

CONFESSIONS OF AN APPAHOLIC

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Texas Eagle Forum Devotionals (#TEFDevo)

What would you do if you took a month to completely unplug? No screens. Not a movie, a TV episode, a quick Facebook scroll or an Insta-story. For a solid month. Could you do it?

For as long as I can remember, my family has made it a point to do exactly that during the month of August. Growing up, my friends mourned with me as August approached. As an adult, most look at me strangely when I attempt to explain why I disappear from social media for so long.

Even as I write this, I am on day 14 of our month turned off. And it is glorious.

The first week is torture.

I delete all of my apps that would tempt me to distract myself and I find my thumb hovering over a spot where an icon should be. After those first days, I start to notice a few more details in my interactions that amuse me and I find I am no longer looking for a way to phrase my “noticings” to humor the few hundred followers I have accumulated on Instagram.

Halfway through, I might check into Facebook to make sure I hadn’t missed a message, only to realize that the noise and clamor of political posts, those weird quizzes to find out what herb you are, and videos of people trying to smear lipstick all over their faces no longer holds as much entertainment as it did a few weeks before. *(No offence, lippies. I’m sure your product is still fabulous.)*



It is in this time I reflect on the changes in my life since deleting my apps, turning off my notifications, and generally avoiding the mindless distraction that is so readily available.

AND HERE IS WHAT I FOUND:

1. I feel infinitely more creative – Given back the time no longer wasted away on my phone, I am looking for more outlets of productivity. I built a bookcase, bought a set of watercolors, and have actually written more like I said I would ‘if only I had more time’.
2. I am more focused – Not at first. The initial struggle of not falling into old habits is a tedious battle. The weekends are even harder. No Netflix binging or Twitter Trolling for this girl. Instead, I sit to read the book I bought at the beginning of the year and organize my planner for the upcoming semester of grad school.
3. I am more intentional with my friendships – I may not know what they ate for lunch or what funny little thing their toddler said. I might miss an engagement announcement or an occasional invitation. But the connections that bring me life are given the opportunity to be poured into and shaped into something no Facebook post could accomplish. The other night, I had an hour-long conversation with my fourteen and twelve year old brothers about leadership and bravery. We got out the book of Joshua and counted the number of times the Lord told Joshua to be strong and courageous.
4. I pray more – There is nothing I love more by the end of August than paying attention to the little changes in my relationship with my Heavenly Father. Inevitably, He uses this time to help me process the previous months and prepare for those ahead. I spend more time reading and memorizing scripture and watching it impact my decisions and relationships. My prayers are less drive-

thru demanding and more five-course dine-in satisfying.



And all of those changes are what make September so hard. As long as it is August, I have a compelling reason to stay “disconnected”. But the first days of September are a tussle between the side of me that wants to pull a Kuzco and boom-baby my way back onto social media and the side that is desperate to hold onto what August brought me.

By the end of the month my life is not extraordinarily different. Only exceptionally fuller, purposed, and peaceful.

I promised myself I would not end this with a challenge for you to do the same thing I do. You wouldn't have the exact same experience anyway. But I will attempt to summarize my thoughts with this:

Our world is full and the noise can be overwhelming, and the stillness we long to have even briefly is harder than ever to find. Tragedy, celebration, and victory will all come in waves but fighting to clear the air and settle our souls is a worthy endeavor.

Appropriately paraphrased in The Message, Psalm 46:10 says:

“Attention, all! See the marvels of God! He plants flowers and trees all over the earth, Bans war from pole to pole, breaks all the weapons across his knee. ‘Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything.’”

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