



01 You are only physically, but not mentally, present.

Alter says social media addiction has led some to "miss spending face-to-face interactions with people." Have you seen at least one family or group of friends out to dinner with nobody talking? All of them are glued to their screens, even after the food is served. "We've become obsessed with how many 'likes' our Instagram photos are getting instead of where we are walking and whom we are talking to," observed the author. Think about it. How many times have you asked your friend or spouse to repeat something he or she just said because you were on your phone? Guilty.



02 Your life has been put in danger.

No social media post is worth your life or your loved ones. Please remember this the next time you are behind the wheel or are crossing the street. On the road, a number of drivers cannot resist looking at their newsfeeds while driving. They add to traffic problems by moving unusually slow even when traffic is light or stopping without reason because their eyes are not on the road. Some pedestrians cross streets while staying on video calls or watching a live social media event. It's like you're asking to trend online for the wrong reasons, right?

Are You A Social Media Addict?

4 Signs You've Lost Control

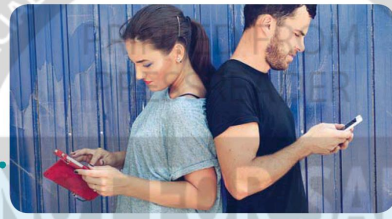
By JOYCE REYES-AGUILA

Too dependent on social media? Many of us are in denial when asked to reflect on the amount of time we spend online. We'd like to believe we are in control, even thinking that others spend way more time than us on social media sites. Some of us consider browsing through newsfeeds as harmless, especially when done during our "downtime." Truth be told, some of us have lost, or are close to losing, control. Have we crossed the line to addiction?

In an interview with Claudia Dreyfus of The New York Times, social psychologist Adam Alter defined addiction as "something you enjoy doing in the short term, that undermines your well-being in the long term — but that you do compulsively anyway." When an experience "hits the right buttons," he explained, the brain will release the neurotransmitter dopamine and "a flood" of it makes us feel wonderful for some time. The problem, according to Alter who penned the book *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked*, is when we build tolerance for whatever we enjoy and want it more.

Alter tells Dreyfus in the article "Why We Can't Look Away From Our Screens" that the gadgets we have are the "perfect delivery devices for addictive media. If games and social media were once confined to our home computers, portable devices permit us to engage with them everywhere." Contemplating on the amount of social media we consume can be beneficial, like that time you understood that your body needs more water than caffeine, or when you started bringing recyclable bags with you everywhere so the paper and plastics bags would stop piling up at home. You will be able to identify what you have too much of and what you have to do to gain control.

Up for a self-assessment if you are too hooked on social media? Experts say here are some signs. Put down your mobile device and read on.



03 Some things are in limbo.

Psychologists Mark Griffiths and Daria Kuss discovered way back in 2011 that for "a small minority of individuals, social media (have had) a significant detrimental effect on many aspects of life, including relationships, work, and academic achievements." In a recent article for The Washington Post entitled "6 questions help reveal if you're addicted to social media," the experts of the impact of technology and social media on cognitive and social behavior said that some have allowed their habitual social media use to spill over into other areas of their lives. Ask yourself if you use social media to forget about your problems or if your being constantly online has had a negative impact on your job, studies, or relationships.



04 You have no limits.

Here are the four other questions the team wants us to ask ourselves. "Do you spend a lot of time, when you're not online, thinking about social media or planning to use social media? Do you feel urges to use social media more and more over time? Do you often try to reduce (time spent on) social media, without success? Do you become restless or troubled if you are unable to use social media?" If you said yes to some of these questions, a digital detox may do you good. Experts suggest turning your phone ringer off at night or having dedicated periods of no-screen time. If all questions are true for you, it may be time to see a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. Some social media addiction cases are linked to psychological problems such as depression, loneliness, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.