

#109: Detaching from Social Media



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With Your Host

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Hey, you all, I'm Marissa McKool, and you're listening to the *Redefining Rest Podcast for Public Health Professionals*. Here we believe rest is your right. You don't have to earn it, you just have to learn how to take it and I'm going to teach you. Ready? Come along.

Hello everyone and good morning. Now, I don't know if it's morning where you are but it's morning here. I'm actually recording quite a bit earlier than I normally do. My partner, Jared, and I both work from home remotely. So sometimes it's hard to get quiet time. He's on calls or making meals or our dog is running about. So he actually went to the gym early this morning, so I was like, "I'm going to record, I'm going to get this done while it's quiet." Hopefully, I can wrap this up before he gets home.

So it's quite a bit earlier actually than I normally record or even start work. But it feels good, it rained last night, and it has that after rain smell. I don't know if you know what I'm talking about, but I love that smell. And it's a little foggy, overcast, misty which reminds me a lot of when I used to live in the Bay Area and we'd take trips to Jenner, California, Bodega Bay, Carmel. I just love that feeling. Listen, I love all beaches but I especially love, take me to an overcast cliff, rocky beach. I am so happy. I know that's not everyone's vibe, but I love it.

There is something to me that is just so relaxing and just, I don't know, if you get me you get me. Please message me on LinkedIn or Instagram and let me know. I'd love to hear if any of you feel similarly, I need to find my people in that sense. But anyways, let's get into it. This might be a tad bit longer than normal episodes or typical episodes, but I promise, I promise it's worth it.

Yeah, and also if you're new here, welcome. I'm so glad you're here. Maybe a friend shared this with you, a colleague. Maybe you found it on LinkedIn, wherever you heard of this podcast that brought you here, I'm so happy. Just want to remind you to subscribe. I always forget to subscribe to

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new podcasts I'm listening to. And then it's hard to find and I don't want you to have to deal with that headache.

So make sure you hit that subscribe button, so you don't miss any episodes and you don't kind of lose this in your Apple Podcasts or Spotify or wherever because that tends to happen unfortunately if you don't subscribe. So make sure to do that.

So you all, I believe, know what social media is. They are different platforms online to connect and share. And there are many benefits to these platforms which I'll share in a minute. And of course there are many downsides to them. Just like anything else in life, social media is not perfect and has some flaws, but it also has some good components too. So I'm not here to say that social media is the root of all evil. I'm also not here to sugarcoat or move past the actual real concerns of it, both exist. And we can live in that complexity. We can talk through that complexity.

But today the purpose of this episode and what I'm going to share is what it means to detach from social media. And I really spent a long time trying to figure out what to name this podcast episode from calling it a Social Media Detox to Taking a Break From Social Media or all the other different ways we talk about social media. And really what I'm going to talk through applies to any of those. So if you have been wanting to delete your social media or have a detox or take a break, this episode will help you, I promise, because in order to do any of those things you do have to detach.

And I'll share my definition, how I think about it. And I'm also going to talk about how to know if you would benefit from doing this. And also why it feels so hard, why it feels so hard to detach from social media or take a break or 'detox,' if you want to think about it that way. I'm also going to share how not to do a social media detox or a break or detachment and how to do it. And then the positive outcomes or what you might experience

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the benefits from reducing your social media and really changing your relationship with it.

And all of what I'm sharing with you is coming from firsthand experience. I have spent years, I will tell you, years in this struggle, push and pull with social media. And I have tried probably almost, not all but almost everything out there to feel better about it, to have a different relationship. From deleting the apps completely to giving myself a time limit and setting a timer to putting my phone in another room. Literally you name it, I've tried it. I've coached myself on it and actually last year, it's 2023 so in 2022 I worked on this a lot with my one-on-one coach.

