

## **You, your phone and social media - Is it time to re-evaluate this relationship?**

**By Ellany Kincross - [www.ellanykincross.com](http://www.ellanykincross.com)**

As many of us know, there was life before the invention of cell phones and there is life with cell phones. Back in the life before cell phone days, we had ways to be connected but they weren't all consuming like cell phones are today. Those of us who remember those days know that you had to call-in to your home phone to see who had called in your absence. You then called that person when you were out and about using a pay phone. When cell phones were first introduced, they were bulky and cumbersome. Remember that cell phone that Michael Douglas carried in the movie *Wall Street*? Over time cell phones became sleek, cool and refined. They also became the next best thing since well . . . sliced bread. With their popularity, many people realized the convenience of talking anywhere and everywhere. You'd see people or listen to them chatting away in the supermarket, on line at Starbucks, walking down the street, on the bus, in the subway, driving in their car, etc. Additionally, most people didn't care what parts of their conversation others listened to. During that time, I heard so many conversations and not by choice. It was because I was somewhere that I couldn't escape like sitting on the bus, waiting on line to buy a latte or trying to figure out what type of brown rice I should buy. I heard stories of he did that, she did this, I hate that, you said this, the deal fell through, the client is giving us a hard time, etc. Then the tide turned and everyone began texting. Suddenly we weren't talking anymore, we were holding conversations, having arguments, telling someone off, breaking up with them and having sex via text. I remember hearing stories of teens who were over-using their thumb muscles by texting. Sadly, nothing could be done for them. At the same time the popularity of sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc, taught us the magic of staying in touch, catching up with or reconnecting with people we'd left behind. Social media gave us the opportunity to connect with others all over the world. This new found place of staying in touch invited us share all kinds of information on our posts - selfies, pictures of the food we were about to eat, places we were visiting, posts in which we bragged and posts in which we complained, etc. Somewhere in the midst of this, scrolling became the new phase. In order to stay in touch with all the friends we had and the events going on, we had to scroll and scroll and scroll these sites to see what others were posting and to like or comment on their posts. We've now achieved a zombie-like state where you can't walk down the street or push your cart through a store without having to maneuver around someone who is mesmerized by what they are seeing on their cell phone. Why have our phones become so important to us? Here are three reasons why you need to re-think your relationship with your phone and social media

1. **The outer focus** - While the constant scrolling through sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others has been touted as the best way to 'stay in touch' with our friends, family, acquaintances, lovers and ex-lovers; isn't most of this scrolling about observing what they are doing, where they are going, who they are hanging out with, who they are friends with, who they are dating or are married to and trying to find understanding or reasoning in their posts? Ask yourself: Why is it so important to know what everyone is doing all the time? What do you gain in having this lens into someone's social media postings? Are you merely interested in their life or has your scrolling turned you into a voyeur? When you are scrolling: do you make judgments about the way they look, the people they spend time with, the pictures they share, their comments, etc? Do you feel better or worse by 'keeping an eye on others'? What do you gain by

this observation? How does this scrolling benefit you? Could you live without scrolling through these sites? If yes, how would you spend your time?

2. **The inner focus** - Outer focus takes away from inner focus. By spending all your time on social media, what are you not looking at about yourself? Are you happy? Are you depressed? Are you satisfied with your career? Are you burnt-out? Are you with the right partner? Is your relationship past its expiration date? What is really going on with you? You can only answer these questions and many others when you put the phone down and really allow how you are feeling to come to the surface. I truly believe that we have been using our phones as a way to disconnect from our inner terrain. We use our phones to check-out instead of checking-in with what we are really feeling from moment-to-moment and day-to-day. Why don't we want to 'go there' and feel our feelings? Because our phones allow us the opportunity to escape. Ask yourself: are you using your phone to avoid feeling something. If yes, do you know what that is? Why are you hiding from what you feel? Do you think the feeling will go away? What is/are the long-term effect(s) of not looking inward? Depression? Disease? Do you want to risk that?

3. **Have you lost sight of your dream?** - If you gave up on finding the right partner, switching to a job where you are more aligned with your higher good or doing something that makes you feel passionate, ask yourself why? I feel that our obsession with social media has also been a catalyst for the 'It's never going to happen for me' syndrome. We see others in relationships, finding the right job or career, living their lives in a way we'd like to and suddenly we cannot imagine the same for ourselves. We are living in a place of comparison by only perceiving what is posted on social media. Ask yourself: Are you are living vicariously through the posts of someone who has the ideal job, career or relationship you desire? If yes, what does that give you? Does seeing these posts help you on your journey or hinder you? Are you taking steps to align with the right person, the right career and change yourself or are you standing in the shadows waiting for the person whose postings you are following to fail? Ask yourself what's more important: you finding success, the love of your life or the thing that makes you passionate or watching and observing someone else's journey? Remember that old college acquaintance you found on social media? You've been following her story. She met the man of her dreams and from all intents and purposes appears to be living an idyllic life. Is her life really that perfect? Is there always truth in what people post? And that ex-boyfriend or girlfriend whom you are still 'friends' with on social media. What do you gain by keeping tabs on whether they seem happy, unhappy or have really moved on? How is that helping you heal, move forward and find the right partner for yourself. With that in mind, can you see how you have one foot in the past while trying to move forward?

Social media, cell phones, texting. They've been touted as a wonderful thing. Can you see where it has gone too far? Can you find a happy medium for yourself?

What about me? Well, I'm on the other extreme of things. Yes, I have a cell phone. I admit that having a cell phone is a great thing. I can go about my day and trust that anyone who needs to reach me can call, text or email and I can respond accordingly. As far as social media, I was late to the party. At one point I had a Facebook account, but I closed it down awhile ago. I don't use Twitter or Instagram. For those of you who have spent time with me, you know I rarely touch

my phone in your presence. When I'm not with clients, I only look at my phone every few hours. I have developed a relationship with my phone where I won't be a slave to it. In other words, I don't make my phone more important than me. I won't it give it that power.

Take a moment today to think about your relationship with your phone. Do you feel you are doing yourself a service or dis-service? Are you feeling empowered or dis-empowered? Is it time to re-think and revise your relationship with your phone and with social media? If you desire more than what you have or want to change your status quo, I hope you choose to spend more time with you. Reaching your heart's desire is easy when you turn the spotlight on you.