**Why I Deleted My Instagram**

first draft

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Outline

* Introduction:
  + Background of writing this essay
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  + How these reasons led me to my decision a year ago.

In today's digital age, social media platforms like Instagram have become integral parts of many people's lives. However, despite its popularity and entertainment value, Instagram made me feel depressed and anxious. I found myself wasting too much time scrolling through posts, seeking validation through likes and comments. Although it was fun at times, it wasn't beneficial for my well-being. A year ago, I decided to delete Instagram, and since then, I've felt healthier and more balanced than ever, and here’s why.

Regardless of your own experiences with Instagram, numerous studies have talked about the negative effects of excessive Instagram use on mental health. Research indicates that heavy Instagram users often report higher levels of various psychological disorders. These include eating disorders, depression, social anxiety, general anxiety, and even problematic alcohol use. The platform's emphasis on visual content and curated lifestyles can create unrealistic expectations and foster feelings of inadequacy. This environment can lead to constant comparison and self-criticism, which are detrimental to mental health.

One issue I had with Instagram was the fear of missing out (FOMO). I often saw my classmates and friends posting about fun outings I wasn't part of. Once, my classmate invited everyone in our class, except me, to their house for barbeque during Moon Festival. When I saw them having fun on their Instagram stories, I felt excluded and sad. I thought that they all hated me and wanted to isolate me from their circle. Looking back, as I matured, I realized that I didn't really want to join them; I just wanted to be invited. Seeing their posts made me feel left out even though I had no real interest in joining. This fake sense of exclusion made me anxious and unhappy, hurting my self-esteem and overall happiness.

Instagram also had a huge impact on my body image. Seeing girls my age showing off their perfect bodies in bikinis and trendy outfits made me feel insecure about my appearance. I began to obsess over looking "sexy" and fitting into societal beauty standards of women at a young age. This obsession was harmful, leading to unhealthy habits and a negative self-image. However, since deleting Instagram, I've regained confidence in my natural appearance. I now feel comfortable wearing clothes that make me feel good, rather than those dictated by trends or peer pressure.

Deleting Instagram has been one of the best decisions I've made for my mental health. Over the past year, I've noticed a significant improvement in my well-being. Without the constant bombardment of curated images and unrealistic standards, I've been able to focus on my personal growth and self-acceptance. I've reconnected with activities that genuinely make me happy, like reading, exercising, and spending quality time with loved ones. My anxiety levels have decreased, and I no longer feel the pressure to compare myself to others.

In conclusion, the decision to delete Instagram has profoundly impacted my life. The platform's negative effects on mental health, FOMO, and body image issues were overwhelming and detrimental. By stepping away from the constant comparison and validation cycle, I've been able to live a healthier, more fulfilling life. My experience over the past year has shown me the importance of prioritizing my mental health and well-being over the short satisfaction of social media.