
OPINION: Even if it's work-related, it's OK to 'power off' once in a while

Posted by The Next Great Generation

April 14, 2012 09:12 AM

By Welina Farah

Much like technology is supposed to make everyday life easier, the use of technology in the workplace is supposed to make our work lives easier. Technology can help us better solve a problem or perform a specific function. It can enhance person-to-person communication, too.

And certainly, technology seems to have done all of these things; most definitely, it has made many jobs much easier. But, especially with more recent advances, I believe it's done so at a price we may not want to pay. Our freedom and psychological health are now the victims of the fight for priority between work and even some of the most basic parts of human existence.

Isn't it great that we can respond to urgent emails while sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic? I guess -- but if that email was really so urgent, couldn't the person have picked up the phone and called instead? Maybe if that was the trend, we wouldn't feel compelled to have our phones buzz every time an email hits our inbox just in case this one happens to be super-important.

Our productivity levels may have risen thanks to remote log-in systems, which give us the ability to work from outside the office, and we may be always informed and in the loop at all hours of the day because we can access our email from any number of portable devices, but too much access can run us down. Even when we're "off the clock," because our smartphones tell us some update on some project is available, we know it's there, and we feel compelled to see what it says. The constant nagging of work and responsibility often outweigh the time-saving (and other) advantages that these technologies provide.

I believe that "just enough" has become "too much." As humans, we have come to rely on technology too often. What's worse is that when we don't have access to our technology, or when our technology fails us, we often feel unproductive, defeated, and/or useless.

However, I often find that after I've gotten over the despair of not being able to send an important email or text message in time, I reflect on the situation: Why am I so upset about this situation? (Actually, I don't really know. It's not the end of the world.) Does this lack of instant access to my email make me a lesser employee? (No.)

The human race has accomplished so much thanks to advances in technology: We sent a man to the moon! We're curing illnesses! We're teaching the masses! And those are all great things. But on a micro level, I think we might be hurting, rather than helping, ourselves.

I'm not suggesting you throw all of your iProducts into the Charles and move out to a remote cabin in the woods somewhere -- but I am suggesting you "power off" every once in a while. The world around you may be changing quickly, but you don't always have to keep up.

Do you feel overwhelmed by a dependence on technology, especially in your work life?

Photo by lgb06 (Flickr)

About Welina -- I'm a UMass Boston student of sociological sorts with a political twist. I like black coffee, snarky

comments, speaking my mind (especially when I shouldn't), social justice and Latin dancing. Let's think together on Twitter; you can find me @Ouleena.

Want more TNGG? Send us an email. Go to our main site. Follow us on Twitter @nextgreatgen. Like us on Facebook. And subscribe to our newsletter!

*This blog is not written or edited by Boston.com or the Boston Globe.
The author is solely responsible for the content.*
