.

The life of a teenager is pretty hard, so a lot of times kids use social media as a way to let their feelings out and talk about any problems going on in their lives at the moment, and when there's a positive response and there's people who go out of their way to help that kid out; social media is probably the only thing that that person has to make him/her feel safe. I know it might be hard to hear and understand but, many times, talking to someone you don't know online can actually really help, especially when that other person knows exactly what you're going through. Of course there's risks but I'm not talking about meeting up with the person or giving out any address, just talking to someone is very therapeutic. The question you probably have in your mind right now is, "Why don't they just talk to their parents, friends, or a therapist about it?" Some kids are very open with their struggles and do talk to their parents and friends about it, but not everyone is like that and not everyone has a good and honest relationship with their parents,

and not everyone has friends either. As for the therapist, yes, they are very helpful but not every family can afford one, therefore, social media can sometimes be a teenager's only hope.

Another reason for why us teens might use social media is because it's fun. You get to connect with your friends outside of school, tag them in things you think are funny, interact with people from other schools, and post really cool things (most of the time). It's fun to share your greatest life moments with your friends online, it really is. I became friends with so many great people through the internet that go to other schools, so social media is a great way for me to be more social and out there.

There are a lot of great things to take from the apps that we have on our phones and there are also lots of bad things that can happen when using them. You, adults, probably think you know your teenager pretty well because you monitor all of their social medias, right? Well, here are some apps you may not think your child has, but they probably do. VSCO - this is an app where you just post pictures and videos, there are followers on there but that doesn't matter because everyone can access and look at his/her posts. Kids think that because this app is not really well known that they can post pictures of their drugs or alcohol without getting caught. Almost everyone posts the link to their VSCO's in their Instagram bio, the good thing for parents is that you don't need to download the app to see your teen's content. Of course, that's pretty bad news for us kids. Another app you might not think your child has is something called a Finsta. A Finsta is not an app - it's just a second account that teens make on Instagram, that's where it gets the name from because it stands for Fake Instagram. The purpose of a Finsta is to post funny content that you wouldn't actually post on your real Instagram account, and they come up with clever names so that not a lot of people know about it. The bad thing for you adults is that teens can make their Finsta's private, so unless you want to make them show you their fake account, you can't really spy on them. Finsta's give teens the opportunity to post whatever they want on their account, including them with drugs and alcohol, without having to worry about their parents finding out about it because they most likely won't even find out their usernames. Those are the two main secret social medias adults need to specifically look out for.

The life of a teenager during this generation is very tough and confusing. Although social media plays an important part in making life like that for us, it also has a lot of benefits,

even though you might not understand that yet. So parents and adults, watch out for your teen's social media because you might not know if it benefits or hurts your child.

Sincerely,

A Middle School Student