

## *Philosophical Musings - Relationships*

Whatever happened to respect? People in relationships today do not seem to hold their partner in any sort of respect. Go into any given restaurant you will see couples sitting together where each is on their respective cell phone. Why did they even bother to go there together? You can observe couples walking down the street side by side and each is on their cell phone. They are obviously not together and yet society seems to accept this behavior. Where's the respect. When you're on the phone, you're not with anyone else. You are with the party at the other end of the phone. Cell phones are used for lots and lots of reasons – some even make sense, however, cell phone addiction is a fact of life. People on average check their cell phones 160-200 times a day.

Some people argue that the cell phone keeps them connected. Connected to what? Texting is not really communicating with another person. You cannot see their face or their expression. You cannot hear the tones of their voice or see their body language. This is a sterile medium of exchange – not communication. The social fabric of society is being eroded little by little as people avoid direct contact and face to face communication. Respect is lost. Understanding is lost. Real messages are lost. All of this is in the name of being connected.

It is common for families at the diner table, each member having their indispensable cell phone beside their plate – ready in anticipation of receiving an important message. Whatever happened to the normal family conversations that took place during the meal? There's no time for that. We must be ready at a moments notice to respond to some inane comment from some distant sender. If an immediate response is not sent, the originator will come back at you with yet another message asking if you received the first. All of this instant activity builds the expectation of immediacy – in everything. Each message must be responded to instantly or you will be thought of as rude or impolite. In reality, however, there is rarely any message that cannot wait an hour, several hours, a day or several days. But with each message comes a ***demand*** that you respond immediately.

Meanwhile, if you're an Android user (in 2017 Android accounted for more than ***85%*** of smart phone use – more than ***2 Billion*** users), all of that phone activity is being recorded and analyzed so that the results can be marketed for advertising purposes. In order to use an Android phone you ***must*** give permission for the collection of all of your personal data. Here's a wake up call for you: in 2017 Google's advertising revenue was more than ***US\$96 Billion***. Did you receive a dividend from Google for the use of your personal data which earned them that level of income? Just as an aside, FaceBook's advertising revenues for 2017 was more than US\$40 Billion. Did you happen to receive a dividend from FaceBook for their use of your personal data?

Because of the expectation of instantaneous response - influenced and generated by cell phone use (and social media), attention spans are diminishing. The average human attention span is about 8 seconds - dropping from 12 seconds in 2000 (it is believed that a goldfish has an attention span of 9 seconds). Most people cannot concentrate for more than 20 minutes at a time. In today's world the distractions are overwhelming (like the many notifications one typically receives on a daily basis). Of course when these facts are mentioned, the addicted cell phone or social media user becomes defensive and will not accept that they might be an addict. Most will rationalize their use and justify the importance of it all, while in reality it is really trivial mostly without substance.

In the future history will see this period of “connectivity” as the dumbing down of society resulting in lost productivity, lost potential creativity, and lost civility.

None of this deals with the proven health issues associated with electromagnetic frequencies (EMF - generated by cell phones). In the 1950s the tobacco companies promoted their product in any number of ways – knowing full well that it was addictive and detrimental to one's health. Research was discouraged and blocked in many cases because there was a lot of money on the line. Today the mobile phone industry (a ***multi-trillion dollar*** business) as a matter of course discourages/blocks relevant research into side effects caused by the use of their product. Will the future, as with tobacco, show us that cell phone use can be detrimental to our health? Only time will tell. Are you willing to take the chance that cell phones are not harmful to your health?