

# Peaceful Life Radio

## Show Transcript

### Finding Peace in a Social Media-Driven World

Welcome to Peaceful Life Radio

Hello, everyone. This is David Lowry. Alongside me is my good buddy, Don Drew. Don, let's preview our show today.

#### The Impact of Social Media on Our Lives

Well, David, social media is everywhere in our lives, so our show will be examining the relationship between social media and having a peaceful life.

We're going to examine social media's benefits and drawbacks and offer some suggestions for using it to enhance your life and the good you want to do.

But first, I want to ask you to download, like, and subscribe to our Peaceful Life Radio podcast. It'll help us out a lot.

Don, you've been thinking about social media, and I'm interested in how that relates to our podcast theme of A Peaceful Life.

#### The Top Social Media Apps

Thanks, David. I'm really interested in social media and its impact on our lives, both positive and negative. The top four social media sites are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram. And Facebook, believe it or not, has just under 3 billion users.

That's half the planet, Don. Half the planet. I use nearly all of those, don't you? I use YouTube almost every day. I have a WhatsApp account, and discovered when I was in Europe, that was amazingly important. Instagram, of course, and like everybody else, I have the Facebook account.

#### Positive Impacts of Social Media

Then there's things like LinkedIn. Absolutely.

## Exploring the Positives of Social Media

Let's talk for a minute about some of the positive impacts that social media has had on us. One of the things it's done is it's really helped us build communities and foster connection. People can gather in online forums in ways never before and share information, ideas, solutions, and so on. It's really been helpful in building a community.

It is for me. I don't know how many times I go to social media to learn about something. I go to YouTube to learn how to fix my car or how to make a recipe in the kitchen. I'm so grateful there are people who share their expertise and knowledge, and that is a really positive use of social media.

## Promoting Awareness and Change

And I have a friend that also uses it to raise awareness and promote social change. She's very active on social media, and she challenges people, proposes ideas, gathers interested groups together to take positive social action. And then there's things like promoting empathy and understanding between different cultures for instance.

## Using Media for Good

Those are all amazingly positive things. I call that using media for good. I can think of a few other things. It can actually improve your mental health. I know a lot of people say it's bad for your brain, but sometimes I find it so relaxing to look at social media, learn new things, and find funny things to talk about. I can't tell you how many times my wife and I've had some of the best-- we laugh our heads off. We look at some of the funny stuff that's on there, and some of it is mindless, and some of it is so perceptive and comical. I believe that it can make you a happier person if you choose to make it so.

## Learning and Development

One of my favorite uses of social media is for learning and development. I can learn things and look them up in an instant. I had a situation a few years ago where I had my bumper knocked in or crushed in, and I was lamenting to my daughter-in-law, who said, you can go online and get a YouTube video, and it'll show you how to pour hot water on that and push it out. I thought to myself, that's going to be crazy. So, I looked it up. And sure enough, it worked perfectly.

Thank goodness for your daughter-in-law and for the social media.

## Addressing the Dark Side of Social Media

But Don, there are some more things we can say about social media's positive impact. I think we also ought to admit there are some downsides, and we should mention a few of those.

That's true, David. The spread of negativity is everywhere. Social media platforms can be a breeding ground for negativity, often amplifying and highlighting content that evokes strong emotions and can polarize groups of people. Various algorithms on social media platforms create echo chambers where users are primarily exposed to information and opinions that confirm their existing beliefs. So, they're really only getting one side of any issue.

### Beware of the Algorithm

This is something I think many people are beginning to wake up and realize, but if not, let's quickly explain something about this algorithm. So, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and almost any social media you use watch how you respond to things. They watch what you like and how much time you spend with it, and they're going to give you more of what you like. And it becomes an endless scroll of things that agree with your viewpoint, your way of looking at the world. Now, what you don't know is that the neighbor across the street is getting their version of reality and what they like, and so what I hear from people is, how can those people believe those things?

Well, like you, they're only seeing endless streams of things that agree with them. It's creating quite the polarized country. When we talk about a peaceful life, it's time for all of us to grow up and realize that the media is brokering audiences. They're selling you to an advertiser who will influence you in some way. It makes them money, but honestly, your neighbor across the street is being brokered to a totally different audience. And if we don't realize that, we can sometimes begin to take it too seriously and believe our neighbors are our enemies, or we allow ourselves to get worked up and angry. And let's face it, fear sells a lot of stuff.

Right. Social media also tends to think of it itself as a paragon of free speech and as such they allow people to say whatever they want. Well, whenever people are allowed to say whatever they want, they can spread disinformation or misinformation. And so, a lot of what we hear is not necessarily true, but somebody's intentional stretching or perversion of truth.

Back in the day, when we relied more upon major networks, newspapers, and the like, there were reporters trained in journalism and journalism ethics. Now everybody's a reporter, right? Everybody has access to a microphone and a video camera, and we have social media platforms that will give you a chance to share your views. But what's happening is people are saying things that haven't been checked out.

