# My Time Offline

A wonderful story of hell that broke loose when I quit social media for 10 months.

I really don't know if this is a story about social media, depression, social anxiety, or loneliness. As sad as that thought makes me feel, it wouldn't be honest if I say it isn't. Writing and reading this was an emotional rollercoaster, but that's really how my year went. It's one of those articles that makes me pace back and forth in my room, because not only was so much emotion put into it, reliving it in my head was... everything. It started off with a bunch of different thoughts pulled from old and new journal entries, ugly crying while writing as I remember old feelings, and then dancing and laughing from realizing how good I have it now.
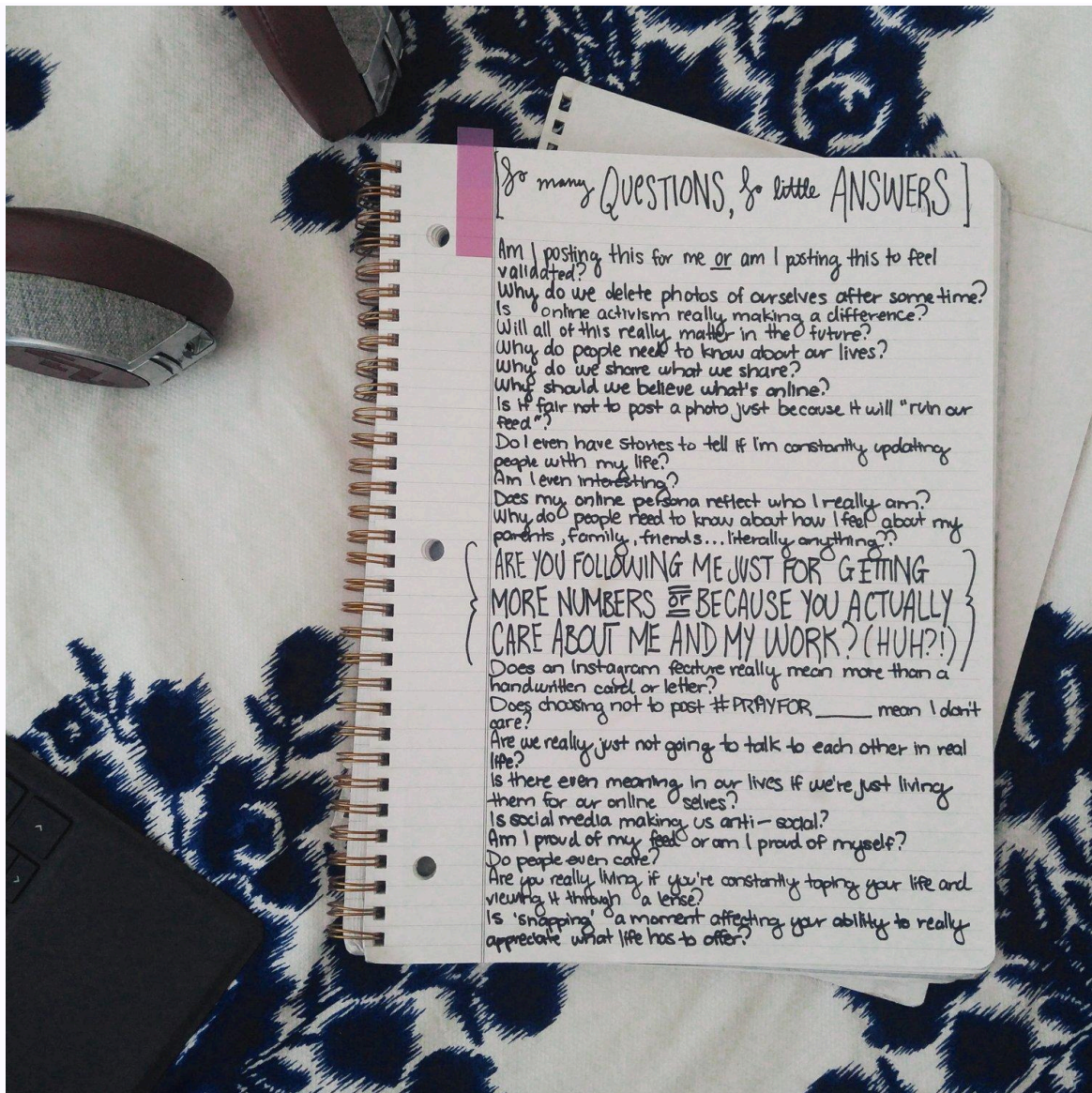
Almost a year ago, I decided to quit social media for a year. I travelled, I started new projects, and I put myself through a multitude of experiences, because I wanted to figure out the root of all these questions I had about social media and how others and myself interact with it. Looking back at this list of questions I had surrounding social media, it can easily be a list of prompts that I could delve into, and maybe I will get to all of them eventually.