And I coach so many women in public health who also struggle with this for different reasons which I'll get into in a minute. But I finally feel like I'm in such a good place with it. I've gone on such a journey. I've made a lot of mistakes which I'm going to share, kind of what not to do today so you don't have to go through those same mistakes and had a lot of successes. And now I have a much healthier relationship with social media. It's not perfect and I still fall into the social media traps, but that's okay. It will never be perfect. That's not the point, that's not the purpose.

But my relationship with social media now is one where I feel not drained by it and I feel in control. I direct it. I'm not thrown around by it. And we'll talk about kind of that urge you feel to constantly be on social media or check it. And I know I can help you create the same experience. Now, I want to be really transparent here. For some of you listening to this one episode, might really help you do this work, and it might change very quickly.

For me, it took me, I mean when I really think about really working on it through the ways I'm talking about today on this episode it took me at least a year, if not more. Now, I'm not saying that to discourage you. Your experience might be different. It might not take that long but for me it really

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did. And I just want to be clear and transparent. But it's so worth the time and the work and the effort to do this, I promise you, it's so worth it.

Because you go from a place where you feel like social media's kind of in control of you, you are constantly looking at your phone. You're constantly comparing yourself. When you try to take a break from it you feel this urge that you have to check it. That does not feel good. That feels like you're out of control to a place where you're in control, you're empowered, it doesn't have a pull on you, you are really in charge. It feels so, so much better and it has such huge impacts on your life. So I promise you, it's so worth it.

But your journey might look a little different than mine and that's okay. So first, what does it mean to detach from social media? Or what does a social media detox mean? Or some people call it a cleanse or a break. To me these are all the same thing even if in practice people do them differently because the purpose is to really change your experience of social media. So for me how I like to think about it is less focused on if you're taking a break or if you're permanently eliminating it or how long is a break or if you're 'detoxing' from it.

For me it's more about adjusting and changing your relationship to social media. I think a lot of people, when you Google, advice for, there's articles or podcasts or news specials on social media and reducing your use. A lot of it focuses on either completely stopping your use of it or putting boundaries or limits on it. But I actually don't think that gets to the root of it. I think it's really more about assessing and realigning your engagement with social media and your relationship on the whole, long term.

Deciding on purpose how you want to use it, why and when, in a way that you feel in control of how you use social media. You don't feel controlled by social media. Where having social media if you choose to adds to your life, doesn't take away from it, doesn't drain you of your energy, your mental capacity, your confidence. And social media isn't all bad. There are several

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ways social media has really helped us either as a community or individuals.

For many people it's about keeping in touch with family and friends. I know my sister who spent, I don't know, a couple of years traveling the world. All of the people she's met on her travels she keeps in touch with through social media and that's really important to her. For some of us it's staying updated on current events either just local events to your city or big events, what's happening nationally or in the world. It can help us stay connected with various communities, some of which, depending on where you live, might be hard to connect to in real life.

Maybe you live in a rural area and the online queer community has really helped you feel connected, where you might not have access to that in person based on where you live. For a lot of people, it helps stay engaged or connected with advocacy efforts. If you are really big in advocating for disability rights, online communities can really help keep you informed and engaged and connected. And even advocacy does, there's a lot of people who say posting on social media, social media advocacy doesn't do anything. I don't think that's true.

Obviously there is a point in which, okay, we've got to get out there in person and really change our behaviors and make things happen. But obviously things that start on social media or grow on social media do have an impact and they may kind of light a fire under in-person action. So they do matter. Anyways that's a little tangent, we'll come back to the point. Social media lets us learn new information.

Maybe you start following accounts that talk about the impacts of fat phobia, what it is, what fat activism is, things you might really not learn otherwise depending on your circumstances or who your social group is. For some folks, I had a client who, she told me she used it as a personal

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memory board, her pictures she posted, it was her memory board, which I love that. I love that idea.

And there is, of course, many, many other ways it's had a positive impact on people or communities. But of course, it can also be a source of a lot of emotional and energy drain. And there are other negative effects or impacts that I'm not going to cover today. I'm not going to go into cyber bullying for teens and all this other stuff. Of course those exist. But today I really want to talk about in the context of how social media can really drain you and get in your way of feeling rested, having energy and capacity. So that's kind of where I'm narrowing in.

