Love in the Time of Twitter

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A recent Pew Study found

- Nearly three to one Americans
- "the main purpose of marriage is the mutual happiness and fulfillment of adults rather than the bearing and raising of children."

National Center for Policy Analysis

- Nearly half of 20–somethings are willing to abolish marriage
- 45% agree government should not be involved in licensing marriage
- 43% believe cohabiting couples should have same benefits as marrieds
- Only 16% believe main purpose of marriage is to raise children

Other than breathing

- We spend more time streaming input than any other activity.

Poll #1

How much time do you spend
on social media per day?
- less than an hour
-1 -3 hours
- 3-5 hours
-5-7 hours
- 7 or more hoursf

Facebook facts

- Avid users spend two hours a day on the site
- While they are at work!
- That 1.5% of productivity going to Facebook

Not just for kids…

- 60% of social network users are over 40

Wait a minute…

- Doesn't the social media help us stay in contact?

The people who fare best…

- young or old, are those who use online relationships to support those that exist face to face.

Loneliness and the social media

⬆ Lonely people are more sensitive to

Attention

Inattention

Being left out

Having fewer friends and contacts

Threats

Gossip

Teasing

Bullying

Predators

Poll #2

What percentage of your clients are lonely or have social anxiety?

-Less than 10%

- 10%-25%

- 25%-50%

- 50% - 75%

- 75% - 100%

Social media research study

- Vulnerability traits such as loneliness and social anxiety
    - Make you a sitting duck for online media
    - More likely to use social networking compulsively
    - Use it to regulate mood
    - Compulsive cycle is reinforced

Most people won't suffer

- from a couple hours a day plugged in.
- Might even get them off the couch

But if you bring any compulsivity (1 in 50 adults do)…

- The instant gratification can make the hours grow quickly.

Technology accelerates

- *compulsivity*

Technology

- Accelerates and exacerbates emotions

New Rules

- The proliferation of technology calls for
  - Awareness of the seductive nature of stimulation
  - Emotional regulation
  - Early detection of core value violations

Why is technology so seductive?

- Proximity
- Stimulation
- Connection
- Business opportunities
- Efficiency
- Equality
- Convenient
- Portable
- False sense of anonymity

Why????

- do we need to regulate our use?

- How serious is it!

Poll #3

Do your clients complain about their significant others spending too much time on social media?

-Often

- Sometimes

- Never

What's wrong with it?

- *"Don't burst my bubble."*

Here…

- But not hear.

"Why this one?"

- Decision making satisfaction
  - 1 out of 2 versus
  - 1 out of 50

Seeking a...

- Bright
- Young
- Rich
- Brilliant
- Athletic
- Entrepreneurial

- Multi-lingual
- Kind
- Supportive

Parental

Sensitive

Funny

Lactose tolerant

Vegan, who all my friends like

who will love me unconditionally while

I continue to find

myself and explore

lifestyle options.

MESA-Mechanically Enhanced Sexual Addiction

- Stimulating nature of technology alters the sexual set point in the brain.

- Secrecy excites the brain

- Forbidden nature increases thrill

- Fear of getting caught raises excitement

- Current stimulation becomes the norm.

Patrick Carnes, et al. research

- Use of online porn
  - Will escalate in use
  - Lowers attraction for current partner
  - Lowers interest in other forms of sex
  - Increases guilt and resentment toward partner
  - Lowers partner's self esteem
  - Increases probability behavior will escalate
  - Increases probability user will act out in person

Contact via technology is

- Affordable

- Accessible

- Anonymous (can be)

- Addictive (can be)

Distress can be detected with:

- Patterns

- Perseveration

- Pain

Patterns

- Reaching for phone during every spare minute.
- Being conditioned to respond to the "ding"
- Sleeping near your phone/computer
- Hiding the amount of time you spend
- Hiding contacts
- Communicating with co-workers after hours
- Getting personal intimacy needs met through work communication

Perseveration

- Using technology in inappropriate places
- Checking the phone/computer automatically
- Loosing track of time
- Thinking about using when you are not using
- Imbalance of cyber versus face to face relationship time
- Becoming anxious when separated from technology
- Expanding time on URL versus IRL

