

Nadiia Pynkivska

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### How Social-media Addiction Is Similar to Drug Addiction.

In her documentary [“Miss Representation.”](#) Jennifer Siebel Newsom talks about how social media influences young girls in terms of sexualized girl-woman’s image on public and political arenas. It is only one side of the social media power on our children and teens but many others exist. Our children as sponges absorb everything from laptop’s or cellphone’s screens without stopping or comprehension. According to [Christina Gregory](#), Internet Addiction Disorder exists and, like any other illness, has its own signs and symptoms.

From school, a science class, we know that addiction is something that with time will alter physical health of the body. But how Facebook can do it? [WHO defines health](#) as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” At this point, mental and social well-being characteristics of health are entering the game. Social-media addiction is similar to the drug addictions in terms of the behavior of an addicted person and withdrawal effects that potentially would harm a child’s mental and social well-being.

How often do you see a family with kids in public place and each of the kids is stared at their device? How often do parents give kids tablets or smartphones just to make them busy? Can electronic devices substitute live communication or bring up children? Too many questions...

We, as parents, would say that it is nothing serious, it is just harmless cartoons or special designated developmental games. Although modern children grow up very quickly, their brain is

not developed fully to understand media messages and especially, to distinguish the real meaning of media's messages. Then parents blink and a child has a profile on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. A couple of months or years later, you and me and neighboring mother would be screaming at the child, "You are addicted to the smartphone! You are always on your Facebook, Instagram or whatever!" Only now, in my adulthood, I have realized that previously ridiculous words of my parent are truthful. The same situation with the constant been on social media. Modern parents are right in this case because, according to the [Cambridge Dictionary](#), addiction is "the need or strong desire to do or to have something, or a very strong liking for something."

Leslie Walker, a multimedia journalism professor, [in the article "What Is Social Networking Addiction?"](#) provides a simple and understandable definition of the social networking addiction. According to Leslie Walker, "Social networking addiction is a phrase sometimes used to refer to someone spending too much time using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other forms of social media – so much so that interferes with other aspects of daily life." In my childhood, I have had three friends, and most time we played outside in improvised kitchen. Now, children have profiles on each of existing social media. Children are in endless process of checking profiles and pages but they totally forget that life is around them in real world.

One of the trends in the behavior of the drug-addicted person is lying, says [the Narconon Organization](#). They tend to deceive about an immediate cessation of taking drugs or about where they are going like instead of going to the cinema with friends, they are going to a drug dealer for a new dose. Similarly, children might lie about going to bed for sleep but instead, under the duvet, they are spending hours and hours with a phone surfing online. And who knows how many hours your child really spend on social media. According to ["Miss Representation"](#) by

Jennifer Siebel Newsom, children and teenagers spend “10 hours and 45 minutes of media consumption a day.” One can say that numerous special applications exist to help monitor what a child is watching and doing on cell phones or tablets. I can agree with this but no application for measure exact spending time does not exist yet.

Next tendency, in the behavior, is constantly looking for a new dose. When drug addiction becomes more serious and causes an increasing number of doses or amount of substance, you can see an untidy dressed person who is looking for a new and cheap dose. In the same way, the first question from a child in the shopping mall, an airport, and even in the library is about free Wi-Fi. Children are like “crackheads” not taking their eyes off the cellphone’s screen going around and looking for free Wi-Fi or a place with the best signal of it. “Our kids today live on Facebook and cellphones,” says J. S. Newsom in her film. Been active on social media becomes so important as for a scuba diver to make a breath of fresh air after a long dive.

Can you imagine a reaction of a person when something that brings the highest pleasure and joy would be taking away? It will totally change the psychological state of a person. Your so loved child will become a devil in the human body. Withdrawal of social media from children or teens has similar characteristics as withdrawal of drugs in an addicted person. Crying and irritability become normal everyday behavior. It can be caused by the smallest parent’s unwillingness to do what a child wants and asks. The necessity to check the profile on Facebook or Instagram is akin to the painful need for a dose. If you want to take away a cellphone from your child, be ready to attacks similar to psychotic one from a thriller movie. Your child will beg at the beginning followed with crying that gradually grow up to hysteric with falls on the floor and beat a head on the floor. Of course, a child cannot exhibit identical psychological behavior as the mature drug addicted person, but your child will act at the top of his/her psychological state.

As stated in [the article “Internet Addiction and Excessive Social Networks Use: What About Facebook?”](#) by Eduardo Guedes and others, “...define Internet addiction as a syndrome with a set of symptoms that includes:...f) replacing other activities and relationships with recurrent Internet use despite awareness of the bad consequences.” So, with excessive use of Facebook or Instagram, your child creates a virtual world with unreal friends and at the same time loses connection with the actual world around him/her. [Tech Times](#) conducted a study where stated that disorientation, feeling detached from self, severe anxiety, and depression are only a couple of signs that your child would exhibit in case of the withdrawal social media and Internet in general.

As drugs and addiction to them shape children as a human being, “... they are shaping children’s brains and lives and emotions,” says Jennifer Siebel Newsom about Internet and social media in her [movie “Miss Representation.”](#) Let’s help our children to escape from “online cave”. Let’s show our children how good real life. Children’s mind and emotions must be shaped by live communication and live people.