But I want you to know, I am aware there are many other kind of negative impacts. We're just not going fully there today. So here are some of the ways social media gets in the way of really living the life you want to intentionally, having the energy and the confidence to do so. We can waste so much time on social media. I'll get more into that in a second. Reading negative posts or comments even if they're not on your posts.

Sometimes I go onto the comments section of someone else's post. And some of the things people say or even just follow a lot of local news accounts on Instagram to stay informed of what's going on in our community. And you read the comments and some of them are so negative and that has an impact. We end up comparing ourselves to others because everyone's posting the best version of their life. And many people are doing it with editing their photos or filters so the visual even looks different.

A lot of times it gets in our way of being present because we're constantly on our phone and we're more connected online and disconnected from those around you in real life. There are also some specific ways this impacts your experience at work, ability to get work done and your confidence about yourself. And I'm going to talk about some of the ways I've seen this happen for folks in public health.

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So here's what I want you to do. I want you to listen to these examples and just check in with yourself to see if you've had any of these experiences. There's no need to blame yourself or feel shame. I have been through these. All of these I'm describing, these next examples I've lived them and many, many other people do. It's a very common experience so it's not shame or blame on you. It's just good to have awareness first like, okay, am I having some of this? And if so, it might be time to realign your relationship with social media.

So first example, you might be using social media to avoid your emotions, whether it's conscious or not. You feel anxious about a meeting. Maybe you aren't even aware the emotion you're feeling is anxious. All you know is all of a sudden you're on social media, instead of preparing for it, you're scrolling Instagram or TikTok, which ironically makes you less prepared for the meeting because that time has gone, that time you could be using to prepare.

Or maybe you feel embarrassed about a mistake you made at work and your brain wants to constantly remind you of it. And say really mean things to you about it and replay it in your head. And you don't want to experience that. And maybe this is all happening very fast and unconsciously but if you slowed it down that's what would be happening. So you find yourself instead of being present, watching TV with your partner or just at the dinner table, you're on your cell phone or watching YouTube.

Because if you weren't, if you weren't distracting with social media you'd be feeling that embarrassment and you're trying to avoid it. Or another example, you use it to avoid your actual work. You feel dread about a project and instead of working on the project you check social media throughout the day. You end up jumping between one task to checking email, to checking social media to another task to avoid doing work but also to still feel productive because your brain's going to be a jerk to you if you don't do anything.

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Another example is you use it actually to try to feel better, the opposite of avoiding an emotion, you do it to try to generate emotion. So instead of processing your emotions, instead of really sitting with maybe it's the embarrassment or rejection or some other feeling, you go to social media to get validation, to feel better. To get a hit of dopamine when you see someone liked your photo or commented on your LinkedIn post or you post a story to get responses to feel connected, to feel better.

Another one is that you end up comparing yourself to others. I have had so many clients who tell me they scroll LinkedIn, and they just feel terrible about themselves, or they avoid LinkedIn altogether. Because they see it and they see what other people are doing and posting and they think I should be farther along in my career. Look at what they're doing. I haven't accomplished anything. That's amazing. I wish I could do that. What's wrong with me, I should be farther along.

Or you're on Instagram and you see other people post pictures of them and their partner and you think, wow, everyone is so much happier in their relationship than me, something must be wrong in my relationship. You start to compare yourself to others as you compare yourself in work context, in relationships, as a parent, as a mom, in so many other ways. You compare your body or how much you're working out. And intellectually many of us know that a lot of these photos or posts aren't showing the full picture of someone's life, what they're experiencing.

We all post kind of the best parts of our life. Now, I try really hard to be conscious of that and post real life things, like when I'm sad I share what's going on or when I've made a mistake. That is really important to me especially as I talk through creating a rested life and coaching and what that really looks like rather than just painting a picture of perfectionism and everything's perfect sunshine and rainbows because that will never be the case. And there are a lot of other people who do that too.

