

FOMO Funk
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Conquering Cyber Envy

Scrolling down a Facebook feed you see – “I got a summer internship at Weber Shandwick,” “Life is good hanging with the besties” and “Movie date night with the best boyfriend ever.” According to SHAPE magazine, social media has created a world of instant access to other people’s lives creating a condition that psychologists call Fear of Missing Out or FOMO.

In today’s digital world we are constantly scrolling our Facebook feeds, Twitter posts and Foursquare check-ins to stay connected. However, this constant social media observation makes it easy to start comparing ourselves to others. If someone has FOMO thinking, they have the mindset that the grass is greener on the other side of the computer screen.

Dr. Josie DeGroot Brown, assistant professor in the Speech Communication Department who has done extensive research in computer-mediated communication, explains FOMO thinking.

“We can sometimes feel that others’ lives are much more interesting than our own – forgetting that we only put our best “face” forward,” said DeGroot Brown. “Someone else might think that my life is fantastic because of how I present it on Facebook, when in reality, it is fairly mediocre.”

In comparison to the real world, in the online world people can let you see only what they want you to see. Everyone is in control of their pictures and status updates, whether they are positive, negative or neutral.

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Those who feel they may be suffering from FOMO should try to keep these thoughts in mind as reality reminders, since it is almost impossible to completely unplug from the Internet these days. SHAPE magazine, recently published an article on the issue, and gave a couple common scenarios of FOMO funks and how to fix them:

FOMO FUNK: Your college roommate completed her second marathon in less than four hours; you can barely finish a 5K.

FOMO FIX: Recruit her as your training partner.

FOMO FUNK: Your co-worker was promoted after just six months, while you've been in the same role for years.

FOMO FIX: Stop stewing and ask your boss for a much deserved title change. If she says no, update your profile on LinkedIn, reach out to your network of contacts and look for a new job.

So the next time you scroll down your Facebook feed and see – “I got a summer internship at Weber Shandwick,” comment, “Congrats! Do you have any tips for me?” When you see – “Life is good hanging with the besties” and “Movie date night with the best boyfriend ever,” hit “like” on their status then go find something fun to do.

As one anonymous author pinned on Pinterest, “I hope someday your life is as good as it looks on Facebook.”



Jump on the social media bandwagon by Matt Hamm