

YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

Staying mentally healthy in our modern world, Part II

By Dr. Gabrielle Cannick

In our previous feature we discussed the emotional health implications of our “24-7 plugged in” lifestyle. There are huge advantages to technology, to be sure. As a professional my smartphone has become indispensable — enabling me to be more accessible to my patients.

But the experts are warning there are risks associated with this technology. Being aware arms us so we can make informed decisions — and hopefully exert the proper influence on our children. For example, according to research 59% of those age 18 to 34 text while driving. There are studies of compulsive cell phone usage, i.e. constantly checking your phone, resulting in poorer attention inhibiting a person from staying focused and vulnerable to distractions.

There is now a clinical term for a psychological attachment to the cell phone. It's called “nomophobia” (short for no-mobile-phone phobia). Psychologists say that it's affecting more and more young people. Symptoms



Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick

include feelings of panic or desperation when separated from your smartphone, some may even think their phone is ringing when it's not.

Experts do offer recommendations for modifying our behavior to achieve a healthier mental state and fulfilling emotional freedom through more responsible use of cell phone technology. Some are even suggesting we take a “digital sabbatical” — parking our cell phones one day a week. I cannot say I am willing to go this far considering my professional responsibilities. However, if you find yourself checking your cell phone excessively you might do some soul-searching.

Here is practical advice from the experts as you assess your need for and use of your smartphone: (1) Simply turn off your phone at certain times of

the day. For example, during meetings, dinner, playing with your kids, and certainly driving; (2) remove social media apps like Facebook and Twitter from your phone. Use your laptop instead; (3) Try to keep to 15-30 minute intervals for usage at set times of the day so as not to affect your family life; (4) Do not bring your cell phone to bed; (5) focus on healthier things that result in the freedom of not caring about what's going on online and not following your impulses. Alternatives for your time:

- De-clutter your home, your car, your office, or your computer files.
- Start learning something new like cooking or playing a musical instrument.
- Spend time on a hobby you enjoy.
- Practice stillness. Take your time — do something without rushing.
- Exercise, even for a few minutes. If you can't do something more just walk in place to get your heart rate up.
- Read books. Seek out inspiring movies.

Perhaps most important of all rediscover what is increasingly at a premium in our modern world — just being alone with our thoughts. If you have questions, I invite you to call. Think of us as your hometown resource for guidance and support.

Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick is the owner of Grand Oaks Dental, located at 3905 Liberty Highway in Anderson. A strong believer that dental fear and anxiety should not prevent any patient from receiving the highest quality dental care, Dr. Cannick has received extensive training in Sedation Dentistry and is a certified member of the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation. She is also a member of the South Carolina Dental Association, the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry, and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine. For more information about Grand Oaks Dental and the services provided, please call 864-224-0809, or click to grandoaksdental.com or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrandOaksDental>.



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Gabrielle F. Cannick, DMD, PhD
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