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LinkedIn, I'm actually seeing a lot more people post and talk about the other side of life where things are challenging, where you're really struggling, or things aren't perfect but not everyone does that. So even though intellectually you know most of social media, a lot of it at least is putting out the best version of ourselves. Emotionally you do start to compare yourself. You do start to feel bad.

Here's the last two examples. You find yourself constantly opening up social media on your phone. You're waiting in the doctor's office and you're scrolling your phone. You're at your kid's game and they're on break and you're scrolling your phone. You wake up in the morning and you grab your phone and scroll. It becomes such a habit. Sometimes you don't even realize how much time you spend on your phone.

And then if you have an Apple phone, I don't know if androids do this, but Sundays you get a summary, time spent. And then you're like, "Oh, shit, I've spent four, five, even six hours a day on my phone." And then you start to feel bad, embarrassed. You want to detox, put your phone away. The other one is you feel so much more drained after social media. And this can be more subtle and nuanced, but I promise you, once you start doing kind of the work of detaching you'll notice it a lot more.

Maybe you get into a TikTok hole or spend three hours watching YouTube. Hello, I have done both of those things. I actually spent two hours last night watching YouTube. Again, this still happens, it's okay. But then you get off and you're mentally drained. You aren't as present. You don't enjoy other things as much. And I'll talk about why that happens in a little more detail in a second. But listen, if any of these, you're like, "Oh shit, that's me," that's okay. We are all in this together. We have all been there, including me.

Like I said I find myself watching YouTube to avoid my feelings or to feel better. There are some people I follow on YouTube who I find so funny and I go watch them when I need a laugh. Sometimes I distract by scrolling

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Instagram when I'm avoiding my work, millions of people do, which is why Facebook and TikTok and all those platforms make so much money. You're not alone.

It doesn't mean something is wrong with you, you should feel shame, it's okay. But it also doesn't mean it's serving you. You can have a better relationship and experience with social media. Let's talk quickly about why it feels so hard to change your relationship with social media. Some of this you might already know but a refresher always helps. And for some of you this might be brand new information.

So first you have to understand how social media was designed. And there's a lot of books and documentaries on this which you can go check out because they talk in a lot more detail than this, than what I'm going to. Some of them are more matter of fact. And I just want to give you a heads up, some of them are a little more fear based approach. So just so you know, going into it.

But just in brief summary, these apps were designed to keep you on them. Because even if your goal using them is to connect with friends, the ultimate goal of these apps is to make money. Even if the apps have other goals, they do want to connect people. Their bottom line is to make more money. The longer you're on the app, the more money they make. They make their money from ads. For some of you, the longer you're on the apps, depending on the app, the more you buy from those apps.

Again this isn't necessarily always a bad thing. There's pros and cons to this like anything else. And we won't get into the pros and cons of that. But it's important to understand that the apps are designed and continue to operate with the goal of keeping you on there. And the apps were designed specifically, the technology to keep your brain receiving dopamine from being on the app, meaning you actually have a physiological response, and

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your brain wants to keep having that response. So you keep coming back to that.

Now, dopamine responses aren't bad. You have one when you eat a delicious piece of cake and that's not a problem. The problem is, if then you decide, your brain's like, "I need to have that experience all the time." And then you decide you're going to eat that cake for every single meal. That's a problem because you're missing other nutrients. After a while, fruit doesn't taste as good because it's not as sweet as the artificial sugar in the cake. Get what I mean? A piece of delicious cake isn't inherently bad.

The problem and how it affects your life if you start eating that cake for every meal and you're not eating your veggies or your grains or your fruit or having balanced meals, same thing with social media. Changing your relationship with social media can help you in several ways. And I was really thinking about what are some of the most impactful ways it has helped me and my clients.