What wasn't clear back then became very clear a few months into my break. This was a major case of projection. I was so filled with anger, pressure, and loneliness towards school and this blog, which eventually exploded onto every outlet that represented me. I wanted to run away, LIVE, understand myself, and figure out how the situation got so bad. I needed to solidify my morals and get rid of the toxic trash in my external and internal environment. It was a moment waiting to happen.

Last month, I spent time looking back at my old journal entries from the months leading up to quitting social media and the few months preceding that. I was so sad, lonely, and lost. University can be stressful and it's so easy to feel alone with your problems. I think I tried to make up for my lack of progress in school by giving a lot of energy to my blog, which caused me to create these unrealistic expectations of myself and others. I thought I could be like those online personalities who semi-annoyingly show their entire day on Snapchat and Instagram, and give those inspirational quotes to make people feel better.

I thought that by giving my everything to social media, I could receive the same amount of abundance in followers, likes, and comments. The problem with that was that it didn't come from a place of being genuine and authentic, which is important to me. They came from a place of greed, so the plan backfired on me and naturally fell down because of its poor foundation. In the end, I was the one who fell deeper into negative emotions.

I tried taking a two-week social media break around May, which turned into a month, only to learn that I needed more time; and that within itself was a big decision I had to make for my own well-being. The apps I took a break from were Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram.

The last two were to an extent, because I came across opportunities which obliged me to use those platforms, but I tried to keep my use "strictly business," or in my case, strictly club related.

On Instagram, I unfollowed everyone because I didn't want to be overwhelmed with news once I would eventually log back in. This is the only thing I'm really petty about, because there were some people who thought it was about them & became angry and concerned. It just proved how right I was about how crazy people can get when it comes to statistics in social media. **There were people who asked *my friends* why I unfollowed them and asked if I didn't like them. I thought to myself, *I have no time for this, this has nothing to do with you. Projection!* I'm telling you. You having a problem with my actions means you've got something you need to confront within yourself.** *Anyways*, it was the moment that told me taking a break was the right move.

Being back on social media, particularly Instagram, it's like I could see the sadness right through my last posts leading up to me quitting. They were not joyful at all, which is why I deleted them. I don't blame myself, because it was absolutely necessary. I choose to put myself through the breaking of internal structures and transformation into someone who makes sure she's always aligned with her values and asks herself if everything she's getting into is okay with her.

At the end of the day, *at the end of all this commotion*, I have been through too much loss, too many moments of regretting things I should have or shouldn't have done to not want to evolve into someone so much better than whoever I was last year. At the time, I was still brooding over things that happened two years prior, and with the amount of growth I surpassed within one year, those problems are long

gone. In fact, I can proudly state that one of my favourite characteristics is being able to be honest with myself and strive to better myself everyday. Sometimes, you have to stand up and give yourself your own TED talk or get on a plane to somewhere foreign and force yourself into uncomfortable situations and learn.

After internally battling out if I should return or not, the final verdict was that I missed feeling connected to people. I felt strong enough to stand on my own amidst the many distractions and possible triggers waiting for me in the virtual world. Since I've been back online, I have been taking things slow and paying attention to my feelings in the case of taking any necessary breaks.

Out of all the events that happened during my time offline, solo travelling was the material catalyst that led me into the greater aspects of my growth. I went to New York City twice within a year, and I also visited Montreal and Toronto. These places provided blank slates for me to be myself at 110%. The first trip had more emotional issues which contributed lessons I had to learn, but the second time around felt like a gift from the Universe that I had completed all my tests and everything was finally, significantly more peaceful.

Unironically, my first trip was a few months after I quit social media and the second trip was a few months before I decided to get back online. Both were impulsive decisions I made at 2AM and they remain at the top of my list of "Best Decisions I've Made In My Life" (so far). It's always so liberating being away from home, because it helps me recognize what parts of myself aren't liberated inside. I learned a lot about myself, more than I could explain, and I'm incredibly grateful to have the privilege of going on these trips.

I continue to manifest becoming a greater version of myself every day and practice being kind to myself. Looking at the kind of people I still have around me and the ones I've recently met is a true testament that I've changed for the better. I want to say that I never would have thought I would end up in such a good state of mind and well-being, but that wouldn't be true, because I believed with all my heart that I would be in a better place and made it happen.

A motto I came up with when I was in New York last May that's *almost original* (but really, is anything 100% original these days?), sums up the lesson of this whole conundrum. It's really inspired by something that has nothing to do with quitting social media, but anyways. What is about exactly?

#PICKYPAYSOFF

IT'S ABOUT VALUING YOURSELF. IT'S ABOUT NEVER SETTLING FOR ANYTHING OR ANYONE LESS THAN WHAT YOU DESERVE. IT'S ABOUT SELF-LOVE. IT'S ABOUT SPEAKING YOUR TRUTH WITH CONVICTION AND NOT BEING SWAYED OTHERWISE. IT'S ABOUT RECOGNIZING THAT EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE AROUND YOU IS A REFLECTION OF WHO YOU ARE.

CHOOSE LOVE. BE LOVE. BE GRATEFUL. SMILE.