SIP Interview

Interviewer: Justin Wong (p2112646)

Interviewee: Jonas Batula

Jonas - What is your name?

Justin -My name is Jonas

Jonas - What is your age?

Justin -I am currently 17, turning 18 this June

Jonas - What is your gender?

Justin - I am a male.

Jonas - Okay, so, do you prefer going outdoors or staying indoors?

Justin - I’ll prefer going outdoors because I believe growing up that makes up the majority of my childhood. Even though at the end of the day, I think outdoors is the way to go.

Jonas - as you’ve mentioned just now about your childhood, speaking of which, what do you normally do in your free time?

Justin - Well, it is sort of dictated by my academic circumstances, where I’m mostly at my PC at the forefront, I usually go on YouTube and browse videos and play pc games.

Jonas - Right, you said you play pc games right, it might be with your friends or perhaps online strangers. So, do you frequently make friend with strangers?

Justin - I *do not.* In fact, I rarely go out of my way to associate myself with some random user online whom I may have had a good session or couple minutes having a short conversation with; I rarely do so.

Jonas - speaking of online, is social media an important pastime for you?

Justin - No, I wouldn’t say it is an important past time for me. I do acknowledge the fact that it has made up quite the time in my list of leisurely activities. That said though, I wouldn’t say that it is the be all end all. I do look at it as a form of convenience since everything is so accessible online. So, social media is just a platform for me to get the latest news or anything that I’m interested in.

Jonas - So, news right, people read news maybe at the start of the day, be it physical newspapers or news websites, so that’s what some people normally do right? So, what do you look forward to on a regular day?

Justin -Well, on my phone, there is this newsletter feature where it sends me a list of newsletters each and every single day, and it’s sort of accustomed itself to what I click on and what I actually take the time to read. If anything, one of the biggest things that I look forward to is sports news, more specifically NBA basketball news of the Golden State Warriors. I wouldn’t say I’m an avid fan, but I do support my favourite teams. Other than daily news like this, it’s usually just some daily videos of the channels that I’m subscribed to online.

Jonas - like you mentioned earlier, the Golden State Warriors, you’re a fan of them right. When we look at fan and teams that we support, who is your role model? Or someone you look up to?

Justin -Stephen curry, golden state warriors team captain, he was the player I tried to associate my style of basketball with, it’s sort of viable and that height doesn’t have to matter. So, with that free-flowing freedom that he has introduced, he’s my role model.

Jonas - So, like you said, he’s a role model to you and that the things that he’s done has inspired you to play more like him. That being said, what is something that pushes you to reach your goals? Be it playing like Stephen, what has pushed you to reach said goals?

Jonas - I think what really pushes me is the fact that it’s having the right mentality, because it’s more of motivating yourself that I can be the best version of myself, and at the end of the day, nothing else can top being the best that you can be.

Justin - would you say that is what makes you satisfied?

Jonas - yea definitely. Comparisons to other individuals can get you really lost in the sense that there’s numerous other people out there that when the best comparison you can give yourself is yourself.

Justin - Like you mentioned, comparing to others isn’t exactly the best and we would want to compare ourselves to something that is within our control. So, when it comes to the things that things that pushes us to reach our goals, understandably that might be obstacles that may come our way. What are such obstacles?

Jonas - I believe that the biggest obstacles I’ve faced aside from circumstances and environment, like are you placing yourself in an environment where you are encouraged and pushed to grow? So that is a good consideration to have. But the biggest thing to have been the mentality that I have at a given time and place. I think that’s what pushes you and sort of prolongs this journey of learning and growth. Because if it comes to the point where you yourself think that you’ve stopped growing, then definitively, that’s all that there is.

Justin - so how do you deal with that?

Jonas - well, I think that dealing with that comes to a point of understanding your situation and knowing how many more factors you can equip to your own arsenal; don’t limit yourself; broaden your views and understand that there’s more to life and see if there are any more skills that can boost you to progressing in life and finding things that are complimentary, I think that’s really important to get through that mental blockade.

