

The Illusion Of Friendship On Facebook Is Both Amazing And Horrible



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SELF

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When a friendship fades, do you unfriend them on Facebook?

Or let them lurk there among your bonafide friends while you avoid peeking in on their posts?

Six months ago, I learned a good friend was actually not such a good friend, and that was the last time we spoke. Move on. Cut cords. Make peace, right? And yet, there she is on Facebook, her radiant smile and my memories colliding in cyberspace.

I don't see her much, but she's there because I never severed the ties — and neither did she. Truth is, I didn't realize at the time that [the friendship was](#)

over. I figured the revelation that she had acted in such a betraying fashion would be a simple conversation, she'd apologize (which she did), and we'd patch things up and move on.

Only, that's not what happened.

After the conversation, absolute radio silence. And I realized I couldn't trust her ever again. Much as I tried, the apparent trust on which friendship is built had slipped away, a virtual landslide until nothing was left but the memory of a mountainside, at least for me; I don't know what she's thinking.

Many times I thought about reaching out, but wondered what the point was. I'm 44 years old. Life is short. I have no interest in filling mine with drama. So I let it go ... or so I thought.

Every time I see this person on Facebook, I revisit the situation anew. And it's so silly! None of it matters — not then, not now.

Early this morning, before dawn when the house was utterly quiet and everyone I love slept in their warm beds under piles of blankets, I strolled the wood floors alone, awake, wondering about these tenuous connections.

In our real lives, flesh and blood, real time, face to face, we have few people. Deep relationships. Tasks to do. The work at hand. Online, though, there's so much more. And so much less.

I speak often about how the connections we have on social media are wonderful and horrible simultaneously. We stay connected to people far away and on different paths while living lives of meaning, thankful for the social platforms that remind us of a person's birthday or the passing of an old friend's parent.

And then there's the pitfall of being so connected. We're always lurking, watching, sticking to the perennial shadows, as if we're still in someone's life; as if the connection is more than ethereal.

The competition, the emotion, the drama we find online doesn't actually exist. It's all an illusion as we sit in our separate houses, listening to the early rush of morning traffic on a nearby highway, the scream of a late night train as it passes, the wind whipping the tree branches against the window.

Just me. Here. Right now. This old acquaintance is nowhere to be seen, except on Facebook.

Do I take the final step and unfriend? And then she will know that it's final and I've moved on. Can I really move on, though, if I don't take that necessary step and cleanse my life of people who no longer belong in it?

And finally, why is it such a daring move to unfriend a person — a virtual connection, tenuous at best, and one that doesn't ever cross over into reality?

Ask yourselves this: the illusion of connection we have online, what does it mean to you? And why are you loathe to let it go?

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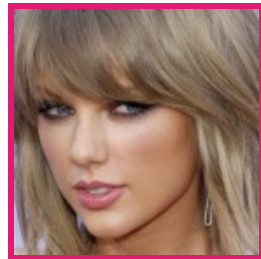
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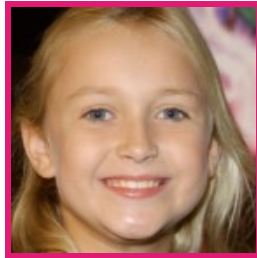
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