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Digital detox
Is the digital world impacting your daily life and relationships? Taking a break from technology can improve our health and well-being in unique ways.

Improve your interactions
When we hunch over to stare at our phones, tablets or laptops, we give the impression that we are unapproachable. Upright posture and eye contact will make you appear more open and interested in your company and surroundings. Engaging with others this way and ditching technology allows you to hear new perspectives and have deeper, more meaningful conversations.

Enhance your mental and physical health
Blue light from screens negatively influences our sleeping patterns, so taking some time away can improve your rest, causing you to need less sleep and feel more energetic during the day. This boost can sharpen your mental state, too. When we are rested, engaged and attentive to our surroundings, we are able to remember small details we would have missed before.

A new outlook
Technology is a constant distraction from what we should, and need to, be doing every day. It steals our focus from what is going on in our daily lives. When we cut back on technology time, we open up more time to concentrate on and commit to our health and wellness. You may also find that difficult decisions about your career and relationships come easier because you will be able to spend uninterrupted time planning your choices.

Start your digital detox today by putting technology down when you are spending time with others and do not bring your smartphone into the bedroom. Carve out technology-free time to be more present during your day and decrease your dependence on your phone.

Book Club
Vital Friends: The People You Can’t Afford to Live Without
by Tom Rath
For his book, Vital Friends, Rath pored through research, performed testing and analyzed over 8 million interviews from The Gallup Organization’s worldwide survey database. What he discovered is there are eight types of people we need in our lives to support us, what he calls vital friends. These people include champions, connectors and mind openers. Learn ways to strengthen and add new types of vital friendships to your life. With vital friends, you can improve your physical health, happiness and engagement at work.

Discussion questions
1. What statistic surprised you the most from your readings?
2. What are the side effects of your negative relationships at home and at work in each of these environments? Think about the baggage you bring home each night and bring to work each morning.
3. Who are your best friends at work?
4. What vital friend roles are lacking in your life?
5. What can you do to strengthen existing relationships and form new ones at home and at work?
Give it a try...

Promoting positive interactions

The Workplace Bullying Institute has found that 27 percent of employees have experienced workplace bullying at some point during their career. The key to avoiding a negative and disrespectful work environment is to establish and continually support a strong consistent corporate culture that stops bullying before it starts.

1. Promote a work culture where all bullying is not tolerated and provide staff training on reducing negative interactions like hurtful teasing or name calling, intimidation or exclusion of employees.
2. Encourage open, face-to-face communication rather than disagreements over email.
3. Remind staff to stop and review an email before sending and consider the reaction of the receiver.

Using self-compassion to reach your goals

Practicing self-compassion, or being kind to yourself, can improve your success rate when working toward a goal.

Negative emotions stick around easily and impair the brain’s ability to learn and take in new skills. They can keep us in a “hot” state, which is when we find ourselves making rash decisions that we later regret. This also makes it more difficult to focus on a new habit or make a healthy choice.

Practicing self-compassion will lead to self-determination, which is a better kind of motivation. When behaviors are driven by kindness to self, we feel confidence, calmness and a sense of security. This is called a “cold” state. Here we make more intentional and logical choices. Better decisions lead to a greater chance of success, which helps us master our goal. This completes the circle and gives us a sense of competency for our next task.

So instead of getting down on yourself, make a list of the times you’ve been successful in the past and of all of your strengths. Use that to move your goals forward instead.

Skin cancer prevention

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the world and although one in five Americans develop the disease, there are preventative measures you can take to help lower your risk. Protecting your skin is extremely important year-round because UV rays are present every day, even when it’s cold or cloudy.

Here are some prevention tips:

• **Use sunscreen daily.** Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher. Apply to body and face 30 minutes before heading outdoors. We receive a large portion of our sun exposure in our cars, when we don’t even realize it.

• **Cover your skin.** Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and neck. It is important to wear UV-blocking sunglasses to protect your eyes and the sensitive skin around them. The more skin you can cover, the better off you will be.

• **Examine your skin.** Look monthly from head to toe to detect skin cancer early before it spreads. Look for any new or changing lesions and contact doctor with anything suspicious.
Activate!

Wellness Tool

Track your smartphone habit and assess your dependence on technology. Download the Checky app in your favorite app store to answer one simple question: How many times a day do I look at my phone?

Being dependent on your smart phone, even to just pass the time, can be harmful to your health.

Physical well-being changes:
- Poorer posture from being bent over looking at your phone is called “text neck”
- Using a phone during other activities like walking, running, biking or driving can cause serious accidents and injuries
- The blue light emitted from smartphones can cause dry eyes, strain and may be linked to long term eye health problems

Emotional well-being changes:
- Feelings of jealousy, sadness or anger when viewing social media
- Obsession or upset feelings when social media reaction is small or negative in tone

Fruit salsa
Serves: 8
Total time: 75 min | Prep: 15 min

Ingredients:
- 2 cups of cantaloupe, diced
- 1 large tomato, diced, seeds removed
- 1 cup red onion, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 2 tbsp lime juice or juice of one lime
- 2-4 tbsp dried basil leaves
- Optional: one fresh jalapeno, diced

Directions:
Dice melon, tomato, onion, pepper, jalapeno and mix evenly in a large bowl. Add basil and lime juice to taste. Place in refrigerator for at least 60 minutes to allow flavors to develop. May add more basil for a sweeter flavor or lime for a tart flavor. Keeps well in refrigerator for 24 hours. Serve with your favorite tortilla or cinnamon chips.

Nutrition Facts:
Calories: 31 | Total Fat: 0 g | Sodium: 9 mg | Total Carbohydrates: 8 g
Dietary Fiber: 2 g | Total Protein: 1 g

Nutrition information computed using nutritiondata.com