

“Why Can’t You Put Down that Phone?”

Discussion Booklet for Young Adults

<https://youtu.be/Thkl8-q2pYc>



<https://www.cathmed.org/media/> - public service videos

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WELCOME

Welcome to the CMA University Video Vignette Group Discussion—“Why Can’t You Put Down that Phone?” Over the course of your discussions you will view a brief video (approximately 5 ½ minutes) which will highlight some important principles about screen media use. After the video presentation, you will engage in a group discussion. You will have the opportunity to talk about how screen time influences your daily life. You will hear some ideas that have benefited many other young adults. Some groups might want to schedule additional discussion sessions to share their experiences and ideas. Enjoy!

Section 1

Video Review Questions

1. Did you hear anything that surprised you in the video?
 2. What does Marshall McLuhan mean when he says: “It’s the medium more than the content that is the message”?
 3. Why is *unpredictability* so powerful in stimulating desire and craving?
 4. How does *operant conditioning* or *cueing* make you want to check your cell phone?
 5. Persons who excessively engage in online gaming, for example, *World of Warcraft* or *Minecraft*, can have trouble stopping. Describe why this happens.
 6. What is your response to hearing that: Steve Jobs, founder of the iPhone, never permitted his kids to use an iPhone and that Evan Williams, founder of Blogger, Twitter and Medium, refused to give his two young sons an iPad and instead bought them hundreds of books?*
- (*<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/11/fashion/steve-jobs-apple-was-a-low-tech-parent.html>)

Group Discussion Questions

The following questions are intended to help you reflect on your use of screen media.

1. In what ways do social media platforms and texting benefit you, your family, and friends?
2. What is your reaction when you pick up your phone to see if you have any messages or “likes” and there aren’t any? How does this make you feel?
3. Do you catch yourself accessing social media when you should be doing something else?
4. How much time do you spend with friends online as compared with friends in real life?
5. In what situations do you interrupt a conversation you are having with someone face-to-face to check a message you received?
6. Do you multi-task when using your screens? What do you choose to do when multi-tasking?
7. Have you ever experienced FOMO? In what situations?
8. How much personal time do you daily spend on your electronic device(s)?
9. Are there triggers for when you use your electronic device? When bored? When alone? When you first awake? When waiting in line? Others?
10. How does your use of electronic devices affect your mood?
11. When you use your electronic device, how often do you have a clear purpose in mind?
12. Do you take your phone to bed? How long are you on your phone in bed before trying to all asleep?
13. What times or situations would you think it is inappropriate to engage in social media?
14. What would concern you if you were asked to turn off your devices for a day?
15. What skills or talents could you develop if you were spending an hour less on social media each day?

Section 2

Be a Smarter Screen User

We know the tricks that advertisers use to tempt us—a mouthwatering sundae or a shiny red car. Electronic design engineers also know how to get our attention. The color red in notifications on our cell phones and tablets trigger a desire to see what it is all about. Auto-play in videos can get us hooked to watching much longer than we intended. More and more cell phone and tablet functions are designed to get us to spend more time using these devices.

Here are a few suggestions to help you be more aware of your tech usage:

Say no to notifications. A notification is intended to let you know something important needs attention. Most phone and tablet notifications are machine-automated and do not involve people. They are intended to get you to engage with an app you might not have otherwise thought about. Set notifications only for things that are important to you.

Put your phone on “do not disturb” mode, and allow only messages from “favorites.” You might be surprised how much time interruptions from messages take away from what is important to you.

No screen zones. Use good screen etiquette. No screens at meal time will help facilitate better face-to-face conversations. Also keep your phone and tablet out of your bedroom at night. You will probably get more minutes of sleep and better quality sleep. Of course, do not read or send messages while driving.

Use an old fashioned alarm clock. Not using your phone or tablet as an alarm clock will prevent you from being tempted to engage in the many other functions your phone and tablet offers you at a time and place designated for rest and sleep.

Utilize Apps to Help Increase Screen-free Time

Many apps are available to help you be more mindful of your use of screens and to allow for more screen-free time. One example is *Onward*, an app that helps block websites and apps and tracks phone or tablet usage.

