[Alert sounds from iPhone, iPad, email, Facebook notification]

Wow, I have so many notifications first thing in the morning. I must be really popular huh? Well interestingly enough most of them have little to do with me. Spam emails, random Facebook notifications, mass snapchats, news alerts.

The average American spends roughly 24 hours a week online. That’s a whole day of your week. Gone. And the average phone user picks up their phone 150 times a day. 62% of

We're more connected now than ever. But how strong are these connectoons, and do they help or hurt when it comes to maintaining social relationships?

This questions is even more pressing when we think about children and teens who are the target consumers for many apps and websites. Many children are becoming technology experts by the time they’re 8 years old. But that is hurting their social skills. Kids between 8 and 10 years old are spending about 8 hours a day behind screens.

Kids in this generation aren’t playing outside. They aren’t even talking to each other. Why meet at the park of school when you can text? But without face-to-face connections, children have little practice with social ques. You can’t see the reaction behind the text. The body language or facial expression. The problem even seeps into the few social interactions we do have. A study by Flashgap found that 87 percent of millennials said they missed a conversation because they were distracted by their phones. And 54% said they experienced a fear of missing out if they didn’t check social networking apps.

Perhaps the solution, as Cal Newport wonders, is to quit social media. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7hkPZ-HTk>

What is clear is that social skills that are declining as a result of online distractions.

A study by Dr. Tamyra Pierce found a correlation between teens spending more time behind screens and higher levels of discomfort in face-to-face scenarios. Many avoid awkward eye contact by checking their phones even if there’s nothing new.

Being an active listener involves looking for physical ques and asking questions. But if teens can’t hold eye contact, it gives an impression of disinterest , an impression that is mostly correct. The brain cannot truly multitask so it splits attention between technology and other tasks at hand. The rise in distracted drivers and accidents is a result of this attention split. And even our ability to focus on a single task is beginning to suffer.

In more than a decade, our attention spans have shortened from 12 to 8 seconds. Couple this with devices designed to grab as much attention as possible and you can see that we have a battle on our hands.

Of course, technology isn’t all bad. Ordering online has never been more efficient, trees are being saved with eBooks, and electric cars are helping our planet. But in order to enjoy technology to the fullest with those around us, we need to know when to plug in and plug out. We need balance and can’t let our screens be the only things we experience.

Thanks for listening!

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