



Respect Your Elders

Muriel Owen, Sophomore
Reporter



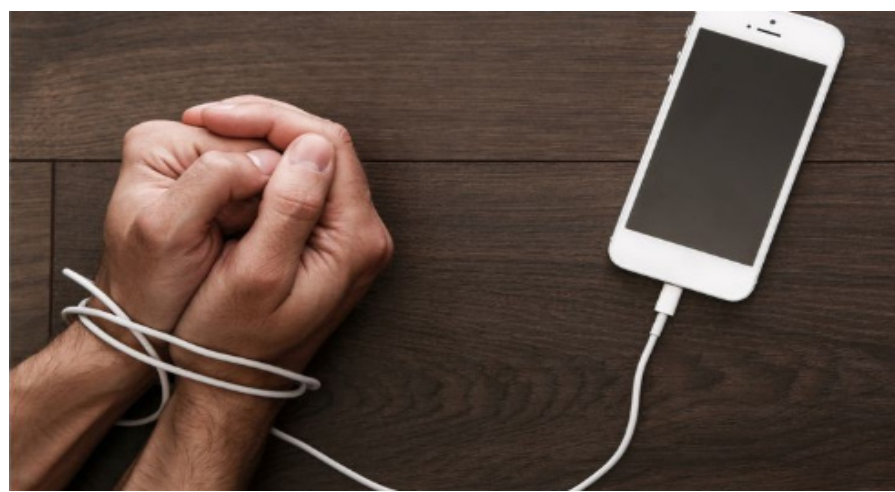
and why I follow them blindly. I have seen how this seemingly virtuous value has been twisted and has silenced our youth.

According to Merriam-Webster, respect is "to have due regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions of someone or something." We all have wishes and rights that we would like to have respected, because otherwise they vanish and mean nothing if nobody else acknowledges that they exist. However, I have found that when the youth of today are expected to respect those who are older than them, this concept becomes a one-way street. As a sixteen-year-old, I am expected to honor and have due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of anyone who is older. Yet, those who are older than me are not pressured by society to honor my feelings, wishes, or rights. It is acceptable for them to disregard my opinions, ignore my requests, and treat me as if I am mere scum on their shoe. This power dynamic creates a world in which we, the youth of today, are taught to sit still and look pretty, and don't question your elders for it would be disrespectful. It suppresses our creativity and our curiosity. It kills our ideas.

I understand that respect for people is necessary to allow for an environment in which people can speak their minds and feel that they are heard. I understand that when you are a child, although you may disagree with your parents about your curfew or certain restrictions placed on your freedom, that those rules they create should be recognized and followed. What I do not understand is why there is such an emphasis placed on respecting one's elders, when I find that the emphasis should be placed on respect for all. I want to change this one-way street that encourages those who blindly follow and agree with what they are told simply to fit a mold. I want respect that is reciprocated, no matter one's age, religion, race, gender, ethnicity, or any other category that is used to define a person. As Bryant H. McGill has said, "one of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say." So elders and youth alike, please listen to one another and show respect, but don't give up your values to do so.

Smartphones Rule Your Life

Lily Morgan, Junior
Reporter



Recently, I've been thinking a lot about the way modern technology, specifically my cell phone, has completely altered my life.

A few weeks ago, I heard the students in my advisory talking about the new IOS update and their daily "screen time." I was intrigued. I usually don't update my phone because I just don't care enough to do so. However, I wanted the new feature in order to find out how much time I spend on my phone, so I got the update.

Every Sunday, I get a report on the average daily time I spent on my phone for the week. I thought that I was somebody who didn't use my phone very much—I try not to use it when I'm at school, or doing homework, or hanging out with people. I've had screen time enabled for two weeks now; last week, my daily average was 49 minutes, and this week it was an hour and 16 minutes. An hour and 16 minutes. Granted, that is a lot lower than some of my friends' daily averages, which can reach up to six hours a day. But that still means that I spend a little under nine hours on my phone every week. Nine hours! That's nineteen days a year spent scrolling mindlessly through Instagram and sending ugly photos to my friends on Snapchat.

I was young when smartphones filtered into the mainstream. I remember standing inside Village School on a rainy Halloween in sixth grade when a boy pulled out his iPhone 3G and began discussing the failings of its design. Two years earlier, I was waiting to say goodbye to my teacher for the day when I spotted a classmate playing Temple Run on her iPhone. I remember when my parents got smartphones for the first time, matching blue and red androids with a single game each that we took turns whittling away our time on, trying desperately to just get the stupid ball through the goal! I got my first smartphone on my thirteenth birthday, a white iPhone 5C with a lifeproof case and a lifelong contract with Smartphones-Rule-Your-Life-Now, Inc.