We mentioned that on this program, A Peaceful Life because it directly interferes with your serenity and peace. Let's face it: Sometimes, we get worked up, don't we? Do you ever find yourself reading something and feel a bit whipped up by what you're reading?

### Cyberbullying

Absolutely, David. There are obviously a number of different kinds of negative impacts. One of the most overt that we haven't talked about yet is cyberbullying and harassment that occurs online, where there are severe negative consequences for the victim. This may lead to anxiety or depression and, even in some cases, self-harm or suicide. Obviously, this is a direct challenge to our peace.

Of course, we would all agree that we shouldn't be doing this. We shouldn't cyberbully. We shouldn't harass. But some people become so angry that they inquire that they ask their friends to make negative responses to people, or they gang up on people online. I've seen shows that say, hey, here's a picture of so and so, and you need to call their office and let them know what you think. So, they get 10,000 phone calls or 10,000 emails, all of them very harassing and upsetting. This is a form of cyberbullying. And I'm afraid it's become acceptable in our society. But you can't do those things that cause harm to other people and call yourself a peacemaker. And you can't have a peaceful life if you're participating in all of that because sooner or later, it's going to happen to you.

### Don't Spread Negativity

One of the things I've learned the hard way is that I gave in and wrote some very negative comments to people. Guess what? For the next couple of days, I'm getting some responses back the other way, and they're really as vitriolic and angry and just as rabid as maybe my statement. But I discovered as I received these messages from people I didn't know how it made me feel cold, anxious, edgy, and not enjoying looking at the media anymore. And suddenly, I realized, is that what I'm doing to other people when I send these responses? So, I have a rule now. I just don't do it. There's lots of stuff to react to, but there's also a lot of good things I can react to. I don't have to be spreading negativity around. I had to stop doing that so I could have a more peaceful life.

### Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

David, before we start discussing strategies for finding peace on social media, I want to discuss one other area that has a negative impact: FOMO, or fear of missing out. Constant exposure to curated feeds showcasing others' perfect lives can create this fear. In other words, we see all these things that everybody's doing or experiencing, and we begin to feel like we are the ones being left out in this process.

I know how they feel.

You are missing out. Is that what?

I am missing out. The good life is passing me by.

No, I don't believe that.

I don't know. I have a great life, but here's the fun thing. I can remember years ago, driving down the 405 freeway. in Los Angeles, and I saw Mercedes and BMWs, and I'd see these Testarossas, and all these amazing cars go by, and I think, what do these people do that drive all of these cars? I'm driving this Volkswagen, and I can barely keep it up. Where do people find their money? Well, social media has amplified this a million times. We suddenly think. Wow. What am I doing wrong? Everybody else seems to have it great. What's wrong with me? It's that fear of missing out, and it creates comparisons. It creates a feeling that you're not quite enough. And it feeds into all of our insecurities if we're not careful.

As you mentioned, looking at all those other cars can lead to dissatisfaction and envy, anxiety and stress because you're getting left out, and maybe even impulsive decision-making. Because you see what others have, you might act on that. You may have gone and bought that Mercedes, David, and it may be a little bit beyond your price range.

But I have to have it because everybody else has one, Don.

### Strategies for Finding Peace in Social Media

Let's move on to some strategies for peace. What do you say?

I think it's important that we think about some strategies for peace because it's really important that we use social media for good instead of allowing it to rob us of our happiness, our joy, and our security.

### Track Your Time

One strategy would be to track your time. Facebook even has tools for tracking your time, and I imagine others do as well. So, one of the first things you might want to do is look at the amount of time that you're spending on social media. It may surprise you. And once you do that, you can set time limits and perhaps even allow yourself a schedule for looking at social media. I know, for instance, Facebook is one of the ways that I keep up with my children are doing because they like to post what's going on in their lives. And it actually is a pretty effective way for me to see what they're interested in, what they're doing. And so, I enjoy that.

Set your time, like anything, you can use it to excess. You can watch too much television; you can do too much Facebook.

But it's important also, Don, that you use that time in a way that motivates you. Here's how I use it sometimes. Instead of allowing it to control me, sometimes I say, okay, I'm going to reward myself with 10 minutes of time if I can get these things done that I've been needing to get done. I use it as a little incentive and reward, and it works for me. In other words, I use it in a way that will move me to do things I need to get done.

### Turn Off Your Notifications

David, have you ever been talking to someone and a conversation's going along well so that it seems like they're listening to you, and then all of a sudden, their phone beeps or squawks with some kind of notification, and their attention immediately is drawn to their phone?

I have been guilty of this in the past. One of the best recommendations I've heard of, there are ways to turn off notifications on all your social media. Turning that off helps you from getting distracted by all of these constant notifications and allows you to decide when you're going to look at your phone and when you're going to check what's going on in your social media.

This is huge, Don. I'm going to testify to this because I used to look at my phone, and it'd be like 345 and a little circle, and it'd be like, oh, somebody responded to something that I said, or it'd be Don Drew has posted on Facebook. You need to read this.

