

Keeping Relationships Strong in the Age of Social Media



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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 hours

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.



Poll #2

Do you ever feel lonely
or get anxious in social situations?

- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

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

Most people won't suffer

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



Plus, technology is here to stay.

- There's no going back...



But if you bring any compulsivity into technology use (1 in 50 adults do)...

- The instant gratification make the hours evaporate.



In addition, technology

- Accelerates and exacerbates emotions



Internet disinhibition effect

- We are meaner in cyberspace.





Poll #3

Do you feel either you or your significant other spend too much time on social media?

Changing landscape of fidelity

- Is sexting cheating?
- Recent survey=65% of women and 80% of men say they would cheat if they knew they wouldn't get caught.
- “Is it reasonable to expect one person to fulfill your every need, sexual or otherwise, through decades of marriage?”
- “Is cybersex really about narcissism?”
- “How far will it go?”

After TweetCongress formed

- Congressional Tweets went down by 28%!



New Rules

- Greater proliferation of the internet calls for
 - Awareness of the seductive nature of stimulation
 - Personal monitoring
 - Greater sensitivity
 - More civility
 - 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

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
 - The tyranny of choice





Poll #4

Have you started a relationship
over social media?

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)



Poll #5

Do you think you have
an addictive personality?

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

- *“I have to do it or be left out.”*
- *“It feels good.”*
- *“I feel alive.”*
- *“Everything else is boring.”*
- *“What else is there to do?”*

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 #6

Have you lost a relationship over either you or your partner's use of social media?

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.



42% of surveyed adults indicated

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

Disaster alert!

- As hurricane Irene prepares to batter the east coast, federal disaster officials have warned that internet outages may force people to interact with other people for the first time in years. Residents are bracing themselves for the horror of awkward silences and unwanted eye contact. FEMA has advised (be prepared!) to write down possible topics in advance, e.g. sports, weather. Stay calm, remember: conversations are basically a series of facebook updates strung together. You can do it!

How serious is this?

- Eighty percent of couples who divorce and separate say:
- *“We grew apart.”*





Poll #6

Have you known couples who have grown apart over Internet use?

- My relationship
 - Friends
 - Family
 - No one

How much time do you spend

- in your own world?



Number one cause of growing apart

- Withdrawing your interest and your energy.



Focusing your interest and energy

- Partner focus versus self focus
- Honoring differences
 - Male coping strategies versus female coping strategies

New Rules

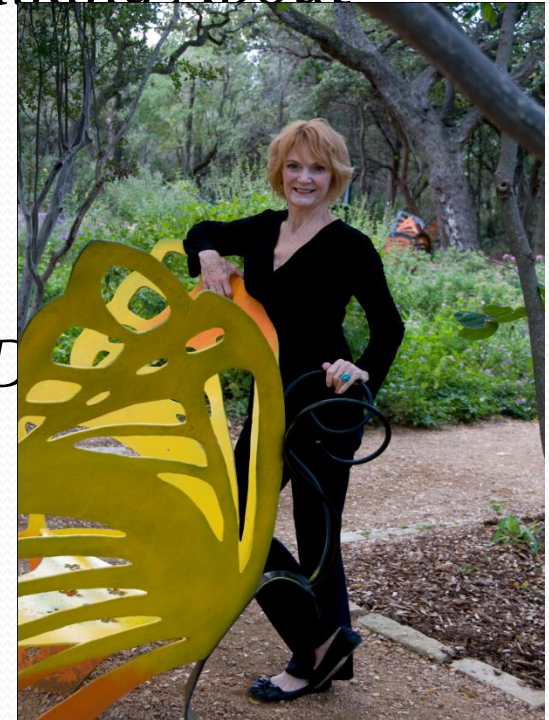
- The social media and the danger it holds for committed relationships calls for more honesty and transparency throughout the family system.

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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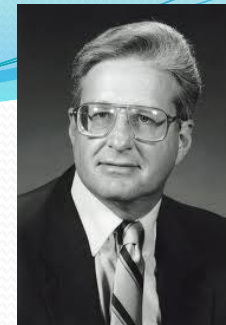
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