

Responsibility



DUJ DŽSÉNE ONLINE

Social media in my life

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When I was a little kid, I never really have a phone in my hand, although, to be fair, screen-based phones were just starting to become popular back then. At the time when I was in nursery, there was strictly one cartoon on TV in the morning, and that was it. Maybe on weekend evenings we would watch a movie with my parents. In the evenings, we would watch a filmstrip at home or read a story. In the summer, we would be outside in the garden or at the beach as long as it was light out, and sometimes I would visit a friend's house. Of course, when school started, things changed. In first and second grade, I did not really miss having my own phone, but after that, as more and more people around me got one, I kept begging my parents, saying that all the others had one, and I wanted a phone, too. I finally got my first phone at the end of fourth grade. I was practically the last one in my class to get one, though looking back, I am grateful that my parents waited until then to let me have one.

Of course, the first thing I did was download every app that was trendy at the time. I did not want to fall behind, after all. But I was never the kind of person who followed every trend on social media. Sure, I tried out all kinds of online platforms for a while, but in the end, I only kept those without which I would have been almost completely left out of the loop. Or at least that's what I thought back then. I spent quite a bit of screen time on my phone, but then, in high school, I noticed that we were sitting with my

friends in the classroom and almost everyone was tapping away on their phones. They barely talked or joked with each other, and even when they did, their phones were somehow still in their hands. On another occasion, I was riding the bus and I saw that when a child who was about one year old, started to cry, his mother instantly pressed her phone into the baby's hand with a story playing on it. It was almost as if the little one had been spell-bound by the phone; he stopped crying immediately. I have seen many similar examples, and it made me think in ways that almost scared me about the whole online world. Where will real human connections go? Quality time spent together? Fun? Of course, I am not saying I do not use my phone or the internet, they are definitely part of my life, but I really try to pay attention to how much and for what purpose I use them.

When I am with friends and family, I make a point of not using my phone at all, or at least keeping it to a minimum. I try to have days when I do not hold it in my hand at all. I try not to fall asleep with my phone and avoid using it before bed. Observing people made me realize just how much better life can be when it does not involve a phone or any kind of internet device. Those days when I am out in nature, with the animals, or even watering the flowers in the garden, or helping my dad on the farm, and then I come back to the house in the evening—such days feel almost liberating. And yes... I feel like the day was meaningful. I felt good, and I felt recharged. Often, when I am with a group of people and I notice that everyone is starting to check their phones, I tell them “Hey, we’re all here together—let’s make the most of it!” I sincerely recommend that everyone take a moment to reflect on how much they use their phones and try spending a day without checking them. I promise, it will feel liberating.