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Is this your life at work? Answering email and hitting Send. Answering email and hitting Send. All day long. Or how about at home? Scrolling through your phone. Scrolling through your phone. All night long. Yes?

Getting caught up in emails at work may help some people get answers or maybe clarify a few issues but quite often very little work gets done. You leave the office 8, 9, or 12 hours later and cannot pinpoint exactly what you accomplished that day. You're caught up in an email game that feels like a whirlpool you can't swim away from.

Well, it's time to let everyone know you aren't playing this game anymore. It's time to intentionally spend hours of your workday beyond the reach of your computer, working at a table or on a sofa away from your desk. You need some concentrated, non-illuminated-screen time to practice what an entire generation is forgetting how to do (and a new generation is likely never to learn): to think and read and discuss and write.

If your job requires the use of your computer to do actual work, then silence your email notifications and hide your email screen for solid chunks of your day. If your boss expects you to immediately answer her emails, then set up your system to alert you of only her emails, but do try and discuss the matter with her to see if she'd be willing

to curtail her expectation of immediate responses.

So you may be thinking: “Chief, this column is unreasonable. No successful person can thrive without their computer or Smart phone. No human being can function without one eye looking up and one eye on their Smart phone.”

Well, Warren Buffett, one of the richest men in America who runs a multibillion-dollar investment firm, isn't glued to a computer or phone. His colleagues have confirmed that he spends most of his days in his office away from his computer. In fact, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter who once shadowed him verified this and also said that throughout the day, Warren Buffett hardly looked at his Smart phone, and he only received about a dozen phone calls, one of which was a wrong number. He's living proof that successful people need uninterrupted time in order to effectively think, read, plan, and write.

The point herein isn't technology vs. no technology, but how to use it wisely and well. I suggest that you, and not the technology or corporations that develop it, make the rules. You should be the one deciding when to read your emails and when to answer them. Your response to others, while timely, does not necessarily need to match the speed of instant messaging that so enamors our kids.

As for the personal temptations to scroll on your phone all night long,

form the habit of using technology when and where it helps or otherwise ignore it, unplug it, walk away from it, or turn it off. Be determined to be where you are--in the room and in the present.

Technology has crippled civility and cordiality, and has even put a damper on personal relationships. Think about it. Have you ever sat at a boardroom table with colleagues or a restaurant table with family to notice that seven out of ten people have their eyes and thumbs glued to their Smart phones, oblivious to what's going on around them?

When using your Smart phone for entertainment, don't let it become all-consuming. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to converse with someone who's constantly surfing through social media propaganda or the latest political memes. Of course we all do this at times, but put a lid on it. And certainly don't hand your Smart phone to a toddler to keep their attention off of you!

At work, and in life, get a hold of technology or technology will take hold of you. Don't let technology relieve you of your solitude and space, your mind, your thinking, and your real presence with family, friends, and colleagues. As it turns out, life has no rewind button so enjoy your moments with full awareness or your meaningful experiences will last about as long as the battery life of your computer or phone.

~ The End ~