So the first I want to talk about is being more present, whether that's being present with your kids and actually listening or sitting on your porch and enjoying the weather. That's been one of the best pieces for me, is, I used to immediately be on social media in the morning. Now I leave my phone in the bedroom and I go sit on my porch and have my coffee and just sit there and I'm present and I love it but that didn't happen overnight. There was a period where that took some time because my brain's like, "Get your phone, get your phone, get your phone," which we'll talk about more a little bit later.

The other piece is getting outside more or moving your body more. Seriously, readjusting your relationship with social media helps you get out of the house more. And for many of us who work from home full-time who struggle with getting out of the house, this is such a huge benefit. It can

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help you stick to your goals if it's working out consistently or going on walks more.

Because you aren't draining your energy or time scrolling and because when you have all that time back when you're not scrolling constantly, you're like, "What do I do with this time?" I've really been wanting to walk more or it's really nice out or now I can go to that workout class. I know it sounds ridiculous but it's so true. If you really calculate how much time we spend on social media a week, it's a lot. And we could use that time for a lot of other things. And even though social media is a way to learn, when you change your relationship to it and you're not on it as much, you get to learn in other ways.

For me I started reading books way more, not just books but I love archeology, I love history. And my mom sends me her old Smithsonian magazines. I've been reading those a lot more. I've been reaching for those before bed instead of my phone or maybe you watch documentaries or listen to podcasts. There's a lot of other ways that you start to learn, it's not just social media. You also get to feel more connected in person, to actually connect to partners or friends or new neighbors or even strangers in the grocery store.

Or for me, as some of you know I have recently moved to Denver. I'm trying to make new friends. I'm on the Bumble Make Friends app, which is a form of social media. But because I've changed my relationship I am really more conscious about, okay, if we have a connection let's go get coffee. I'm not just stuck swiping and scrolling, I'm like, "No, let's take action." I don't need this app forever. I'd be happy to get my group of friends and then be able to delete this app.

You also get to be less swayed or impacted by other people's opinions, not just online but in person too. And your brain becomes less judgmental, both of other people and yourself overall. When you're constantly comparing

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yourself to others online, you then judge yourself whether you're intentionally doing it or not. And then you're priming your brain to do the same in real life too, when you look in the mirror, when you talk to someone at work in the office.

When you distance yourself and change your relationship to social media this happens in person. You distance yourself from the judging. In your brain you distance yourself from self-judgment or judging others. You also get to make decisions from true desire. There are so many ways in which social media prompts us to have FOMO or to feel like we want something or need something that deep down we might not. Rather than making an impulse to purchase something, to do something that might be prompted from social media, whether that's seeing an ad, or an influencer promote something and then feeling FOMO or comparison.

You get to make decisions based on what your true desire is. Would I really have fun with this? Would I really enjoy this? Do I really need this? What sounds good? Where do I want to prioritize? You also save so much time, seriously, so, so much time. So many of you, so many folks I talk to in public health the number one thing they want to do is have more time. This is a way that you can get more time without your boss changing, without getting more staff at work, honestly even without your to-do list changing.

You change your relationship with social media and you're not on it as much, you get so much time back it's ridiculous. And you can use that time to start that new hobby. I just signed up for a ceramics class or get back into working out or getting up earlier or going to bed earlier or reading more or whatever you want. You get to use that time however you want. You get to feel in more control of your life rather than social media controlling you.

Remember how we talked about social media was designed to keep you on it. That's why you feel an actual physical urge to reach for your phone to open that app. That urge, that physiological urge feels like it controls you.

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But when you change your relationship to social media you don't have to have that urge anymore and it doesn't have to control you if it still shows up. You also get your work done quicker and more efficiently. You aren't ping-ponging between a task and checking social media. You're staying focused and not distracted.

You're not using social media to avoid your work, which means you get your work done quicker, which again saves you time and reduces your stress and reduces your workload. You don't have to stay late to catch up. You don't always feel like you're behind. You're less likely to make mistakes and your work is higher quality because you're focused and you're not ping-ponging between social media and your work. You also save money, seriously, it reduces your online shopping both from social media ads but overall.

