

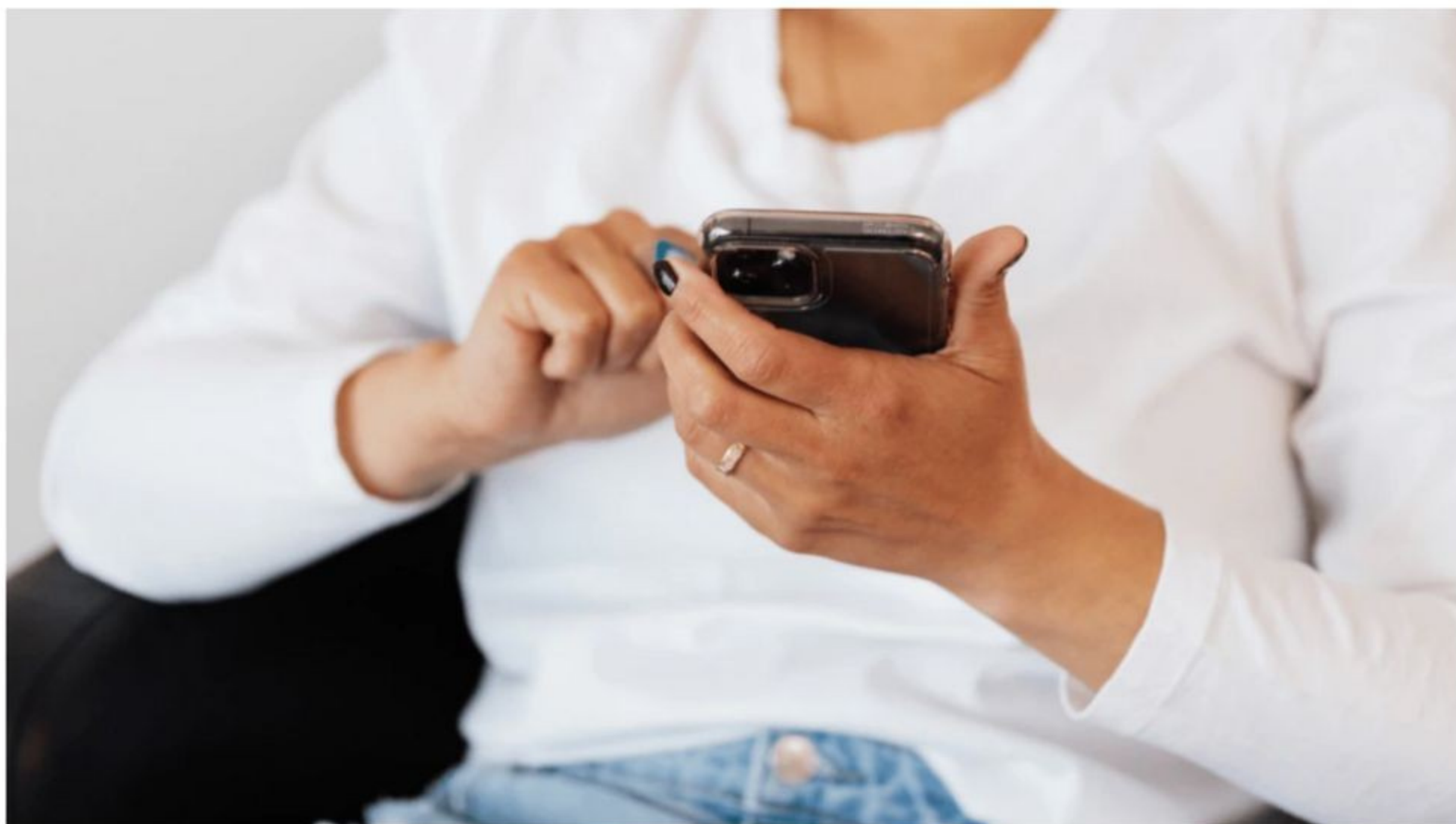
Wellness > Mental Health

We know comparison is the thief of joy, but how do we stop?

Don't compare your life to their highlight reel

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🕒 5 min read August 1, 2023 - 12:51PM *BODY+SOUL*



Social media is a fertile ground for jealousy and comparison. Image: Pexels

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Okay, so how do I stop?

It's abundantly clear that if you struggle with envy and social comparison, you are in excellent company.

Justine Campbell is a female empowerment coach and former therapist whose work centres around equipping women with the tools they need to **“step out of comparison and step into sisterhood.”** Having worked extensively with teenage girls, and more recently with young mothers, Campbell notes that often, the same problems follow women from youth into adulthood.

“Social media and reality TV reinforce the idea that competition and bitchiness are inherent. They tell us, ‘This is what women do, you can’t trust women,’” she laments.

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Why am I jealous?

Ask any of us if we want good things for the people we love and it will be an unequivocal “Hell yes!”, so why do we so often find ourselves guiltily rooting for the opposite?

As with any unpleasant emotion, envy exists in us for a purpose. Psychologists believe that our tendency for upward comparison (comparing oneself with others in a perceived higher status) happens because we aspire to a better position in society relative to others.

Evolutionarily, humans are driven to keep progressing upwards in status to ensure we will not only survive in our communities but also thrive.

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Research also confirms what most of us know deep in our bones to be true – social media is a fertile ground for jealousy and comparison.

“It’s systemic,” says Campbell, “these tendencies get passed down through generations, and then absorbed through narratives on social media and reality TV.”

The good news is, there are tangible tools we can use to kick the green-eyed monster to the curb for good, and, according to Campbell, it begins with self-compassion.

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Start with compassion

Brené Brown's work on vulnerability and whole-heartedness lies at the core of Campbell's methodology when it comes to coaching women out of shame and comparison, and into belonging.

She suggests pinpointing your core values, the things that drive everything you do, and focusing on how you bring those values into your relationships with others and, importantly, to yourself. "As long as you cultivate a sense of belonging in oneself first, you will always belong," says Campbell.

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