

8 Ways to Use Social Media for Positive Community Influence

Early city planners knew that in order to provide controlled access and protection of the city, they would need gates. Thus, the city gate became an extremely popular place for all kinds of activities including the screening of who was going in and out of the city.

Business leaders and merchants often would station someone at the gate to recognize new arrivals—prospective clients and customers.

City gates were also a place for announcements. Solomon said that Wisdom stations herself at the gate, at the entry of the city, for anyone who will listen to her. So, the gate was the chief place of discourse and concourse.

It is also important to note the elders of the city would gather at the city gates to decide domestic situations (Deut. 21:18-21), legal matters regarding marriage (Ruth 4:1-11), and show hospitality to foreigners (Gen. 19:1).

So, the city gates were a significant place where rulers met and gave counsel to those seeking wisdom.

Likewise, the town square provides a public place often used for markets, entertainment, political discourse, and commerce. Town squares are designed to be the center of activity for a community. Early architecture often placed the town square at the best place in the city. As important as the city gates were to protect and provide leadership for the city, the town square is primarily the focal point of the residents of the city. It is where citizens interact with the community.

Cities no longer are fortresses with gates to lock and many town squares are now abandoned. However, social media has risen to replace both local venues as the center point of dialogue and social intercourse.

So, here is how men can use social media for a positive community influence:

1. Establish a protocol to enter into “friendship.” It is very important to screen the people who are “friending” you. Don’t accept everyone into your social-media community. Take the time to investigate who they are and how they made the connection with you. Don’t be concerned with the number of people who are following you—be conscientious of who is following you. Are they relating to you from your past? Are they relating to you based upon current relationships? Church? Business? Political? These are all important.

2. Have an authentic voice on your social-media outlets. As an author, I am appalled at ghost-written books. As soon as I pick a book up and start reading it, I can tell if it has been ghost-written. The voice of the author is unauthentic. The reading doesn’t have a natural flow to it. The words are sanitized and shallow. The same is true for social media. I refuse to follow someone who isn’t the actual voice. People want to connect directly with the person whom they’re following. If it can’t be your voice, don’t bother.

3. Create a rhythm in your postings. Don’t over do it, but be consistent. I like to think of it as a heartbeat. There are times when my adrenaline for social media kicks in, so I will post often and with a lot of energy. There are other times that I pull away to catch a breather. However, I strive to be consistent in the rhythm of my postings.

4. Don’t lose your integrity. If you repost something, use as much caution as if you were the originator of the post. I’ve seen people post ridiculous articles, videos and slanderous

statements that made me question the integrity of the person reposting it. Your influence is at stake with reposts, so be careful to not discredit yourself by association.

5. Be positive. Don't be a whiner who complains about everything. Let your words be encouraging and build up people. That's not to say that you shouldn't speak to current matters, but just know that you can't make a full argument in 140 characters.

6. Unfriend or unfollow people who annoy you. If there are people within your social-media community who get under your skin simply unfriend or unfollow them. Don't make a big deal about it. Don't message them and tell them why. Just disappear from their feed.

7. Use it properly or lose it immediately. I use social media for very distinct purposes. My personal social media accounts are for those people who want to connect with me, well, personally. My voice and sharing on those platforms is of a personal nature. When I or others post on FivestarMan platforms we are raising the volume of authentic manhood. Our goal is to influence culture with our authenticity and representation of manhood. We want to counterbalance the culture.

8. Keep the main thing the main thing. Social media has the ability to creep into something that is unhealthy and inappropriate. Stay focused and sober-minded regarding your use of it and how it represents you. I never want to be shamed by something that I say or how I represent myself on my platforms. It requires diligence in my words and careful consideration of how a statement represents me. I am fortunate to have several people who help me and give me feedback on my posts.

*FivestarMan was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of*

ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.

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