Instagram Life v Real Life

WHY THIS MATTERS

Instagram and other image-led platforms often show life in edited highlights rather than the full picture. This can lead to upward social comparison, where people measure their ordinary day against someone else's best moment. Evidence links this pattern with lower self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, anxiety, low mood, and pressure to meet unrealistic standards.

The Highlight Reel

Purpose: Help people recognise that social media often shows a filtered version of life, not the whole truth.

- Key message: You are comparing your behind-the-scenes with someone else's edited highlight reel.
- Focus: Perfect bodies, perfect homes, perfect relationships, perfect productivity, perfect recovery journeys, and perfect lifestyles.
- Risk: Repeated comparison can make normal life feel like failure.
- Call to action: Pause before comparing. Ask: "What might this post not be showing?"

INSTAGRAM CAPTION

Instagram often shows the clean kitchen, not the mess outside the frame. The gym selfie, not the exhausted morning. The success, not the setbacks. Your real life is not falling short - it is simply real. Before you compare, remember: a post is a moment, not the whole story.

Real Life Is Enough

Purpose: Encourage practical, protective habits that reduce pressure and support mental wellbeing.

- **Key message:** You do not need to look perfect, perform constantly, or prove your worth online.
- **Focus:** Rest, honest conversations, realistic goals, offline connection, and choosing accounts that support wellbeing.
- **Risk:** Unrealistic expectations can increase stress, shame, low mood, anxiety, body dissatisfaction, isolation, and unhealthy coping behaviours.
- **Call to action:** Unfollow pressure. Follow honesty. Make space for real life.

INSTAGRAM CAPTION

Real life includes bad days, tired mornings, unfinished jobs, recovery setbacks, quiet wins, and moments no one sees. None of that makes you behind. Try checking in with yourself before checking your feed: “Is this helping me feel connected, or is it making me feel not enough?”

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“ Your real life is worth more than a perfect feed ”