Ever since that birthday in 2015, my iPhone has changed my daily life. A week ago, I would have told you that smart technology had simplified my life; communication is fast, easy, and accessible; everything any man or woman has ever known is two thumb-presses away; I can keep tabs on every person I have ever known, and every person I have never known, with a search of their name and twenty minutes to spare.

But I've been deliberating, and now I'm not sure what I would say.

In English a few weeks ago, we read "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For" from Thoreau's *Walden*, where he expresses his concerns about the new technology of his time: the railroad. He claims that innovation works only to complicate our lives, and that "we do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us." Now, I'm not dissing railroads—I personally enjoy being able to leave the small pocket of the world that is Marblehead. But I agree with Thoreau that modern innovation has complicated our lives.

With easy access to all of my friends, I am expected to talk to them constantly. With research sources at my fingertips, I'm expected to be able to learn everything. I have to keep up my image on social media, keep up with the influx of news, keep up with my homework when I miss a day of school, keep up with the incessant, monotonous, useless stream of pop culture references, keep up keep up keep up.

And while I'm doing all of this keeping up, I am wasting precious time that I could be doing something else, something useful, something that I love.

In 2016, Common Sense Media conducted a survey where they asked kids and parents about their mobile device usage. 50 percent of teenagers responded that they thought they were addicted to their cell phones, and 59 percent of parents thought their teenagers were addicted to their phones. After learning this, I took an online quiz (reliable, I know) that swore to psychoanalyze me and my smartphone use; it told me that I should consult a psychologist to cure my behavioral addiction.

So what am I going to do about it? Well, for starters, I have set time limits on my phone; I have a 25 minute daily limit for social media and a five hour downtime from 3:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. I've also—as ridiculous as it sounds—been moving my phone farther and farther from my bed at night. The third step in my not-very-well-thought-out plan is to leave my phone home tomorrow while I'm at school. For seven hours. Will I survive? Will I have behavioral withdrawals (if that's even a thing)? Or will I have the best, most productive day I've had in four years?

I encourage you to take a moment out of your day and analyze your cell phone usage. Dig up the root of your technology addiction and eliminate it. If you spend the most time on social media, delete it. If you spend the most time on YouTube, find a hobby to do instead. If you check the Aspen family portal 45 times a day, stop worrying about your grades and take a nap, for God's sake. Join me on my journey to a life without cell phone addiction, and stop letting the railroad of innovation trample you.

Rest Your Mind

Kristy Twaalfhoven, Senior
Reporter

There's a plague going around the high school, and it's not pretty. Everyone seems to have the sniffles, a cough, a sore throat, or a headache. Last weekend, I was struck with the plague, feeling fluey and fatigued. As an extremely active person, sitting in bed all day is not my cup of tea. So, as I sat in bed drinking a cup of theraflu, irritated and impatient, I wondered how I might have avoided the plague. I wash my hands, sleep enough, exercise, and eat well. And yes, it's not easy to stay healthy when sick germs are everywhere in school. But, is there more to the picture?

When my mom came in to take my temperature, I couldn't help but shed some tears of frustration. She asked what hurt—throat, stomach, head—and I explained that I just felt somehow overcome with exhaustion. "Does your mind hurt?" she asked. Hm. That's a new one. Pondering the question, I paused. That's when I realized that I could hardly think straight. There were a million thoughts buzzing through my head every second. It was like my brain had been clogged up. Suddenly enlightened as to my condition, I responded "Yes. My mind hurts."

Being sick is typically associated with physical disturbances because our body feels rotten. So when we fall sick, we focus on resting our body. But what about our minds? They need rest, too! As my mom told me that day, don't think about the past, the future, or even the present; don't think about anything at all! Meditation can be helpful in doing so, but it all begins with giving ourselves permission to let go. Allow the brain to forget everything for the moment. Simply rest. My experience last weekend showed me that a rested mind is key to staying healthy. The moment I decided to let go, I felt so much better. I stopped resisting my bedridden condition, realizing that I owed it to my mind to take a pause. Like any muscle in our body, our mind has limitations and can only work so hard. So, like one would to a strained, overworked muscle, allow the mind to rest.

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