

Look Up

by Gary Turk

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

I took a step back and opened my eyes
I looked round and realised
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
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, 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 till our lives are glistening
We don't even know if anyone is listening

Being alone isn't the problem let me just emphasise
If you read a book, paint a picture, or do some exercise
You're being productive and present not reserved and reclused
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 your 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 and 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
I'd be out with my friends, on our bikes we'd roam
I'd wear holes in my trainers and graze up my knees
Or build our own clubhouse high up in the trees

Now the park is 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 as 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 still loved 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 nights 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 Grandad and makes you feel real old
The time you take in all you've made when you're giving life attention
And how you're real 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, 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 phones, shut down those displays
We have a finite existence, a set number of days
Don't waste your life getting caught in the net
because when the end comes, nothing's worse than regret

I am guilty too of being part of this machine
this digital world we are heard but not seen
where we type as we talk and read as we chat
where we spend hours together without making eye-contact

So don't give in to 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 the display
Stop watching this video, live life the real way.