

Five Steps to Create Technology Boundaries –Avoiding Techno-Excess Syndrome

To achieve better physical health, it is important to protect your mental health. In order to safeguard your sanity, you must create healthy boundaries. Boundaries serve two main purposes. Just like a traditional fence, they keep out what you don't want in your space, and keep safe what you do want in your space. For many different reasons, it is often difficult to set boundaries.

With the constant barrage of stimulus we encounter daily, it becomes necessary to filter the incoming information and emotions you are confronted with. Setting boundaries gives you the power to control the gate and allow into your life only what is useful and beneficial. It also gives you the authority to shut the gate on people, information, and behaviors that are harmful to you and your goals.

Creating personal boundaries is important when people make demands on your time. You need to have clear guidelines to measure against when deciding how to spend your time. By establishing your personal time boundaries up front, you will be able to make more beneficial and consistent decisions. You will have a clear-cut “yes” or “no,” based on whether the activity lines up with the criteria you have set for yourself. These should be based on your “What Matters Most” list and personal values.

Today's society has become so fast-paced that people are “plugged in” 24/7. You are accessible by cell phone, e-mail, or even GPS. This constant accessibility can be a blessing and a curse. In a crisis or emergency, having a cell phone is a blessing. When you are trying to relax, getting numerous messages requesting your reply can be a curse. It is not necessary to be constantly bombarded by electronic intrusions.

Get REAL Note: Seek ways to create balance in your day so that you can be fully present in each moment.

You need to create times in your day that are technology free. This will require you to set boundaries and stick to them. This unplugged time can become a haven in your day. The first step is to notify those who regularly make demands on your time. They may not like it, but they need to realize how setting boundaries will help you organize each day and reduce your stress. Use this breakdown to help you set some healthy technology boundaries.

The Five Get REAL Steps for Technology Boundaries

- Set aside a specific time of day when calls will be returned. Don't answer your phone at home during specified family times. It's okay—really. Callers can leave a message, and you can get back to them during your specified time.
- Limit checking the computer, electronic planner, cell phone, or e-mail to once or twice a day at set times. Don't gasp! If you want to get really crazy—try scheduling some days off!
- Answer your cell phone only when expecting a call or during specified call-back times. Remember you have a choice—live in the present and tangible moment.
- When spending time with people, please don't use these technology devices. Use common courtesy and give your full attention to the person you are with. Through technology dependence, society is learning to *devalue* actual human contact. It is no wonder there has been a rise in attention deficit disorders! Technology encourages people to regularly do multiple things at once.
- If you must use a cell phone or text while in the company of others, step aside and asked to be excused. Otherwise it can be very awkward for those around you to have to listen to your conversation—not to mention that making people play second fiddle to an electronic device is rude.

By the way, take a Get REAL gut check—how uncomfortable are you feeling right now? Technology detox may be difficult for you at first. Many people have become addicted to their 24/7 technology fix. I call it “techno-excess syndrome.” You may want to wean yourself gradually, or you may decide to go cold turkey into your new plan. As always, it will depend on you. The main purpose of this step is to address the subject and deal with it appropriately. Take back control of your life, and remember to fully *live* in the moment!