

Intensive English/ G4

Part 2: The Chemical Component of Social Media

- a. Read the following paragraphs and think about your psychological relationship with social media.

The pull of social media addiction isn't all in our heads. It's quite real, thanks to two chemicals our brains produce: dopamine and oxytocin.

Scientists used to think dopamine was a pleasure chemical in the brain, but now we know what it actually creates is want. Dopamine causes us to seek, desire, and search. Dopamine is stimulated by unpredictability, by small bits of information, and by reward cues—pretty much the exact conditions of social media. The pull of dopamine is so strong that studies have shown tweeting is harder for people to resist than cigarettes and alcohol.

Then there's oxytocin, sometimes referred to as "the cuddle

chemical" because it's released when you kiss or hug.

Or... tweet. In 10 minutes of social media time, oxytocin levels can rise as much as 13%—a hormonal spike equivalent to some people on their wedding day. And all the goodwill that comes with oxytocin—lowered stress levels, feelings of love, trust, empathy, generosity—comes with social media, too. As a result, social media users have shown to be more trusting than the average Internet user. The typical Facebook user is 43% more likely than other Internet users to feel that most people can be trusted. So between dopamine and oxytocin, social networking not only comes with a lot of great feelings, it's also really hard to stop wanting more of it.

Adapted from: <https://buffer.com/resources/psychology-of-social-media>

- b. Based on the article, fill in the blanks below with the correct information.

1. Social media addiction is a real psychological problem because of the chemicals _____ and _____.
2. Dopamine makes us feel _____. It is triggered by _____, small pieces of _____, and _____ cues.
3. Studies have shown that it is _____ to quit social media than to quit alcohol or cigarettes.
4. We feel oxytocin when we _____ or _____ someone.
5. Because of the role of oxytocin, on social media we _____ each other more and often lower our guard.

6. The impacts of oxytocin and dopamine make it very difficult to _____ using social media.

Part 3: Selfie Surgery

Selfie Surgeries

Getting surgeries for the sole purpose of taking selfies is a common tendency now.

a. Watch the following video and take note of the reasons why these women get selfie surgery.

Vocabulary for while you watch:

To "take something with a grain of salt" is an English saying that means to accept something while still being skeptical and/or critical about its complete truth.

1. According to the video, what are selfie lovers asking the doctors to do?
2. How does social media make the first patient, Rachel Goldstein, feel?
3. What app has helped propel a "selfie improvement movement"?
4. These women use photo editing apps to _____ teeth, _____ lips and _____ hips.
5. In what filter does Rachel Goldstein say she wants to live her life?

6. Plastic Surgeon Dr. Norman Rowe says that it is difficult to obtain what?

7. Goldstein sees plastic surgery as normal as typical beauty upkeep. What process does she compare plastic surgery to?