

Instagram is Not Real Life

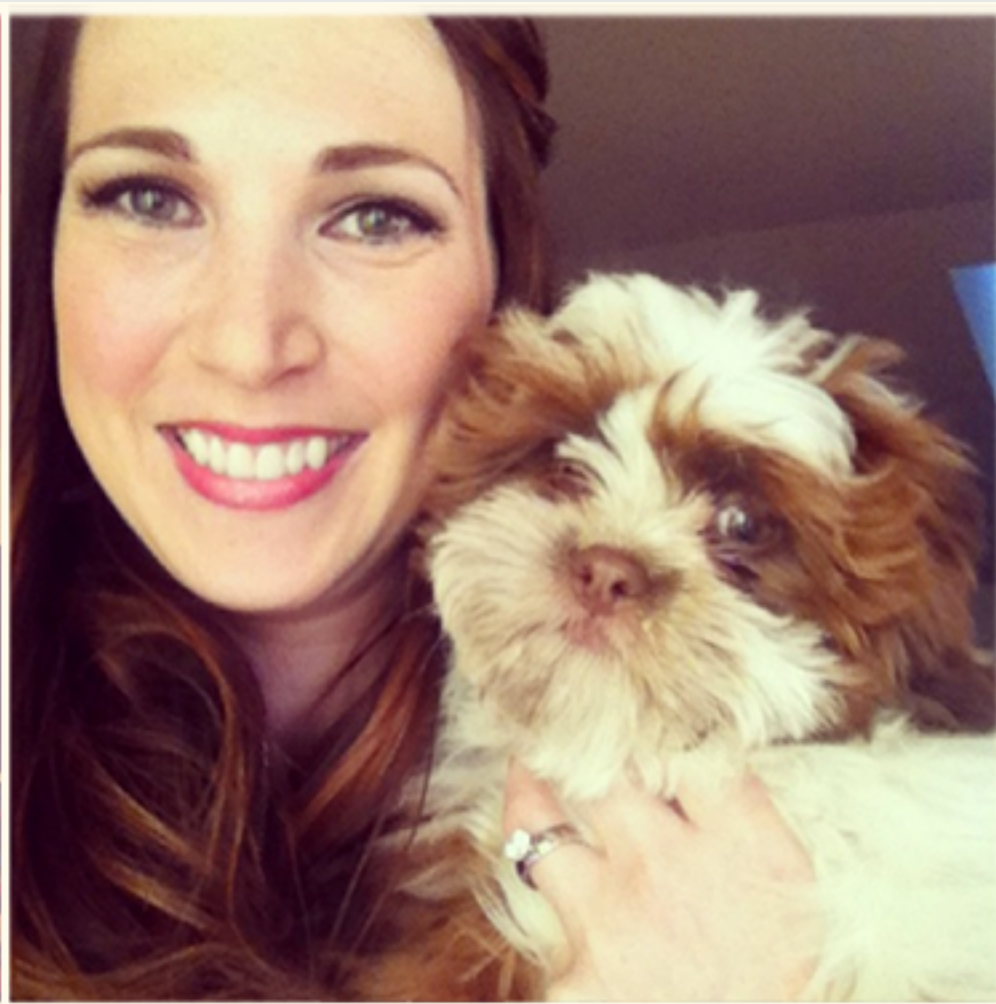
I received an email from a friend who let me know that she deleted her Instagram account.

As someone whose work requires that I am entrenched in every social media channel possible, I was taken aback.
Delete Instagram? That glorious app with the filters? Heavens, why?

More or less, her answer was “It’s consuming and addicting and it makes me feel like garbage.” Oh yes, that.

Instagram, it seems, has no room for mediocracy. I scroll through and see photos of summertime dinners on gorgeous back patios, little boys dressed in expensive clothing, vacations in the Cayman Islands, elaborate preschool-at-home projects with all things [Pinteresty](#), thin people, in-shape people, people in tiny sundresses, people with no discernible amount of stretch marks, women with impeccable makeup and flawless skin, post workout sexy sweat (HOW?!), clean homes, children grasping hands and smiling pleasantly, and peaceful, sleeping babies.

(Photos below are from [Teach Mama](#), [Mama Kat’s Losin It](#), [Anthropologie](#), and a non-blogger friend.)



Cue the inner turmoil:

She has as many kids as I do, and she looks amazing, while I have to wear Spanx in order to not look pregnant. Okay I hate her.

Oooh, that dress is so cute. Where is it from? I should buy it.

That DIY project is amazing. Ughhhhhh, I wish Jack and I were handy at using tools.

She is the most patient mom, and here I am, scrolling through Instagram, barking at the kids to use their indoor voices.

Her kid is already telling TIME?? Wow.

What the juuuuuunk, she looks incredible. Grumble grumble.

A mental to-do list starts in my brain. I should buy some vegetables. I should work out regularly. I should go shopping. We should do more crafts with the kids. We should take them somewhere tropical. We should work on math with our kids. We should make more money. I should blow out my hair. I should buy a new bed. I should... we should... I should...

Comparison is the thief of joy.

And Instagram is not reality.



INSTAGRAM IS NOT REAL LIFE

Instagram is not reality, but I think that's okay, as long as we maintain some perspective. We're seeing everyone's highlight reels. We're showing our *own* highlight reels. I am guilty of this too, but I don't think it's a bad thing.

We want to highlight and remember the wonderful moments, and not necessarily the bad ones. Which is why I'll post a photo of Jack and I out having fun at a concert, but I won't post a photo of us in the middle of an argument.

I also don't ever want to embarrass my children, so I don't want to post photos of them being angry or crying, so every photo you'll see of them will portray them being stoic, at worst. For your sake, their sake, and mine. No one wants to watch an Instavideo of a tantrum, you know?

When we post less-than-stellar stuff, we call it *being real* but we still edit how much of that *realness* we show.



I posted the photo on the left when our water heater broke and [flooded our basement](#), but I took this shot after hours and hours of work. I didn't take a photo of me standing in three inches of dirty water, wayward socks floating around my ankles. That's where I drew the line. The photo on the right is from [a wedding we attended](#).

Our friend snapped it in between our attempts to smile nicely for the camera. We saw it and thought it was hysterical. So I'm making an unpleasant face, but my hair's done, I don't have a weird double chin, and Jack looks jovial, so I posted it. And that's where I drew the line. Haha, see? Even when we're keeping it real, we're not keeping it *that* real.

I think Instagram is a wonderful thing as long as I remember that *this one photo that is causing me to writhe in envy is a one second snapshot out of 86,400 seconds out of a day. That we, who have access to clean water and good food and safety, are all blessed people envying other blessed people.* I want to let the photos inspire me, not allow me to foster discontentment or make me feel guilty.

Are you an [Instagrammer](#)? Have you experienced Instagram envy?

Maybe it's just me. Or maybe it's Maybelline.