Justin - On mental blockades, many people don’t really look at social media fondly. How much of your leisure time is spent on social media?

Jonas - to start off, my time spent on social media is pretty spread out throughout the day. There’s time spent first thing waking up, and there’s everything in between the day and into the evening. I would say 2 hours at least minimum. A day.

Justin - how long do you spend with your family and friends each week?

Jonas - With my family, I’d say nearly every day, because we have dinner together. With friends, it’s very rare. I mean I have friends from poly who are my classmates. So, I’ve been seeing them every day, I guess that makes up for it. Other than that, outside of school, it’s very rare.

Justin - what social media platforms do you use?

Jonas - I use Twitter. That said, I am not actively involved in all basic functions of twitter. I only read the news on twitter, the straits times account. I was looking for a form of social media to achieve that, nothing else other than that.

Justin - What is your favourite social media platform?

Jonas - Twitter, I suppose. I’m on it 30 minutes per se, taking a quick glance to check if there’s new tweets and turning it off and checking it throughout the day.

Justin - Why is social media important to you?

Jonas - social media to me is important mainly because it’s a connectivity to the world, where it’s just a form of getting news and information of happenings that are around the world. I understand that twitter can be used among friends and acquaintances alike. But for me, I mainly use it for a course of an information library.

Justin - on that note, why do you think young people use social media?

Jonas - well, my perspective of young people using social media has to deal with the fact that they are doing it together with their friends. To get out there in the world and to introduce themselves and to meet new people; to meet people with similar interests and to gain a following. To have a following who likes them for who they are as a person and their self-image, and who could potentially get along with them.

Justin - can you expand more on that?

Jonas - I guess it’s part of the follower’s system.

Justin - there’s this metric right? This arbitrary value?

Jonas - there’s this metric that is more so used as a gauge of how well off you are, on social media. I believe that a lot of youngsters these days, as that’s sort of their first impression on joining social media. That they’re able to see big numbers and that they see these *online influencers* and it acts as a form of encouragement for them to also try it out as well.

Justin - we’ll come back that; that want and desire to join this sort of movement.

Jonas - this social media movement, yes.

Justin - So when do you usually open your social media applications?

Jonas - aside from my free time, usually first thing in the mornings, evenings, and any spare time in between. There’s no specific timing; I just use it when I’m free. And I don’t use it extensively too, it’s a pretty broad range.

Justin - on that note, when you open twitter, what are your favourite things to do on twitter?

Jonas - To start off, twitter is an information library, it’s more of a secondary source of newsletters aside from the one my phone is already providing. Other than that, just to see posts of people that I follow. These social media influencers whom I follow. I follow them because we have similar interests, and just usually browsing posts. I’d say twitter itself gives more of an insight to what’s going on behind the scenes. There’s this sort of connectivity to the individual that I’m following, just as a form of interest.

Justin - so, when we’re looking at that, like you said, behind the scenes. There’s this insight as to what they’re doing, how they may think, what are the processes behind this content. Like for example for a video, what are the editing processes and whatnot. So, when we’re looking more at this persona, it’s more of this closer-to-life persona on twitter as compared to their online persona that they have to keep up, similar to what we see on real life major publications or even YouTube, where they have to keep up this act of perhaps acting energised, as opposed to twitter, where they can tweet anything they want to tweet. When you look at personalities and personas, what do you think are the effects of one’s personality of one’s social media online?

Jonas - well, I think the biggest factor is determined on how they uphold themselves and their image online.; being on a social media platform, it’s kind of up to the individual at that point on whether to keep their personalities and to tell their following “This is who I am, and I’d like to share that with you”. Or to make the decision to be someone else, maybe a bit different or entirely different as part of perhaps their brand image.

Justin - so, it’s more of a façade that they must keep up right?

Jonas - right.

