
The Impact Of Media Detoxification On Modern Society

Mass media is a unique feature of modern society; its development has constructed a generation psychologically dependent on an inundation of information. The constant influx of media, through various mediums, has resulted in the overstimulation of today's population. The irrepressible force of the media appeals to the needs and desires of its audience; thus, conditioning human beings to follow information blindly and constantly seek out more. Through a 24-hour period of media detoxification, I discovered: the prevalence of media in society, my own unhealthy dependency and consumption of social media, and the ability of the media to manipulate and influence a system of thinking and belief into consumers.

To prepare for this period of detoxification, I needed to address several factors that would have inhibited my ability to participate in this assignment effectively. Foremost, I informed my family members and many close friends about the investigations and processes of this experiment to ensure they would not text, call, or expose me to media outlets. Furthermore, I stored every printed, electronic, and digital form of media into my closet where I would be unable to access it for the duration of this assignment. Also, I completed all my homework, chores, and projects in advance, so I could experience the entire 24-hour period media-free. Lastly, I organized various events and activities with my close friends to occupy time and simultaneously enjoy myself during this experience.

Foremost, abstaining from the use of social media proved to be the most challenging component of this assignment. Upon waking up, I instinctively reached for my phone - neglecting the detoxification - to scour social media and catch up on any information I had missed since falling asleep. This single experience demonstrated my reliance on social media applications, as it was second nature to mindlessly access my phone. Thankfully, my device was stored away, but this habit was consistent throughout the day; whenever a friend's phone rang or vibrated, my body elicited an automatic, reflexive response to reach into my pocket and access my phone. I constantly wanted to retreat back into the glowing trap of my cellular device, even during the slightest moments of discomfort. It became increasingly evident that I was addicted to social media for the haven and sense of self-worth it provided.

Acknowledgement from a 'Like' or 'Follow' arouses a sense of approval and acceptance that has fostered an addictive and narcissistic nature in many others and myself. When I heard a notification, I longed for my phone and the validation that it signified. Furthermore, my incessant desire to stay in contact with media platforms was driven by the fear of missing out. This detox period caused me pervasive anxiety because I subconsciously feared missing an experience others were involved in.

We live in an age in which constant connection is an expectation and information is always in our line of sight, which in turn makes it much more difficult to feel relaxed and present. Thus, social media has become an addictive affliction on my life that made this detoxification period an arduous task.

Moreover, by dint of this assignment, I discovered the widespread presence of mass media in society. Throughout my day I was continually, involuntarily exposed to various forms of media

that I normally would not have noticed. For instance, I planned to go on a hike by myself but, as soon as I stepped outside my front door, all forms of media bombarded me: billboards positioned on the side of roads, advertisements plastered across busses and bus stops, magazine stands outside of shops, televisions flashing inside store windows etc. I could not escape these forms of media; I was in the constant presence of logos, branding, advertisements, and news regardless of where I escaped. This experience opened my eyes to pervasiveness of the media and their discreet manipulation of the public. The widespread presence of branding and media allows wealthy companies to indirectly persuade the decisions and choices we make. Media companies intentionally exploit our inherent vulnerabilities and compel us to desire a specific lifestyle.

As a result of this detoxification process, I gained a deeper insight into the mass media and its impact on today's society. While I was untethered from the media, I came to the understanding that few things in life are truly urgent. Humans often get caught up in the belief that tasks require a swift response and instant attention - the immediacy of our connected world. Being disconnected also gave me the opportunity to look at my life without the blinders that the media had actually become. I was reminded that what's happening in front of me is infinitely more engrossing than any device or piece of social media. I believe we need to change the way we use social media especially. This change will allow us to form sincere connections in a world that is based less on likes and followers, and more on direct communication and interaction.

A world that is based less on jealousy and more on supporting one another. So often, media encourages a competitive nature in human beings. We compete to attain the most attraction and attention and fail to help one another. Through this detox I became aware of this competitiveness the mass media has fostered and the feelings of depression and anxiety it promotes. In order to keep a balanced perspective we must look away from media and be willing to take a step back.