How many times have you seen someone talk about something whether they're an influencer or not and then you've Googled it and bought it and then later you're like, "I don't really use this, or this doesn't really work or this doesn't fit my needs." You save money.

And the last one, overall you're just on your phone less. You spend all day on your computer most of you, not all but most of you, especially if you work from home full or part-time. When you change your relationship with social media it reduces your overall phone use or screen time, which is so important. How many of you have been on the computer for eight hours a day and you feel like your eyeballs are falling out, like your brain's going to just melt out of your head? It feels foggy and tense and you know it's just from staring at the computer.

It does not help to then spend two/three hours in the morning or evening being on your phone looking at social media. It doesn't help that experience. And here's another thing I've noticed. Once you change your relationship with social media you actually change your relationship with

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your whole smartphone because you don't have the urge to constantly grab your phone and avoid life with any app.

When I started doing this work I found it was so fascinating that maybe I wasn't reaching for Instagram, but I was like, "I still need to scroll my phone so let me look at Zillow, let me look at Pinterest, let me look at something else." That's not really serving you. That's not giving you these results, these changes because you're still on your phone, you're still staring at a screen. And in some ways you're still on an app that might have these same outcomes that you don't want to have, like wasting time, not being present.

Okay, so now that you know all the benefits to changing your relationship to social media, let's talk about how not to do it. These are the most common strategies you see when you're Googling this topic. And I'm going to share why you should not use these to start. I'm specifically talking about don't use them to start this journey of changing your relationship. Down the line once you have a different relationship, once you've detached, if you decide on purpose with intention that you want to do any of these things and you like your reasons and it's not coming from a panic, fear based, get this away from me place, totally, go for it.

But when you're starting out with changing your relationship with social media, these approaches will not work. So the first strategy you often see is to delete any apps for good, permanently or set a timeframe. I used to try this. I used to delete Instagram for a month. Some of you might have tried this. Oftentimes this comes from a fear based or shame based place, which doesn't feel good. And actually it doesn't address, deleting the app doesn't address that shame or fear you feel.

And doing this to start doesn't help you create a more balanced relationship especially if you're deleting it for a month or a couple of months because you'll get back on the app and it might feel good at first. You might feel able

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to have boundaries and have space and not always be on it at first. But eventually you will get back to that place where you always need to be on it or you're always comparing because you haven't actually addressed what's causing those challenges just by deleting the app. It doesn't magically make your brain not react to the dopamine of social media.

The other strategy I hear a lot is set timers or leave your phone in the other room. And there are even apps to do this too and actually I think either the iPhone or Instagram has a timer option you can put on. Here is the problem with using this to start. It's not going to address that urge your body feels to reach for your phone to be on social media because your brain has been trained to get a dopamine hit from these apps. Setting a timer doesn't make that experience go away. It's more like restriction, that approach rather than changing your relationship.

It's like food restriction, if you say that you can't have sugar, your brain thinks about sugar way more often. It wants it way more. It's likely to binge it when you 'allow yourself to have it' especially if you go 'cold turkey' and just cut it out. Same thing with doing that with social media.

The last one I see, which really irks me to be quite honest, is replace scrolling social media with something else. This absolutely doesn't address your physiological urge that social media has created because you're just getting on your phone and recreating it just on a different app. But also it continues to train your brain to want to be on your phone instead of being present. You're continuing to look at a screen, to grab your phone, to waste time, to drain your energy.

Some of these strategies, if you want to use them later on, once you have really worked on your urge, your physiological response, once you are detached, totally, go for it because that can be a totally different experience. The biggest problems with these strategies to start with is they don't address that physiological urge. They promote continuing to be on

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your phone. They don't deal with kind of the root of the challenge. That's why so many of you and this was me too, have tried these over and over and it hasn't really actually resolved the core issue.

And then you just try to keep being more restrictive and use these avoidance strategies and it doesn't feel good. That's the other thing. It does not feel good, and you don't actually get to experience all those benefits I already listed out.

