Why it's Time to Leave Facebook
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When Facebook arrived on the scene it took off like wildfire. Facebook's premise of connecting with friends and sharing of memories was a good idea. For my part, being a 60 year old guy, finding old friends and reconnecting was a pleasurable experience. Then as Facebook became more popular friends of friends started sending requests to "friend them". OK, that wasn't bad until their friends wanted to be friends, and their friends want to be friends; and here I was with three of four levels of people who I don't know.

Today it seems that Facebook has run its course. Facebook Fatigue is setting in on many people. I've noticed a definite change in attitude of people, and an ugliness crawling out of posts.

Friends

Who are our friends? As stated above; friends are who we interact with on Facebook. In some cases they are those who I knew in high school, (class of 1972). Some are old radio people I knew and worked with. Some are casual acquaintances, such as vendors of products I knew or the guy who owned the hot dog stand which is now owned by his kids. Then there are the kids who we knew "of" in school, but never reacted with each other at the time.

When you get to casual acquaintances the relationships become cloudy. And when the friends of the acquaintances enter your friend list, things get interesting. The one thing I have to stress is that although all 500 people in your Friend List are called "friends", only about 5% of them are really friends. The rest are "drive by acquaintances".

The Triggers

Covid-19 and the reactions of our city, state, and federal leaders has given birth to both Covid Crows and Covid Deniers. The "Crows" keep chattering with the reasons we must stay vigilant, and protect humanity. The "Deniers" give us all the reasons that the disease is a total farce and we're being played as idiots. Both camps seem to have a fondness for dropping their meme bombs; or pictures with sayings, supposedly proving their positions. I find it astounding how many of my friends have worked in a biological lab, have a degree in medicine, or source their views from other Facebook users or non-medical web sites.

The same applies for the political puppies. These folks gleefully post their memes about their preferred party, barking about one side or the others virtues or perceived/real immoral judgements. Along with their medical degrees you find their writings, (and memes), paint a picture of their profound involvement with some of America's premier Constitutional scholars.

More triggers include those of brand preferences, such as Chevy versus Ford, or brand of electronic equipment, machinery, and even contractors. Then there are the requested recommendations, which a third of the respondents cite something off the top or their head, a third will cite something more educated and on mark, and the final third will argue about the choices or flame the other two thirds.

Add to that, the computer is a perfect shield for saying something to someone which you would never say to them in person. I've seen some truly horrific slurs and comments about race, religion, nationality, party affiliation, etc. I've believed ever since the Internet allowed us to communicate in mass through forums, news lists, and other methods, that the tone of dialog has become confrontational. Not speaking to someone face to face, or having that double thought before stamping a written letter for sending, has allow people with a short fuse and strong beliefs to say incredibly hurtful things.

Facebook Groups are of often the most feral when someone asks a question, and another person will respond with, "are you stupid", "read the friggin manual", or opine an uneducated answer. I recall in an electrical group one of the members giving someone advice which would have caused death, if not permanent injury. Luckily the group's admin took down the post, which later the poster said he as "just kidding". Anyone who visits a group should know that there are various levels of proficiency and intelligence. And there are always some wise-guys who contribute nothing of substance, but is quick with what they feel is a clever or comical comment. I have yet to see one post showing the aftermath of damage to equipment, vehicle, or boat where someone has not typed those hilarious words, "that will buff out".

It's interesting to note that no groups are exempt from triggered individuals. Even highly moderated groups struggle as the moderator desires a balance between 1st amendment speech, and something outright wrong or misstated. Even in a Bible group I've seen more than a few dust ups over meanings of scripture, which book is correctly stated, etc.

Trolls

Trolls have become a major problem in Facebook. They may post some comment with an article, (usually opinion), from a manufactured web site, which is usually partisan or leans in a specific direction. Often it's just clickbait. Then there are those who use Youtube as their source of information and enlightenment. I find it surprising how many people believe a heavily produced and CGI video of a flying saucer over a town proves, beyond a shadow of doubt, that extra-terrestrials are visiting us.

Trolls also come in the flavor of either promoting or demonstrating a flaw of a political candidate or the latest social media cause. "Q", 5G, 4D/5D, and Underground Government are some of the ones which come to mind. I've watched as someone will post an article, (usually tracing back to Youtube), and participants swallow it hook, line, and sinker.

If P. T. Barnum ever needed validation for his statement, "there's a sucker born every minute", the trolls are the fertilizer for the mind. I've seen some pretty bold claims and statements, but it seems that once you post it on Facebook, it brings followers.

Fact Checking & Inappropriate Content

Lately, Facebook started doing Fact Checking. Their methods and algorithms for detecting fraud or fake information are closely guarded. What is a given is that they are highly flawed. Here are a couple of examples.

A friend posted picture of his granddaughter being baptized in a church. The pictures showed an infant, in her mother's arms, with the minister dropping water upon her head. Most of us have seen this tradition for decades. Facebook marked it as inappropriate and took it down. Many of us were dumbfounded how a simple, innocent photo of a child being baptized in church could be a violation of Facebook's community standards.

Another friend was debating the topic of rioting and stated that Dr. Martin Luther King stated "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that". That statement was said to be false, yet some of us have the audio recordings of Dr. King saying just that.

The fact checking also is suspect when politics or Covid comes up. I have to wonder if it's a rogue Facebook employee or a flaw in a bots word recognition, but I've seen many statements either marked as inappropriate or wrong, only to be proved later as correct, and reflagged as wrong.

Scams

For me, Facebook ads are not to be believed. The only ones I see as legitimate are local businesses, whom I know about already and don't require an ad to attract me. Lately the ads have been scams or outright frauds.

Take for example in March the ads for masks. One seller sold a cloth mask, claiming it was made by veterans, and supported veterans. The mask was made of the highest grade materials. When the mask arrived it contained no stitching, and the only material was cloth similar to what would be used for a light t-shirt, and die cut. The large adult size was ordered, the item could only be used by a young pre-teen otherwise it would be painful to wear. Although the mask claimed to be made by veterans, and insinuated U.S. veterans, the item was received from a Chinese vendor with an address in Hong Kong, showing a China Post cancellation.

It should be noted that when complaining about this and other sellers, I heard nothing from Facebook. It seems that Facebook has no concern they are being used to sell, and defraud people. At the least you would think someone at Facebook would check into it.

Conclusion

When several friends made the statement "if you don't like what I say, unfriend me", I have. And oddly, one of the nine challenged me after going through his friend list to see who did unfriend him. He confronted me for my reason for unfriending. I told him, "you put a line in the sand to agree with you unconditionally or leave and I did what you asked".

In the end, we didn't stay friends because his view of what matters, and my view of what matters, differed. And while I could live with his view being his opinion, he could not live with me not accepting his view unconditionally and professing such publicly.

I've found even more people like to give opinions, but are loathe to even view something close to what they believe, yet just slightly off.   And there are those who are rabidly tribal to the point where you can't have a dialog.

My only recourse is to be honest with my views, but keep my opinions to myself. I may mark every ad on Facebook as a scam, and friends posts which are wrong as "I don't want to see this", or report them. But in the end, I don't have any need for seeing this gibberish, and I don't think I have an obligation to tolerate it.

I'm pretty much done with Facebook. At first it was fun. But now the tone of the platform has taken a pretty nasty turn, and even people I "thought" I knew have demonstrated very poor judgement when it comes to their language, or positions on topics.

I fear as we get closer to elections Facebook will become worse. This is not the place I want to call home. If I find another, more civil platform, it would be nice. If not, I have other things in my world to do than to be aggravated on a daily basis.

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