

Have you seen the latest and greatest new phone technology? It's a dumb phone. Really. Its only function is to send and receive phone calls. No texts. No email. No camera. No Facebook. The Light Phone was specifically designed to help you "leave your smart phone behind and enjoy peace of mind." You can use it as a substitute for your smart phone for those times when you don't have enough personal control to not respond to your device.

Really? Have we become so connected that we can't stop? The measurement services company Verto Analytics reports that the average person checks his or her smart phone 47 times per day. But we touch them even more... And even though the overall time spent on smart phones may be less than three hours on average, some of us are purposefully using that smart phone time to avoid other people,

Perhaps the reason we can't put down our smart phones is that we're addicted to them — or at least to our notifications. Studies have shown that receiving mobile notifications triggers the release of dopamine, which is associated with reward-seeking behaviors. Through our connectivity we have instant gratification to our seeking. Our notifications are cues that something is going to happen — that a reward is coming — which keeps that dopamine system stimulated. Then again, maybe without our knowledge, a chip has been implanted in our brain which controls our smart phone addiction.

Say no to notifications

You can end the smartphone addiction cycle (and be more productive!) without buying another device like the dumb phone. Just turn off the cues by turning off notifications. Ask yourself if you need a notification every time you get a new email (from your five different email addresses) or every time the President tweets or every time someone likes your vacation (*after* your vacation, not during) photos on Facebook. Take control of your smart phone, your peace of mind and your productivity.

How to turn off notifications on iPhone or iPad

Go to Settings > Notifications. Scroll through and select an app to determine whether you will "Allow Notifications" and if so, what kind (Show in Notification Center, Sounds, Badge App Icon, Show on Lock Screen).

Challenge yourself by turning off some notifications that you've previously had on, especially for social media platforms.

How to turn off notifications on Android (Lollipop)

Go to Settings > Applications > Application manager (depending on your manufacturer) . Scroll through your list of apps, select an app and decide whether to “Show notifications” by tapping the checkbox.

Without a doubt smart phones provide connectivity that we need for day-to-day life. For many people they are an essential tool for accessing on-line information and services — especially for those who don't have a broadband connection at home or few options to connect except through their smartphone. Just remember that you're smarter than a smart phone when it comes to knowing when to disconnect. You don't need a dumb phone to enjoy peace of mind — just a better understanding of your device settings!