**Excerpted from**

***The upside of selfies: Social media isn't all bad for kids***

By Kelly Wallace, CNN

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*Kelly Wallace (born in* [*Brooklyn, New York*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_York)*) is a* [*television*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television)[*journalist*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalist) *who reports for* [*CNN*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNN)*. She previously worked for the* [*CBS Evening News*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CBS_Evening_News) *and* [*iVillage*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IVillage)*.*

"I think just as damaging as social media can be, it can ... help to build self-confidence, too," said Masio, during a recent interview including her husband, 13-year-old Amelia and 8-year-old son William.

In fact, [according to a report](http://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/social-media-social-life) last year by the nonprofit child advocacy group [Common Sense Media,](http://www.commonsensemedia.org/) one in five teens said social media makes them feel more confident, compared with 4% who said it makes them feel less so.

In the survey of more than 1,000 13- to 17-year-olds about how they view their digital lives, 28% said social networking made them feel more outgoing versus 5% who said it made them feel less so; and 29% said it made them feel less shy versus the 3% who said it made them feel more introverted.

When it comes to relationships with friends, more than half (52%) of teens said social media has made them better versus just 4% who said it has negatively affected those relationships.

"On the whole, teens said that they feel that social media has a more positive than negative impact on their social and emotional lives," said Shira Lee Katz, Common Sense Media's director of digital media. "They believe that social media helps their friendships, makes them feel more outgoing and gives them confidence."

Rebecca Levey (co-founder of a video sharing platform for tweens ages 7 to 12 called [KidzVuz](http://www.kidzvuz.com/)) said another benefit is for kids who might feel slightly isolated to connect with other tweens and teens who share their same interests.

"They can just find other kids who are superexcited about the same thing, so if you are living in a small town and you're the only kid who loves musical theater, instead of feeling like a freak about it, you can go online and find all these other kids that love musical theater," she said.

Social media has been a place where teens, who might be feeling isolated, can cry for help. For example, when [an 18-year-old recently posted on his Facebook page that he was thinking of jumping off the George Washington Bridge](http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20131113/washington-heights/suicidal-teen-gets-help-after-papd-reaches-him-on-facebook-officials-say), which connects New York with New Jersey, Port Authority officers managed to connect with him on social media and encouraged him to get help.

Teens have also shown they can use social media to make their voices heard. After a Christian motivational speaker, who believes "dateable girls know how to shut up," spoke at a high school in Richardson, Texas, [students took to Twitter to express their outrage](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23lookadouche&src=tyah).

"Teens and this young generation in general want action," said Elena Sonnino, a founder of the site [Live.Do.Grow,](http://www.livedogrow.com/category/social-good/) social media strategist and writer who focuses on engaging tweens and teens in using their voice for social good.

Sonnino, who has created a Facebook group called [Grow Global Citizens,](https://www.facebook.com/GrowGlobalCitizens) said social media has not only increased tweens and teens' awareness of the world around them, but also has allowed them to be more innovative about how they can get involved.

"In the past ... they would do canned food drives, they'd do the book drives, they'd do all the things that have been done over and over, which were all wonderful, don't get me wrong, but now ... they're realizing there is so much more they can do," said Sonnino.