

Have we become more intimate with our mobile devices than the people in our lives?

Despite technology allowing us to complete many tasks more quickly and our ability to communicate instantaneously, relationships have not become any easier. In fact, technology has created new obstacles to experiencing live face-to-face connections. Visual chats, Skype, and sending "selfies" or live chats or posts on Facebook often replace the warmth that was once experienced while looking into another person's eyes. The art of being fully present in a room with another person in the absence of distractions, truly allowing for sustained eye contact is becoming increasingly rare. In fact, the concept of being preoccupied in another person's presence, is more the rule than the exception. More typically observed are people spending time together, believing they are having quality time while they are texting, emailing or playing a game on their handheld device. Are we becoming a culture of emotionally disconnected people?

Emotional intimacy is becoming a lost capacity, fewer people seem to be experiencing the pleasure of getting to know someone in a deeper way. Why should this be a human need when we can read about the daily events of people's lives on Facebook. Curiosity to know more, to ask questions seems to not be very necessary anymore since people are broadcasting their personal news on the internet. The skill of inquiry is obsolete when the people you are with are preoccupied, continuously glued to their phones, tablets, and wearable technology, not wanting to miss the next beep.

The value of another human being's presence has become diminished since we so often give priority to our transmitted messages. In the

past, reading a book while visiting with someone would have been considered rude, the concept of rudeness or being disrespectful seems to have disappeared. Our attachment to mobile technology is most remarkable when the battery has lost its charge or the device has been misplaced, it creates a sense of panic, being disconnected from the seemingly important people in their lives. We are losing the values as well as the ability and desire to feel our importance in the presence of another person.

In my practice I help clients reconnect with their inner selves and the innermost self of those significant people in their lives. Clients learn or relearn how they can relax their hold on technology, and suspend their electronic connections for a period of time. I believe people can choose to put the word "significant" back into human relationships. When people open up to really listening and hearing others, they are taking steps toward the important people in their lives. When they are visually focused on the other person without distractions, more than words are communicating "You are important to me." The warm feelings of being emotionally satisfied are able to flow more easily when we know our thoughts and feelings matter.

These days I am helping more and more clients remember, learn or re-learn how to be truly present with another human being; and to experience the joy and warmth of human connections in family and romantic relationships.

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