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## Communication Breakdown

Does anyone know how to talk anymore? Does anyone know how to carry on an intelligent conversation without a technological device? This is something affecting today's youth, however, adults are just as bad, if not worse, evidently leading by example. Technology is great when it is used appropriately; to make our jobs easier; to find and pass along information faster, to get us where we need to go without getting lost. However, the art of holding an actual conversation is being lost. We are connecting to more people (social media), but the communicative exchanges are not as deep as in-person conversations; we are missing body language, hand gestures, facial expressions and voice changes that put emphasis and expression in to the communication. It seems that the no one wants to make eye contact and strike up a discussion.

A recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation indicates that young Americans (ages 8-18) spend more than 7 ½ hours per day on electronic devices, inclusive of smart-phones, televisions, computers and video games. However, a new study by the Nielsen group shows that American adults spend more than 11 hours per day watching, reading, listening to or simply interacting with media. That's up from nine hours, 32 minutes just four years ago. Digital communications can teach certain skills and habits, but face-to-face conversations can teach other skills that are important for overall well-being; a few kind words from someone with a smile, can turn a bad day into a good day and help you forget what made it bad in the first place.



We, a society as a whole, need to unplug more often and



take time for face-to-face conversations with friends and family. It's all about balance...screen time versus people time. The dinner table is great place to start with family; have a "no cell phone/no tablet" policy. Another good time to practice "unplugging" is when you are out with a friend, or co-worker. Show the people you are with that you value their time and company by NOT looking at your phone every 5 minutes. Respect the time, respect the words, and respect each other.

I am as guilty as the next person, checking my phone for emails, text messages and updates, but I also value the importance of the personal connection. Let's talk!



**Email us** topics or specific questions that you would like us to cover.

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The following websites were referenced for this article:

<https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/is-conversation-a-lost-art>

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/people-are-spending-most-of-their-waking-hours-staring-at-screens-2018-08-01>



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