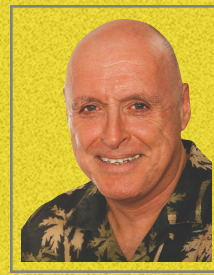


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1676 Can We Get Smarter About Smartphones in 2025?

There has been a lot of information put out in the past year or two that we as a society use our phones too much. It's not just young folks who do this. Experts say that adults also exhibit phone behavior that can only be described as addictive. I'm Jerry Roberts, and today we'll talk about smart ways to cut down on the addiction to smartphones. That's next on the Extra Point.

Be honest, do you reach for your phone first thing in the morning? When your eyes fly open to the start of the new day, is the phone the first thing you go for?

Brad Zicherman is a psychiatrist at Stanford University, specializing in the treatment of children and adolescents. He understands the phone issue very well. Before I tell you what he has to say about the connection teens have to their phones, you might want to stop sipping your coffee, so it doesn't get sprayed around when you hear this.

Zicherman says that working with teens with problematic screen use can be — the coffee is away from your lips, right? — working with teens with problematic screen use can be more challenging than working with teens who have severe opioid use disorders.

He just said that teens with phone disorders are harder to help than those who abuse opioids. Did you take my advice and stop drinking, or is your coffee all over you?

Okay, disclaimer. Not all teens are so addicted, and phones are not to blame. In the hand of someone who knows how to get great value from their phone, while not overusing it, your average smartphone is an amazing tool.

The American Psychiatric Association says that smartphones are the constant companions for many people. They deal with their phone more than they do other human beings. Further, they find those dealings more satisfying than the ones with people.

We could go on but let's toss out a possible solution for parents of kids who are glued to their phones. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that you sit down with your kids and make a family media plan.

The plan must have limits on the number of hours a phone can be used, and specifically when it must be off.

For example, teens love to text after midnight and into the wee hours of the morning. This will destroy sleep patterns, and actually build new sleep habits that could be detrimental to health in the long term.

If your child has to be up at 4:00 a.m. or 6:00 a.m. to get to school, then latenight texting is going to be an issue. Will they fight you over this? Probably. Is it worth it for you to make this a serious issue? Definitely.

Now back to you and going to your phone as soon as you open your eyes. Zicherman says that trying to get an adult to break this habit is just as tough as trying to help smokers quit.

In the case of smoking, psychologists figure out ways to delay the day's first cigarette, and screen use is similar. The longer you can delay the time that you first check your phone in the morning, Zicherman believes you'll end up checking it less throughout the day.

That's a plus for the individual, and a plus for his/her employer. So, will you look to devise a way to be smarter about smartphones in 2025?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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