



Colorado Lawyer Assistance Program

Power Up by Powering Down

"I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots." ~ Albert Einstein

Technological advances over the past 50 years have drastically altered the way we live our lives. Both our personal and professional lives are impacted by technology that continues to change and improve at an exponential rate. Change, however, has both positive and negative aspects. How many hours per day do you spend *without* a smartphone, tablet, or a computer? Especially for students, your phones and tablets are basically an appendage; they never leave you.

The problem, as research has demonstrated, is that depression, negative thoughts, loneliness, physical pain, compulsion, vision problems, and a decreased ability to communicate effectively during face-to-face interpersonal discussions results from such a strong dependency on your smart phones and computers. It would have been ridiculous to consider, even 10 or 15 years ago, that the following would be possible: a smartphone addiction as a legitimate addiction; that people would develop a fear of being without a cell phone (nomophobia); that it would become impossible for many people to relax because they are on alert for incoming texts or emails; that people would feel a compulsion to send pictures of everything they are doing or eating to everyone they know throughout the day; or that a decline in patience would result from phone use, and that the concept of delayed gratification would become a metaphoric dinosaur.

Examine your dependence on technology. Dedicate at least 30 minutes each morning, and 30 minutes before going to bed, to putting down and shutting down your smart phone, computer, and TV. Slowly increase that amount of time to one hour. In the meantime, DO NOT use your phone as your alarm clock or you will wake up looking at texts and emails. Living life is about experiencing life, not being immersed in a superficial or artificial sense of connection that ultimately can leave you feeling hollow, disconnected, and alone. It's difficult to buck such a strong current that society is on, but you will find yourself happier and healthier by "powering up by powering down." Start today ~ there is no time like the present!

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