TEN STEPS TO DEAL WITH ADDICTION TO ELECTRONIC STIMULATION

“Consumers don’t pay for Facebook. Advertisers do…Never before in history have a handful of people and a handful of technology companies shaped how a billion people think and feel” (60 Minutes, June 11, 2017) (1)

In their 2004 Prospectus to Stock Holders, Google wrote, “‘Don’t be evil’. We believe strongly that in the long term, we will be better served—as shareholders and in all other ways—by a company that does good things for the world even if we forgo some short-term gains. This is an important aspect of our culture and is broadly shared within the company.” (2)

I believe Google is betraying their commitment to their stockholders to “do no evil” because, similar to why Cigarette companies hired scientists to figure out how to create addiction to cigarettes over 50 years ago, Google and other corporate behemoths are hiring computer geniuses to develop technology to produce addiction to electronic devices. As stated before, people don’t pay for FaceBook. Advertisers do. Clicks and time spent on line is their product. Digital service providers are figuring out how to hook people, especially kids and teenagers, to use their product and stay on line. This is what they sell to advertisers and that’s how they make their money (Anderson Cooper 60 Minutes June 11.2017) (2)

The average citizen checks in with their favorite electronic gadget every 15 minutes and, if you believe in science, you’ll be interested to know that researchers have determined that we all experience a subliminal burst of anxiety when we get an electronic notice of a text, a tweet, an e-mail or a phone call. (2) We have learned to reduce that anxiety by checking in with our on-line account. (2) This is a classic example of what B F Skinner identified as “operant conditioning”, utilized by thousands of Psychologists and other scientists for more than 70 years to train, mice, dogs and chimpanzees to perform as laboratory animals.

Make no mistake about it. You and I are now like lab rats carrying our own portable lab in our pockets in the form of smart phones and other digital devices. Like the millions of people who smoked cigarettes for years without having any idea they were addicted or causing themselves harm, billions of us have been “drinking the Cool Aid” about digital technology. Like rats in a laboratory hitting a bar for sugar water; we are checking in with our favorite devices to stay plugged in and wired every 15 minutes and whenever we get a digital signal in order to reduce our trained anxiety response. (2)

This patterning is becoming more sophisticated and more prevalent. Each of us is on our own, left to figure out how to protect ourselves, our kids and our teens from falling victim to the unknown effects of this technology on our brains and on our psychological, social and emotional development.
Ten Steps for Taming your Addiction to Electronic Stimulation:

1. Understand and discuss what it means to be “addicted”. As a therapist, my definition is, “any pattern of behavior which causes one’s life to go out of balance, can be understood as an addictive pattern: a pattern of behavior that is unconsciously designed to camouflage vulnerable emotions.”

2. Ask yourself the question, “Do I have this problem? Am I or one of my kids Addicted to Electronic Stimulation (ES)? If so, what are the indictors of this addiction?

3. If the answer is “yes”, answer the following question: “Do I want to do something about it. Do I want to Tame my electronic addiction?” If the answer is “Yes”

4. Prepare to Tame your Addiction by first learning a breathing method to lower your arousal level. At the Wolf Training Institute, we teach “Belly Breathing”. You can request a Free MP3 of Belly Breathing by sending me an email - info@tamingyouranger.com.

5. Train yourself to clear your mind by refocusing your attention. At the Wolf Training Institute, we teach the Mindfulness/Mindlessness method to clear your mind and focus your attention. You can request a free MP3 of Mindfulness/Mindlessness by sending an email to info@tamingyouranger.com.

6. Identify the thoughts feelings and body sensations you experience when you hear your phone ring or a beep or a buzz which informs you that you are receiving an electronic message.

7. Remind yourself that the best time to work on Taming your Electronic Addiction is in the moment when you become aware of the effect the addiction is having on you.

8. In the moments you become aware of your addictive impulse, take a Belly Breath, focus your attention on the farthest sound and decide how long you are willing to postpone your impulse to “check in”. Will you wait 10 seconds? A minute? 5 minutes? An hour? Till the end of the day?

9. Observe the anxiety or agitation you feel while postponing your impulse to respond to your digital “master”.

10. Continue to use your breathing and mindfulness method to lower your anxiety level in order to Tame your programmed reaction to digital stimulation until you calm down.

Once you have experienced some success using this “Detox from Electronic Stimulation Method” you can make a plan to assist your kids and teens to deal with their addictions.

Please let me know, is this method helpful?
Please share your thoughts about this article and about my column in general at info@tamingyouranger.com

Please let me know of any issues you would like me to address in future columns.

For further information about the Taming Your Anger program please contact me at info@tamingyouranger.com.


2) https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1288776/000119312504142742/ds1a.htm#toc59330_1

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