

- Social Media Etiquette

Dos and don'ts: Social media etiquette during pandemic

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Not a day goes by when we don't hear of anyone dying, our front-liners particularly. People are dying, and even if it's not a deluge of numbers, it's still one death too many. New normal? I doubt if life, as we knew it, would be back in the near or even distant future. "Normal" has become a luxury word.

"Normal" will come only when and if people regain their confidence in how our government is managing this pandemic. We gain hope and faith every time we see the private sector—the citizen Pinoy—step up to the plate, moving heaven and earth to help others, especially our heroic front-liners. Business leader Tessie Sy Coson said it best in an email interview with Lifestyle: "It's simply people helping people."

It makes you proud to be Filipino. We accept the extended quarantine—the lockdown lifestyle—with mindfulness. Yet we're also aware that we suffer anxiety and fear not only about the virus, but also about how soon the government can contain the pandemic (from extensive, methodical testing, contact tracing to quarantine and recovery), how it can restart the economy and save people's jobs—simply put, how it can prevent people from dying and starving, and how it can resume productivity.

Confidence

The longer the lockdown lifestyle, the more chances this sense of confidence in the state of affairs could wane. Even if there's no quarantine, people will not go out like before and resume their normal activities if they don't feel confident, safe and secure. Robust consumer spending will be a thing of the past.

We need to build faith and trust in our leaders, trust that they know what they're doing and are doing it—now (bureaucracy during pandemic can kill)—even if there's no template to follow for this pandemic. But they themselves must help us develop that trust to make the country transition to the new normal.

In the meantime, let's be sensitive, especially on social media. While we could be coping with or even enjoying this lockdown, let's be mindful that people are dying, starving,

losing their jobs. Some social media posts are in poor taste.

‘Turn-offs’

Friends have been giving me their “turn-offs” during this pandemic. Call it social media etiquette at the time of the pandemic—dos and don'ts.

Others say it's a matter of having class or just being crass. I think it's a matter of having sensitivity and a sense of “human-ness.”

When is lifestyle therapeutic in these times, and when is it a total turn-off—you should know the difference.

Friends wrote these Dos and Don'ts:

Do:

- Post messages of hope and encouragement. These give motivation when times are difficult.
- Make people laugh without being offensive. The basic rules of “good manners and right conduct” still apply, crisis or not.
- Share verified, truthful, important and relevant information.
- Document stories about the triumph of the human spirit during this global health emergency. People want to feel good and be inspired.
- Encourage people to donate or help any way they can. Every little thing counts.
- Be sensitive to the plight of others. We do not know the full extent of the effects of this lockdown on the lives of our neighbors. Although we are happy to see you are thankful for your “blessings” during adversity, others are struggling. Your luxuries and lifestyles are uninterrupted, but a lot are starving.
- Be humble. Now is not the time to brag. On social media, perception is reality. The quality time you spend with your family also means the loss of daily wages for a lot of our countrymen.
- Post creative ideas on how people can entertain themselves—games, puzzles, DIY videos, links to concerts and webinars. Knowledge is power.
- Encourage others to participate in your photo or art challenges. This inspires people to look at their photo albums and find strength and beauty in the past. This can be therapeutic.

Do not:

- Post photos of your luxurious meals that you have beautifully cooked or were delivered by your favorite restaurant or grocer.
- Post home workout videos if you are not a personal trainer, gym instructor or fitness expert... or an artista.
- Share fake news or unverified information that could cause panic or stress.
- Post too many chain messages and prayers. Nakakaloka na! This does not inspire people to pray. If at all, it only forces them to pray out of Christian duty. Instead, post messages or photos that highlight the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.
- Post your OOTD. Even if we admire (or lust for) the treasures in your closet, we have had enough of them. Unless you are posting PPE outfits and safety supplies, we all know that

you are all dressed up but with nowhere to go.

- Post repeatedly your own achievement in designing PPE. It seems self-serving.
- Belittle the sacrifice of others. No sacrifice is too small, especially those of our medical and non-medical front-liners.
- Maliciously aim to divide. We must stay united, since the war is against a common enemy, the virus.

Must you post your OOTD every time?