

#MENTAL HEALTH

Social Media Habits



In the new study, the students, who received automated daily reminders about social media use, also scored higher for "positive affect," which the researchers describe as "the tendency to experience positive emotions described with words such as 'excited' and 'proud.'" Essentially, they had a brighter outlook on life.

College students who limited their social media use to 30 minutes a day scored significantly lower for anxiety, depression, loneliness, and fear of missing out compared to a control group, researchers report.

Last month, the American Psychological Association and the US Surgeon General both issued health advisories. Their concerns and recommendations for teens, parents, and policymakers addressed a mounting body of research that shows two trends are intertwined: Young people are using social media more, and their mental health is suffering.

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"It surprised me to find that participants' well-being did not only improve in one dimension but in all of them," says Ella Faulhaber, a PhD student in human-computer interaction at Iowa State University and lead author of the paper in the journal *Technology, Mind, and Behaviour*.

"I was excited to learn that such a simple intervention of sending a daily reminder can motivate people to change their behaviour and improve their social media habits," she says.

The researchers found the psychological benefits from cutting back on social media extended to participants who sometimes exceeded the 30-minute time limit.

"The lesson here is, it's not about being perfect but putting in effort, which makes a difference. I think self-limiting and paying attention are the secret ingredients, more so than the 30-minute benchmark," Faulhaber says.

The findings fit with other research that's grown out of kinesiology and health fields, says co-author Douglas A. Gentile, professor of psychology.

"Knowing how much time we spend on activities each day and making something countable makes it easier for

My very first viewing of Piku reminded me of Podokkhep, a 2006 film that treads the very same tricky waters of a father-daughter dynamic. But while Piku makes much song and dance (and a road trip!), Podokkhep leaves it at an intimate but stimulating conversation.



Both Piku and Podokkhep tread the tricky waters of a father-daughter dynamic.

Podokkhep Before Piku! (...1)



Shreya Biswas
Multimedia Journalist and Editor

#MOVIE

As we passed by International Father's Day recently, the 2015 movie Piku suddenly resurfaced in many peoples' memories; honestly, I couldn't scroll through enough posts on social media without coming across someone reminiscing about how 'beautifully' the film had captured the intricacies of a father-daughter relationship.

I seemed to be the only one in the crowd who felt that Piku had barely scratched the surface of a tenuous dynamic that another movie from over a decade earlier had viscerated more deftly.

The study extends the current research on social media and provides a practical way for people to limit their use. For anyone looking to cut back, Faulhaber recommends: "Create awareness. Set a timer or use a built-in wellness app to see how much time you spend on social media."

"Give yourself grace. Recognize that it's not easy to stick to a time limit. Social media apps are designed to keep you engaged."

"Don't give up. Limiting social media use over time has real benefits for your daily life."

The researchers say it's also important to be mindful of how and when we use these platforms. Future research could further explore this, along with the long-term effects from limiting social media and what people do with the time they gain.

"We live in an age of anxiety. Lots of indicators show that anxiety, depression, loneliness are all getting worse, and that can make us feel helpless. But there are things we can do to manage our mental health and well-being," says Gentile.

Paying more attention to how much time we spend on social media and setting measurable goals can help.

movies revolve around a Bengali family - a widowed, retired father and a working daughter whose life pretty much revolves around taking care of their elderly parent. And both of them are a breath of fresh air in their approach to defining/representing a modern Indian family.

A Fresh Kind Of Spin

Indian movies generally have (or at least used to have) a tradition of making daughters a fringe character. They exist on the periphery either to be married off before interval, to play a victim that must be avenged (either by the dad or the big brother), or to be the villain whose sole purpose in life is to poison her sibling's happy married life. Not to say that Podokkhep (which in Bengali means 'footsteps') was the first film ever to broach the subject of a strong and independent daughter in Indian cinema (Rekha's 1982 film *Jeevan Dhara* comes to mind at the very least), but it did put a

fresh kind of spin to it.

In Podokkhep, the concept of a daughter supporting her family is not boxed under the unilateral label of 'sacrifice' but is instead explored from multiple angles, including the very real financial and societal aspects, which is what makes the movie relatable to many (especially working women). And that's where it seems to me that Piku has taken a leaf straight out of Podokkhep's book.

