**How I got rid of my addiction and what I learned from it**

**Step 1: Understand the problem**

The first step to fixing a problem is recognizing there is one. If you’re reading this then you probably, kind of, most likely, definitely use your phone a little too much. But do you *really* know how much you use it? Have you ever counted the hours on average per day? Have you ever checked hon stop w much of your time on your phone is spent on Snapchat, Facebook & Instagram? If not, the first thing I recommend you do is download the app \_\_\_ and track yourself. Fair warning, you might be shocked.

Now look at those hours. Look at them. That is at the very minimum how much free time you have throughout the day. How many times have you said, “I don’t have time”? That’s complete bullshit, and now you know it. You have enough free time to aimlessly surf the web, text meaningless conversations to people, and post all over your social media accounts. That’s okay though, no need to feel guilty, we’re all trying to get over this addiction right? Now delete the app, you won’t need it anymore. By the end of this article, if you follow the steps, you will only ever be on your cellphone when you need to be. Your cell phone will be a tool you use to enhance your days, you will control your cell phone addiciton – not the other way around.

Let’s get started.

**Step 2**

Delete all social media off your phone. What the hell right? Where’s the progression, the slow build up to this big step? There is none. It isn’t going to be easy, and if you shuttered at that first sentence then that’s all the proof you need to show yourself you have a problem.

Now that that’s deleted. There’s a couple things you might notice. The first is that just because it’s deleted off your phone that doesn’t mean you won’t use it. I mean you can just go on facebook/twitter/insta through the web. You’re right, but you can’t go on snapchat through the web. You can’t compare yourself to other people’s highlights anymore. That’s really the most important thing you can get out of this step. To understand that in order to become who you want to become you’re going to need to shut everyone out. And I mean everyone, everyone that you’d be making jealous by posting your night out, and everyone that would make you jealous. Both of these are demons that are stunting your growth. If you’re the kind of person that uses facebook or Instagram more than snapchat, then you are going to need to deactivate those. Whatever is your outlet of choice, delete it.

You’re allowing other peoples experiences and opinions infiltrate your mind to tell you how you should be living your life. You post something and it gets a lot of likes, so you think hmm cool maybe I’ll post more things like this then… Or maybe you’ll post or share something that didn’t receive as much recognition, and you instinctively know that that will be something you avoid sharing from now on. In both these cases you’re suppressing your true expression to satisfy the outside world. There’s a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson where he says, “The hardest thing for a man to is to be himself in a world that’s constantly trying to change him”. He said that over 100 years ago when he was living in the wilderness where he had to wait weeks to get feedbacks on his writing. If that was true for him then, how much more true is it for us now?

**Step 3**

Leave my phone at home entirely. This is what’s the hardest. What I found when I quit social media was that I may have left the need of comparison out of my mind (for the most part), but I never left the need to constantly be in communication with someone. These might not all be vices to you or most people, but they were to me personally, which is why I didn’t want to make a “how to” article.

I found that although social media was gone, I was still constantly messaging people, and my ability to focus really hadn’t gotten significantly better. Yes, it was a step in the right direction but I wasn’t feeling the way I thought I should feel. So, one day, I just thought you know what, I’m not bringing my phone to work today. I work 12 hour shifts, so I’m not going to lie, this scared me. Was I going to feel alone? Wasn’t I going to be bored? What will I do at lunch? Won’t I feel even more out of the loop? And then it hit me, the last thought I had – *Won’t I be more out of the loop?* That’s what I’d been worried about, what I’ve been so afraid of practically all of my life. Being out of the loop. Not knowing what was *in*, being that guy that didn’t know any of the latest music or trends or celebrity gossip. Stuff that truly never really interested me, but I felt like I needed to know it because of FOMO. I had to adjust my interests and my hobbies to make sure I wasn’t missing out. That’s the sickness I needed to get rid of. But how?

I sat there - without my phone thinking, just thinking about what I knew about myself and how to get rid of this problem. I mean it is JUST a problem right? I can solve this problem, I’ve figured harder things out before, right?

This is what I learned. Hopefully it doesn’t come off as some pseudo intellectual BS.

**Step 4**

The first thing I learned was that this major that I was in in college was contributing to my shitty impulses and bad habits. I didn’t enjoy my major; that was no secret to me or the people around me. But that’s okay, because none of my friends really enjoyed their majors. We’re at a top school, we get good internships, we make good money & life is seemingly pretty good, isn’t that enough? No, it isn’t; not when you hate every class you’re in, and every internship you get. You start believing that’s okay though - people constantly praising your “achievements”, and it all gets supplemented by you and your friends encouraging the negative bullshit you all throw around while passing a joint. From the outside the situation looks so good that you start to believe that on the inside it’s all good too.

Why am I saying all this? Well, when you remove yourself from social media, and are essentially alone with your thoughts all day, you get to communicate with yourself. You get to ask yourself questions all day long, get responses, and contemplate those responses. You find out what you really care about, and what you don’t care about. Removed from all the noise, the expectations, and the distractions, there’s nothing stopping you from understanding what it is you want. Eventually the fear of missing out is gone. You don’t care who knows what you’re doing, and you stop caring what other people are doing. You will only compare you to you. And sooner or later you discover *it*, that thing that you want more than anything. You fall in love, so to speak. I don’t necessarily romantic love, though it could be that, what I mean is a passion about something. You’re so focused on what you want that you don’t even think about all that shit that you’re missing out on. And you realize that all those people that you think you’re missing out on, are out there looking for something to love.

Why do you think people go on vacation after graduation? Why do new grads all over the world do some solo trip throughout Europe or Asia? Or go on exchange? The reason most people give is that they’re “finding themselves”? Huh? How does that make any sense? YOU are here, mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally. Every aspect you could ever find out about yourself is where you are right now. The only way to be with yourself however, is through solitude. Solitude in all its forms. Physically alone, and mentally alone. The thing about a cell phone is that regardless of your distance from someone, they’re actually just seconds away from hearing your voice or seeing your face. Unless you block that point of contact entirely for periods at a time you are never never never truly by yourself.