

Social media and values

Please note that it is not necessary to do all of these activities in one lesson. They can be spread over time across the unit. Some of the activities can be set for homework assignments, to save class time.

Values message: Are we drawing our happiness and self-validation from our social media or from inside ourselves?

Silent sitting

Close your eyes and take some deep breaths to relax. ... Now in your mind's eye imagine your mobile phone. Imagine how it looks, how it feels,..... As you look at it, you hear a "ping" as a message arrives..... How do you feel when you hear a message arriving? Where in your body do you feel the sensation? Is it a good feeling, a bad one or a neutral one? Now imagine that you send a message to a friend or friends. You can see that they are online. Your message was important and you are excited to get their reply. You wait and wait and wait.... But no reply comes. All day and that night, still no reply comes. How do you feel about your friends not answering? Where in your body do you feel this feeling? What do you do? What do you feel about yourself because your friends have not answered you? What are the thoughts going through your mind? Take a moment to listen to the thoughts going through your head. ... Let yourself feel any of the feelings that these thoughts bring up. Now imagine that you have a bright light shining in your heart. Let the light get bigger and bigger until it fills your whole body. Imagine that it is especially bright and strong in the parts of the body where you felt reactions to your friends not answering your messages. Allow the warmth of the light to burn away any bad feelings, until you feel strong and powerful. ... Then when you are ready, open your eyes.

For discussion after the silent sitting

- Invite 2 or 3 students who are willing to share what they felt during the visualisation.
- [Hopefully some students will talk about annoyance or impatience when their friends didn't reply instantly. They might have had thoughts like "I know they are online but they are not answering. Why? Are they angry with me? Have I said something to upset them? Have they unfriended me? Should I unfriend them?]
- Social media are about "different place/different time" (ie the people are in different places and the person receiving the message might read it at a different time from when it was sent. But using social media has caused us to expect "different place/same time". So when we don't get a reply in the "same time", especially when we know the other person is online, we have doubts and ask questions about ourselves and whether they like us, etc. Also, there is research evidence that when we hear the "ping" of a message coming in it releases the chemical dopamine, which makes us feel good, so we start to get addicted to this feeling and want more and more messages to "ping" into our in-boxes.
- Discuss how they felt when they allowed the good feelings to come from inside their own hearts instead of from the social media.
- What advice does this activity give us about our happiness? What, if anything, can we do in our lives to put this into practice?

Values message: Will our social media behaviour now affect our lives in future?

Stories: People losing jobs because of social media

<https://careers.workopolis.com/advice/6-people-who-were-fired-for-social-media-posts/>

<http://press.careerbuilder.com/2018-08-09-More-Than-Half-of-Employers-Have-Found-Content-on-Social-Media-That-Caused-Them-NOT-to-Hire-a-Candidate-According-to-Recent-CareerBuilder-Survey>

After reading the story, discuss the issues, e.g.

- Was this surprising to you to read about people losing their jobs?
- After reading these stories, do you think you have put anything on social media that could cause problems for your future job? Have you put anything that might affect another person's future job?
- Even if you take these things down, can you be sure that a future employer will never find them, even in 10 years time?
- Is it worth it to take the risk?

Quote

“I will only post what I want my reputation to be 10 years from now.”

- Display this quote on the classroom wall for the duration of this whole unit.
- Ask students to brainstorm what they want their reputations to be 10 years from now. Let them post the good ideas on the wall on cards.

Values message: Who am I?

When using social media, we use emoticons often to show what we are thinking/feeling. Ask students to use some emoticons to emphasise their personal values/who they really are.

They could use emoticons that show what their special talents/interests are (such as sport, music, etc.).

But also encourage them to express who they really are on the inside.



(I communicate from my heart. OR My head, heart and hands are in harmony.)



(I am a shining light that lights up myself and everyone I meet.)

- Another idea is to ask the students to post an emoticon to show how they are feeling when they arrive at school in the morning. This can be used as a point of discussion

about feelings, eg Roshan is feeling angry today. What can we suggest he can do to feel better?

Values message: Are social media values human values?

(Inspired by <https://www.trebuchet-magazine.com/are-social-media-values-human-values/>)

Questions for discussion

Ask students to work in groups (4 is a good size) to discuss and fill in the following table.

Social media value	Reason/s why this is also a human value	Reason/s why this is not a human value
People can share their private information with many people who they do or do not know.		
Quantity– you can have hundreds of “friends” over quality (ie a small number of real friends)		
Friendship-free friendship (i.e. they can be friends even if you don’t know them in any meaningful way)		
Going viral is a way to get attention.		
You can hide who you really are.		

Values message: Moral challenges of social media

Questions for discussion

- From time to time, select one of these questions.
 - Ask the question and then ask students to sit silently with their eyes closed for 1-2 minutes and hold the question in their minds. [Note that this will help them to appreciate how silent sitting for a short time can help them to tap into the deeper parts of their brains to think of better answers.]
 - After the silent sitting, discuss the question in groups, then invite some groups to share their ideas with the class.
1. What are some of the moral impacts of social media?
 2. How can your use of social media improve your character?
 3. Which of these values do you remember when on social media platforms and which do you forget? (Share examples of your own experience, if any, with your groupmates)
 - humility
 - self-control
 - forgiveness
 - honesty

- fairness
 - kindness
4. Have you ever noticed an attitude change in yourself after reading or posting on social media? If so, please share your experience with your group.