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Social media has become a major part of people's lives. There are many articles that discuss the issues of using social media such as Melissa Healy's "Teenage Social Media Butterflies May Not Be Such a Bad Idea", Hilary Stout's "Antisocial Networking?", and the infographic "Teenagers on Social Media: Socialization and Self-Esteem" by Clive Anderson Jr., Eknor Johar, and Jocelyn Cikey. Hilary Stout, the author of "Antisocial Networking?", believes that kids today are losing their face-to-face social skills. She believes social media is what weakens our social skills. I disagree with Stout for three reasons: social media develops a closer bond with friends, there are some benefits of social media, and it allows people to explore their interests and identities.

First of all, social media helps us develop closer bonds with our friends. The majority of people aren't with their friends around the clock to talk to them. Social media provides the ability to do just that. According to Stout, she wrote that Elizabeth Hartley-Brewer "believes that technology allows them to be connected to their friends around the clock." This means that people could be closer to their friends through social media. It allows us to be more connected with our friends. Social media is just another way of communication, which leads the friendships to become closer by being able to chat with them. Since people could be connected with their friends through social media at anytime, social media helps us develop closer bonds with our friends, thus strengthening our social skills. Also Stout wrote about another woman named Beth

Cafferty, and Cafferty states, “I actually think they’re more in contact with each other - anything comes to mind, I’m going to text you right away.” What she states shows that through instant communication, we grow closer with our friends. We are even more connected with our friends through instant messaging, which can help get word out faster or share something you discovered or thought of. Because we’re more connected to our friends with instant messaging and social media, we develop a closer bond with our friends.

Second of all, there are benefits of using social media. According to Resource F, the infographic lists some positive effects of using social media. On the lists, it shows that social media “helps those with social anxiety.” This means that social media would be great for most introverts, allowing to practice social skills with others online. They may not be as nervous as talking to someone online than talking with someone face-to-face. Social media could be an introvert’s training wheels when they can strengthen their social skills. Since social media benefits most introverts social media has benefits. Not only that, the infographic also listed that social media “gives freedom to express oneself.” This could help those who don’t go to social gatherings or are just too busy to be with their friends. People could show their feelings on a subject with the help of social media. Since social media helps those who are introverts and who are too busy, the use of social media has benefits.

Lastly, social media allows people to explore their interests and identities. Social media has many groups and forums in which people can talk about or post on a certain topic. Those groups can help a person develop their social skills. According to Healy, she believes that social media actually strengthens social skills. In her article she states, “electronics appear to be the path by which kids today develop emotional bonds, their own identities, and an ability to

communicate and work with others.” This means that using electronics has benefits will positively affect you in the future. The benefits will also include growth of communication skills. Since technology is the way kids today will gain communication skills, it is a way kids will gain their identity. The article mentions a study done by universities, it states, “The digital world is creating new opportunities for youth to grapple with social norms, to explore their interests, develop technical skills, and experiment with new forms of self expression.” It’s shown that technology benefits people with finding their interests and learning more about them. It also helps with their social skills. Since technology helps people explore their identity and boost communication skills, it allows people to explore their interests and identities. Although there are negatives ways social media affects us, such as leading to cyberbullying on the internet which can lead to depression and suicidal thoughts as stated in the infographic, “The use of social media leads to cyberbullying, which leads to depression, thoughts of suicide, and sadness.” Overall, the positives do outweigh the negative effects.

To conclude, social media strengthens our social skills. Stout may believe what she wants to but I disagree. Social media develops closer bonds with friends, creates benefits of using social media, and allows us to explore our interests and identities. Social media and technology have a major impact on our lives. Technology will become the next generation’s best friend. We can either promote that or prevent it. Social media allows to communicate and stay in touch with family and friends.