Here is how to start detaching from social media, how to detox if you prefer to use that word. There are two main things you need to do, the first is eliminate the shame you feel, the second is reduce your urge. So eliminating your shame, many of us make the fact that we use social media or how much we use it, we make it mean something about ourselves. But using social media doesn't mean something is wrong with you or that you are vain.

Some of you right now, when you're on social media or when you're thinking about deleting it, you're telling yourself, I shouldn't be on it, what's wrong with me, I should be able to control this, and you feel shame. And that shame shuts you down. It doesn't help you problem solve. It doesn't help you feel motivated. Doesn't help you feel confident or better in any way. And these apps are designed for you to actually have that physiological response, where your brain wants that dopamine hit.

It doesn't mean something is wrong with you, just means the apps, what they were designed to do, they're doing that. Now, you can change that, but it doesn't mean anything's wrong with you. Trying to change your relationship to social media while feeling shame will never work, while telling yourself, I shouldn't be on here, something's wrong with me, this is ruining my life. Why is everyone else can do it, all that stuff. There is nothing wrong with you for being on social media or using it.

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Doesn't mean anything about your ability or value or capacity or intellect or anything else. There's nothing wrong with you for how much you use social media. Using social media, being on it for hours is not a moral issue. Now, listen closely, of course, there is a benefit that you might want or experience when you're not on social media. That is not the same as believing it's a moral issue because it's not. Being on social media eight hours a day does not mean you're lazy or incapable, it doesn't, that's an optional thought.

There's no fact in the universe. I know it sounds counterintuitive, but you fully have to allow yourself and give yourself full permission to use social media all you want in whatever way without feeling shame. That's the first step and I know that sounds crazy but is so, so important. This was actually the turning point for me. My coach coached me on this, and this is what we coached on, and it was really hard for me to see because I was so in the belief that something was wrong with me, that I should feel terrible about how much I'm on social media and how much I use it.

And we coached around you're not a terrible person, it means nothing about you. What if you just let yourself be on there as much as you want and you didn't make it a problem, you didn't make it mean anything about you, you didn't judge yourself for it? And that truly was such a turning point for me when I did that work because right now so many of you are on social media feeling shame and judging yourself for being on social media.

And if you try to change your behavior from this place of self-judgment and shame you will use restrictive approaches, which won't address that physiological urge. And you won't feel better. You have to really see and believe first that social media it not a moral issue. And when I say a moral issue, I'm not talking about the social media as an organization, as a business, as a capitalistic promoter or moral, not that piece. I'm talking about you.

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It doesn't mean anything about your morality, how worthy you are, how valuable you are, whether you're a good or bad person. How much you use social media doesn't mean anything about you. That is step one. You really have to drop the self-judgment and the shame and see that doesn't mean anything about you. Because if you try to change your experience from shame and judgment you're just going to feel worse and it's not going to work.

Then the second piece is addressing that physiological urge you feel to be on social media. Again, not from a shame place, not from judgment, from knowing you can be on social media every single day and it doesn't mean anything about you as a person. But choosing, I want to have a different experience, I know I can be on there and I'm not making it mean anything about me. I know it doesn't mean that I'm a bad person, but I just don't want to.

Your body currently experiences a sensation that feels like an urge to be on or check social media, it's like a pull. For me it was like part of it is your brain just thinking about it, check, check, check, whether it's conscious or not. But part of it, there is a physical physiological pull, a sensation. And that's because of how social media was designed, to release that dopamine hit in your brain. What you need to do is actually allow that physical urge without reacting to it.

Don't resist it, resist it often looks like restriction. Resist it looks like I'm going to put my phone in the other room. Or telling yourself, I shouldn't do this, I can't be on this and that judgment piece. That's not what I'm talking about. Allowing the urge, it's just noticing it, noticing the sensations in your body, naming them. What does it feel like? What's the sensation? Where is it showing up? And then not reacting to it means not acting on it. You can let those physical sensations be there whether it's a pull in your chest, a knot in your stomach, without grabbing your phone.

