



#MonthlyMotivation Unplug to the Present: Mini Digital Detox

Presented by Jodie Leister

[Jodie] I'm Jodie Leister and I'm one of your OSU internal EAP on-campus counselors, and I have been within the EAP for almost 11 years now and I get the opportunity to do these little monthly motivations rarely. So, when I was thinking about this one, I really try and come up with topics that are relevant to my own life and to what I see not just at work but at home. So, I came up with this unplugged to the present, the idea of the mini digital detox because it's just truthfully something that I've been dealing with a lot within my own life personally and professionally and being able to just be more present, especially when it comes to the advent of AI. AI is a wonderful tool, but it is a tool. And I think that, like I've even noticed myself, you know, overly relying on certain decisions or certain things for myself. And I was like, you know what? I think I need to just take a step back from that. And I then I started thinking about what it really means to be present. And really the idea of presence is about this cultivation of a skill of being in the moment. It's, some people think, like, okay, being present is a luxury. I have too many things. I'm going from one thing to the next. Yes, we all are. The pace of our lives is very, very fast right now. And I miss the one thing that I miss about is how it seems to have slowed things down during that phase of my life when everything seemed to be just hurry, hurry, hurry all of the time wearing my busy badge. But the idea of being present is to just engage just for a matter of seconds sometimes into the present moment to stop and to pause and to notice. Many of you, if you have had a chance to work with me, or just know me as a person, I say this all the time, that I need to find the pause. I'm constantly trying to find the pause because life will pass us by. I have this experience as a neurodivergent person where I'm constantly mourning the current experience as I'm experiencing it. And it's just this awareness of, you know, the everything is bleeding. But that loses its power and it doesn't make me feel as diminished if I'm able to be present in the moment. So, the idea of being present is just pausing, noticing what's around you and then choosing to meaningfully engage. This is extremely difficult as I mentioned right now because of the pull of screens. We have this need to always be on right now. There's a collective hypervigilance I think across the world about what's happening next because information comes so quickly. When we think about this and looking at this chart and getting ready for this presentation, I was just a little bit shocked and surprised when it came to this. When it looked at the estimates of how many hours we really spend on a day on screens, so like seven plus hours a day for healthcare workers and office-based



jobs. And there is a lot of research to how much this actually links to depression, disruptive sleep, anhedonia and just flattening of our effect. The thing that really pulled me to this topic, truth, truth time, guys. A couple weeks ago, I was in the midst of my doom scroll session, just a regular doom scroll sesh, and I came across a TikTok about zoochosis. And I don't know if you guys know what zoochosis is, but zoochosis is the this phenomenon where like in zoo animals where they start to, animals start to engage in these specific types of behaviors that are a result of captivity. And being in confined spaces and a lack of social interactions and a lack of getting outside. And I started thinking about this. Are human beings in the TikTok even posed this question? Are human beings experiencing zoochosis based on the little box that we put ourselves in because of our pull to screens and the digital obsession for information, all of those things? So, reading through the slide, maybe some of you experience this too, like the phantom phone syndrome, where, I have this all the time, where I put my phone in my back pocket. And another funny thing that I heard the other day was like, remember back in like 1999 when you used to spend money to buy ringtones and now I look at my phone and it's been on silent for the last decade. I think it's so funny, but I think about that that like, oh, I'll feel like this random vibration in my back pocket and I'm like, "Oh, it's my phone." Nope, it's not. It's a phantom phone syndrome. It is. Or the random beep that I think that I hear that's not. A lot of what this does is it exposes that we really do have a lot more social isolation than we used to in the past. So, it presents a really strong case for digital detox. I don't think I have to convince any of you this. Oh, my slides froze a little bit there. Sorry about that. So, there are actual benefits to this. If any of you have kids, I have kids, but I've practiced this digital detox with them. It takes about three days to really start seeing them come out of the fog and the emotional letdown of screen with screen withdrawal all of that. And I think I experienced that too, like when I've gone camping or something like that and had no signal. But then after about 3 days, I'm able to kind of recalibrate and bounce back. You notice that when you do have these digital detoxes, you start being more present. You start being able to see in a very optimistic way the things around you, the beauty of the things around you, or at least that's the hope. You see anxiety reductions, depression reductions, then also boosts in concentration because these little shorts and the little videos that we're all viewing, they really do shorten our attention spans in a lot of ways. It's impossible to think about making these giant changes in our lives. It's not it's not manageable to do that. Our world and our lives are constructed around technology to the point where if you don't ingest some type of technology and use some type of information technology like this that you're going to be behind and we



don't want that to happen. But there are small opportunities where you can unplug intentionally little things like this like the phone free morning. That's one of the ones that I am going to commit to do myself. I instinctively check the weather in the morning and then I check my emails and I check my calendar so I know what's on my day and I need to stop doing that. I need to just allow myself to ease into my day. But screen-free meal times is another one. Taking a 10-minute walk outside without your phone or giving yourself a digital curfew. Pick one of these things to help. You have also really great resources. I've talked about this before with time management. We have great tools within the Microsoft suite that will help us with like setting up focus time, things like that. But you also have settings on your phone. I upgraded and I got sucked into the new, you know, smartphone deal a couple of months ago, free phone, a new contract, all the stuff. But one of the things the new phone has, this new fangled phone has actually a lot of digital diet resources that I'm trying to use like the grayscale mode that you see I talked about here on the left hand side of your screen. App timers, I use that for my kids all the time. I don't want to fight with them about how much Roblox time they might get. You get this much time and then when it shuts off, it shuts off. Like those little things help me to be more present and help me to not be constantly worried and aware of what's going on around me in a negative way. Another thing is example of time boundaries. So like the internet I actually I joke but I have an arrow mesh internet thing system in my house and the internet actually gets shut off at 8:00 p.m. at my house. So, nobody has access to the internet. That includes our TVs. Like, there are smart TVs and all of that. We don't have access to those things. Space boundaries. We have very hard rules. There are no televisions and no screens in bedrooms. I grew up that way. That's the way that I have my house now, but there are no screens or televisions or anything like that in bedrooms. And then with relationships, like the same thing, like put your phone down. That's one thing I'm working really really hard on is making sure that you know when I'm hanging out and spending time just hanging out on the couch with my kids that even if we're both we're all collectively watching a television show I am not looking at my phone or when I'm in consultation with my team you know I'm turning or closing my computer, actively turning away from it to be present because that ping the urgency or the manufactured urgency whatever it might be stop me from being present in 5 minutes of genuine attention and genuine care towards yourself or toward another person or towards an environment can do worlds of difference and make wonderful strides in positive ways if we just force ourselves to be present. So that's your task, that's your challenge for this month. I'm going to say go outside because that is the best way for



me personally to be able to get myself to be present. But go outside without your phone for at least 10 minutes every day for one week. You can do anything. It can be you can actually be doing something like gardening. You could just be sitting there and drinking your coffee. You could be going for a walk. It doesn't matter. The point is to just be where you are mentally, emotionally, and physically as much as possible. And to not intentionally detach by going into another world in your screen. It's about presence and it's about practice. It's not perfection. This is something that we all need to work on. So, if you need some help with that or with anything else when it comes to mental health things, manager consultations, work life resources, any of that stuff, please feel free to reach out to us. We serve all of OSU including main campus, regional campuses, OSU extension offices as well as Wexner Medical Center, ambulatory sites and everything in between. We are happy to help you. Please reach out to us. You can reach out to us via 800-678-6265 or through our online portal. And you can always reach us through the EAP@osumc.edu mailbox as well. That's answered 24/7 by one of us in our [audio ends.]