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What My Vacation From Facebook Taught Me About My Life

I think most of us tend to go through life thinking that other people have it so much better than we do and Facebook makes it easy to keep that theory alive. Taking this vacation from Facebook helped me decide to give up on the idea that my life as a whole will be perfect in every aspect. This has allowed me to be a much happier version of myself.

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Have you ever wanted to take a vacation from a friend? One who seems to be bragging constantly about her children, her husband, even her dog? Those friends can be so annoying, and sometimes I just avoid calling them back for a while.

Facebook can be described as hundreds of these friends all talking at

you at once. Facebook has become a press release for the life everyone wants to live. A place where people put up an idealized version of what they want their relationships to be. It's easy to think that all you have to do is sign off if your "friends" are bothering you, but for many people that's easier said than done. Facebook becomes almost an obsession for many people who feel isolated and alone if they don't sign in, and then once they do, they feel even more isolated and alone.

There are a number of studies that say that depression among adults in this country is higher than it's been in decades, and Facebook is a contributing factor. It puts a light on whatever area in your life you feel is lacking. If you take what your "friends" are saying as the whole truth of their lives, then Facebook can make your life of carpools, eating fast food, and being happy if your teenagers actually notice you, seem pretty dismal.

Some of my female "friends" are always posting about their husbands and how amazing they are. These men give them foot massages every night, bring them martinis in bed, and whisk them off on a moment's notice to some beautiful island where they hide from their children. Not only do I have to read these posts, but there are always pictures to go along with them.

A few weeks ago, I decided to take a self-imposed vacation from Facebook. At first it drove me a little nuts to see that icon on my phone as if it was yelling at me every day to just give up my vacation and check one little thing. I resisted though, because after 24 hours off of it, I actually felt more relaxed and better about myself.

After a few days, I no longer cared that much about checking it and I stopped caring how my "friends" were doing in their lives. I quickly realized that I had been spending more time than I should have on Facebook. What seemed like only five minutes, could add up quickly to

an hour or more over the course of a day. This was time I couldn't get back and could've been doing so many other things. I could've been spending quality time with real friends in person, I could've gotten more writing done, or God forbid I could've been exercising. Until I took this vacation from Facebook, I didn't realize how much of my time I spent looking at other peoples' lives and not living my own.

During these two weeks, I spoke on the phone, emailed, texted or had lunch with my real friends, and we caught each other up with what was really going on in our lives. My Facebook friends either didn't notice that I had disappeared for a while, or didn't contact me if they did notice. I can't say that the gossipy side of me wasn't curious about the Facebook world, but for the most part I just lived my life.

At the end of the two weeks, when I went back on Facebook, I was able to get some perspective on my life and the lives of my cyber friends. Suddenly, I noticed that while some people were bragging, there were others whose lives weren't all sunshine and roses, somehow I had missed these people my first go-around. I think most of us tend to go through life thinking that other people have it so much better than we do and Facebook makes it easy to keep that theory alive.

I had often wondered if I was living up to my full potential, and now I realize that very few people have hit a pinnacle in their life where they can say they are exactly where they want to be both personally and professionally. Taking a vacation from Facebook allowed me to pull back from caring about other peoples' lives and see mine more objectively. There are times my career isn't going well, but my husband and I are getting along great. Then there are times my husband and I are having issues, but I feel completely fulfilled by an article I wrote.

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