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You can notice that tightness in your stomach while you type an email. You can notice that pull in your chest while you eat dinner. Sit with those sensations in your body, allow them to be there and choose not to grab the phone, not from a restriction place like I can't. This is also why it's so important to do that eliminating shame work first because if you don't then when you're trying to allow the urge, what will happen is you will go to judgment and shaming yourself, to get yourself, to resist and to not be on social media.

And that doesn't feel good and that doesn't work in the long term. When you've let go of the shame and self-judgment you can practice noticing the sensations in your body and choosing not to grab your phone. And doing this and practicing this over and over reduces the intensity of the urge and the frequency of it, I promise you. And once you do this you can decide on purpose with intention how you do want to engage with social media moving forward. And listen, this is not about perfection.

You will not perfectly allow all urges. I still don't and I've moved through the phase of self-judgment and shame and let that go. And I've done the work on allowing the urge, the really intense urge at the beginning when you're doing this work. Urges still come up for me. For the most part I can allow them. They used to be such a big deal. I wish I could explain better. It was like gravity pulling me to the ground, that's what it felt like. Now, they come up and doesn't feel like that at all. It just feels like a little ping, hey, I'm here. And then I'm just like, "Okay, cool."

Sometimes I act on it, and I grab the phone from the urge. It's not about being perfect and you might actually still have some shaming thoughts. That's okay too. As you're working on letting go of the shame, those thoughts might still come up. You don't have to believe them. You don't have to attach them. This is a practice, an ongoing practice. For some of you it might take a few months, for others like me it might take a good year, even more than a year, it all depends, but it is so, so worth it.

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Truly you get connected more to yourself. You're more present in your life. You feel in control of your time. You are driving the car rather than social media driving it for you and being like, "Hey, get in, sucker." Social media doesn't feel like it controls you anymore, you get to decide. I mean it literally impacts your time, your money, your work quality, your relationship with family, your decisions, so many things, it's so, so worth it.

But you do have to go through the phases of eliminating letting go of self-shame and self-judgment and practicing allowing urges, which for many of you is a whole new skill. No one's ever taught you how to do this. It might feel hard at first and that's okay. It can take some time and some practice because it is a skill.

And if you want help with it, if you're struggling you can always reach out to me, message me on LinkedIn, or Instagram or email me. I'm happy, happy to connect with you and help you. But with that, I'm going to let you sit with this for the week. The only thing I ask, if you have a friend or a colleague who you've heard say things like, "I really need to get rid of social media," or, "I think I'm going to do a social media cleanse," or something along those lines. I want you to think of that person, who is it? Who is someone in your life has recently said that?

I want you to send them this episode because it's really going to help them achieve the ultimate goal they want which is having more time, which is feeling better, but provide them a structure, a way to do it that addresses the root kind of problem or challenges and has long term impacts and is sustainable. So I want you to think of that person, send them this episode. And for you, if you are that person you might need to listen to this episode again, that's okay.

Actually one of the things you can do which one of my clients recently did. She told me this week and I was like, "That's such a good idea." She said she listened but then she printed out the transcripts. For those of you who

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don't know, I always have transcripts of my episodes on my website. She printed it out and she highlighted and took notes, which I thought was such a good idea because the way we learn while listening is slightly different from the way we learn while reading.

So you actually will kind of get additional learning or impacts from doing it both ways. It's actually a researched and proven kind of learning technique to both listen and read as far as absorbing information. So that's also something you can do. This is a process, this takes work. I have been through it too, but so, so, so worth it. Alright, you all, there is my sermon for today on detaching from social media. I hope this was helpful. If you have questions, reach out. With that, have a great, great, great week. I'll talk to you all next week. Bye everyone.

If you found this episode helpful then you have to check out my coaching program where I provide you individualized support to create a life centered around rest. Head on over to mckoolcoaching.com, that's M-C-K-O-O-L coaching.com to learn more.