

My Frenemy

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I am pretty sure most of the audience here has a smartphone. Right now, while you are listening to me, it's in your pocket, on your table, or in your hand, You might trust it more than anyone because it knows how to contact your families and friends; it helps you receive your emails and messages; it navigates you when you get lost, it wakes you up in the morning, and it helps you to set your schedule. Maybe because of these functions, many of us heavily depend on our smartphones and keep them in an always-on-call state.

Have you ever heard Smartphone Compulsion Test?

I tried this test just for fun. Here is the result. According to the score, you can see that I have a phone addiction and need to see a specialist. It is very scary, right? Although it is not an official diagnosis, I consider it a warning sign. We all know that this issue has become a social problem today. According to a survey on Smartphone Dependence conducted by the MMD Research Institute, about 80% of the respondents said they were aware of their dependence on smartphones. Still, they felt it difficult to quit their bad phone habits. I was one of those who compulsively check their smartphones.

Let me share one of my stories from last winter. On a typical school day, I found I had left my smartphone at home when I had just arrived at school. I felt uncomfortable and anxious about not having my smartphone with me. I could not stop thinking about how many messages I might receive or missing some important calls or emails. To ease my anxiety, I rushed home and got my phone back by bicycle during the lunch break. It turned out no one had contacted me. I got my phone and felt safe, but I was not happy at all. I hated myself. My obsessive relationship with the smartphone made me miserable. I felt the smartphone was my enemy because it was manipulating me.

That incident helped me rethink my phone problem and step into a balanced relationship with my phone. I started to become conscious while using my phone. I believe there are a lot of strategies for limiting our screen time. I am cultivating my own way of avoiding overusing the phone. Such as getting rid of some distracting apps, reducing time for scrolling social media, turning it off before going to bed, and trying to listen to my friends carefully without checking my phone. I could let it go if I left my phone at home. I might not be fully qualified to say I am a mindful phone user, but I am adjusting the relationship with my phone step by step.

However, in some ways, I have a good relationship with my smartphone; In under a minute, I can say happy birthday to a friend or ask my classmates about an assignment. As a language learner, I have made friends in Taiwan and Vietnam using smartphone communities, and I can keep in touch with old friends I had lost contact with.

Finally, I would like to conclude my presentation with the word 'moderation.'

Kurumi Sato - 2
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The smartphone is our friend if we use it mindfully. But, on the other hand, if we own it obsessively, it will resist us and become our enemy. So how do you define your relationship with your phone? If it is still in your hand now, I think it's time to give your phone a rest and let yourself be totally in the present. Thank you for listening.