



## MAKE SOCIAL MEDIA WORK FOR YOU *(without losing yourself)*

Social Media is a huge blessing and a curse. It opens up possibilities for independent artists and small business owners to grow and get their work out there, but at the same time it can be a beast that can eat your creativity and mental health alive if you aren't careful. I've experienced this first hand.

I'm going to try and tackle this topic from 2 angles:

**1) Strategies that have helped social media work for me**

*while simultaneously*

**2) Letting go of the power social media has over me so that I don't lose myself in the process.**

It is a tricky topic that I think about a lot and still struggle with, but I do feel like I have gotten closer and closer to where I want to be in this area, so I hope that at least some of what I write in this article might be helpful to you too! Let's get into it!

# Understand what the BEAST wants

Have you ever felt completely confused about why one post goes viral but then your post gets almost no engagement. And you just don't know why! I know I have felt like this. I have wanted to shout at my phone, "WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!"

But when you step back and think about it, knowing what every social media app wants is actually really simple.

Money.

Maybe it sounds cold, but it's true. And the way social media apps get money is by holding users' attention for as long as possible so that they can show them ads on their app.

"But Chrissa, why are you telling us this?"

I bring this up for a couple reasons.

1. Knowing this, lets gain a bit of distance from yourself and social media, which is ESSENTIAL.  
Once it really sinks in that these apps don't really care about you, and you don't owe them ANYTHING, you can feel more free to go and create what YOU want to create WHEN you want to create it. (of course, I'm not saying that the actual PEOPLE on the app don't care. You might have some really wonderful friends through social media. We are just talking about the apps themselves)
2. Knowing the app's true goal, lets you strategize your content to give the beast what it wants, so that it shares more of your content.

## Redefine your Relationship with the Beast

So, you don't owe the beast anything, and we all know that spending time stressing out about social media is unhealthy. It's easy to know that but difficult to put a healthier relationship with social media into practice while still using social media to build your business.

Here are some of my practices and recommendations that have helped me.

- **Let go of the illusion of control**

When you get right down to it, you never know how things are going to go. You never know how many people will see and like your content. You never know when there is going to be a big update to the algorithm that suddenly changes your reach.

Even if you post the most interesting content in the world, there's no guarantee that it will pop off. So start learning to let go of that expectation and illusion of control. Be okay with whatever happens.

Releasing that expectation and stress about controlling the outcome, frees up your mind to work on what you can actually control, and what's most important: the art that you can create right in this moment!

- **Remember WHY you create art and post it to Social Media.**

The true reason probably isn't because you want to gain followers and likes.

For me, art is an important part of my soul and I want to create beautiful work and get better at making art. My drive to improve has nothing to do with likes, and follower numbers. It's something that comes from inside.

And the reason I post it to social media is to get my name out there so that I can more easily get paid for my art. While there are really nice connections and things that can happen when you use social media, it isn't the end goal. Social media is a tool, a means to an end.

- **Set a time limit**

If you have a hard time with continually opening an app to scroll through, or refreshing the numbers, I highly recommend setting a time limit on your phone. Once you hit that time limit, your phone will warn you and then lock you out of the app. Remember, the time spent scrolling through social media is time that you could be using for more productive things, like actually creating art.

- **When you Post, let yourself be available to reply to comments for about 30min-1hr, then set it and forget it.**

Replying to comments on social media is important. It's important to connect with people, and appreciate that they took the time to reach out to you. But after 30min-1hr of posting, I typically turn off social media again. It's easy to just sit and reply to comments for hours and hours, but again, that takes away time from me actually getting stuff done. And, it can sometimes suck my mind into "the beast" too much.

- **Pick a couple social medias where you will be most engaged. Post and Ghost to the rest.**

There are a lot of social media sites out there, and I think it's important to diversify and build a presence on many of them. BUT, you don't have to be fully engaged in them all.

Pick your favorites, to be engaged with, and for the others, just post your content and ghost. No need to even think about them that much as long as you are posting your artwork there every once and a while.

- **Find meaning, hobbies, interests that you have no need to post to social media.**

I think that it is pretty important to have things that you do just for you that no one on the internet ever needs to see.

When you are creating content online, so much is about the numbers, so it is ESPECIALLY important for artists online to have activities and lives outside of social media. These are activities and moments that bring more meaning to your life with no numbers attached.

- **When you notice yourself spiraling, turn off your phone and focus on what you can do RIGHT NOW.**

When I am scrolling through social media, I sometimes start spiraling down with all of my self doubts. Each new post I see seems to feed that self doubt, anxiety, and worry.

When I notice this happening, I have gotten into the habit of following these steps. Maybe you can give them a try and see if they help you as well:

- turn off your phone (literally. Turn off that power button and set the phone aside)
- Pause and reflect.

