



## Timely Information for Personal Success

# Trying an Unplugged Lifestyle

*By Mike Jacquart*

**B**etween Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, and others, there is something simple and straightforward about unplugged albums. Take away the keyboards, LOUD amplifiers, and other instrumentation, and suddenly individual notes, once taken for granted since they were like radar under the surface, once again dominate the sounds of master musicians like these.

It's not unlike how we deciphered the sounds of our less cluttered, unplugged lifestyles before smart phones, tablets, iPads, earbuds, and Bluetooth devices came in to play to bombard the airwaves of our already busy lives.

### **Technology, the Good...**

As I've written before on this blog, I like to think I am not naive to the numerous advantages of today's Information Age. We can "google" something in the blink of an eye, and have access to information that would have likely taken hours to research in a library decades ago.

In terms of communication, we can talk to, listen to, and even see people anytime, anywhere on our smart phones and other digital devices. It's not unusual for me to receive an email from San Diego in the morning, and Beijing, China later in the day. I still revel at that technical advancement. That's clearly part of the plus side.

### **... The Ugly...**

But I would point out, do we ever consider the cost of technology? Does anyone else think it odd

that a family can be seated in a living room with very separate, distinct things going on? Allyson is texting Jamie about tomorrow's volleyball practice. Meanwhile, Mom, earbuds in place, is listening to some of her favorite music. Finally, Dad is relaxing, reading the newest book from his favorite author he just downloaded onto his Kindle.

So what, you might say? Just family life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, right? Perhaps, but when these scenes play out day after day, after day after day... Is this a good thing? Are separate "conversations," while certainly unavoidable at times, a technological "advancement" over Allyson telling her folks about

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## Healthy Recipe: Moist Pumpkin Bread

### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ stick unsalted butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- ½ cup canned pumpkin
- ¼ cup nonfat, plain yogurt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon (each) baking powder, cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon (each) salt, ginger, allspice

### NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 170
- Carbohydrates: 33 g.
- Sodium: 77 mg.
- Fat: 4 g.
- Saturated fat: 2 g.

### DIRECTIONS:

- ❶ Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Spray bread pan with nonstick cooking spray.
- ❷ In a bowl, use electric mixer to beat together the butter and sugar on high speed until smooth. With mixer on low speed, add the egg and combine. Add pumpkin, yogurt, and vanilla, and mix until smooth.
- ❸ In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, ginger, and allspice. Fold mixture into pumpkin mixture and combine until smooth.
- ❹ Pour into prepared pan and place in center of oven. Bake for 45-50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into center comes out clean.

Serving size: 1 slice of bread.

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her big practice tomorrow with the season's biggest volleyball match just days away?

Put another way, most of us have plenty of electronic communication DEVICES but all too often there is little actual *communication* going on. Or, as a friend of mine once told me with a very puzzled look on his face when he found out that I emailed my work colleague, Karen....*Doesn't she sit right across from you?*

#### ... And the BAD

Today's "too plugged in" lifestyle is having adverse effects in today's workplaces as well. A recent survey by CareerBuilder found that more than half (55%) of employers blame mobile phones for decreased productivity. In addition,

more than 80% of workers said they keep their smart phones within eye contact at work, and 66% say the use their phones several times throughout the day.

A study by researchers at Florida State University found that the routine notification of a new text message or email can cause worker performance to drop, even if the person doesn't check his or her phone to see what just arrived! The probability of making an error among employees who received a phone call notification while working increased 28%. With a text notification, the error probability increased only slightly less at 23%.

#### Summary

I am not suggesting how employers and families can go about making their workplaces and homes at least a little less plugged in, I am only saying I think it is imperative that more restrictions are put into place than is the place at present. We need our mobile devices and other technology, sure, but what would be so terrible about living an unplugged lifestyle *more often* – at work or at home? We just *might* find some great notes again underneath all of the heavy drumbeats, and screeching guitar solos. ■

*Mike Jacquart is the editor/publisher of "Employee Assistance Report" and a frequent blogger and LinkedIn contributor. Additional source: Tribune News Service.*