Pain

- Avoiding important activities to be plugged in
- Cheating with time or money
- Inappropriate relationships
- Lying about use
- Using technology in ways that violate your core values
- Using technology in ways you would not want known to others

Stimulation dependency

- *"It feels so good."*
- *"I feel alive."*
- *"Everything else is boring."*

Pleasure versus happiness

- **Pleasure is for now.**
- You only feel good when the chocolate cookie is in your mouth.
- Pleasure exhausts itself in the moment
- Pleasure is most often about need gratification
- Gratification beyond needs creates craving
- Need displacement creates craving
- Which leads to compulsivity

- **Happiness is forever**

Effect of technology on relationships

- *"Keep your thumbs still while I am talking to you!"*

Poll #4

How many of you have had clients who have separated over this issue or talk of separating over this issue?

American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

- 2/3 said internet played a significant role in divorces
- Excessive interest in online porn contribute to more than half of divorce cases

Pornography

- Had an almost non-existent role in divorce just seven or eight years ago.

Businessweek:
Porn use on the job

- 44% on the job site
- 40% working at home
- 59% university workers

More than 30% of 1500 companies surveyed

- Have terminated employees for inappropriate use of the internet.

Poll #5

How many of you have had a client
lose a job over Internet use?

42% of surveyed adults indicated

- Their partner's use of pornography made them feel insecure.

How serious is this?

- Eighty percent of couples who divorce and separate say:

- *"We grew apart."*

Number one cause of growing apart

- Withdrawing your interest and your energy.

Poll #6

How many of you have known couples who have grown apart over Internet use?

New Rules

- The social media and the danger it holds for committed relationships calls for more honesty and transparency throughout the family system.

New Rules

- The social media and the danger it holds for committed relationships calls for emotional regulation related to stimulation and use of technology.

Emotional regulation

- Is the ability to choose a positive response at any given time

- Is the ability to regulate the use of technology in order to enhance your lifestyle and support your core values

- Is respecting limits regarding your interest and your energy

Love in the time of twitter

- Calls for:
  - Core value living, i.e.
  - Knowing who you are
  - Deepening your connection
  - Living in community
  - Using your talents in meaningful work
  - Living out the purpose of your life

Thank you!

- Pat Love, Ed.D., www.patlove.com, pat@patlove.com
- *Never Be Lonely Again*
- *How to Improve Your Marriage Without Talking About It*
- *The Truth About Love*
- *Hot Monogamy*
- *The Emotional Incest Syndrome: What to Do When a Parent's Love Rules Your Life*
- *Love: What Everyone Needs to Know*
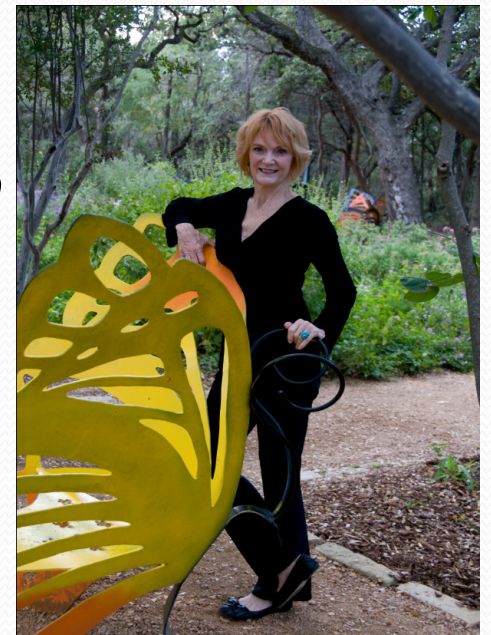
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Love in the Time of Twitter: Keeping Relationships Strong in the Age of Social Media
Tuesday, September 20, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM PDT
Learn more or register here -
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Suicide: What Therapists Need to Know (CE)

Thursday, September 8, 2011

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Dr. Donald Meichenbaum

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and Comorbid Disorders: A Life-Span Approach (CE)
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Innovative Approach to Treating Depression (CE)

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