

What We're Missing in a Wi-Fi World

I don't know about you, but I am a major night dreamer. I also often wake up in the early hours of the morning, and God speaks to me.

One of these times as I was making my way through our dark bedroom so as to not wake up Kathy, God spoke to me. I wasn't expecting what He was about to say, and it still sits soberly with me to this day.

He said, "You're not present. You're always thinking about yesterday or tomorrow. When you're with someone, you're thinking about being with someone else."

Now you have to understand that often God disciplines me, but this felt different. It didn't feel as though the tone of His voice was to discipline, but rather that He was deeply grieved. He continued, "Every day I have planned for you to have several encounters, but you don't have most of them because you're not present. You're always somewhere else in your mind."

Wow. My Father wanted to encounter me more, show me more of His love, show me the beauty of His creation, and I had been missing so much of it. He had several encounters planned for me.

I started to think through how long this had been going on, and it was a very long time. I was so saddened and grieved, just as God was, to think through the countless conversations I'd had with people without engaging with them because I was so busy thinking of something else.

I came to realize that I had figured out how to fake being a good listener. That's right, I faked it. If you looked at me,

you would think I was really listening to you, but my mind was trailing off to other places. How much of life was I missing out on because I simply wasn't present?

Turning Off Autopilot

This encounter with God was a major wake-up call for me. I've had to work through this, and to be honest it wasn't an immediate change. I had been living on autopilot after training myself to appear present while my mind—and therefore my heart—were not engaging with the people around me. It took some effort to go from autopilot to taking back the controls of my life and retraining my brain to be in the moment.

After the word from God, I realized I'd been missing out on so many incredible moments with not only the people in my life, but with my Creator. Something had to change so I could wake up to the beautiful life God has given me and so I could be fully alive and actualized every day. I didn't want to miss out on the encounters, the moments and the beauty of connection anymore.

Often turning off autopilot means disengaging from our crutches. In the world we're living in today, it can be so easy to disengage from real life. Have you ever arrived early to a meeting and sat and taken a look around the room? So many times I notice people on their phones or laptops, filling the time with social media or emails until the meeting begins.

Have you ever been in an airport and looked around while at your gate waiting to board? You'll probably find a similar picture of people on phones and laptops. Our world has gone online, often leaving us connected to our devices more than to the people around us.

I love modern technology but like most advancements, it does pose a challenge. We must learn to use our phones, our social media and other technology in a healthy way and return to real life and real love. Although this is not the only way we can

work on being present, I do believe it is a huge key. And when you think about what's at stake, it's worth turning the phone off.

What's really important to you? Is it having your eyes glued to your phone, following someone else's highlights on Instagram or rather, having a meaningful conversation with your real-life friends around you? Is it having your phone on the dinner table in case you get a notification or finding out how your children's day was at school?

What are you willing to trade for your inbox, your likes and your comments on social media? Real life is happening all around us; will we miss it, or will we take every moment for what it is, a gift and maybe even an encounter planned by God?

Do you find disengaging from social media and the online world challenging? How else can we learn to connect with the real world around us and not miss out on the many encounters our Father has planned for us every day? {eoa}

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