Disconnecting from Stimulus Response Technology

4 simple ideas to help you turn off technology

Our love/hate relationship with technology continues. PC's gave way to laptops that provided more freedom. Laptops have given way to smartphones, tablets, and now, wearable technology. With technology embedded into the fabric of your clothing, and presented directly into your ears and eyes, 24/7 connectivity will take on a whole new meaning. Still, disconnecting from technology is simple to achieve: turn off your device, put it down, and walk away. Easy enough to do, isn't it?

Turning on Technology

Turning off technology is not as simple as turning off a device and walking away. For many people, technology is not only a convenience for work, but an important way to keep connected to their loved ones. Technology enables the freedom to go places and be with people while still remaining connected to work and having quick access to information.

In a recent paper from Deloitte, Technology, Media and Telecommunications Predictions 2014, the authors suggest that 2014 will bring a decline in cellular voice calls, tablet-phone sales will double, and that wearable technology will become a $3 billion dollar industry (the tip of a large iceberg).

Turning Off Technology

Before technology controls you, it is important install boundaries that meet your practical and personal preferences. Here are a few ideas to help you consider why you should disconnect a little from technology.

1. The costs of too much technology includes:

- The financial costs: Sure, technology is relatively inexpensive in the scheme of things, less costly than a car or major appliances but the financial costs add up over time
- Physical Health costs: Not only is distracted walking, biking and driving one possible cost but so are sore necks, eye and ear strain and even insomnia.
- Relationship costs: This is a tricky one because on one level some relationships are strengthened with the connectivity. An app to remind you of a partner's

birthday can be a benefit. However, technology that distracts you and keeps you distracted is not as positive.

2. The benefits of tuning out

- Time Benefit: technology can be a time saver, it can also be a time waster. Cutting wasted time such as reading usefulness content, playing games, focusing on other people's lives can give you back time to spend on activities that are more rewarding.
- Relationship benefits: Staying connected with your children, family, friends and co-workers to facilitate communications and activities is often useful, but connecting with them directly off line is equally important.
- Health benefits: Technology leverage better health with apps to help manage your diet and encourage exercise. Put down your device to engage in many healthy activities like gardening, exercising, and playing team sports.
- Self-awareness benefits: technology can provide you with access to information you can use to assess your self and your interests, but turning off technology and taking time to explore your interests in the real world will bring more insights and a deeper awareness of who you are
- Work benefit: for every advantage technology affords for work, and there are many, too much technology can result in a lack of concentration, paralysis from information overload, a distraction from effective performance, and mental fatigue.

3. Simple Actions to Take Today To Help Disconnect From Too Much Technology

- *Track how long you can go without interactive technology, outside of work hours, each day.* A great first step is to understand your usage of technology.
- *Establish 2 hours each day (outside of work) where you will not be distracted by interactive technology* (no less than 30 minute intervals and sleeping does not count). Set and track the time and see how easy or difficult it is. You can read a book or magazine or watch a movie, even using technology, but select 2 hours where you do not respond or let technology take the lead. That means no cell phone or texting during dinner, in the middle of a conversation, when taking the dog for a walk or other times when technology can be at your fingertips if you allow it.
- *Turn off communication technology 30 minutes before you go to bed and do not turn it on for 30 minutes after you wake up in the morning*. This means no sharing, messaging, responding or even reading messages last thing or first thing each day. Give your brain time to think before the shiny lights of technology and other peoples needs, ideas, demands and more find their way into your line of site. Consider expanding this to include dinnertime. Once you create a new habit it becomes easier to maintain and expand.
- *Pay attention to other people's use of technology.* We often learn by observing others. Identify times when other people's inability to disconnect from technology is frustrating or distracting to you.

Many people love technology and perhaps they should because technology affords many great opportunities to learn, stay connected, gain new experiences. But technology can also cause you to lose connections and miss out on experiences. Pay more attention to who is controlling your use of technology, you, or the technology itself.