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**Posers**

These Days, We're All Playing for the Camera

By Paul Asay

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**What Happened:**

Apple released its new iPhone 4 this summer and, along with its much-touted slimmer design and faster processing, the gizmo also came with an interesting little innovation: a second camera lens that faces the user, as well as the lens that faces away from the user.

This reverse lens might seem innocuous—even strangely pointless—to some; but for a generation immersed in digital media and social networking, the added feature made perfect sense: It makes it that much easier to take pictures of ourselves.

Once upon a time, back when cameras used film, folks posed for pictures only during family vacations and special occasions. People today are almost always in view of a lens: Camcorders record us for YouTube, and security cameras document our every move. If we're not posing for pictures for our friends, we're taking them ourselves.

“People are so much more attuned to adjusting how they look in front of a camera,” said Keith Gould, founder of Daily Mugshot, a Website that allows users to upload pictures of themselves every day. “Now they make precise decisions about every part of their face and angle of their head.”

*Source: The New York Times*

It's a good thing we take this sort of care, too. We live in the age of Facebook, where sometimes we meet people through our online profiles and pictures before we ever see them face-to-face.

“People are really putting their best foot forward, for complete strangers,” Sam Yagan, founder of the site OkCupid.com, told *The New York Times*. “It's pretty remarkable.”

Oddly, all that familiarity with the camera seems to have made us more comfortable with ourselves. Although 10 years ago people would work hard to look their best for the camera, today's self-shots are less self-conscious. “(A)s it becomes a part of your life, you just embrace your crazy hair,” says Gould. “Or you notice you're still wearing the same shirt from yesterday and you don't care.”

We all make snap judgments about those we see in pictures, but some experts believe the casual shots we take of ourselves sometimes can leave the best impression. Those telltale signs of imperfection convey more honesty, which makes us more likable.

**Talk About It:**

Do you take photos of yourself? Why? Are they for social networking sites, for friends or just for fun? Do you think Gould's right when he says taking pictures of ourselves makes us less self-conscious? Or does it make us *more* concerned about how we look?

Do you like how you look? Are there things about yourself you'd change if you could? When does the desire to look your best become vanity?

People take far more pictures of each other than they typically did when our parents and grandparents were kids. Is this a good thing? Do you think that always "performing" for a camera changes us somehow? How?

**What the Bible Says:**

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

"For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin" (Ps. 36:2).

"A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit" (Prov. 15:13).