



Timely Information for Personal Success

Outsmart Your Smartphone

By Vickie Milazzo

We love our smartphones. There's no denying it. In fact, we love them so much that we never want to put them down. Most of us constantly check text messages, emails, and the latest Tweets and Facebook updates at all hours of the day, whether we're in a meeting, at lunch with a friend, or just at home in front of the TV.

It's easy to justify our smartphone love. They allow us to stay plugged into what's going on both at the office and at home. They help us organize our schedules, and much more.

But our smartphone obsession comes with a definite downside. It prevents us from making the most of an event because we're texting and emailing the whole time. And we suffer from burnout from always being plugged into work.

Here are some easy steps to take back your life from your smartphone, recover your common sense and rediscover what it means to be productive:

❖ **Turn off cyberspace.** There's no greater blow to productivity than breaking your concentration to reply to an email or text as soon as it hits your smartphone. No award will be handed out at the end of the day for the person who responded the fastest. If you're doing nothing but responding to emails and texts, you're bouncing around like a pinball. It's important to keep in mind that the purpose of email and texts is not to generate *more* email and texts. Unless a response is necessary in order for the sender to move ahead on a task or project, it's OK to let this person have the last word.

❖ **Tame the social media beast.** Smartphone apps make it fun and easier than ever to read our friends' status updates and to see the photos they've posted on Facebook. It makes us feel good when they "like" something we've posted or when we're tagged in one of their photos. That's one reason social media is so addicting – it's like experiencing hugs all day long. Likewise, Twitter can quickly move from social communication to an obsessive compulsive disorder. But remember, Facebook and

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Healthy Recipe: Kale and Potato Soup

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 bunch kale (about one pound)
- 2 pounds potatoes
- 2 quarts boiling water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 157
- Carbohydrates: 35 g.
- Protein: 6 g.
- Sodium: 530 mg.
- Fat: 1 g.
- Saturated fat: 0 g.
- Fiber: 4 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Remove the stems from the kale, wash the leaves and cut them into a chiffonade (shredded leaves). You should have about 6 to 8 cups.
- ➋ Peel the potatoes and chop them up very fine.
- ➌ Bring the water to a boil with the salt. Add the chopped potatoes, return to a boil, and cook for 2 minutes, covered.
- ➍ Add the kale and cook 2 minutes more.
- ➎ Salt and pepper to taste.

Makes 6 servings.

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Questions and Answers

Most Firms Offer Wellness Programs

Q: Do you know how many organizations currently offer some sort of workplace wellness program?

A: Statistics from the American Institute for Preventive Medicine show that 91% of organizations now offer some type of wellness program, a percentage that has risen substantially in the last decade.

Corporate wellness programs have soared in popularity due to their ability to fight high insurance premiums and skyrocketing medical costs. When Johnson & Johnson implemented a four-year wellness program, the company was able to save more than \$8 million per year in health care costs. Another large company, Citibank, found that they recuperated more than \$4 for each dollar they spent on employee wellness programs.

However, statistics also show that these programs go beyond health care savings. Wellness programs also boost employee satisfaction, reduce absenteeism and improve productivity. Research shows that employee wellness programs increase employee loyalty, since employees perceive them as a benefit. These programs also reduce absenteeism by keeping employees healthy so they do not miss work. ■

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Twitter won't be evaluating your work performance and probably can't qualify you for a raise either.

❖ **Turn off the lights and your phone.** More and more of us are using our smartphones as watches and alarm clocks, keeping it plugged in to recharge on the bedside overnight. But as long as your phone is plugged in, so are you. Take a break from your phone. If it's by the bed you'll get those late night calls, tweets and texts that interfere with precious sleep. Unless there's a likelihood of an emergency, we have some rules in our house that we absolutely follow – the first is *no* smartphones in the bedroom.

❖ **Crunch on kale instead of candy.** Games are fun, but *Words with Friends* can wait until after dinner. We have another rule that bans smartphones from the table whether we're at home or in a restaurant with friends or clients. Checking your texts and email during a meal is the social equivalent of picking your nose in public.

Summary

Though it may seem painful at first, by making these changes to your smartphone habits you'll find it can actually become the productivity tool you want it to be instead of a drain on your time and social skills. ■

Vickie L. Milazzo, RN, MSN, JD, is the owner of the Vickie Milazzo Institute and author of "Wicked Success Is Inside Every Woman" (Wiley, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-1181-0052-3, \$21.95, WickedSuccess.com).