

UNPLAG FROM STRESS, RETURN TO YOUR “True North”

2019-02-28



Mind

Every year, The National Day of Unplugging is additional opportunity for people to put down their devices and focus on what really matters in their lives. Mindfulness expert Julie Potiker invites us all to use the following four tips to do just that:



**TURN OFF
CELL PHONES**

Take a Technology Holiday

Power off your phone, leave your television and computer screens off and give yourself the gift of some quiet, reflective time. You may want to write in a journal, take a walk in nature, or spend some quality time with people you love. However, you spend this time, experience it fully without turning on your tech. Get grounded into the experience of being fully present in your body and your life.



Drop Down

Take some time alone and allow yourself to drop down into your current emotional state and see what's there, not judging it but simply observing it with curiosity. This is the heart of what mindfulness is all about. It takes practice, but pretty soon you will be able to tune in to your body and notice what's happening inside you.

Self-Soothe

Evidence shows that putting your hand over your heart — or wherever you most find it soothing — taps into the body's mammalian caregiver response and releases oxytocin and opiates in your brain to counteract cortisol, the stress hormone. Try different spots out on yourself and see what works best for you.

Practice Loving Kindness on Yourself

Ask yourself what you really need to hear right now. Do you need to be told you are loved? Safe? Healthy? Strong? Whatever you most need to hear right now, create a Loving Kindness phrase and repeat it as a mantra to yourself. You can do this in seated meditation, but you can also do it on a walk, in the car, at the office, in line at the DMV, or anywhere else you need to. Try this out next time you feel stressed and see how much it helps.

"If a whole day unplugged seems daunting," says Julie, "how about a three-hour time block? And as for not watching TV, if you are watching a heartwarming movie or funny TV series — stories that fill you up with joy, not stress — there's no need to unplug from that. That's where discernment comes in! I advocate unplugging from the TV if you are a news junky, but not if you feel like watching 'When Harry Met Sally' again."

About Julie Potiker:



Author and mindfulness expert Julie Potiker is an attorney who began her serious study and investigation of mindfulness after graduating from the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program at the University of California, San Diego. She was trained by Kristin Neff, Christopher Germer, and UCSD as a Mindful Self-Compassion Teacher. She went on to study with Rick Hanson, becoming a graduate of his Positive Neuroplasticity Training Professional Course. Potiker also completed Brené Brown's Living Brave Semester. Now, she shares these and other mindfulness techniques with the world through her Mindful Methods for Life training and her new book "Life Falls Apart, but You Don't Have To: Mindful Methods for Staying Calm In the Midst of Chaos." She holds a B.G.S. from the University of Michigan and a J.D. from George Washington University. For more information, visit www.MindfulMethodsForLife.com.

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