

FACEBOOK BLUES: IS FACEBOOK MAKING YOU UNHAPPY?

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(6) One simple answer is that Facebook and other social media is addictive. Dr. Cecilie Andraessen of the University of Bergen in Norway developed the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale which can measure your level of Facebook dependency. Through studies, Andraessen shows that symptoms of Facebook addiction closely resemble alcohol, drug and other forms of chemical addiction. For Facebook addicts, using Facebook triggers the same reward pathways in the brain as would be triggered by drug use. As well, social media addicts also exhibit a greater activation of their amygdala and striatum, which are regions of the brain associated with impulsive behaviors. This makes it more likely that they will log into

Facebook more often than they want. Like with many other addictions, the use of Facebook for addicts comes with feelings of anxiety, conflict as well as withdrawal when they are unable to use Facebook. Nir Eyal is the author of a book titled *Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products*. He says Facebook has been intentionally designed to have addictive qualities. These are the keys to how Facebook hooks users, "...a trigger, such as loneliness, boredom, or stress; an action, such as logging into Facebook; an unpredictable or variable reward, such as scrolling through a mix of juicy and boring tidbits in the newsfeed; and investment, which includes posting pictures or liking someone's status update." Does this sound familiar?

Article Questions

- 1) What is subjective well-being?
It is how people rate the quality of their own lives.(2)
- 2) Summarize what Ethan Kross's study found about the amount of Facebook use and the level of subjective well-being people experience.
The more someone uses Facebook, the more unhappy, lonely and dissatisfied they feel with their life so their well-being decreases.(3)
- 3) What does social comparison theory propose?
We have a constant desire to compare our opinions, abilities and status with our peers.(4)
- 4) To whom are you most likely to compare yourself?
You are most likely to compare yourself to people who are similar to you.(4)
- 5) Why does social media distort your ability to compare yourself to others accurately?
Social media doesn't portray a person's life accurately because users of social media create a social media persona that makes them seem happier and more successful than they really are.(5)
- 6) What is Facebook addiction similar to?
It is similar to alcohol, drug and other forms of chemical addiction.(6)
- 7) Use the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale to measure your level of Facebook addiction. For each statement answer: very rarely, rarely, sometimes, often or very often.
 - 1) You spend a lot of time thinking about Facebook or planning the use of Facebook.
 - 2) You feel the urge to use Facebook more and more.
 - 3) You use Facebook to forget about personal problems.
 - 4) You have tried to cut down on the use of Facebook without success.
 - 5) You become restless or troubled when you can't use Facebook.
 - 6) You use Facebook so much that it has a negative impact on your work or studies.

If you answer "often" or "very often" to at least four of the above statements, then you might have a Facebook Addiction.