Wise Words from Wellbeing

Facebook Syndrome: 9 Ways to Beat Your Facebook Addiction

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Myspace... the list is endless. Millions of us are hooked. With our attention span changing and our interests shrinking, can this addictive behavior be beaten? The answer is yes. The following article will give you some simple and concrete ways to change your habits!

How to tell if you are an internet addict
Before we start you need to find out if you are an addicted to Facebook some signs like:

1. You are late for school because you are on Facebook
If you ever late for school or a commitment because you were checking your updates on Facebook or watching a related video on Youtube then you know you are addicted. This is classic addict behavior.

2. You think about it when you are offline
I have several friends who struggle to get to sleep because they are thinking about the latest game or wondering how their website statistics are looking. If you do this then it could be a sign that you are heading towards a problem.

3. Your friends and family comment on your excessive internet use
When other people around you start to notice that you have a problem it is generally a pretty accurate indicator that you are losing it. If your mates, coworkers or family members have made comments about how much you use the net then you need to read the rest of this post. You may even get a bit aggressive about it and be withdrawing?

4. You check your accounts from your mobile phone
A phone is a talking tool. It is supposed to allow you to text and make calls. It is not for checking Facebook or Myspace updates while you are having dinner with a friend.

5. You get stressed when a Facebook “friend” doesn’t add you
Have you noticed yourself getting stressed over something that has happened on Facebook or Myspace? Do you ever feel like your online life is more real than your offline life? If you have been stressed about what rapper you turned out as or what magic egg someone sent you then it is time to open your eyes.

Ok – where to from here?
You’ve established that you have a problem you need to get yourself some recovery tools. The strategies listed are some simple ways you can beat the Facebook Syndrome.

1. Admit that you have a problem
I want you to take a deep breath and then repeat after me. Seriously, repeat this out a loud – even if you are at school or in a public place.

“I have an internet addiction problem.”

Good. Now that you have acknowledged your problem we can proceed. There is no point in trying to beat an addiction if you do not seriously believe that you have one. This is important.

2. Write down exactly how much time you spend on each site
At the end of the day add up how much time you have been on your chosen site and record it in a little book. This info gives you a solid measure of how serious your addiction is. You need to write down your Facebook hours! After a few days, weeks and months this number should decrease.

3. Give yourself a set time of the day to visit
We need to realise that spending time on these sites is not a bad thing. With the right amounts it can be a lot of fun and even quite healthy. However, if you start to notice that your school assignment is still not done because you have been watching a friend’s skit on Youtube all night then it has gone beyond a joke. Banning your addiction outright often leads to a Facebook relapse. We don’t want this. Give yourself some set times to visit and don’t break the limits.
4. Turn off email notifications
Email notifications are like annoying reminders begging you to come back and visit Facebook. Turn them off. You don’t need to be notified every time someone sends you a message. Use the telephone! Turn off email reminders so you can get on with your work.

6. Leave your mobile at home or locked up somewhere!
Having a phone on you at all times is just a tempter to make your check your Facebook inbox every 5 seconds! Face it; shouldn’t you be attending to what’s going in right there and then?

7. Meditate as soon as the thought arises
One of the most powerful ways to beat Facebook Syndrome is to look directly at the tempting thought as soon as it arises in your mind. You do not need to judge it or try to push it out – just look at it. The thought might arise as a worrying thought that begs you to check your updates so you don’t offend anyone. Or it might appear as a carefree thought saying that one quick look won’t hurt. Whatever it arises as the meditation is to just look at it. Over time the power of the thought will be get smaller and smaller!

7. Get off the MAC!!!
Really… do you need to spend that much time on the mac? Honestly ask yourself that. Instead of getting home, grabbing the mac and checking your updates you could go for a walk, hit the gym or go and see a movie. There is so much more to do in life than watch your hatching egg grow. Really there is. Turn your MAC off at a certain time each night, have some family time 😊

8. Write down what you used to do before Facebook
Something that can be really useful to do is write down a list of things that you used to do before you got addicted to Facebook or Myspace. For example, some people might write, “I used to meet people in person,” “play sport”! Try and reconnect with what you used to do before these sites became such a big part of your life. You will be surprised to see how your time has been freed up! You will feel healthier, happier spending quality “REAL” time with people you care about!

9. Block the sites the REAL way
Your computer allows you to block certain sites. Sure, you can unblock them straight away if you wanted to but the more barriers you put in your way the better. TO seriously block these sites from your computer you can do it the REAL way:

For Windows systems

Click START and then select RUN. In that box type notepad c:\WINDOWS\system32\drivers\etc\hosts. A neat little Notepad will appear with a bunch of computer jargon on it. Scroll down to the last line of that code and type 127.0.0.1 facebook.com. After that Facebook will never show up on your PC again. You can substitute the domain for any other domain that you do not want to view.

For Mac systems follow the prompts from this link

http://www.proginosko.com/leechblock.html

If what you have read has concerned you, please contact wellbeing, the IT team at Galen or speak with a health care professional.

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