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Screen Time Check

Anyone else cringe at their weekly screen time report? Digging a little deeper, I see it tells me how many ‘pick ups’ I have and where I look first. I hate to admit it, but based this report, I am very close to the average adult, checking my phone every 12 minutes. Yikes, talk about an eye opener and just like that morning cup of coffee... very much a habit for me!

Though technology often creates productivity and important connections, it can also cause stress. There are now apps to help us use it less and in some parts of the world, motels and restaurants offering digital detox discounts! I had already been using the social media time limit feature on my phone, but I learned one more while writing this article. Apple provides a ‘down time’ option and google a ‘wind down’ feature. This is where you can allow only certain apps to be available at a designated time, phone calls are always available.

In a recent volunteer study, behavioral economists found that people are wanting to use their phones 31% less, but it is like the ‘I want to floss my teeth before bed’ scenario. When bedtime comes, it is hard to make yourself do that. Christine Carter with the Greater Good Science Center, provides these tips you can do today to strategically utilize your technology:

- Check email intentionally, not compulsively. Designate three specific times today that you’ll read and respond to your email, and keep your mail application closed (and alerts off) at all other times.
- Decide on a few places where you will ban your smartphone use. (Consider starting with the dining room table, your bed, and the bathroom.) If you don’t have your phone in the same room, you’ll be a lot less tempted to check it.
- Use social media and email to strengthen your real-life relationships. For example, each morning, send an email telling someone what you really appreciate about them.

What About the Kids?

Adults are not the only ones spending more time with screens. Did you know, children ages 8 to 18, spend more time with screens than any activity but sleeping? Try swapping some of your digital entertainment for the joys of life beyond the screen with fun ideas from screenfree.org’s Unplug to Giggle Guide at <https://www.screenfree.org/unplug-to-giggle/>!

I have designated my 'down time' on my phone and am reading more physical books rather than apps before bed. What will you do to be more intentional about your screen time? Contact me at tsolomon@ksu.edu or 620-724-8233.

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