Let's take a look at Podokkhep first. The Bengali movie revolves around the lives of retired bank manager Shashanka Palit (played by Soumitra Chatterjee) and his daughter Megha (played by the incredible Nandita Das), who, like Piku, is addressed by her daak naam (pet name) 'Maamoni' by her family members. From the get-go, we are made to closely follow the mercurial interactions between the father and the daughter who go from quarrelling one instant to sharing a sweet moment the very next. Their hyper-intense dynamic is clearly fuelled by their very similar obstinate personalities - a quick-meaning daughter who is well to anger because she is not being



Scene from Podokkhep where Soumitra Chatterjee plays Shashanka Palit and Nandita Das plays Megha.



Scene from Podokkhep where Chatterjee and Das are seen reminiscing over old photographs.

heard and an aging father who looks at obeying his child as a sign of loss of power and, in turn, his sense of pride. And in the middle of this constant grind is a loving caretaker who is trying their best to maintain some semblance of peace and harmony. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

But while the broad strokes of the plot are quite alike, the intricacies of how such a bond was exemplified through the span of a movie are very different for Piku and Podokkhep. In short, while Piku makes much song and dance (and a road trip) about a dad-daughter duo, Podokkhep leaves it at an intimate but stimulating conversation.

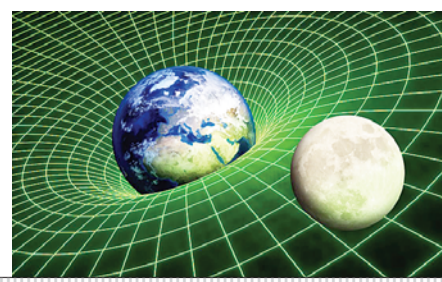
A 'Feminist' Dad?

Granted, the 2006 film may not be everyone's cup of tea. It is at times slow-paced and has a few jagged edits. And it does not have the exaggerated storytelling pattern or musical numbers like Piku. Each scene and interaction is subtler than the one before and requires you to pay deep attention in order to be able to pick up the cues of what the characters are actually trying to convey, which may deter some viewers who are looking for a less taxing movie to watch. In other words, Piku yells its message of familial

Shashanka is very much like Piku's dad when it comes to his dismissal of the idea of his daughter fleeing the nest - although in Megha's case, it is for career-related reasons and not marriage. And while he expresses his displeasure to her, unlike Bhaskor Banerjee, he never actually does anything to actively foil Megha's plans to move out of his house.

bond with every other scene until your ears are ringing, but Podokkhep will leave a lot of it unsaid. You will have to be a good listener and pick up on the hints. For me, personally that is what make a story or a movie more immersive.

Nothing elaborates more on this point than the subplot of the fathers' stomach issues in both the movies. Piku, as we know, begins (and pretty much ends) with Bhaskor Banerjee (played by Amitabh Bachchan) elaborately discussing his stomach issues with his daughter Piku (played by Deepika Padukone) and anyone else within



Time & Gravitational Field

Time is a relative quantity. Its measurement can change on the basis of how fast you are going, just like mass as mentioned earlier. Also, its measurement depends on the gravitational field around which it is measured. According to gravitational time dilation, the higher the gravitational field slower runs the time. If we compare Jupiter and Earth, Jupiter is massive and hence has a stronger gravitational field than that of Earth. So, according to physics, a clock must run slower in Jupiter than on Earth.

the unfortunate earshot. As the movie continues to tether itself to Bhaskor's digestive misfortunes, it becomes quite clear the relentless discussion is a loose metaphor of Piku's stressful life. So much so that even the mere prospect of a significant other with constipation issues is a big fat red flag for Piku, as is evident in the last interaction between her and Syed (played by Jishnu Sengupta).

With Podokkhep, on the other hand, we see this issue crop up only once, when Megha, during a heated argument with her father, indignantly yells that she is tired of listening to the detailed descriptions of his bowel movements. Instead of making this issue a running gag that quickly stops being funny or even meaningful, this one swift blow at the topic gives the viewers a more nuanced description of their relationship - one that borders on oversharing and discomfort.

