

Finding Our Way to the Here & Now: Getting Control Over Our Phones

Psychologists talk about The 3 C's of Addiction.

Control: Using a substance or performing a behavior (like gambling) in ways that would be considered out of control, or more so than intended.

Compulsion: Being intensely mentally preoccupied with and using a substance (or performing a behavior) automatically, without actively deciding to do so.

Consequences: Continued use (or doing something) in spite of negative social, physical and mental consequences.

It seems like a good idea to ask ourselves (at least from time to time) whether the 3 C's describe how we're relating to our cell phones and/or our experiences while using our cell phones.

But setting aside the idea of phone-addiction.

Whether phone use is an addiction or just a habit many of us are stuck in, for our purposes here in Project Lab, we're putting "PHONES" in the category of Things That Take Us Away From the Here And Now." Because for sure that's true for everyone. Phones are distracting. Phones interrupt our thoughts. Phones disrupt our in-person experiences and conversations.

Basically, phones force us to multitask when the whole point of Project Lab is monotasking. Here are two exercises designed to help create a phone-free time and space.

Exercise 1: Screen Fasting

Taking a break means taking a break. Show yourself that you CAN and WILL take time off from your phone when you want to or need to.

Put your phone on airplane mode, turn off notifications, and put it in your pocket or out of sight. Begin with 5 minutes of no touching and no checking your phone while you participate in the class activity. At a pace that feels right for you, work your way up to 30 minutes. If you can keep going, keep your phone fast going for longer. Log your results!

Exercise 2: Making Space Between You and Your Phone

Research has shown that things closest to us in physical space have the biggest effect on us psychologically. When we allow our phone to join us in every experience, we're going to be drawn to it and we're going to use it. If you can't physically reach your phone, you're going to use it less.

Put your phone on airplane mode, turn off notifications, and lock your phone in our lockbox. Begin with 10 minutes while you participate in class activities. At a pace that feels right for you, work your way up to 30 minutes. Log your results!

Outside of Project Lab

Consider deleting Instagram or any of the apps that are creating drama and bringing negative energy and feelings into your life.

Set your screen to gray scale – the colors are more addictive than gray scale. Gray scale will reduce the time you're looking at your phone screen.

<https://www.psycom.net/cell-phone-internet-addiction>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2016.00175/full>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6449671/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/08/well/live/smartphone-addiction-tips.html#:~:text=Set%20rules%20around%20your%20daily,as%20before%20and%20after%20work.>