First maybe grab a cup of tea then:

- Accept where you are at right now.**  
Even if you aren't where you want to be yet, that's okay. You are where you are, and that's perfectly okay!
- Ask yourself: What can I do right now?**  
No changing the past, no worrying about the future. The only thing you can do is work on whatever task you have in front of you at this moment.

It might be helpful for you to actually write down a few things that you can focus on at this moment. That way you have a couple concrete things to choose from.

- Go do that task, or take a break,** if that's what you decided to do at this moment.
- When fears and worries come up again, remember to ask yourself again, what can you do right now.

- **Remind yourself that you don't owe the beast anything. Taking care of your own health is most important.**  
And sometimes that means ignoring the beast for a while, and that's okay.
- **Trust that as you improve at your craft, people will take notice.**

Now that we have covered a bit of how to not lose yourself to the beast, let's talk about: Feeding the beast.

## Feed the Beast

Alright, you know what the beast wants. SO, the best content to feed the beast so that it shares said content to more and more users, is content that resonates and will hold people's attention for as long as possible.

- **Make Art from Your Heart**  
I've said it before, and I'll say it again. If you are drawing or creating content that you enjoy and is authentic to you, that will show in your work. Draw what you are passionate about and that authenticity will resonate and shine through!
- **Relatable and Authentic Content and Descriptions**  
Some of the most viral content is viral because it is relatable. When people see something that reflects their own experiences, they are instantly more invested. Not only will they spend more time looking at that art, or story, or whatever it is, but they'll also be most likely to share it as well.

So if you like making short comics, videos, or even an illustration that tells something of a story or communicates a genuine emotion, it will be more likely to resonate.

- **Quality over Quantity**  
Generally you hear tips about posting every day, and it seems that social media algorithms tend to favor more frequent posting. *But* if we sacrifice quality because we are in a rush to post, that could make the content less appealing, and might even annoy some people into unfollowing. If you are able to make high quality content and post every day, that's awesome! Do it! But don't be afraid to take the extra time you need to make a post really shine.
- **Post WIPS, Sketches and Process shots sometimes**  
Quality posts don't always need to be fully polished and completed pieces of art. Sometimes the most engaging and interesting posts

are posts showing the process, or a half completed work.

It should still show that effort and artistic sensibilities went into creating that process shot, even if it is not fully complete. For me, this is often a really good opportunity to play with interesting cropping and composition to show a cropped preview of whatever I'm working on.

- **Try and post content somewhat regularly**

No, you don't have to be on a strict schedule of posting every day, every other day, or even every 3 days. The goal with a schedule is to make sure you are continually producing art. I usually try to post about 2ish times a week.

But if you need to take a break from posting sometimes, don't stress about it.

- **Experiment with features:**

Videos, Reels/tiktoks, Image Stacks, Livestreams, Stories... there are a lot of options now! It can feel overwhelming. But I think it is a good idea to experiment with creating different types of content every once and a while. For example, if you always post still images, it might be a good possibility to try out making a short little video that showcases your work. All of these types of content are there with the intent of making users spend more time on the app, so if you create more types of content sometimes, it could be just the thing to re-engage your audience with your work.

BUT I don't believe you HAVE to create EVERY type of content to be a successful artist on social media. I propose approaching trying out these types of content as more of a fun experiment. Not as another thing to stress out over. If it is causing you a bunch of stress, skip it for now.

- **Participate in Challenges and Trends IF they resonate with you.**

DTIYS, OOTD, REDRAW, and all the other challenges out there can be super fun and have the potential to boost the amount of people seeing your work. But only participate if it is a challenge that seems fun and inspiring to you. As I have said, making authentic content from your heart is what is most important and is what will resonate with people viewing your work.

- **Reply to Comments and Messages**

As I mentioned in the previous section, there should be a limit on how much time you spend doing this. But it is important to reply when you can!

- **Like, Share and Comment on other Artists' work.**  
I know this one seems obvious, but it's worth remembering. It is called SOCIAL media for a reason. Interacting with other amazing artists' accounts is one of the really good and encouraging aspects of these apps!

Phew this was a lot of text! I'm sure that you were already familiar with at least some of those points! but I hope there are at least a few points in here that give you some helpful new insight on managing social media in a way that doesn't steal your sanity!

The beast is always hungry for more content and more attention, so remember to do what is best for YOU first.

*"The only thing you can do is please yourself and the more selfish you are, the more generous you are, as contradictory as it sounds.*

*So what I'm always just doing is to do what I need to do at that moment.*

*And the minute I try to please 5 people, I won't please anyone. But if I only please myself, I might please 10 people."*

*-Bjork*