And there was something about looking at my phone and seeing that there was a circle, and it doesn't go away unless you go and open the app and look at all those notifications. And then one day, I said, I just got to stop this. So, I turned off the notification. So, today, I have no notifications coming in, no sounds, no beeps, no blurbs, no little banners, none of that, and you know what? My life has not suffered. It hasn't suffered in the least. Turning off notifications turned out to be one of the greatest things for me, and I no longer feel compulsive about the use of social media.

### Curate Your Feed

Right now, one of the things I am working on is to curate my feed better. I have a lot of accounts that I've picked up by accident. It seems like everywhere you go these days, if you do any business online, you'll get emails coming in. People work their way into your feed. I know that, on my Facebook account, I have several people who post what I think are pretty negative things, and I don't need to waste my time listening to them. So, I am intentional about going in and curating and removing those that are not helpful to me. That takes a little bit of time, but what I'm finding is I've been working on this now, actually off and on for a couple of months, and I have eliminated an awful lot of negative content that is pretty disturbing and impacts my peacefulness.

Father Don, may I make a confession?

Yes. Yes, my son!

Hide Pesky Posts and Users

Father Don, I have hidden some of my family members' post on social media.

Say it's not so!

And it's because I love these people. I would step in front of a moving train to save one. I'd take a bullet for one. I love them to death, but I cannot stand their political points of view, their constant negativity, their ranting, their raving and their unhappy thoughts that they want to express on social media. And I learned that I have a better family relationship sometimes if they're not coming through on my feed. So, rather than unfriend them, I hide them. And there are ways we can do that on social media. And my life is so much better. I really don't need to know all of their thinking. They think I do, but I don't really want to know all of their thinking. To counter that, Don, I've stopped putting out stuff. Everybody doesn't need to know what I think.

They get to hear this on Peaceful Living Radio.

You can hear it on Peaceful Living Radio if you like, but I'm telling you, it was a hard lesson for me to realize that you need to have a filter. Have a filter, Lowry. You don't need to talk about your political views, your dissatisfaction with religion, your workplace, the people in your life, or somebody who's in the news and doing something stupid in your opinion.

Do a Digital Detox

Okay. We're looking at social media. One more recommendation on how to bring more peace to your life. And that is to consider a digital detox period. We all have periods where we get locked into looking at social media. We catch ourselves spending way too much time, and it's eating up our bandwidth. It's disturbing our peace. And sometimes, it might be a good idea to turn it off for a bit.

Turn it off. You go to the beautiful mountains of Colorado. Or you stand on the Golden Gate Bridge, and I promise you, while you're seeing the great wonders of the world, half the people you see there with their eyes on their phones, missing it all. Because they got a red dot on their phone that says that they've been notified about something. It robs us of so many of life's precious moments.

It used to be that I felt like I had to video everything that happened in my family. Sometimes it's better to let that be a memory than feeling like you have to document everything going on. We are proud of our family and everything, but sometimes it's best to let that take in

that solemn moment and enjoy the moment itself without feeling that it's not real if you don't take a picture of it.

Thanks, David.

### Concluding Thoughts on Social Media and Peace

I think it's important that we remember that managing social media use is a journey and not a destination. We are not saying don't use social media. It certainly has a lot of value. Managing it can help establish or reestablish peace in our lives. So, we need to be patient with ourselves, experiment with different strategies, find what works best for you. By being mindful and intentional in your social media use, you can create a healthy and balanced relationship.

If you feel bad after using social media, you are using it wrong.

Don, I want to make a couple of comments on this. If you want a peaceful life, you've got to curate the good stuff and get rid of the bad stuff. If you want a peaceful life, you've got to quit contributing your bad stuff and start putting in positive stuff. It's that simple. If you feel bad after reading social media, you're using it wrong. I really believe that. You're using it wrong.

The more you're willing to use media for good. The better your life is going to be. The more unwilling you are to allow everybody's pollution into your life, the happier you're going to be. I know this is simple, but it's true.

I want to issue a challenge to our listeners, and that is to use social media but find something to advocate for that's really beautiful. Make the world a better place. Get a YouTube channel and talk about something in the world that's important and beautiful and that people need to know about. Share something. If you cook well, do something with cooking. If you raise children well, talk about raising children.

Contribute to the positivity in this world and notice how you feel when you do it. When you see something that really bites and you feel all this negativity rising, move on and don't respond. They don't deserve it. They're trying to get you to respond, whoever they are that you don't even know. It helps their algorithm. It invites more. Every time you respond to it, just remember those algorithms say, give them more, give them more. Something to think about as you try to develop this peaceful life.

Well, Don, as we come to the close of today's program, let's remind everyone that social media can be a double-edged sword. While it offers connection and information, it can also drain our peace with negativity and envy. But we have the power to control our experience. In this episode, we explored strategies to find balance and use social media for good.



We close, reminding everyone to be mindful of what you consume and contribute. When you see something that tempts you to be negative, move on and do something positive instead. We encourage you to visit our website at [Peaceful Life Radio](#) for more tips, and we hope you'll share your social media peace journey with us.