

Setting Boundaries with Social Media

[00:00:00] So this is going to be a bit of a different podcast episode from me. It's not going live on Instagram. I'm literally sitting here in my living room with the recording equipment in front of me. And I just, I'm going to talk you through my story. and give you some tips with regards to social media addiction and setting social media boundaries.

Because I feel like this is something that social media managers in particular have issues with, with defining what they should be sharing on their personal profiles, because they are so used to strategizing for businesses. And it's something that I have fallen victim to, or something that I have really been reflecting on, particularly recently because it has been affecting other aspects of my life.

Hello, if you're new here, my name is Frances and I'm the head brain from The [00:01:00] Social Brain, which is a social media marketing agency based in Essex. My business is made up of other freelance social media managers and it's something that we have been talking about openly particularly recently when I noticed that it's affected some personal circumstances within my life, not just work.

Addiction is quite a strong word, but I feel like by telling my story, this is going to empower other social media managers or even if you're not a social media manager, and you can see some of these behaviors within your own social media marketing or social media relationship, it's going to help you moving forward.

And if this can just help one person, it's very, very cliché, but if this can just help one person, I'm all for it. Social media came out when I was at university and I immediately felt passionate about it. So I was around. 19, 20 years old, Facebook [00:02:00] had launched the platform in my university because it was only university wide back then.

And actually my university was one of the last ones in the UK to actually have access to Facebook. But I was hooked as soon as it came out, I was hooked and I was studying marketing at the time. And funnily enough, the stars aligned and that's what brought my journey together into social media marketing.

What I found quite early on was that I was an oversharer, and I used to share all sorts of details about my day. And that was back in the days when the statuses

included the is, so it said Frances Barrett is, and you had to fill in the gaps. And I would tell all of my friends, absolutely everything that is going on with my day.

Frances Barrett is writing her dissertation. Frances Barrett is looking for people to go out with on a night out. That sort of stuff. In 2010, I was employed as a social media strategist and manager for my first job with Water Babies. Because my bosses, the franchisees of Water Babies in [00:03:00] Essex, saw that I had a passion for it.

And they knew that I had my degree in marketing, that I could marry the two together and build up a marketing presence on Facebook and on Twitter at the time. Facebook was different back then, there were no such things as business pages. It was just a Facebook personal profile acting as Water Babies Essex.

And we had to add our clients as friends and market that way. So it was very, very different to Facebook that you see today. And I was good at it. I was really, well, I am good at it. That's why I do it for a business now, but I was, I was very, very good at building those relationships and growing those connections.

At the same time, I was still using the platforms personally and I would still be oversharing at quite a high rate. I would be posting three or four times a day about what's going on with my day. It was becoming an addiction and that was back in 2010. [00:04:00] So obviously I'm now, I've now have 13 years experience in social media marketing.

I have been involved in social media for what feels like forever. And recently I have decided to deep dive into my relationship with social media and how I use social media as a consumer, as opposed to a marketer, because they are both extremely different. This is what sets me apart from your teenage relative running your social media marketing campaigns.

I understand the strategy behind it. If you're using it for personal use, there is no strategy behind it. You just use it as you see fit. Since I've been deep diving into my relationship with social media, however, I've discovered that I was using my personal profiles as a strategic content plan, which meant that I overshared a lot about my [00:05:00] anxiety, about my other personal issues that were going on. I overshared a lot. I was even talking about dating and relationships to the detriment of the starting of a new relationship. I overshared too much and he said it was too much for him.

It took a family bereavement for me to really reflect on this because a family member always used to say to me, you need to get off of Facebook. It's no good for your brain. Spending too much time on Facebook is no good for your brain. That's what he said. That's what he used to say. So I reflected on everything and have come up with a plan that works for me.

And I hope with my tips that it might help you too. If you are feeling like you are oversharing over on Facebook. Before I get into those tips though, I just want to tell you how bad my social, my relationship with social media had got before I started to really review this. I [00:06:00] was posting on my personal Facebook page every day, a minimum of twice a day, about things that I was going through, shout outs, personal stuff, things about my son.

There were no boundaries. I was literally posting it. Most of my activity was actually on Facebook. I was posting on a personal Instagram feed, which was actually public and not private. I was posting on there every single day, and usually the content would be different from Facebook. So I would be posting completely different content about my son, about really personal things I was going through.

I mean, I'd scrape the surface on Facebook, but I'd deep dive further into these personal issues on my Instagram feed, because I prefer Instagram as a platform. So the captions would be maxed out. It would be like literally essays and essays and essays. I was posting on TikTok again, different [00:07:00] content trying to, you know, learn a new platform.

I'm not a TikTok specialist by any stretch, so it was about learning the platform and seeing what sort of content really worked. Again, because I'm a social media marketing strategist, I was looking for the metrics that really drove the conversation, the things that got the likes, the comments, the saves, the shares.

I was constantly analyzing my metrics, but it was talking about me personally. And there were no boundaries when it came to whatever I wanted to talk about. As I said, this was detrimental to a potential romantic relationship. It's got me into arguments with family members who don't understand why I was oversharing so much or I was oversharing something that was very, very sacred to them.

