

Look Up by Gary Turk

I have 422 friends, yet I am lonely.
I speak to all of them every day, yet none of them really know me.
The problem I have sits in the spaces between
Looking into their eyes, or at a name on a screen.

I took a step back and opened my eyes,
I looked around and realised,
That this media we call social is anything but
When we open our computers and it's our doors we shut

All this technology we have, it's just an illusion
Community companionship, a sense of inclusion
But when you step away from this device of delusion
You awaken to see a world of confusion.

A world where we're slaves to the technology we mastered
Where information gets sold by some rich greedy bastard
A world of self interest, self image and self promotion
Where we all share our best bits but, leave out the emotion.

We're at our most happy with an experience we share,
But is it the same if no-one is there?
Be there for your friends and they'll be there too,
But no-one will be if a group message will do.

We edit and exaggerate, crave adulation
We pretend not to notice the social isolation
We put our words into order and tint our lives a-glistening
We don't even know if anyone is listening

Being alone isn't a problem let me just emphasize
If you read a book, paint a picture, or do some exercise
You're being productive and present, not reserved and recluse
You're being awake and attentive and putting your time to good use

So when you're in public, and you start to feel alone
Put your hands behind your head, step away from the phone
You don't need to stare at the menu, or at your contact list
Just talk to one another, learn to co-exist.

I can't stand to hear the silence of a busy commuter train
When no one wants to talk for the fear of looking insane.
We're becoming unsocial, it no longer satisfies
To engage with one another, and look into someone's eyes.

We're surrounded by children, who since they were born,
Have watched us living like robots, who now think it's the norm.
It's not very likely you'll make world's greatest dad,
If you can't entertain a child without using an iPad

When I was a child, I'd never be home
Be out with my friends, on our bikes we'd roam
I'd wear holes in my trainers, and graze up my knees
We'd build our own clubhouse, high up in the trees

Now the park's so quiet, it gives me a chill
See no children outside and the swings hanging still.
There's no skipping, no hopscotch, no church and no steeple
We're a generation of idiots, smart phones and dumb people.

So look up from your phone, shut down the display
Take in your surroundings, make the most of today
Just one real connection is all it can take
To show you the difference that being there can make.

Be there in the moment, that she gives you the look
That you remember forever as when love overtook
The time she first held your hand, or first kissed your lips
The time you first disagreed but you still love her to bits

The time you don't have to tell hundreds of what you've just done
Because you want to share this moment with just this one
The time you sell your computer, so you can buy a ring

For the girl of your dreams, who is now the real thing.

The time you want to start a family, and the moment when
You first hold your little girl, and get to fall in love again.
The time she keeps you up at night, and all you want is rest
And the time you wipe away the tears as your baby flees the nest.

The time your baby girl returns, with a boy for you to hold
And the time he calls you granddad and makes you feel real old.

The time you've taken all you've made, just by giving life attention.
And how you're glad you didn't waste it, by looking down at some invention.

The time you hold your wife's hand, sit down beside her bed,
You tell her that you love her and lay a kiss upon her head.
She then whispers to you quietly as her heart gives a final beat
That she's lucky she got stopped by that lost boy in the street.

But none of these times ever happened, you never had any of this.
When you're too busy looking down, you don't see the chances you miss.

So look up from your phone, shut down those displays
We have a final act existence, a set number of days
Don't waste your life getting caught in the net,
As when the end comes nothing's worse than regret.

I'm guilty too of being part of this machine,
This digital world, we are heard but not seen.
Where we type as we talk, and we read as we chat
Where we spend hours together without making eye contact

So don't give into a life where you follow the hype
Give people your love, don't give them your 'like'
Disconnect from the need to be heard and defined
Go out into the world, leave distractions behind.

Look up from your phone. Shut down that display. Stop watching this video. Live life the real way.