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Title: Discussion

# Question #1

An individual's sense of self-identity is formed as a result of both the information they gain from the external social world and through their self-observation. As we grow up to acquire more self-awareness, we evaluate and observe our behavior based on our current needs, past experiences, future dreams, and goals. However, our social worlds have dramatically expanded since the age of the Internet and the countless people we interact with online. The expanded social world now deeply impacts the development of our self-identity as our experiences get broadened. This exposure comes with consequences, enabling negative thinking and the validation of false notions. Posting a highly glamorized version of one's life for others leads to social comparison that perpetuates negative bias and leads individuals to belittle the positives in their own lives and relationships, compared to the highly glamorized versions of moments and relationships that are presented to them alongside carefully worded captions and posts (Theobald).

To manage these self-perception issues, it is recommended to restrict and narrow the noise that reaches to us through social media. Social media has to be used for its appropriate function such as remaining updated with current events, networking with distant relatives, colleagues, and people we know. This also requires us to be mindful of who we reach out to and to be conscious of the time when social media is inducing self-loathing in us. Such posts have to be questioned for their validity and the negative thoughts they induce, confronted. At times like these, it is also helpful to disconnect from social media and socialize in the real world.

# Question #2

One instance of miscommunication that I witnessed was during my placement while I work with Jack in the same department. A project he was recently working on was a critical one for the company as well as his career. Sitting beside Jack, stuck in his work, I saw him exclaim, "This sucks!". I looked over to him and tried to console him, "Jack, I feel sorry that you are having a problem getting the answer, but I’m sure you will find one soon, I see you have a lot a lot of potential within you." However, Jack simply replied with a “Whatever!". While I was only trying to console him and provide emotional support, Jack perceived my response in a different way, and instead of thanking me, he said, "What do you need to worry about, you're sitting there relaxing while it's me who is stuck in this mess!" This was not the reply I was expecting and ended up saying, "Jack, You're always clueless about what I'm trying to say."

The miscommunication between Jack and I occurred as a result of a lack of acknowledgment of gender differences in communication styles. These gender differences result from the particular social arrangements existing within a society, in which individuals have grown up, and lead to a perceived difference in expectations and roles wherein certain linguistic practices are more socially acceptable for a particular gender than the other. To avoid such cultural barriers in interpersonal communication, it is important to acknowledge the perspective of the other and to acknowledge that one's own understanding may be different than the other person. Our own view of the situation, or interpretation of a message, could just be one out of several possibilities. This helps us consider the perspective of others before responding, it helps us develop an enhanced understanding and appreciation of their point of view, which affects the way we communicate.

# Question #3

Paraphrasing is an effective way to enhance understanding of a conversation or a subject of discussion and is one means of increasing the impact of one's statement. Translating and rephrasing the other person’s comments leads one to understand each other better (Turner and West 148). To practice and evaluate paraphrasing in conversation, I discussed the film *Man of Steel (2013)* with a friend. It began with him reviewing the main characters and themes in the film while I had to listen to his comment and paraphrase it again.

During the practice, I noticed that I only heard what I was expecting to hear, possibly due to my underlying bias and assumptions regarding the film. As I began to paraphrase, I noticed that I began to question the opinions of my friend, and as I began to paraphrase, I felt the urge to introduce some of my own ideas to his version. In the midst of it, I could not catch a word but while paraphrasing, I guessed the context and used simpler words to replace the original. Finally, I managed to refine, rearrange and rephrase his comments and repeated to him a paraphrased version of what he narrated to me.

# Question #4

There has definitely been a social decline in eye-contact when individuals are conversing. It is common to have someone drop their sights to their smartphone whilst having a direct conversation. This can be observed at any general gathering, whether it is the dinner table, a meeting, party or a ceremony. One of the primary factors behind this rising occurrence is the increasing use of smartphone devices, which further is a result of its continued integration with features of everyday life. It is not just a handheld computer but has become a key tool to navigate our lives thereby, and hence it has become more culturally acceptable to glance over to our phones during a conversation or answer a call or a voice note. For adolescents and young adults, glancing over to their phones repeatedly during a conversation is out of a compulsive feeling to see if they have missed a social opportunity or something interesting. Furthermore, with the advent of remote based work as a result of internet connectivity, more people are living isolated and less social lives than before; hence unaccustomed to the norms of proper business conversation whilst maintaining eye-contact.

# Works Cited

Theobald, Mikel. *Depression and Social Media*. 29 May 2014. 14 February 2019. <https://www.everydayhealth.com/hs/major-depression-resource-center/depression-social-media/>.

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