

## THE BOTTOMLESS WELL

Raina preferred TV to movies. She loved getting to know the characters and following the storylines season after season. Raina felt as if she knew the characters and had a connection with them. For each life event they went through, they helped her understand and cope with her own.

Raina watched shows that made her cry, laugh, and think about life's bigger questions. Whenever something happened to her, she thought about her favorite character, Jess, and asked what she would do in this situation. It helped her cope and make sense of things she didn't fully know how to handle yet.

Raina watched TV more than your average teenager. With the vast selection of shows available, she was never bored and didn't have to wait until the next episode rolled around a week later. These streaming services were a bottomless well of content. Raina didn't even have to click a button when her show finished to get the next episode or a similar show aligned to her interests. She found it impossible to know when one episode had ended and the other began, finding herself staring at the screen unblinking for hours. Raina usually fell asleep watching TV, and when she woke up her computer was on the floor and slumped over next to her.

Last week, Raina was struggling to find a show she hadn't seen. She was shocked that she had already seen most shows twice. This made Raina stop and think about how many hours she was watching TV. After checking her browser history, she guessed it was 8 hours a day. That was almost one third of her day and more than half of her waking hours. That freaked Raina out. Was she addicted? She felt like a normal, healthy kid but wondered if this would affect her in the long run. Was her brain turning to mush?

Raina tried to cut down the hours she spent watching TV but found herself unable to sleep without playing a show in the background. She spent three weeks cutting down her TV time and found that she was still watching between 6 and 7 hours a day. Raina was afraid to talk to her parents about her problem. They would take away her computer and then she would be way worse off. She thought about what Jess would do.

Jess doesn't even watch TV on the show. She's out there living a life, I'm just watching other people live cool lives instead of living my own, Raina thought.

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## Guiding Questions:

- What is a good amount of TV per day?
- What are the positive and negative effects of TV?
- Is Raina addicted? Does she have a problem?
- What would you do if you were Raina?
- Should someone in the family have noticed that Raina watches a lot of television? Should they have intervened?

**Topic: Media Balance and Dynamics**

**Age: Elementary School and Middle School**