

For the last two years, I have provided a daily wisdom quote through a Twitter account called [Tiny Buddha](#). Since the follower count has grown by leaps and bounds, people have suggested I tweet more often throughout the day. I've realized, however, that the greatest lesson we can all learn is that less is enough. In a time when connections can seem like commodities and online interactions can become casually inauthentic, mindfulness is not just a matter of fostering increased awareness. It's about relating meaningfully to other people and ourselves. With this goal in mind, I've compiled a list of 10 tips for using social media mindfully.

1. Know your intentions.

Doug Firebaugh of [SocialMediaBlogster.com](#) has identified seven psychological needs we may be looking to meet when we log on: acknowledgment, attention, approval, appreciation, acclaim, assurance, and inclusion. Before you post, ask yourself: Am I looking to be seen or validated? Is there something more constructive I could do to meet that need?

2. Be your authentic self.

In the age of personal branding, most of us have a persona we'd like to develop or maintain. Ego-driven tweets focus on an agenda; authenticity communicates from the heart. Talk about the things that really matter to you. If you need advice or support, ask for it. It's easier to be present when you're being true to yourself.

3. If you propose to tweet, always ask yourself: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?

Sometimes we post thoughts without considering how they might impact our entire audience. It's easy to forget how many friends are reading. Two hundred people make a crowd in person, but online that number can seem insignificant. Before you share, ask yourself: is there anyone this might harm?

4. Offer random tweets of kindness.

Every now and then I ask on Twitter, "Is there anything I can do to help or support you today?" It's a simple way to use social media to give without expectations of anything in return. By reaching out to help a stranger, you create the possibility of connecting personally with followers you may have otherwise known only peripherally.

5. Experience now, share later.

It's common to snap a picture with your phone and upload it to Facebook or email it to a friend. This overlaps the experience of being in a moment and sharing it. It also minimizes intimacy, since your entire audience joins your date or gathering in real time. Just as we aim to reduce our internal monologues to be present, we can do the same with our digital narration.

6. Be active, not reactive.

You may receive email updates whenever there is activity on one of your social media accounts, or you might have your cell phone set to give you these types of alerts. This forces you to decide many times throughout the day whether you want or need to respond. Another approach is to choose when to join the conversation, and to use your offline time to decide what value you have to offer.

7. Respond with your full attention.

People often share links without actually reading them, or comment on posts after only scanning them. If the greatest gift we can give someone is our attention, then social media allows us to be endlessly generous. We may not be able to reply to everyone, but responding thoughtfully when we can makes a difference.

8. Use mobile social media sparingly.

In 2009, Pew Research found that 43 percent of cell phone users access the Web on their devices several times a day. It's what former Microsoft employee Linda Stone refers to as continuous partial attention—when you frequently sign on to be sure you don't miss out anything. If you choose to limit your cell phone access, you may miss out online, but you *won't* miss what's in front of you.

9. Practice letting go.

It may feel unkind to disregard certain updates or tweets, but we need downtime to be kind to ourselves. Give yourself permission to let yesterday's stream go. This way you won't need to "catch up" on updates that have passed but instead can be part of today's conversation.

10. Enjoy social media!

These are merely suggestions to feel present and purposeful when utilizing social media, but they aren't hard-and-fast rules. Follow your own instincts and have fun with it. If you're mindful when you're disconnected from technology, you have all the tools you need to be mindful when you go online.

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