Speaking of discomfort, one has to talk about the air of feminism that hovers over the plot in both



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films. In quite a few social media posts and movie reviews that I referred to while writing this piece, Piku's dad has been revered as a 'feminist' dad. And while I enthusiastically support the ideology of 'to each their own', I would humbly like to dissect this claim a tiny bit, especially in comparison to Podokkhep.

For Piku's Bhaskor Banerjee, his daughter's freedom and importance as an individual lives and dies with her 'single' marital status. He strongly believes (and very loudly preaches) that any woman who chooses to get married has a "low IQ", going as far as to chide his own dead wife for taking care of him instead of 'making something of herself'. We also see him supports his argument with misinformation by evoking strong female role models who were indeed married (as Irrfan's character points out). What's fascinating here is, every time Mr Banerjee goes on his rant, he is seen clearly interrupting his daughter and drowning whatever she has to say with his loud opinions. One has to wonder if this type of behaviour fits the category of mansplaining more than feminism. Also, he never shies away from



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Scene from Podokkhep where Soumitra Chatterjee plays Shashanka Palit.

acknowledging the guilt-trip he takes his daughter on when he insinuates that she should stay unmarried and take care of him. Doesn't that then make his views about his daughter's life more of self-serving than progressive?

Parenting Approaches

Shashanka is very much like Piku's dad when it comes to his dismissal of the idea of his daughter fleeing the nest - although in Megha's case, it is for career-related reasons and not marriage. And while he expresses his displeasure to her, unlike Bhaskor Banerjee, he never actually does anything to actively foil Megha's plans to move out of his house. In Shashanka we see a father who, while being adamant in his opinions, respects his daughter for having her own and steps back to let her have her own journey. This point is further driven home when he accidentally discovers that his daughter has spent the night with a man. Visibly shaken (and not extremely fond of the man in ques-

tion, as we see later), he does not interfere or question Megha about her personal choices. To me, this discretion is more of sign of a progressive father than Bhaskor Banerjee declaring his daughter's virginity status in public.

For what it's worth, it is possible that the two fathers' opposing parenting approaches were actually written to convey something much deeper. Perhaps, Bhaskor is portrayed as this selfish/woke dad to foreshadow his fear of death and being alone, something that is resolved when he dies peacefully in his sleep, surrounded by family. On the other hand, Shashanka's choice of never actively interfering in his daughter's life may simply exist to shine a light on his fear of losing her and, in turn, his own sense of identity - something that is underlined further by how he begins to care for a neighbour's little girl and the flashback of his wife's fatal accident.

To be Continued... rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com

#SPACE

How To Kill A Star?



In order to explain the gamma-ray burst, it has to have been a compact star, so not one like the sun.

Astronomers have spotted an immensely energetic explosion emanating from an ancient galaxy, apparently triggered by a type of star destruction hypothesized for decades but never before observed. You might call it stellar death by demolition derby.

Researchers said the gamma-ray burst they observed may have been caused by the collision of two compact stars in the densely packed and chaotic environment near a supermassive black hole at the centre of this elliptically shaped galaxy. They suspect the two doomed stars were neutron stars, whose gravitational pull is so strong no matter or light can escape. Relatively low-mass stars like our sun puff up and blow off their outer layers, transforming into a stellar remnant called a white dwarf.

The new findings show another path to stellar demise.

"The idea that stars also can die through collisions in extremely dense regions has been around since at least the 1980s. So we've been waiting for 40 years for the signatures to be found observationally," Levan said.

The researchers used data from orbiting and ground-based telescopes to study the

gamma-ray burst in a galaxy about 3 billion light-years away from Earth.

This ancient galaxy was populated primarily by stars several billion years old.

"The galaxy is what we call 'quiescent' - a galaxy that is not actively forming stars at a high rate and is past its heyday," Fong said. "The quiescent galaxies are very massive and have built up large supermassive black holes in their centres, making them a perfect breeding ground for stellar collisions."

The distance between our sun and the nearest star, Proxima Centauri, is about 4 light years. This same expanse of space would be filled with perhaps ten million stars in a galactic core, with the supermassive black hole's destabilizing influence stirring things up.

"You certainly wouldn't want a front-row seat to one of these events," Levan said.

