

LIVE. LEARN. LAUGH. REPEAT.

goodLIFEfamily

The Go-To Source for Parents of Kids Tweens to Twenties

Spring Forward!

STRATEGIES, IDEAS AND ADVICE
FOR WHATEVER LIES AHEAD



HERE & WOW
TOP TRENDS FOR NOW!

Formerly Abused Lab Gets
A NEW LEASH ON LIFE

PGA GOLF PRO
**HARRISON
FRAZAR**

*Heart of a Champion
On and Off the Course*

**A MOM'S
SPECIAL
MISSION**

*VIP Award Winner,
Kelly Waterman, teaches us
what it means to be "Happy"*

**PICTURE-PERFECT
PROM NIGHT**

plus

EMBRACING SPECIAL NEEDS
COLLEGE DEGREE FOR FREE
CAMPS & TRIPS TIPS
AND SO MUCH MORE!

MARCH | APRIL 2016
GOODLIFEFAMILYMAG.COM

Think Before You Post!

WHO CHECKS OUT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA
(BESIDES YOUR FRIENDS)?

by Lisa A. Beach



This advice seems like common sense, but a lot of teens and tweens just aren't heeding this advice when they use social media, and they are getting themselves into trouble in the process.

Just ask attorney **James Mueller**, a managing partner with the Dallas-based family law firm **Verner Brumley McCurley Mueller Parker**.

"Some of the things kids put online, it's going to affect them because it doesn't go away," says Mueller. "It will follow them in life."

As a family lawyer, Mueller sees this first-hand.

"In one custody hearing, a daughter gave the judge all these reasons why she didn't want to live with Mom. We found out that, when we checked the girl's Instagram account, she didn't want to live with

Mom because Dad allowed her to smoke marijuana and drink while at Dad's house," recalls Mueller. "The next thing you know, she's kicked off her sports team, the judge has now seen all of this, and Dad is in trouble. It all came from one Instagram post."

Kids need to realize that everyone looks at their social media activity, including teachers, coaches, lawyers, colleges, scholarship committees, and potential employers. Stories abound in the media about athletes

getting kicked off their teams, students losing their scholarships and kids getting arrested for questionable antics that got posted on social media.

"When any potential employee sends me a resume, the first thing I do is pull any social media accounts that I can," points out Mueller. "You can find out an unbelievable amount of information."

As the first line of defense, Mueller advises parents to play an active role in their kids' online lives by providing age-appropriate limits. Dr. Sandy Gluckman, a Functional Behavior and Health Therapist, agrees.

"In laying down the rules, especially for younger kids, it's important to give kids the logic behind the

rule and provide examples that demonstrate the bad things that could happen," says Dr. Gluckman, who advises a collaborative approach, asking kids what kind of rules they could live with and then negotiate. "When you're a nurturing rather than authoritative parent, you're educating and empowering kids, which will help them learn to think things through themselves."

So how can teens and tweens engage with social media in a more responsible way?

Think before you post

If you would be embarrassed to show your grandmother what you are going to post, then don't post it. If you would be compromising your safety (such as posting where you will be at a certain time or that you are home alone), then don't post it. If you would be hurting or embarrassing someone else, then don't post it.

Assume what you post isn't private - even if you send it as a private message

Mueller points out that just because you intended something to be private when you sent it does not necessarily mean the other person understands (or will respect) your intention to keep it private. As he says, "You can only control your action, you can't control other people's actions."

Realize what you post is permanent - even if you later delete it

Once you hit send, you create a permanent cyber-record of your words and images delivered via status updates or news feeds. Someone may have already saved or shared your post by the time you decide to delete it from your account.

Be aware that your online activity affects your offline reputation

When you realize that other people besides your friends are checking out your social media accounts, you are more likely to do the right thing online.

Editor's Note:

James Mueller is managing partner at Verner Brumley McCurley Mueller Parker, a premier family law firm. vernerbrumley.com

Dr. Sandy Gluckman is a functional behavior therapist specializing in drug-free family counseling. ParentsTakeCharge.com

"Just because you intended something to be private when you sent it does not necessarily mean the other person understands (or will respect) your intention to keep it private."

- James Mueller, managing partner, Verner Brumley McCurley Mueller Parker

"When you're a nurturing rather than authoritative parent, you're educating and empowering kids, which will help them learn to think things through themselves."

- Dr. Sandy Gluckman