

For Immediate Release

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“National Disconnect to Re-Engage Day” – Are you addicted to your communication devices?

Kelowna, BC - In light of the possible changes to Ontario’s Legislation around the use of cell phones and PDA Devices, while driving, it has prompted me to make my plea to all Canadians to ...just turn off these little communications devices all together says Linda Edgcombe, author and international speaker.

You read that right! I want to challenge the people of Canada to unite and claim January 16, 2009 as “National Disconnect to Re-Engage Day by turning off their cellular phones and PDA’s. Yes, I did say **turn them off** for the day!

Are you Hooked on Electronics?

Fact: IPSOS Poll Shows across North America

1. 92 % of Knowledge Workers (folks who use a computer at work) read, send, make or take work-related communications in NON-Work situations
2. 73% have kept their communication devices on over the weekend
3. 45% still tune into the office while on vacation
4. More than half of the working population 55%, communicate about work in social situations, while spending time with their families, over dinner, on dates and about 20% have cut a date short to take a work call or respond to a work message.
5. 6% of the population say they always ignore the request to turn off phones and pda’s while in meetings, church, plays and movie theatres.

In 1988 there were approximately 500,000 mobile phone subscribers in the US, by 1993 this had grown to 13,000,000. ^[2] By 2006 there were 223 million mobile phone users.

How does this technology hinder our relationships both at work and at home? Before you look at the effects of this obsessive behaviour we all continue to condone, we need to ask ourselves why do we keep it up, and what’s the payoff for this behaviour. Have we whittled down our ability to connect face to face with people and replaced the skill of conversation with our current version of *Virtual Relationships*? Heck, it’s safe, you can think before you type, and just think how important you feel every time that little device vibrates on your hip, in your purse or in your pocket.

If the above hard stats on our cell phone and PDA addiction have not convince you, read further.....

OK, people put down your cell phones, Blackberries, PDA's, Pocket PC's...What ever! And FOCUS. This may sound amusing but I am dead serious here. Oh, and I don't mean turn them to vibrate, stun or whichever setting you normally do to appear courteous. I want you to shut them OFF. Off means OFF! **But wait, there's more:** I want you to keep it OFF for one full day. Yes indeed I formally declare the first ever "National Disconnect to Re-engage Day". So how do you know if you need this challenge? Well, if you have checked for messages in the past 10 minutes, you need to detox. If you have ever scrolled emails over the dinner table, you need to detox. Have you checked messages and emails while on vacation, right after making love to your partner, perhaps while the kids opened their Christmas gifts, during your weekly visit to church? OK, simply if you own one, you need to detox.

Now I know, we all feel very self-important; you know that "I'm needed" feeling you get when your little mini personal excitement device vibrates on your hip. I can feel the wall of reasons that are coming up why YOU are different than the other 2 billion people on the planet who are also addicted to their connection crutches but to tell you the truth, you are not. Sorry to break that news to you. Now if you currently are working in an Emergency Room, are an "on call" doc or perhaps are an EMT, then you can keep your's on during this day off. For the rest of you who are thinking, "what if... someone really needs me?" Well tell them up front they can call you on your landline and if you are not there...LEAVE A MESSAGE.

Now here's a novel thought about what you can do with the time you will literally have on your hands this day. Go and buy yourself a stamp, and put pen to paper and write someone a handwritten letter. You may need a massage after to help with the cramps you will experience, but whoever you write to, will love receiving your letter later that week.

But here's the real reason you are going to take on this challenge. I want you to "just notice what you notice" about yourself for one full day of less distractions. Notice how you love the freedom from the constant connection. Notice that you feel out of sorts and seem to fumble around. Notice what people actually look like when they talk with you this day. Notice what you can read between the lines in conversations with family, friends and co-workers. But most importantly notice yourself. Being engaged in something, whether it's your work, your relationships or yourself, means having a current conscious awareness of more than just the obvious that is surrounding you at any given time. It means giving a damn about what you are doing and consciously making decisions to give it your all. Here's to shifting towards Re-Engagement.

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Adapted from the newly released book

"Shift... or Get Off the Pot! 26 Simple Truths about Getting a Life" written by Linda Edgecombe, Award Winning Speaker, Author and Humorist, www.lindaedgecombe.com

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