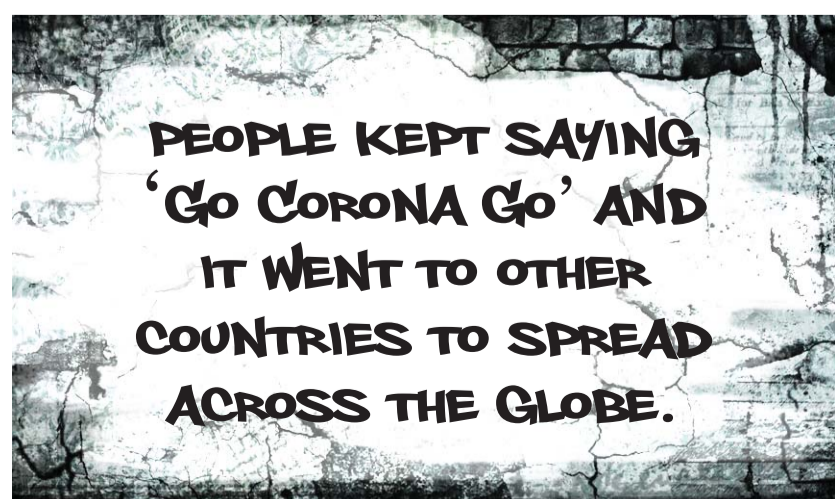
die in a predictable way, which is just based on their mass," Levan said. "This research shows a new route to stellar destruction."

Very massive stars - more than 10 times the sun's mass - die in a supernova blast that leaves behind neutron stars or even denser black holes, whose gravitational pull is so strong no matter or light can escape. Relatively low-mass stars like our sun puff up and blow off their outer layers, transforming into a stellar remnant called a white dwarf.

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THE WALL

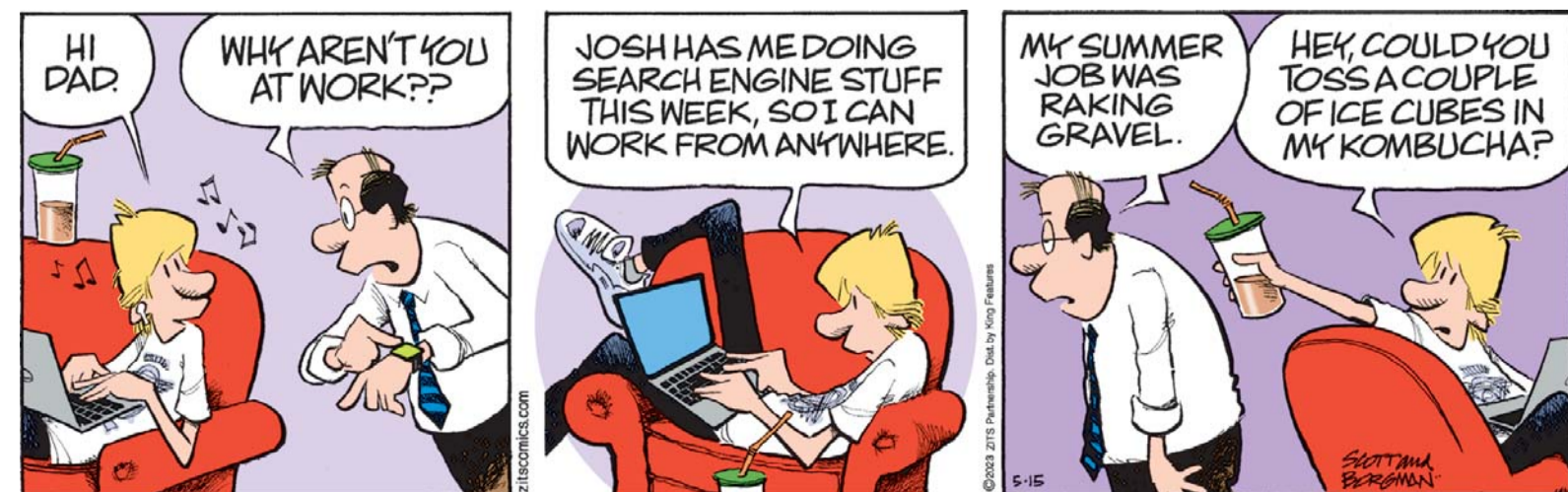


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

