Is Facebook making us lonely, or are we doing it to ourselves? For example, are the people on our friends list really our friends? Do we even know who they are? Then again, we can choose to have human interaction and set aside the social media. Social media has its ups and downs I will admit, but is Facebook really the cause for 35% of adults older than 45 being chronically lonely as stated by AARP?

Take a minute to think about how many friends you have on your social media site. Now think about how many of them you actually know and interact with on a regular basis at least once a week. I am going to guess not very many. In fact, we performed a survey among our own group and found that 7 out of the 8 people in our group interact with only 2% of the friends on their Facebook account. These statistics are hard to believe, but do they necessarily mean that we are lonely? Your true friends are not the people who share or retweet your posts, they are the people that you have human interaction with regularly and would be there for you in a time of need. If you posted on your social media that you needed help with something, how many of your “friends” would actually show up and help?

If you are friends with someone on Facebook, do you really have a real friendship with them? I think talking in person, interacting together, meeting together to eat, or anything that you will do while seeing them are examples of a real friendship. Some friends may live three hours away which makes it difficult to see them in person, but can you really call them a true friend if you do not see them on a regular basis? I do not think you can because you are not interacting with them. To have a real friendship I personally think you should see them at least 1 time a week.

Do you honestly think that you can have a real friend without seeing each other? You can feed your friendship with social media, but you also need some live interaction. For instance, do you really know if someone is rolling on the floor laughing (ROTFL), or laughing out loud (LOL)? Online interaction tends to be over exaggerated. You just can’t beat a face to face conversation. You completely miss the facial expressions and body language when you are not physically present with one another. Real friends can be in a crowded room and never speak a word to one another, but they know exactly what they are thinking and how they are feeling in that moment.

No matter how many “friends” you have on Facebook I think it’s safe to say you really only have a few good friends who will support you and make time for an offline relationship. As long as you have a few good friends you will never be lonely.