

Text: Anna Caltabiano, “Loneliness in the Age of Social Networking” (2014)

A few days ago, I was watching a movie on my couch with a friend. It was a movie that we both had wanted to watch for the longest time, and the movie actually lived up to my expectations. It was one of those movies that ended depressingly with the protagonist and practically everyone else dying in various ways. I remember sniffing for a good half an hour and my friend trying unsuccessfully to
5 console me. (‘At least they all died – It’s more consistent that way!’) I knew that in this kind of situation, most friends would have given me a hug, and I do think that my friend would have done this for me ... If my friend was in the same country as me.

Yes, you read that correctly. The friend who was watching the movie with me didn't live in the same state, country or for that matter, the same continent as me. We were screen sharing and watching a
10 movie on Netflix. There we were, watching a movie with a tub of ice cream on the couch like many friends do together on a Friday night.

As teenagers we hear from our parents and our teachers that inventions such as screen sharing, video calling and Facebook that define our networked world, simply did not exist a decade ago. [...] I feel that it's during my teenage years (the last few years) that technology has really changed the way
15 we, especially teenagers, interact.

In history class we look back on the Jazz Age and the Depression era. We automatically associate WWII with the '40s and hippies with the '60s. It's amazing how one event, invention or attitude can end up defining a decade. It always makes me wonder how the future will define us. While no one can be sure, I bet that we will look back on this era and call it the age of social networking. We now live in
20 a world where it is considered normal to broadcast what one is doing and thinking every few hours.
[...]

Though technology has changed the tools we have to reach out to others, it has not changed our deep psychological need to truly connect with others. Social media can help us satisfy a portion of this need. We let others know what we are doing and hear about their activities. However, this doesn't
25 fulfill our deepest and most basic need to establish an emotional connection with another person. At its most fundamental level, this connection is not about reading or sending updates of activities. Sometimes words do not even need to be exchanged. Spending a lazy Saturday afternoon in comfortable silence with a close friend can mean more to us than a mass of comments on our Instagram.

30 At times social media can create a dangerous illusion of being connected. We pay attention to numbers on Facebook and Twitter, and often fool ourselves into thinking that we've satisfied that need to form relationships with others. In my experience, people who I know who feel the most lonely, usually have a wide and active set of "friends" on various social networks, such as Facebook. They're the ones who have hundreds of people liking and commenting on their photos, yet they feel that it's
35 not enough. Maybe technology has distracted us from the age-old truths of what is most important – true friends whom we can be ourselves in front of, rather than our carefully scripted online persona –

soul mates who enjoy each other's presence so much that shared silent companionship gives them both a warm feeling of connection.

600 words

Quelle: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anna-caltabiano/loneliness-in-the-age-of-_b_5508767.html, Zugriff: 12.07.2014

Annotations

- I. 10 Netflix streaming service for an online subscription to films
- I. 16 Jazz Age the 1920s when jazz music became popular
- I. 16 Depression era severe worldwide crisis starting in 1929
- I. 29 Instagram web-based service to view and share photos and videos

Hilfsmittel

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