



Maintaining Boundaries in the Use of Technology

Technology has become an increasingly necessary tool in daily life. You use it to do business, manage money, communicate, shop, and so forth. However, sometimes it can feel like technology is managing you, rather than the other way around.

What you can do

Reach out. Don't always rely on electronic communication – make an effort to pick up the phone to talk, or arrange to meet in-person rather than relying on email, texting or chatting. Whether it is a business associate or a family member, human contact is important.

Turn it off. Technology may help you get more done but it doesn't necessarily improve your quality of life. Consider setting aside time each day or each week when you are completely 'unplugged' from all screens and phones. You can use this time to reconnect with friends and family, invest in a new hobby, spend time in your community, and so on.

It's your choice. Remember that how much you choose to engage and accept technology into your life is up to you. Whether you are considering to create a Facebook account, or purchasing the newest products or software, take a moment to step back and decide if you want to make use of the new technology rather than automatically accepting whatever may come along.

Mind your Manners. A whole new etiquette is evolving about when and how technology should be used. Consider the following:

- Be aware of your surroundings. Sometimes people forget they are in a public place and talk loudly and indiscreetly on a mobile phone. Rule of thumb: Try to speak 10 to 20 feet or more away from the closest person.
- When emailing or texting someone in work or more formal situations, write out each word. Don't rely on abbreviations and shortcuts. Not everyone is aware of the new wave of text abbreviations.
- If someone calls you and leaves you a message with a request to call them back, try to honor their request by calling them instead of responding by email.
- Finish conversations and turn off your phone (and remove earpieces) before engaging someone in conversation, stepping up to a service counter, or entering a quiet place.
- Use this saying as your guide: If you can't say it to someone's face, don't say it in an email.
- If you are posting photos of people online, reach out for their consent before doing so. Just because you don't mind having your pictures online doesn't mean that everyone else feels the same way.

For more information about maintaining boundaries with technology, contact your Employee Assistance Program.



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