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AESTHETICIZING THE ORDINARY!

If this text had been written 15 years ago, activities such as having and making coffee, cooking favourite dishes, or even making instant noodles would have been considered banal and unworthy of attention. People had no interest in sharing these mundane tasks with others, let alone taking photographs of their food and drinks and sharing them with the world. However, the rise of social media has completely changed this perspective. Nowadays, people tend to share every detail of their lives, regardless of whether it is exciting or not.

This transformation in lifestyle highlights the significant changes that social media has brought about in terms of communication and self-expression. Social media has become a powerful tool for people to connect with others, and it has redefined what is considered valuable or interesting content (Abidin, 2016). Even the most ordinary activities have gained attention and engagement on social media platforms.

It's fascinating to try to understand why people are so compelled to share their everyday activities on social media. Perhaps they seek validation, recognition, or simply a desire to connect with like-minded individuals. For example, taking photographs of food and drinks has become a popular practice, allowing individuals to showcase their culinary creations or preferred food and drink choices to a broader audience (Zappavigna, 2014; Zappavigna & Ross, 2022). Sharing these photos adds an element of visual appeal and further engages viewers.

However, it raises the question of whether this need for validation and engagement is necessary. Are people who share their lives on social media lonely in their homes and need others to notice what they are up to every single day? Don't they have any secrets they intend to keep to themselves? I once encountered a remark from a member of the baby boomer generation who humorously and mockingly commented on how the present generation shares nearly everything online without any sense of shame or hesitation. She went like, 'Oh, come on! It's just food! I cook it every day since forever!'

Well, if we see it through a negative lens, it's very easy for us to label social media users as pompous attention seekers. However, from my perspective, what is currently happening reflects a cultural shift in how people perceive and share their everyday activities. These ordinary moments hold value when shared and appreciated by others, even if we are surrounded by our family and friends in the real world. In the virtual environment, validation from others is just as important as it is in real life.





What we have witnessed of late is that the rise of social media has transformed how people share their lives and perceive the value of their everyday activities. It's rather thought-provoking to see how social media has changed the way we communicate and express ourselves. It highlights the importance of validation and engagement in our online and offline lives. Sharing common interests enables people to relate to one another more personally. People can connect based on mutual interests or experiences by seeing examples of ordinary situations. It gives the Internet a human face, encouraging connection and understanding.

However, above all, this culture appeals to me because it captures all sorts of small and simple joys in my life. It allows me to celebrate and appreciate every little blessing in order for me to find beauty and gratitude in the seemingly mundane aspects of my day-to-day life. I also think it encourages a shift in perspective, promoting mindfulness and focusing on finding happiness in the present moment because we never know how long it will last. Additionally, it's important to recognise that everyone has their unique way of celebrating and finding happiness. When individuals share their daily routines and personal experiences, they have the potential to inspire others, motivate them, and offer practical advice that resonates with their audience. Mundane activities can become a source of inspiration, empowering others to seek happiness and fulfilment in their own lives. This can contribute to the development of a caring and encouraging online community, which plays a role in reducing anxiety and depression (Alsubaie et al., 2019). The key to finding this activity useful is to be positive.

So, the next time you feel bad every time you look at someone's content, the 'mute', 'block', and 'unfollow' buttons are never too far away. They are readily available — your call.

References

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“Live your life to its fullest potential and don't really care too much about what other people think of you.” – Lil Nas X