

SURVIVING *the* SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHT REEL



I recently felt irritated as I scrolled through my Instagram feed and felt perfectly justified in my unkind feelings toward some of my friends. After all, they seemed to live shiny, golden lives filled with one fantastic adventure after another. I felt conflicted but rationalized my feelings. “These people!” I scoffed.

My scoffs and eye rolls evaporated one morning when I read Moroni 7:4: “And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable walk with the children of men.” At this time, Moroni was sharing the words of his father, Mormon, to the Church members. Mormon spoke to the “peaceable followers of Christ” about faith, hope, and charity (Moroni 7:3).

In this marvelous chapter, the Lord teaches how we can have a “peaceable walk” among men. In my negative and certainly unfair attitude toward my fellow social media users, I was not walking very peaceably. Rather, I’d been slinking along, secretly grumbling at others’ successes. I was like a “bitter fountain” not bringing forth “good water,” or not being Christlike in my thoughts and feelings toward others (Moroni 7:11).

I've talked to many social media users who feel irrationally bitter or depressed when scrolling through their friends' posts and pictures. Spending a little less time on social media is one way to avoid these feelings. Of course, many of us enjoy keeping tabs on our family members, friends, and acquaintances via social media. When those unsettling feelings creep in, however, how can we maintain a "peaceable walk with the children of men"? The scripture uses the preposition *with*. In life, we should not be against each other—we should be *with* each other; we should be one.



American author Mark Twain is credited with saying, "Comparison is the death of joy." Sometimes it's a challenge not to make comparisons. But filling our hearts with humility enables us to delight in others' shiny moments instead of begrudging them. The Lord asks us to "walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23).

It's equally important to not invite comparisons. We can ask ourselves some questions before sharing a post. "What is my intent? Is it to exclude someone or cause jealousy?" If so, rethink your sharing. But if it's just to share something you're super excited about or to uplift others, go for it.



Mormon also spoke about serving others with "real intent" (Moroni 7:6). We can adopt this real intent when we sincerely hope for others' happiness. This means being excited for our friend when she posts a selfie with her new outfit or for our friend who posts that he was just voted class president. Whether our social media friends are embarking on a trip we can only dream of or are sharing their academic or sporting achievements, we can celebrate with them.

Living peaceably just feels better. Eliminating the eye rolls and dropping the burden of jealousy helps us to walk *with* others, not away from them or against them.



One friend described social media as a "highlight reel" of life's events. Most people aren't inclined to share pictures of embarrassing situations, grief, or even a bad-hair day. Everyone experiences life's ups and downs, and it's important to remember that social media users typically share the ups.

It's funny how much we allow social media to affect our view of our worth. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, once asked, "Do you think your value to [Heavenly Father] changes based on how many followers you have on Instagram or Pinterest? Do you think He wants you to worry or get depressed if some un-friend or un-follow you on Facebook or Twitter? Do you think . . . popularity make[s] the slightest difference in your worth to the One who created the universe?"¹ **NE**
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NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Living the Gospel Joyful," Oct. 2014 general conference.