



Social Media & Disconnection

Today, I want to talk a little bit about social media. I've been concerned with my level of engagement on social media. And I've been concerned about my quick reactivity when I'm on social media. I can get angry so fast! With all that's happening politically and everything else, it's just crazy out there. The internet is designed to distract us. It's designed to addict us. It's a real problem.

A few months ago read a book called *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* by Nicholas Carr. It's science based and it's all about neuroplasticity, and how our brain works and why. Social media is so powerful! The author is not saying that social media is all bad, but he is telling us how it affects our brains. It was very powerful read that I highly recommend.

The big thing that it does for us is it distracts us and it keeps us very shallow. It's different than when we read a long book. Reading a book gives us time to go deep. The internet scatters and distracts us. I find that the more I spend time on social media, the harder it is for me to read a whole book. It's even hard for me to read a long article online. Do you find that to be the case too? If you do, you're pretty normal because the internet is designed to distract us, to give our brains little dopamine hits that keep us coming back for more and more and more. And it's keeping us from the depth of creativity and critical thinking that we need in order to thrive.

Here's a powerful quote from the book:

"Research indicates that the more distracted we become, the less able we are to experience the subtlest most distinctly human forms of empathy, compassion, and other emotions."

Wow, that's frightening! And he goes on to say that "if things are happening too fast, you may not ever fully experience emotions about other people's psychological states." So, that is very concerning. And it seems to hold true for me with what I'm seeing out there with the incredible divisiveness on social media.

We don't have time to tune into the person across the aisle from us on social media. All we see are these little sound bites, and we make our rash judgments with very little compassion and empathy. I'm experiencing that as well, where I'm not really connecting with the human being behind the social media posts. I find myself on social media to be so quick to trigger, so quick to reactions that I'm not really responding from a deep, grounded place. And this concerns me.



So, I wanted to bring that up today. It's crazy out there in the world right now. Social media is a wonderful, valuable, dangerous, frightening place to be, yes, but we may need to be more intentional.

I'm inviting us all to consider being more intentional about our social media use.

I have a client who decided to shut off his phone every night at 6pm and not turn it back on until 9am, and he is committed to this even though it's extremely difficult. He said that within two days, his brain started to be flooded with more creative ideas than he's had in a very long time, just because he's cutting his phone off at 6 PM and not turning it back on until 9 AM.

I just want to remind you that you have choice here to be a little more intentional and aware about your social media usage because it's impacting your ability to go deep. It's impacting your ability to have as much empathy and compassion as you are capable of. And it's keeping you terribly shallow and not able to go so deep and not able to think as critically.

I've been trying to stay off social media for a couple of weeks politically because I was getting really ramped up, and I can say that it's been helpful to me to not read every single article out there every day. I hope that you'll look at your habits and just be a little more intentional and aware of how this may be impacting you. We need deep, critical thinkers.