

FOMO or JOMO?

After a long, hard, gruelling, did I mention long week, I can finally plonk myself in front of the TV and relax. Feet up, drink in hand, mind as clear as daylight from any worries. I think this is a feeling we can all relate to. Peace at last. "Buzz". Oh no. "User537 has a new instagram post." Just like that my relaxing night in isn't so relaxing anymore. That all too familiar feeling of stress and unease hits you like a ton of bricks. Another reminder that your wasting your youth sitting in when you could be out with friends, living bigger and better. Truth be told you probably would much prefer to be staying in like you are right now, but somehow feel that you missing out. There's a name for this. "FOMO".

FOMO-fear of missing out. Sound familiar? This term first surfaced in the early two thousands, became more known in recent decades and is commonly used by today's generation. I recognised this term immediately after first hearing it and if it's introduced itself to you before, I'm sure you did too. Half of today's teenagers say they are aware of and have experienced 'FOMO'. This isn't surprising. Everyone wants to be included, part of the action. No one wants to be grown up and filled with regret as a result of an unfulfilled youth. A dumb, pointless, almost laughable fear. Yet is it uncommon? No. What did surprise me was this peculiar term I stumbled upon whilst scrolling on my social media feed recently. JOMO- joy of missing out. The complete opposite of our old friend 'FOMO'. This discovery coaxed me into further investigation of the two comparatively distinct mindsets.

Four hours. Two hundred and forty minutes. This is the average amount of time a teenager spends on social media each day. Most of the time it's a lot more. An unbelievable truth. I say this being part of this chronically online generation. Having an abundant amount of the country's population chronically online is accompanied by a new "buzz", "ding" and "beep", each second. A new tweet, a new instagram story, a new tiktok post. Another party, holiday, event, memory that yet again, you've missed out on. Social media glorifies one part of a persons life completely discarding the other part. It's implausible how fake it is. It's safe to say social media is the number one leading factor of FOMO in young people and is the reasoning behind its skyrocketing increase in recent decades. The impacts social media and FOMO are associated with is beyond detrimental. These include compulsive social media use and online social comparisons. Recent research has found 70% of teenagers to experience social media related FOMO and 73% of teenagers to spend money they don't have to avoid FOMO. Enough has been said. I think

we can all agree that social media feeds into FOMO like there's no tomorrow and there is without a doubt, no escaping it.

But this doesn't end at social media. What's the next greatest influence of this inevitable feeling? Time. It's endless. Yet there never seems to be enough. It's an inexplicable reality. There is ridiculous time pressure put on today's youth. We hear "Where do you want to go to college?" "What do you want to do when you grow up?". If I hear this one more time I think I'll go mad. If I can't even decide what to wear this weekend how am I supposed to decide what to do for the rest of my life? This is why our youth scramble to get everything done. The time will never be right so the time is now. Things to see, boxes to be checked. Every answer must be "Yes". Because we can hear the ticking, see the sand piling up at the bottom of the hourglass. Nothing can be missed.

Amongst the chaos of each person trying to create a memorable, meaningful existence for themselves we forget to live for what matters to us. There's this big idea that we must live big, not just merely exist. But sometimes merely existing is enough. The way I see it, it doesn't have to be a big race. Take time to live how you want, when you want. This is where the idea of JOMO pops out of. JOMO teaches us to be content with living in the here and now and how to disconnect and embrace each experience. It's a peaceful, freeing mindset which contrasts to the negative, stress inducing mindset of FOMO. So next time you think to yourself "They're so far ahead of me." or "My life is so boring compared to theirs." Change it to "Their path is different to mine." A changed perspective can be everything.