I discovered as well that it was really affecting my relationship with myself because there was a moment over this summer [00:08:00] where I had been working on myself and my mindset and discovered that I was really suffering with anxiety.

Although I have rules in place when it comes to protecting mental health on social media, specifically, I don't follow people who make me feel bad or who I compare myself to. I only follow people who make me feel good that anxiety was still creeping in in other ways and it was down to my constant posting and constantly looking for maybe external validation or looking for patterns within the metrics of the stuff that I was posting.

So here are some things that I've put into place now that have made me feel actively so much better about my relationship as a social media user instead of a social media marketer. And, you know, I'm still learning. These might change, but this is what I did to start with and have so far made a massive, massive difference.

The [00:09:00] first one is to ask myself questions before hitting post. So the questions that I generally ask myself are, Why am I posting this? Who am I posting this for? Is it for me or is it for somebody else? How would I feel if my family members or friends saw this post?

Is it a positive or negative reaction? So those are kind of the questions that I asked myself before tapping post. But even before I've created that post, I really have now set boundaries with what I am sharing on social media. So at the moment, I've put boundaries with regards to, I won't talk about any current dating or relationship things that are going on. I won't talk about my son when he is in a particular place at that time of posting. So I may talk about it afterwards, but I'll never talk about it at the time. I now don't talk about my [00:10:00] own mental health because I'm a lot more guarded about that now, even though, you know, I was posting things about my mental health before to help other people unless they actively reach out I'm now not posting about my anxiety or any other any other mental health things that I'm going through.

Another tip that I've, I've kind of been developing as well, is setting time limits and only posting on particular days. So, at the moment with my Facebook profile, I will only share my business post with another caption at the top of my business post, I will only talk about work or networking because my profile is now moving towards that direction for networking while I try and build up my visibility. So I will, I'll specifically talk about networking, my business, any special offers any exclusives but I won't necessarily [00:11:00] create any original content around me personally.

And that's just something that I'm kind of building on. We may see changes as, as my, my strategy changes business wise, but it's quite nice to just talk about those things for now and nothing else, what I've struggled with and why, why I

felt compelled to record this today is because I had nothing to post on Facebook today. I've already shared my, my post from my business page with my little caption and people are going to wherever they want to go to but nothing else is happening in my day. This is a day where I'm indoors and I'm working on my business, on my slide deck, on my paying bills and all the admin stuff that, that we, we do as, as business owners as well.

That's what today is. I'm not doing anything else. So there's nothing else for me to post on Facebook today. And this morning, I felt very nervous about that because even though I've been working on my relationship with social [00:12:00] media, there's not been a day where nothing has happened. So it's a really interesting space to be in, to be anxious about not posting as opposed to anxious about posting. It's a really, really interesting space to be in.

I've also decided to diarize when I'm going to post on Instagram. Now, self confessed Instagram addict over here. Instagram is my favorite platform. I could potentially spend all day on there, just posting and conversing and everything else. Right now, I have diarized that I post once every three to four days.

And I'm not allowed to post in between those. And that is just a boundary that I've put into place so that I don't waste time over on Instagram. Instagram are really great with this because they also have tools in the settings where you can limit your time. So I've limited my time on Instagram to an hour a day, so I don't get sucked into that Instagram hole.

With regards to TikTok, which is another place where I was creating another [00:13:00] series of personal content about everything, again, about toddler life, work life and, and dating life. I've just decided not to post on there right now because I don't need to, and I don't want to. So I'm, I'm using it as a consumer.

I'm, I do scroll through TikTok, but not every day. I'm not as reliant on TikTok. But I've just decided for now to take a break from posting and just focus on my relationship with Facebook and Instagram and making that much, much healthier for me and for my mindset.

I also changed my Instagram public profile to a private profile to ensure that it was locked down and even though I'm posting once every three or four days just to make sure that my community was more tight knit.

I've even started removing people who were following me because I didn't know who they were or I wasn't sure about their profile or [00:14:00] whatever. It was

no longer relevant. So I've been really actively working on that Instagram profile.

I've been working on my relationship with social media for about a month now, and I feel so much better.

I feel so much brighter. I feel as if I don't need to share everything. I don't need to look at the analytics. Whenever I share a personal post, I don't need to look at the likes or the, the comments or the share the saves or, or the shares. I can just start enjoying it for what it is as opposed to thinking, thinking of it as work right now.

And I hope that because I've made these changes now, they won't affect any future relationships that I may have romantically or with my family. But I'll continue to build on these boundaries and to maintain a healthy balance when it comes to my social media platforms.

I hope this is helpful I'd love to know if you have had experience with addiction when it comes to [00:15:00] social media. Are you a social media marketer and you've really struggled with finding the balance? Or maybe you're not a social media marketer, but you find that you are tipping the scales much further towards social media platforms instead of concentrating on the other things in your business.

I'd love to hear from you, so please do leave me a comment and I'll be sure to get back to you. Thank you so much for listening to this. I hope it was helpful and insightful and I'll see you in the next episode.