

Unopened?

From FOMO to JOMO and Showing Up IRL

Introduction: "Wait... What Did I Miss?"

Author IRL

My own kids used to look at me like I was a unicorn when I asked about Snap, Insta, or how to post on YouTube. But for my students, it hit different. They were *all in*—always asking for my screen names, Snapchat, Facebook—you name it. Of course, I couldn't share any of that for obvious teacher reasons... but still. Wild.

Ever scroll through TikTok, Instagram, or Snapchat and feel like everyone else is living their best life—without you? Your favorite influencer just posted another perfect beach pic, and someone from math class just went viral. Meanwhile, you're chillin' in your room, rockin' your softest PJs, snack crumbs everywhere, phone in hand.

That tight feeling in your chest? That anxious itch to check your phone again? That's FOMO—Fear of Missing Out. And guess what? You're not the only one feelin' that vibe.

Chapter 1: What Even *Is* FOMO?

Left unread in the group chat? Yeah, that hits different. Especially when you saw everyone else was talking, reacting, sending pics—and your bubble stayed gray. That tiny thing can feel like a huge deal. FOMO is that "OMG why wasn't I there?" vibe. It's like everyone else got the invite to the most fire party of the year—and you're just watching the posts roll in.

But FOMO isn't just about events. It's when you feel left behind—socially, emotionally, or trend-wise. Missed the latest TikTok challenge? Didn't react to that viral video fast enough? Got left on read in the group chat? FOMO hits hard and messes with your head.

Chapter 2: The Social Spiral Scroll Trap

Social media's built to keep you stuck in a social spiral scroll. One post turns into ten. Then it's an hour later, and you're like, "Wait, what just happened?" It's lowkey genius—and totally sus.

What you see:

- Friends vibing at the beach
- Someone with a “dream body” dropping a fit check
- That one couple posting the most extra date ever

What you *don't* see:

- The beach fight over snacks
- The 83 takes before the perfect selfie
- The crying in the bathroom after that “perfect” date

Yesterday's dance moves are today's sunsets, and tomorrow's dancing cats. It's a never-ending loop of fake fire meant to keep you hooked. LOL but true.

You scroll for the vibes but end up doomscrolling for the drama. FOMO is fed by filtered pics and highlight reels—and yeah, the scroll never ends.

Chapter 3: When FOMO Gets Loud

FOMO doesn't just make you feel left out—it wrecks your chill. It can mess with your sleep, your confidence, and your peace of mind.

You're checking your phone every five seconds. You wake up at 3 a.m. like, “Did I miss something?” You're not even vibing with what you're doing IRL because you're too busy thinking about what you *might* be missing.

It's exhausting. Major yikes.

Chapter 4: Reality Check—Nobody Has It All Together

That friend with the OG aesthetic feed? They feel FOMO too. The influencer with 2 million followers? Still stressing about likes. That always-partying dude? Might be the loneliest of them all.

Everybody's curating. Everyone's posting their best angles. Nobody's posting the awkward, the boring, or the real-life flops.

Even you. Let's be real.

Author IRL

I have a mini zoo at home—10 dogs, 2 cats, 4 birds, 4 sugar gliders, and 2 axolotls. Thought about pet influencing as a fun, maybe even lucrative side hustle when I retire. Got advice from an online influencer to just copy viral content, throw my pets into it, and tweak the captions.

I paid real money for that advice. LOL. Never again.

My posts remain original, minus background noise, and will continue—no matter the likes or views.

Chapter 5: Taking Back the Power

You don't have to ghost social media completely (unless that's your move). But you *can* take back control:

- **Mute or unfollow** the accounts that make you feel meh.
- **Turn off notifs**—give your brain a sec to breathe.
- **Set time limits** on apps. Yeah, for real.
- **Do one cool thing a day—no phone.** Paint something weird. Dance however you want, skip the posting in the perfect outfit, and actually take a walk with your dog. You don't need an audience to have a moment that matters.
- **Talk to people. IRL.**

You're not here to just scroll through life—you're here to live it.

Author IRL

Being an educator of 30 years, I've seen how phones have changed education—and not for the good.

You'd think with so much info literally at kids' fingertips, they'd use it. But instead, they're often too busy chasing likes or trying to go viral. Real learning gets lost in the scroll.

In our class, we have the kids put their phones in a cabinet from start to end of the day. OMG—you should've heard the pushback! But after a few months? They said they didn't miss them. They were less distracted, less anxious—and they got to know each other and me. Like, really *know* each other. IRL connection? Total win. And most importantly, they were taking back power—over their focus, their relationships, and their time.

Chapter 6: JOMO—The Joy of Missing Out

The best parts of life don't come with a filter. They're messy, hilarious, sometimes awkward, but always real.

FOMO fades when you lean into the unposted moments—late-night laughs, deep convos, and actual vibes.

And that's where JOMO kicks in. The **Joy of Missing Out** isn't about missing out at all—it's about choosing peace over pressure. It's dancing in your room just because. It's ditching the group chat drama to hang with your dog. It's the deep breath you take when you leave your phone behind and actually look around.

JOMO is your reminder that you're not missing out—you're exactly where you're supposed to be.

So next time your thumb's twitchin' to scroll and your brain's like, "You're totally missing out," you can say:

"LOL nah. I'm not missing out—I'm showing up."



Reader Challenge

Pick one day this week to go **phone-free for one full hour**. No scrolling. No selfies. Just you and your real life.

Take a walk, draw something, dance around your room, or hang out with someone face-to-face.

Then ask yourself: *Did I really miss anything?* Or did I finally show up?
