

How One Woman Broke Her Addiction to Social Media

"Mom, I think you like your computer more than you like your family." Ellie stood in front of me—and my computer—fists on her hips and waiting for eye contact.

"Oh sweetheart, that is not true! Of course I like you better!" I responded defensively.

"No mom. You spend more time playing with your computer than you spend with us."

I reached for the top of my laptop and slowly began to lower it in an attempt to close the computer. However, I was in the middle of reading a blog post, or an email, or some status update on Facebook, or checking stats on my blog, or something, or anything, or absolutely nothing. Still, it took all the willpower in me to close that screen instead of finishing whatever it was I was doing at a time.

Someday, I will be begging for Ellie's time and it will be too late if I don't change this. I have to be present if I want to be a part of my girls' lives. They are more important. I don't ever want to regret this. Not ever.

"You know what Ellie; I think that I should not be on the computer from the time you come home from school until the time you go to bed." I finally said.

"Really?" Ellie's sweet and excited voice was accompanied by a big smile.

"I will try my best."

It is not easy

I didn't anticipate for it to be this hard. Like a drug addict going through withdrawal I find myself constantly standing by my computer. "I can check my email really quick; it will only take a couple of minutes." I know it only takes "a couple of minutes" for me to be lost behind the screen. A couple of minutes soon become another afternoon spent with my online friends rather than the family I love and actually get to do real life with.

That is the hardest part. I have exchanged real relationships for those that take place through a computer monitor. I chose to do "virtual" life rather than real life. It makes no sense, absolutely no sense at all. Especially when my family is the one I sacrifice. Ironically, it is my family that I love the most and they are the ones that really matter in my life.

The seriousness of it all

I have an addiction, and it is damaging my real relationships just as much as if I were an alcoholic or a drug addict. I have become an absent mother and wife, all for the sake of social media.

Recently, a friend of mine posted on her Facebook page (Yeah, ironic, isn't it?) a link that tells you the average time you spend online each day. She was brave to have her number displayed on her Facebook wall. Do I want to know? I was already struggling to keep my afternoons free of my computer; did I really want to know the seriousness of my little addiction? So I clicked on the link and the number broke me. The result of "9.8 hours a day" was not only embarrassing, but also shameful, because I could no longer deny that I sold my life to social media and I didn't even realize it. **So I am taking my life back!**

Those results are what led me to write this post, because I

told you I would be real. But also, because now I have more people to keep me accountable. Because I know that this is a real problem easily dismissed because “everyone else is doing it” but the pull of this media-saturated-culture is so strong that it is destroying our relationships. I cannot sit back behind the screen and do nothing about it. I have to take ownership of my time, of my life, and the gifts that God has given to me.

I do not know if you struggle with this or not, but if you do, we can stand together. We can take ownership of our life and get it back. We can become present to the people we love and care for. It will be hard, it will be really hard. The temptation is only a click away. But it will be worth it, so incredibly, absolutely, and completely worth it. Time to stop living behind a screen, and start living life to the full.

*Adapted from **Ellen Stumbo's** blog at . Ellen is a pastor's wife and she writes about finding beauty in brokenness with gritty honesty and openness. She is passionate about sharing the real – sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly – aspects of faith, parenting, special needs, and adoption. She has been published in Focus on the Family, LifeWay, MomSense, Not Alone, and Mamapedia among others.*