There are also apps that help you to designate screen-free times during the day. Some examples include:

- *Moment Family*
- *Breakfree*

Consider Internet firewalls and filtering systems for you cell phone, tablet, and computer. There are many on the market. Some suggestions include:

- *Circle Go*
- *Qustodio*
- *Covenant Eyes*

App blocking devices to consider:

- *Freedom* for Apple and Windows products
- *Offtime* for Android products

Challenge yourself to reduce screen time.

Initially, try to reduce your screen time by one hour per week.

You could also challenge yourself to a no-screen day. Giving up screens for a day is not intended to be a punishment. It is an opportunity for you to challenge yourself to interact with people in new ways.

- Get your friends on board.
- Choose a day that is realistic to be screen-free.
- Take some time to reflect on your screen-free day.
 - What did you notice?
 - How did your no-screen day compare with a day when using screens?
 - What do you notice when you were interacting face-to-face with others for a day?
 - What were you able to do because you were not engaged with your screens?

Based upon your experience with a no-screen day, consider finding an entire weekend to go screen-free.

Need help?

For some persons, online gaming or other Internet activities become an irresistible obsession. Help is available. Treatment options range from limited outpatient therapy to intensive inpatient programs. Check online for treatment options that fit your needs.

Resources

Below are suggested resources. No endorsement of all material contained therein is intended.

Websites/Blogs/Podcasts

www.internetlivestats.com

www.pewinternet.org

TED Talks on Screen Use:

- “Why Screens Make Us Less Happy,” Adam Alter
(www.ted.com/talks/adam_alter_why_our_screens_make_us_less_happy)
- “What You Are Missing While Being a Digital Zombie,” Patrick Wincent (youtu.be/TAIxb42FjwE)
- “Why We Should Rethink Our Relationship with the Smartphone,” Lior Frenkel
(youtu.be/Pgo65s1R6TM)
- “How Social Media Makes Us Unsocial,” Allison Graham (youtu.be/d5GecYjy9-Q)

The Art of Manliness podcasts (www.artofmanliness.com/podcast)

Ascension Press (ascensionpress.com)

Steubenville Mid-America Conference presents Paul J. Kim on elevating social media
(steubystl365.com/paul-kim-elebate-social-media/)

Books

How to Break Up with Your Phone, Catherine Price (2018).

Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked, Adam Alter (2018).

The Distracted Mind: Ancient Brains in a High-Tech World, Adam Gassaley and Larry O. Rosen (2016).

The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science, Norman Doidge (2007).

The Craving Mind: From Cigarettes to Smartphones to Love - Why We Get Hooked & How We Can Break Bad Habits, Judson Brewer (2017).

Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain, Maryanne Wolf (2007).

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She offers workshops on a variety of topics including human attachment, boundaries and character development, depression and anxiety, dialogue and conflict resolution, as well as on social media and its effects on the brain for clergy, seminarians, women's and men's religious communities, parents, teachers and students. She is a formator within her own religious community. She presents on Internet pornography addiction—a Catholic approach to treatment to bishops, clergy, seminarians, religious communities, and laity throughout the United States and Europe She presented to the U.S. Bishops in Dallas TX in 1992 on "Pedophilia and Other Addictions". She was a member of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse in 1994-1995. Sister Marysia has presented to the Curia, Vatican City State on "Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clergy in North America" in 2002. She has served as a psychological expert consultant for the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, USCCB. Her publications include: "Medical Aspects of Addiction"; "The Roman Catholic Church and the Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Religious in the United States and Canada: What Have We Learned? Where Are We Going?"; "Pornography, Electronic Media and Priestly Formation"; Her publications in *Seminary Journal* include: "Significant Markers of Human Maturation Applied to the Selection and Formation of Seminarians"; "The Discernment of a Priestly Vocation and the Expertise of Psychiatry and Psychology"; and "Internet Pornography and Priestly Formation: Medium and Content Collide With the Human Brain". Her book, "The Art of Accompaniment: Practical Steps for the Seminary Formator" is available on amazon.com. Her book, "Why Can't You Put Down that Phone" is pending publication as is her chapter "Guideposts for the Seminary Formator in Understanding and Assessing Levels of Preoccupation with Use of Internet Pornography and a Formative Process for Moving from Vice to Virtue" in *Spiritual Husband-Spiritual Fathers: Priestly Formation for the 21st Century*. She also has a short video on "Screen Addiction" located at www.cathmed.org/videos.