

MYSFACE.COM

YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW THIS IS AN INCREDIBLY POPULAR WEBSITE AND MOST EVERY TEENAGER USES THIS WEBSITE, IN FACT YOU MAY BE USING IT YOURSELF. MYSPACE IS A GREAT IDEA FOR A WEBSITE, IT HELPS PEOPLE CONNECT WITH FRIENDS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, BUT THERE ARE SOME REAL DANGERS AND THINGS THAT YOU AS A PARENT NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HOW THIS SITE IS BEING USED.

HERE ARE SOME REALITIES ABOUT MYSPACE AS WELL AS SOME HELPFUL WAYS TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR STUDENT IS SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM THE MASSIVE QUANTITY OF SEXUAL IMAGES AND THREAT OF SEXUAL PREDATORS.

THE GOOD STUFF IN MYSPACE:

CONNECTS:

THE SITE ALLOWS FRIENDS TO STAY CONNECTED AND SHARE PICTURES AND MESSAGES BACK AND FORTH.

FUN:

YOU CAN LISTEN TO ALMOST ANY BAND AND ANY MUSIC THAT IS OUT THERE ON MYSPACE. THERE ARE FUN VIDEOS AND HONESTLY IT IS FUN PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR OWN LITTLE WEBSITE.

THE DANGERS OF MYSPACE:

1. ADVERTISEMENTS:

MYSPACE IS FULL OF (ABOUT 90%) ADVERTISEMENTS THAT ARE SEXUAL AND PORNOGRAPHIC. THERE IS ALWAYS LOTS OF SKIN SHOWING ON ABOUT EVERY PAGE YOU LOOK AT. THESE ADVERTISEMENTS PRIMARILY ARE ADULT BASED WEBSITES THAT "CONNECT" SINGLES TOGETHER. IN OTHER WORDS IT'S A WEB DATING SERVICE. OTHER ADVERTISEMENTS THAT I OFTEN SEE ARE GENERALLY VERY ADULT RELATED YET TARGETED TOWARDS TEENS SUCH AS (RATED R) MOVIES AND (MATURE RATED) GAMES.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT YOU CAN BE 14 YEARS OLD AND USE MYSPACE. ALTHOUGH MANY STUDENTS USE MYSPACE WHO ARE NOT 14; THEY JUST LIE ABOUT THEIR AGE. THERE IS NO WAY TO CHECK. EVEN AT 14, IT IS A YOUNG AND INAPPROPRIATE AUDIENCE FOR THE ADVERTISEMENTS ON MYSPACE.

2. PORN FRIENDS

THE WAY MYSPACE WORKS IS ANYONE CAN REQUEST TO BE YOUR FRIEND. YOU CAN ACCEPT THEM OR DENY THEM. YOU OFTEN TIMES DON'T KNOW WHO THAT PERSON IS UNTIL YOU CLICK ON THEIR PROFILE WHICH WILL TAKE YOU TO THEIR WEB PROFILE TO VIEW THEIR INFORMATION. NOW, THEY ARE DISGUISED AND THERE IS NO WAY TO TELL WHAT THEY ARE. IT WILL SAY A NAME OR HAVE A PICTURE OF A 13YEAR OLD BOY OR GIRL AND SAY SOMETHING LIKE "BRIAN" OR "KELLY" YOU THEN CLICK TO SEE WHO IT IS AND BAM IT HAS TAKEN YOU DIRECTLY TO A PORN SITE (FULL NUDITY) WITH NO WARNING OR "YOU MUST BE 18 TO ENTER" TYPE PAGES.

I CAN'T STRESS ENOUGH THE INCREDIBLE DANGER OF THIS. PORNOGRAPHY IN THE HANDS OF KIDS IS LITERALLY LIFE THREATENING. AS A PARENT YOU MUST PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN FROM THIS TYPE OF "POISONOUS" MEDIA.

3. DIRTY AND PORNOGRAPHIC PROFILES

THE MYSPACE RULES SAY THAT NO IMAGE CAN CONTAIN NUDITY OR PORNOGRAPHIC MATERIAL ON THEIR PROFILE. THIS IS A GREAT RULE, BUT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR MYSPACE TO ENFORCE. AFTER SURVEYING YOUR STUDENTS AGAIN ABOUT 80% OF THEM HAVE SEEN NUDITY OF PORNOGRAPHIC PICTURES ON PEOPLES (OFTEN TIMES THEIR FRIENDS) PROFILES.

4. SEXUAL PREDATORS

THIS IS THE SCARIEST OF ALL. SEXUAL PREDATORS ARE USING MYSPACE AS A TOOL TO FIND AND CONNECT WITH CHILDREN OR TEENS AND IT IS WORKING FOR THEM. IT IS SO BAD THAT MANY POLICE DEPARTMENTS HAVE CREATED AN ENTIRE UNIT OF POLICE JUST FOR MYSPACE AND TRACKING SEXUAL PREDATORS.

