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Happy New Year!

This article is about detoxing – no, not detoxing from over indulging with food and drinks during the festive season (although this might not be a bad idea either) ... but detoxing from social media. Don't think you need it, don't think it affects you, don't think it would make a difference ... well, neither did I ... until I tried it.

And don't forget, our last article was about bringing in the New Year – reflecting on the year that had been, and setting intentions for 2017. [Click here](#) to find out more ... it's not too late to consider what you want this year to hold for you.

Digital Detox ... It's Not Worth It, Is it?

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I think we'd all have to agree that the digital age is something that we can't escape. Whether it's how we communicate with others, how we conduct our business, how we learn, or how we distract ourselves – technology is something that is an integral part of our lives. However, sometimes we need to question (or even experiment) with the idea of 'how much' we need to be plugged in to technology.

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If you asked me a week ago how much of an impact social media was having on my life, I would have answered very truthfully “Not much”. I check Facebook regularly to stay connected with family and friends, and I also use it for work purposes; I’m on other social media to also connect with family and friends; and I also connect with LinkedIn on a regular basis, mostly due to work purposes. Out of all of the programs and platforms available, I think I’m a ‘light’ user of social media. What I was unprepared for though, was the impact even my ‘light’ use of social media was having.

So, what did I learn for myself about using social media?

1. **Social media can make me anxious:**

Before I stepped away from social media for a week, I always felt like I ‘had to check’ what was going on – that I might miss something – that my family and friends would think I didn’t care if I wasn’t commenting or liking. However, I now know that this pressure (yes, self-imposed pressure at that) was making me check my accounts a few times a day, making me worried that I hadn’t done the right thing by others, and ultimately making me anxious.

2. **Social media can take up a lot of time:**

Before I detoxed, I would have said that I only spent ‘a little’ of my day on social media. And while I still think that’s true, I’ve also realised that the ‘little’ of my day can be spent a lot more productively and/or leisurely (connecting with those around me, reading, cooking, exercising, playing board games, watching TV shows, etc).

3. **Social media – I didn’t miss it:** I would have said “Absolutely yes” if someone had asked me whether I would miss social media. But funnily enough, once I wasn’t in the habit of checking digital devices, I didn’t miss the anecdotes, photos, comments, articles, limitless information, and videos – I felt it gave me more space to connect with my actual surroundings, and be more

grateful for what I did have in that present moment.

So, how has it changed what I will do with social media? It wouldn’t make me turn away from social media altogether – as I said, I do use it for work purposes, and to also connect with family and friends. However:

- I will check social media less often
- I will be more mindful of when I check social media to ensure I’m not missing moments to be present, and
- I will work with my fears of missing something or feeling like I’m ignoring others

Would I recommend others doing a digital detox ... absolutely ... even if it’s only to experiment. As I said, I wouldn’t have thought it would have made much of a difference, but I tried it (as I always like to try things that I recommend to others), and it did have its positives.

If you’d like to talk further about how you can detox from technology (or anything else for that matter), or you feel like anxiety, depression, trauma, or other mental health challenges are impacting you and your life, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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