Friendship Reflection: Searra Richardson

Social media sites gradually continue to chip away at the overall quality of friendships. I believe these sites detract from the quality of friendships and inhibit the close connection between friends. In today’s world, people are so worried about their image on social media and what is happening in other people’s lives that they stop paying as close attention to their own relationships.

In the *Black Mirror* series, the episode called “Nosedive” brings attention to the role social media has in society and its influence on the interactions between people. In this episode, society is based off a ranking system through electronics that allows everyone to be rated by others around them. The higher rated people receive more respect and advantages such as better houses and the lower rated people don’t have access to the same luxuries and are looked down upon. This episode shows how the main character, Lacie, is obsessed with her rating and goes to drastic measures to make it higher (“Nosedive”). This episode demonstrates how social media effects everyday life and the relationships between others.

The first reason I believe social media sites detract from the quality of friendship is because of how they take away from face-to-face time between friends. In today’s world, when friends are spending time together in person, it is very likely that one or both is on their phone looking at Instagram, Facebook or any other social media site. They are not giving each other their full and undivided attention so they can strengthen their connection and remain high quality friends. One or both are too caught up in what is happening with other people online which causes them to forget the real reason why they are together in the first place. They are together to spend intimate time with a person they care for. The quality of their friendship has been damaged through the way social media sites persuade people to act while spending time with others. Every day, I witness people walking down the street with a friend or multiple friends and they aren’t even talking to each other. I, myself, have been in this situation. We are too absorbed in our online world to acknowledge one other and when we do, it’s usually about the information on social media.

The superficial friendships that social media sites influence is another reason I believe the sites are detrimental to the quality of friendships. When people are constantly talking through social media to their so-called friends, it inhibits them from ever acquiring a true friendship with each other. They interact through the screen instead of having real, face-to-face contact that would deeper the relationship and allow them to know each other better. If all they do is talk through social media, then they never get to experience on another fully and understand their character. These superficial friendships are not valuable to anyone. Individuals with these friends are not as committed to one another. They can’t be present to do all the activities that deeper connected friends participate in such as support one another and enjoy each other’s company while doing something they both love. Social media sites have influenced these types of friendships that cause the overall quality of the friendship to lower. In the episode of *Black Mirror*, this idea of superficial friendships appears throughout. One prime example is how Lacie and her old friend, Naomi, interact with each other through social media. Both end up using each other for what the other can offer and never actually become true, connected friends. They talk to each other simply because they want to appear better online in their profiles, not because they truly care for one another and want to have a deep connection. They only talk through the social media sites when it benefits them individually (“Nosedive”). This illustrates how these types of friendships social media creates lack good quality and valuable interactions between people.

One of the major points that the opposing view, people who believe social media sites enhance the quality of friendship, is that it allows friends to have constant knowledge of what is happening in their lives since they can see friends posting about their lives. While this may be true, the knowledge that friends receive through social media is probably not the actual truth in what is overall happening in someone’s life. People mostly post the happy pieces of their lives and the major things. They usually do not post the hard times and the minor things that contribute to their overall wellbeing. A good quality friendship needs to allow both people to know the major and minor things whether they are good or bad in order to have a deeper connection. The statement that constant knowledge of friend’s activities enhances the quality of friendship doesn’t stand since the knowledge they receive is not valuable in a deeper connected friendship. Individuals must interact with their friends outside of social media sites so they can have real conversations and learn a multitude of other facts and feelings that the other person can share.

Overall, I believe social media sites detract from the quality of friendships. The influence these sites have on friendships cause the relationships to weaken and become more superficial. Even time spent with each other is less intimate because people get sucked into social media while attempting to connect with another individual. As people use social media sites more and more, the quality of friendships is decreased.

Works Cited

“Nosedive.” *Black Mirror,* season 3, episode 1, Charlie Brooker, 2011. Netflix, https://www.netflix.com/watch/80104627?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C0%2Cc417fb3 e-73d1-4c27-8714-9621f52e402b-7193183