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Instagram vs Reality: The Battle Between My Feed and My Feelings

While wondering about a reel that made me feel like I am watching a visual snippet of my life, I found myself tumbling upon a few questions. As effortful this thinking may seem, lets try and look at it for once:

Ever get the impression that your Instagram feed knows you better than people around you? One minute low, and the next, an uncomfortably familiar meme strikes you out of the blue in your stream. If it sounds like you, you're not the only one.

In the midst of Instagram-perfect brunches, Bali sunsets, and flawless selfies, the "sad girl hour" meme becomes an emotional lifeline. But is it reassuring, or just becoming chaotic within?

Instagram is edited, filtered, and cropped, perhaps quiet far from *actual* life. It's a space where random events, as they are, seem as choreographed as they can be and highlighted reels take the place of actual stories. We're given a peek of life that has been purposefully prepared for others' approval; through airbrushed faces and Instagram-perfect holidays. Slowly we start to internalize, slowly see a relatable space building within, these pictures as more than merely content but as expectations and explanations.

This is the tricky part. We start comparing, or try to draw parallels between our normal thoughts, feelings, and situations we are in, with the greatest day in someone else's life. It then feels like we are losing in a fast-paced race to the most shining place, be it aesthetically or on the grounds of accomplishments; a race that we didn't participate in, not running, or not even a part of my journey, at least at this point. The rare emotional post amidst all the shiny content such as a selfie with a remark that reads, "feeling low today" is even more perplexing. It begs the question: Is everyone else having challenges? Or have we simply gotten better at packaging pain?

But here is a thing, we are often scrolling, and find ourselves amidst different stories and journeys. Even though we start only as an observer, after a while, it occupies a larger part in our observations, and perhaps in the stories and experiences we live through. Slowly and

subtly, our perception of self-changes with each swipe, building aspirations, expectations and silent comparisons.

It is perhaps subtle feeling of not measuring up, rather than jealousy. The disconnect between our thoughts and emotions leads to a friction, a conflict between who am I, who I should be, and who I want to be. Even if we appear "put together" on the outside, we're wondering if we're good enough. I can recall one night in particular when I felt depressed and emotionally jumbled. That's when sad memes come in like a digital hug. They validate our emotional turmoil in a society that generally celebrates accomplishments. However, it feels like a quest, at times, to differentiate whether its connection or a layer of humor on it that aids in coping.

If scrolling makes you feel smaller, a little change and more space can have a significant impact.

The reflection is, what you see others posting, or what you post, do not define you or your journey. It does, however, influence the views and expectations, ultimately creating a drift.

Moreover, **your feed should fuel you—not fool you.**