

Local



A true influencer



IN MY VIEW

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Dear influencer,

I don't want to hear how much you get paid to pose and advertise seasonal clothes and bags and shoes and products. I want to hear how much money you raised for refugees and orphans. I want to see a world that pays people for creativity, and where richness is not defined by how much one accumulates, but how much kindness, tolerance, compassion, coexistence, unity and love is garnered along the way.

I don't want you to pretend you don't have any flaws. Speak to the masses of your cellulite, your acne, your bloated belly, even while trying to get rid of them, instead of having all your worshippers look at themselves in the mirror and experience moments of angst and body dysmorphia when they compare themselves to a Photoshopped image.

I don't want to participate in events where I get to meet and greet you so you can teach me how to apply a lipstick that will enhance my pout or teach me how to use an eyelash curler. I want you, instead, to use your influence to meet and greet important people who can change laws that better the lives of the underprivileged or women at risk. Childhood sex trafficking and slavery are still prevalent, and you have the power to raise our awareness of these issues.

You must have heard of the noble initiative - Abolish Article 153 - oh influencer? Five iconic ladies are shuffling to have honor killings considered as a crime locally. Why are you not promoting them on your account, in between your posts about the latest ceramic curling iron or fashion-forward studded, gilded phone cover? Your influence could get the Abolishers more followers and raise the collective influence of the plight of women in our society, who may seem emancipated with respect to other

nations, but are actually shrouded in double-standard patriarchal seams.

I don't want you to fight with other influencers; I want you to fight for the rights of domestic helpers and religious minorities, and use your very, very (might I add very) powerful platform to influence others to do the same. I don't want to see photographs of your wedding - I want to see posts from you that celebrate a world where all lovers are given marital rights.

Why mention the hotels you stay at when you can teach us about other cultures while you continent-hop and remind us that we are the same no matter where we hail from? Why give us pictures of your poached eggs and smoked salmon when you can take a photograph of someone feeding a dog or buying a blanket for a homeless person?

You dictate fashion with the click of a keyboard, so why not make it trendy to provide services to our community, to promote the arts and culture scene, to read books, to research, to fill oneself with awe and appreciation, to help others, to be kind to people not out of pity but as fellow creatures on this journey of life, to speak out for equality, and transcend boundaries? You may say we could do this, but let's not pretend you're the one with the platform, not us. Use that divine power; use that privilege to catapult us higher. Oh, use it!

Dear influencer, you have legions of fans hanging on to your every word and deed. If you want to promote beauty and fashion, by all means, do so. We all want to look the best we can; and yes, even we go out of our way and above our budgets to enhance our appearance, just like you do, influencer. And we all appreciate having a sense of style, but not at the expense of our world.

No. There's a balance between looking better and making the world better. If you want to become rich and famous, that's fine too. We all want attention in our own way - we want to find a way to make a living without busting our butts in a nine-to-five cubicle; but again, not at the expense of our world. No. Please remember that your followers, ever-ready on autopilot, are ready and willing to emulate you in every way. How much you can do, how much!

I know a few influencers do promote goodness, but only after gaining millions of followers first, and by focus-

ing mainly on the superficial to keep the masses entertained. I know that it takes two (or in this case, millions) to tango. And I also know influencers are not the cause, but a symptom of our collective consciousness, so even while we point fingers, let us look into how we have perpetuated superficiality and then lean towards outgrowing our egos.

The fact that these influencers have so many followers in the first place is a sign of mankind's inclinations today. So in this letter, I am asking all of us to wake up so that we can show one another what truly matters on our planet - lipstick that lasts or a world that does? When have long eyelashes become more important than long lives? When has the quality of our skin superseded the quality of our lives?

I have hope in all of us, and I look eagerly towards those souls with few followers who work hard to raise the frequency, even while not being acknowledged. I'm a sucker for the people who are doing everything they can to enhance the vibrations on our planet by finding ways to better themselves and their communities. These are the true influencers - the ones that call us to inner beauty, which stands the test of time and doesn't require a regular Botox upkeep.

Before I sign out, influencer, I want to add that I'm tired of seeing an entire generation taking selfies rather than exploring the self. I'm tired of listening to people talk about the latest caftans and sequined veils when we should be talking about the underpaid women and children and ethnic minorities around the world who are exploited and mistreated, while in some cases, sewing the very clothes we flaunt. I'm tired of inhabiting a world where clothes and cars define us.

Gandhi tells us to be the change we want to see in the world. We need more influencers like him - noble, expansive and worthy of adulation. And even though one might think it is difficult to change in a world when most people are obsessed with the status quo, I say let's fast forward this phase of superficiality and usher in an age of ascension (or else let the two coexist), so that true influencers can take center stage. All it takes is awareness, empathy and camaraderie with one another for us to realize that love is the only positive influence and it doesn't cost a penny (or a fils, for that matter).