

Social media and individuality

Business



Have you ever censored yourself? Have you ever stopped, and not said something, just because for some reason you didn't want to say it any more? If you've made it to age of 12, then you most likely have. According to the Commentary: Behavioral Scientists look at the Science of Adolescent Brain Development, by Laurence Steinberg, The brain during adolescence goes through a period of major plasticity, and is highly influenced by everything around it. Human teenagers display some of the most dramatic changes in self censorship, personality cultivation, and peer evaluation in the entire animal kingdom. The brain undergoes a process which it learns to fit it with its peers, socially regulate itself to fit its environment, and sometimes buries core aspects of its personality. The teen world of the modern day is social media.

Mass perpetuated concepts float around the web, and change in minor ways. Memes, Vines, and Youtube videos. This becomes the kind of stuff that the teen brain learns its peers appreciate. The actual design of the adolescent brain is the perfect vessel for vapid trends. Insecure, self censoring, and peer oriented.

A teen can repeat a trend and live a dream of brief peer recognition, but habits developed in adolescence last for an entire lifetime. The adolescents that have grown up with social media aren't adults yet, but social media has made conversation topics pretty vapid during adolescence, could it be doing serious damage to their individuality as adults? It all begins with a changing brain. Increased dopaminergic activity begins to link the limbic (emotional), striatal (Reward system and self contentment), and the prefrontal cortex (related to cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making, and

<https://assignbuster.com/social-media-and-individuality/>

moderating social behavior.) Adolescence is a big time for development of appetitive behavior (Satisfying a certain need.) The brain learns ways of satisfying its own needs, be it social, intellectual, or something else.

This is very important, because of these linkages, the brain is associating what gains itself satisfaction, to social moderation, its own personality, and its decision making. Along with this, the limbic system begins to grow too. The adolescent becomes more emotional, and receives more hormones, making peer “ evaluation” a high player in their emotional health. These two factors mean that adolescents are always responding to their peers around them, and then moderating themselves and acting accordingly in response to “ peer pressure” and social circumstance, to best fit reward benchmarks (such as laughter, compliments, etc.) set by the striatal system.

But you say “ Peer pressure has been around.” Adolescents have always been under the influence of their peers, trends always went around and they got over them. But what’s different now is social media. Before the internet, the media was trickle down. Meaning, you only saw the stars on television, and only the stars, and you might get a magazine or two, but media was never a place to interact. Social Media, it’s in its name.

Social Media. You could socialize with anyone. This means, unlike the past, your only media influence was popstars and movie stars, and that’s what everyone had. They were also “ recognizable influences”, they weren’t peers, they didn’t matter as much. They might set trends like leather jackets and torn blue jeans, but they never became a peer. Everyone knew where the trend came from.

With social media, any joe you talk to becomes a peer. That means a judging, influencing, adolescent behavior changer. The entirety of social media, becomes an influential peer. Everyone influences everyone on the web. That means most of the web boils down to repetitive, vapid jokes, that everyone keeps telling. This is what sticks with the adolescents.

Everyone else is saying it, so I will too. But with social media, everyone else isn't just your group of friends, it's literally everyone else on the web. This means internet trends insinuate everyone's life, everyone's group of friends, and almost single handedly deindividualize the majority of the current adolescent generation. Everyone knows that personality diffusion (developing habits similar to people you respect and spend time with) happens with humans, adults, children, and everyone, but nothing has been so brutal to this as massive trends contaminating everything. Back in the day, you and your friends might all have "stolen" habits from each other, and you might idolize joey ramone, but those are the only influences you have.

If left sit, you and your friends with develop a special way of acting like joey ramone, your own inside jokes, and this builds proper social and imaginative foundations for adult hood. Immagine isolated bacteria in a petri dish, and small amounts of them. They'll associate, change a bit, and slowly mutate off each others influences, for a long time, because there's not enough of the others to kill a certain group. But teens with social media are like trillions and trillions of bacteria all in closely packed together. All touching.

Supervirus' will quickly boil out of them all and kill and convert the rest, so the petri dish becomes a mass of the same bacteria, with no need to evolve. But you say, "Teens grow out of phases, it's fine." But it's not. Adolescence is a formative time. The habits a teen learns will stick with them for life. According to a Harvard study, Teens who develop bad habits during adolescence, even if they break them as adults, they still will leave permanent scars. A teen who has been exposed to alcohol in adolescence, becomes much more stimulated by the presence of alcohol, than a person who was exposed to alcohol during adulthood, had an addiction, and gotten over it. The teen drinker will still be more stimulated. They have a profound connection with the stress release hormone, because adolescence is a time of brain wiring. If an adolescent learns these seriously peer influenced habits, and low use of imagination, just like massive trends encourages, these children will probably have dramatically less use of imagination, they'll learn to blurt out whatever comes to their head, and just repeat other people's jokes.

The world will become an increasingly vapid place to live. Adolescence is a tricky time to get through, with a changing brain and high standards of peer influence. An adolescent struggles to fit in, but also to find themselves. What they want to do, what they want to create. Adolescents is a time of community, but also individuality.

But social media is taking away from that. You need the strongest will to stand up to tidal pulls of peer influence. Not just online, but around you, media trends push themselves into the real world too. Media trends take away from children's individuality through massive pressure in a formative

<https://assignbuster.com/social-media-and-individuality/>

time. This could make the world quite a mirthless place to live, if we can only access minor amounts of our individuality.

But what can we do about this? What is this going to mean for the world in the future? We can't shut down social media, so we need to provide adolescents with outlets to express themselves, to create. Social Media downs out true expression, and we need to do our best to provide children with the means to express themselves, and to learn to express themselves. Have you ever wanted to pitch a story idea, or a funny joke, but stopped, because you didn't think your peers would appreciate it? Have you ever found yourself feeling stifled, because you have nothing to talk about with your friends aside from stuff talked about a million other times?