



## **Self-Medication: Is Your Hand-Held Device a Dopamine Device?**

Here is a simple activity that may inform you about your personal level of addiction to your digital/electronic devices. Simply print this post, and answer each question according to your personal opinions.

Be sure to complete the meditation activity noted at the end of these questions.

- 1) What is auto-texting? Do you think you suffer from it? Yes or No?
  
- 2) What is auto-texting while driving a vehicle? Do you think you suffer from it? Yes or No?
  
- 3) What is sexting? Do you think you are addicted to it? Yes or No?
  
- 4) On a scale from 0 to 10, rate how lonely or uncomfortable you feel when you are without your hand-held device.
  
- 5) If you answered "yes" to any of these three questions, what insights do you have about your addiction to your hand-held devices?
  
- 6) Have you ever contemplated WHY you must be "on" your hand-held device? What did you come up with for an answer?
  
- 7) Do you think you are using your hand-held device for connectivity with others as self-medication against your unpleasant feelings? Yes or No? Do you know what feelings? - depression, anxiety, fear, loneliness, or other?

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8) MEDITATION ON YOUR DEVICE - Please do this meditation activity.

Shut OFF your hand-held dopamine device, and sit with it in front of you. Allow the device to serve as your object of meditation. Just sit and observe it. Be sure it is off. When your mind wanders off onto another thought, simply bring your attention (pure awareness) back to your device. Notice if you work hard at just sitting looking at your device. Clock how long you can just sit observing your device without any attempt to turn it ON to use it. Notice if this is difficult for you. Score (from 0 to 100) how difficult it is for you to sit (looking at your device) for at least 20 minutes without turning it ON or USING it. A higher score (over 50) implies that you may be addicted to your device. Another way to consider your level of addiction is to see HOW LONG you can just sit and look at your device without turning it on, doing something else, or using it. If you cannot do this for at least 20 minutes, you may be addicted to the device.

9) How do you feel now that you may know the extent of your addiction to your hand-held device? Some people experience such a strong addiction that they seek professional help from licensed helpers with expertise in habitual behavior.

*May you be mindful;*

*May you be more calm;*

*May you be healthier;*

*May you be happier; and,*

*May you live with more joy and less suffering.*

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