

Catherine's new book, *How to Break Up With Your Phone*, is available now.



Break Up With Your Phone

A better relationship starts with less screen time, says behavior guru Catherine Price.

What's the first step?

"Breaking up with your phone doesn't mean throwing it away. Consider your goal and don't think of it as punitive. It's not 'I'm trying to restrict myself' but instead 'I'd like to be more productive and could be if I didn't check my phone during this time.' Ask yourself: *Is this what I want to be paying attention to right now?* I

actually recommend setting that phrase as your lock screen, so whenever you reach for your phone, you're reminded to check in with yourself."

How do you identify your problem areas?

"Use an app. Moment (iOS) and Offtime (Android) track how much time you're spending on your phone and which apps are

used most. It's different for everyone, but research says that Americans, on average, spend four hours a day on their devices."

Does social media play a role in our habits?

"Yes, it's designed to be addictive. The best way to incentivize repeat behavior is through intermittent rewards. People will keep checking their feed because there might be something good. Try deleting the apps from your phone. Also, the default notification settings are meant to get you to use the app as much as possible. I limit it to notifications from real people whose messages I want to receive immediately; only calls, texts, and calendar alerts make the cut. I disable notifications for emails because it's one of the biggest distractions."

What are other ways to set boundaries?

"Society's relationship with phones isn't going to change unless there's a cultural recognition that it's an issue. Recognize the context in which you have power to set the boundaries. Leave your phone at your desk when you go to lunch, don't allow phones at the dinner table, or space out in your Uber instead of checking your phone. It's rejuvenating to give our brains a break."