

THE OBVIOUS QUESTION

Why do people spend so much time on social media?

THE HIDDEN ASSUMPTION

That people are **choosing to spend their time there**.

We assume social media is merely a tool people use for entertainment, connection, information, or distraction.

But what if the deeper issue isn't *why people use social media*?

What if it is **what social media has trained people to want from their own lives**?

QUESTIONS WE AVOIDED

1. What if people aren't addicted to social media, but to the feeling of being noticed?
2. What if scrolling isn't about finding something interesting, but avoiding the moment when nothing is happening?
3. What if people spend so much time online because their real lives increasingly feel less rewarding by comparison?

THE QUESTION YOU SHOULDN'T ASK

"What if social media isn't stealing our time, but teaching us what we should want to do with it?"

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T ASK IT

Because it changes the accusation.

Instead of asking whether people lack self-control, it asks whether the environment itself is **reshaping desire**.

Maybe the endless scrolling isn't merely consuming hours.

Maybe it is quietly teaching us that every empty moment should be filled, every experience should be documented, every opinion should be displayed, and every silence should be interrupted.

And if that is happening, deleting an app doesn't necessarily solve the deeper problem.

IF THE ANSWER IS YES

Then social media isn't simply competing for our attention.

It is participating in the construction of our **preferences, expectations, identity, and definition of a satisfying life**.

The frightening part is that we might eventually mistake those manufactured desires for our own.

IF THE ANSWER IS NO

Then perhaps the problem is much more ordinary.

Humans have always searched for distraction, approval, novelty, gossip, belonging, and escape. Social media may simply be the most efficient machine ever built for delivering all of them at once.

In that case, the technology isn't fundamentally changing us.

It is merely revealing us.

THE AFTERSHOCK

Maybe the real question isn't how much time social media takes from us, but whether we would still want that time back if we remembered what we originally wanted to do with it.