WELL THAT IS A LOT TO TAKE IN AND A LOT TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT, BUT THERE ARE SOMETHINGS THAT YOU AS A PARENT CAN DO TO KEEP YOUR TEEN SAFE. HERE ARE A FEW...

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. BE IN CONTROL OF YOUR STUDENT'S MYSPACE.

YOU NEED TO KNOW THEIR PASSWORD AND BE REGULARLY CHECKING THEIR PAGE FOR ANY SUSPICIOUS FRIENDS OR ACTIVITY. YOU ARE THE PARENT! THIS IS NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE LEFT IN THE HANDS OF TEENS TO DEAL WITH ALONE. EVEN THE MOST RESPONSIBLE TEEN CAN MAKE LITTLE MISTAKES THAT COULD CAUSE HUGE CONSEQUENCES.

BY THE WAY, YOUR TEENAGER IS PROBABLY NOT GOING TO LIKE THIS ONE. BUT THIS IS A BATTLE WORTH WINNING. I BELIEVE THAT IF A STUDENT CAN NOT SHARE THEIR MYSPACE WITH YOU THEN THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE ONE. IF THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE IT IS BECAUSE THERE ARE THINGS ON THERE THAT YOU WOULD NOT APPROVE OF. I TALK REGULARLY WITH GOOD TEENS WHO HAVE INAPPROPRIATE STUFF ON THEIR MYSPACE PROFILE.

2. CLEAN IT UP. (NO SEXUAL IMAGES POSES OR REVEALING CLOTHES)

MAKE SURE THAT YOUR TEEN'S MYSPACE IS SUPER CLEAN. WHAT I MEAN IS NO IMAGES OF GIRLS IN BATHING SUITS. (THEY DO THIS OFTEN) NO SEXUAL POSES OR PICTURES WITH TIGHT OR REVEALING CLOTHES. NO IMAGES OF THEM AT PARTIES WHERE DRINKING IS GOING ON. ALL OF THESE THINGS ARE BIG TURN ONS FOR SEXUAL PREDATORS.

3. REMOVE ALL PERSONAL INFO:

THERE SHOULD BE NO PERSONAL INFO, LIKE ADDRESS, FULL NAME, PHONE NUMBER, IM ADDRESSES, AND CLASS SCHEDULE. ONE RECENT RAPE CASE CAME ABOUT BECAUSE A GIRL HAD HER CLASS SCHEDULE IN HER PROFILE. HER SCHOOL WAS THERE, HER PICTURE WAS THERE, IT WAS EVERYTHING THE SEXUAL PREDATOR NEEDED TO FIND HER. REMEMBER TEENS THINK THIS IS JUST FOR THEM AND THEIR FRIENDS, BUT ANYONE IN THE WORLD CAN SEE THEIR SITE ON THE INTERNET... UNLESS YOU MAKE IT PRIVATE.

4. MAKE YOUR MYSPACE PRIVATE.

THIS IS EASY TO DO, IT BLOCKS ANYONE WHO IS NOT YOUR FRIEND FROM VIEWING YOUR PROFILE. THIS IS A MUST. TEENS DON'T LIKE THIS BECAUSE IT IS HARDER TO GET FRIENDS AND DO CERTAIN STUFF, BUT IT IS A MUST FOR SAFETY.

5. DON'T APPROVE FRIENDS UNLESS YOU KNOW WHO THEY ARE.

EPH 5:15--16; "BE VERY CAREFUL, THEN, HOW YOU LIVE--NOT AS UNWISE BUT AS WISE, MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL".

ANYONE CAN ASK TO BE YOUR FRIEND, BUT IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO CHECK AND MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHO THAT PERSON IS BEFORE YOU ACCEPT THEM.

CONCLUSION:

OBVIOUSLY IF YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED YET, THERE ARE LOTS OF CONCERNS WITH MYSPACE. I JUST PRAY THAT YOU WILL CHOOSE THE WISE THING TO DO AS IT RELATES TO YOU AND YOUR STUDENT. I KNOW FAMILIES THAT DON'T LET THEIR STUDENTS USE MYSPACE AND I KNOW PARENTS WHO ARE SUCCESSFULLY MONITORING AND CONTROLLING THE USE OF THEIR TEENS MYSPACE EITHER WAY IS FINE, BUT PLEASE DON'T LET THIS ONE GET BY YOU. IT WILL BE A TOUGH CONVERSATION FOR MANY, BUT I AM PRAYING FOR YOU AND KNOW THAT GOD WILL USE IT TO STRENGTHEN AND BETTER YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR TEEN.