

Putting a limit on who your friends are on Facebook can be controversial

Are you on Facebook? Of course you are. Everyone is on Facebook. My GRANDMOTHER is on Facebook. So when you hear me say, "Everyone and their grandmother is on Facebook," I mean that quite literally.

My best friend called me a few weeks ago. "Betsy, my mom is on Facebook."

"Of course she is."

"But she added me as her friend! Do I have to add her back? I do, don't I?"

Sorry, but you cannot refuse your mother's friendship on Facebook. The woman bore you. I don't mean she "bores you," either, like when she starts telling you, in detail the plotline on "The Thornbirds." For the umpteenth time.

What I mean is, she birthed you. And look, I have three kids; I have a lot of respect for birthing. I'm hoping one day my kids will, too. Maybe they'll even be willing to be friends with me on Facebook.

Not everyone agrees with me, though. "No way do you have to be friends with your mom on Facebook!" another friend of mine insisted. "It's that whole unrequited love thing. It's okay to ignore your parents."

Hmmm. I dunno. I was quite good at ignoring my parents in my teenage years, but now that I'm 33, it feels rude. And anyway, my parents aren't so bad. I don't mind hanging out with them (free child care!). They can be pretty interesting, even. (As long as we're not discussing "The Thorn Birds.")

So yeah, I'm friends with my mom on Facebook. It's fine. She goes her way; I go mine. She busies herself by stalking my teenage nieces to make sure they're not involved in shadiness or debauchery, while I spend (waste) my time catching up on (stalking) old high school and college friends (ex-boyfriends and frenemies). And she has yet to make an embarrassing comment on my wall or regarding one of my photos—"Honey, you look lovely, but you really should have thought about wearing a slip with that skirt"—so that helps.

I do have my limits though. Don't we all? I have yet to receive a friend request from my mother-in-law, and for that, I am truly grateful. Nothing against my mother-in-law, but come on. She's my mother-in-law.

And seeing as one is unable to smile, nod and fake-laugh in the written word, one should be excused from communicating with one's in-laws online. Besides, if my mother-in-law got on Facebook, I might start resorting to the Passive - Aggressive Facebook Status Update, something like, "Betsy Veach Swenson is pretty sure a toy bugle is a REALLY AWFUL IDEA for a kid's birthday gift." And if you know me, you know there is nothing I find more ridiculous (or amusing) than the Passive-Aggressive Facebook Status Update - "Jessica thinks some people really need to get over it!" Or—wait, this is the best one—"Mya really hates passive aggressive behavior. If you have something to say, just say it!"

Oh, Facebook, how you entertain.

So this Thanksgiving, be nice to your family, but maybe not too nice. They might just friend you on Facebook.



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