

Maintaining a Mindful Life



Using social media mindfully

Here are some suggestions for helping you use social media in a more mindful way.

Scrolling

Beware the black hole that is your social media feed. Set aside a specific amount of time to scan through it – and stick to it. You might want to set a timer. When the time is up, go and do something else.

Set an intention before starting to scroll. Do you want to find new information? Check for invitations? See what your friends are up to? Or just relax? Knowing why you are using social media helps maintain mindfulness.

Take a moment every so often (for example, every five minutes) to sit back and take your eyes off the screen. Check in and notice the effect that being on social media is having on the body, mind and emotions. Take a few mindful breaths and let go of any tension in the body.

Posting

One of the main problems with digital technology generally is that it encourages distractibility and reactivity. Before posting, take a breath and read over what you have written. If you think it might cause problems for you, come back to it later. You can even copy/paste the text into a document to return to later.

Check in with yourself before posting. What sensations do you notice in your body? What emotions are these associated with? Are you reacting to your emotions. Try to post from a centred, calm place.

Similarly, check in with your values. What are you trying to achieve by the post? Be as conscious of this as possible as very often we are posting reactively, and these posts tend to elicit reactive responses in others.

Responding to other people's posts

Similarly, try to avoid reacting to other people's posts. Be aware of your posture and sensations in your body as you scan through your feed. Notice any emotional reactions. Take a moment to calm and centre yourself before responding.

Check in with your intention for responding. Are you wanting to support someone? Contribute something? Attack them or prove how "right" you are (to build your self-esteem)? What effect does that tend to have when you do it?

If you notice (or create) drama, realise that continuing to engage with it is a choice. You can always ignore people's comments, even if they are directed at you. You can always apologise and try to clarify what you meant.

The more mindfulness you bring to your social media use, the healthier and more effective it will be in the long run.