Justin - so, as we’ve established, people use social media for different things. Some use it to browse around, some use it to follow their favourite creators, idols, or people they find interesting, or maybe to even gain a following and promote their brand or products. When we look at the different aspects of social media, and the different sub genres, what effects do you think social media has on you?

Jonas - Well to start off on a bigger scope, it definitely affects your lifestyle; how you go on about your day, because it depends on the intensity of your usage of the social media platform, because for various individuals, it can be varying degrees. For a casual browser, it can be as short as just 10 minutes. But for a content creator who has dedicated his or her entire life on this online platform, there’s a lot of up-time that needs to be taken care of to stay competitive. It definitely dictates that lifestyle.

Justin - when we look at your purpose of using social media, for you, it’s more browsing and keeping up right?

Jonas - yea it definitely narrows down the effects that social media has on me.

Justin - yup, so when we look at that scope, what effect do you think that has on you? Positive or negative or both?

Jonas - for the most part, I’d say that it’s positive. I am getting something out of my intentions of using the social media platform in the first place, which is to gather news and information. For the part where it can pose a negative impact is where I start to misuse or where I start to become irresponsible with it, where it begins to *interfere with my everyday responsibilities.*

Justin - right, it begins to delve into this conversation about addiction, where use becomes unhealthy, and the effect of social media no longer stays positive. So, do you think social media is addictive?

Jonas - for the most part, yes. I do think that it is addictive. Reasons being that especially in our day and age, the transition to a more digitalised world where everything’s making their transition to online, it encourages users to make use of their online presence to gain *further outreach*. And that in and of itself gives better incentive for individuals to hop onto social media given that it is one of the biggest platforms and genres out there to get into, where it’s greatly accessible, which allows them to have a very widespread scope of the things that they like and the things that they follow.

Justin - that large access to content and information can be very addicting right? To want to be constantly in the know.

Jonas - yes. Transitioning into the conversation of addiction, the role of FOMO really plays a part. Definitely more so now, with my experience and what I’ve seen and my peers around me, for better or for worse, it’s definitely becoming part of our daily lives.

Justin - so it being a part of your daily lives, it has to be an *excessive amount* of time to spend right?

Jonas - yes

Justin - so what would you consider an excessive amount of time to be spent on social media?

Jonas - to me, an excessive amount of time means that you neglect everyday activities in your own lifestyle that as a basic human being you are supposed to uphold.

Justin - like doing the dishes, washing the clothes etc?

Jonas - yea, like eating, like actually making yourself live.

Justin - so what would you say, in terms of numbers?

Jonas - I would say more than 4 hours a day?

Justin - from your perspective as a user that uses 2 hours a day, do you know such people?

Jonas - no, not really. It may just be due to time and circumstance; my friends don’t really use it excessively when I’m around. There’s that to consider. I’ve also never really asked my friends that question, too. If I need to, the best I can do is advise them on their social media usage.

Justin - right, even though you may not really know why, why do you think such people use social media so excessively?

Jonas - my first reasoning would be of want. My first example is being part of that social media following, that craze; you yourself are given an opportunity to amass a following, which I think is quite an incentive to jump on that bandwagon to see how far you can go, how big can the numbers get

Justin - which would translate to excessive social media use right?

Jonas - yes, definitely. The second reason being a matter of circumstance. How I view social media is that it can be used to expand your social circle. Depending on the individual, whether he or she has a group of friends that they can hang out with, they may say, feel subjected to converse over said phone screens, which can amass to prolonged periods of time spent on social media, as they’re meeting individuals whom they have never met before, and such an opportunity may never arise if they were to go outside and socialise. So, this could be another reason to use social media; to make online friends and to socialise.

Justin - I heard you mention FOMO. Could you expand on that?

Jonas - it’s generally used in a context of a certain following that you associate yourself with, something that you’re *really passionate* about, and maybe a lot of your friends too, and it may reach a certain point that you may feel left out or left behind that you’re so far away within that movement or individuals that share the same interest, which is where the FOMO comes in, and becomes excessive to you, the fact that “I need to know” or that “I want to know it” just so that I can *stay relevant* with others who share the same interests as me.

Justin - So, when we look at the purpose behind why said users use social media excessively, how do you think we can prevent that? Let’s start with FOMO. How can we prevent users from constantly checking their phones for purposes of not wanting to miss out?

Jonas - providing content that is recyclable? Reusable? One that doesn’t change the narrative that deems all the previous knowledge and information prior to it obsolete; it comes to a point of how information is also spread out and being shared around right? In that sense they can make it so that if it’s something that’s very progressive, they can make a summary of what has been presented before following the new set of information that is released; straits times actually does a good job of this. On top of the new newsletters that they’re putting gout, they actually provide posts of prior stories of journals and newsletters they’ve done before. I think that reuses the information back to the user discourages the feeling of FOMO because the information doesn’t disappear right after, and everyone is kept in the know.

Justin - have you heard of any campaigns to reduce social media usage?

Jonas - I haven’t, no.

Justin - do you think it is necessary to persuade young people from using social media excessively?

Jonas - I do believe that it is quite important. Main reason being that it’s sort of the main intentions of having a balanced lifestyle. Now what do I mean by that? I think that just the intentions of having such a movement is not to have these young children to be overly dependent on social media, where it’s their be all and end all, which is definitely not supposed to be the case, and that there has to be this introduction to the viability of the fact that you don’t necessarily need to have social media to dictate what your life is going to be, and what you should do with your time. Hence, a healthy and balanced lifestyle should be the main intentions of having these campaigns in the first place. This sort of idea I believe needs to be more put out there. Especially in this age where we’ve mentioned before, the transitioning over to digitalised things and media. So, yes, while majority of our everyday things may be encompassed under this umbrella of social media, that doesn’t mean that there’s no other option outside it.

Justin - so, we want to prevent fully prevent fully relying and depending on social media, and we want to reduce that dependability and reliability on social media to get through your day, or prevent FOMO, or to amass a following. So, knowing that, if you want to discourage this dependability, how would you do so?

Jonas - knowing what I know now, although dry and pretty old fashioned, I think one of the best ways of starting out, having a simple workshop, doing it step by step. It can be based on the activities that these young people like doing online and transitioning it over what we can do in person together. It has most if not all aspects they would expect to have in a social media setting, just that we can transition them over to real life, mainly focusing on the absence of social media. Hence, workshops that encourage that sort of activity and flow, would be a great way to start off.

Justin - do you think that there is a role for schools and government for the curbing of the excessive use of social media?

Jonas - I think that they can have that influence, mostly in part due to the fact that they spend most of their time in school, generally speaking. So, they can use that to have a better influence. You know what they say, better to start them off young right?

Justin - What makes you close your social media application on a day-to-day basis?

Jonas - well once I’ve gone through the new posts (dopamine, new content etc) and whatnot, and secondly, I need to tell myself to get off social media and do work

Justin - so you have that innate understanding that there is stuff that needs to get done, and translates to you discontinuing your use of social media

Jonas - yes and having control over your usage of social media.

Justin - do you think someone who is addicted has that level of control and/or innate understanding or maybe perhaps they don’t act on it? What do you think?

Jonas - yea so, innately, I think individuals know what it is to have that control, but because of that addiction, they may have lost that perception and understanding of what it means to get away and focus on the task on hand, making that conscious effort and decision, not having to rely on a third party. To sum it up, I think they have that understanding deep inside of them, just that they never put it too practice.

Justin - does that play into a possible solution to curb social media usage?

Jonas - I think it can be used a starting point, something that can be used to ease them to that feeling. To the addict themselves, it is an unpleasant feeling, easing them into it, getting them accustomed to it and that familiarisation to what’s actually happening and instilling that level of understanding within them is definitely a great way to go about it.

Justin - okay that concludes the interview. Thank you for your time.

Jonas - Thank you.