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RED & BLACK ... Texting Is NOT Talking!

I can't decide what's more unbelievable.

Subject, please.

You becoming the queen of breaking news, even though you don't watch the news or read a newspaper. Or, that you tell me tidbits and then I hear it on *The View*.

Can you make that same statement in 140 characters or less? And spaces count.

What are you talking about? And why would I want to do that?

That is all Twitter allows, including links to news stories, photos, etc. I get "breaking news" because I follow two accounts that specialize in it. Much more efficient than reading the newspaper or watching the news, as you can just skim the tweets versus spending time on the entire story.

Does that mean you no longer read *The Wall Street Journal*!?

Although they tweet links to their bigger stories, I still read the hard copy. I have always been addicted to the front page columns, which are short paragraphs of "breaking news" - basically a "paper tweet" before "tweets" existed.

There's something about holding an actual newspaper or book that I've always enjoyed. But I'm still shocked you're now using social media - Twitter AND Facebook - as you fought it for so many years.

As much as I think social media is a waste of time on a personal front, I now admit it is a "necessary evil" in terms of building a brand. And, down the road, it could be extremely valuable if we start any grassroots campaigns related to our work with prisons or our stance on education.

You're the business half of Red & Black, so I'll defer to your judgment. Personally, I have no desire to spend a single minute on social media. It's bad enough I have to proof-read our Facebook entries.

I am using Facebook's timeline format to memorialize the chronology of Red & Black. But, if other people are interested in reading it - so be it.

I'm amazed we have so many followers on Twitter and Facebook. There must be a lot of people with too much time on their hands.

DISCLAIMER: We are real people. We are not claiming to be experts in any given field, but rather are becoming experts of our own lives.

It is not that they have too much time. It is how they choose to spend it. Unfortunately, social media, and electronic devices for that matter, are time-suckers.

Don't get me started. If I have one more person ask me when I'm going to get a smartphone, I'm going to scream. Although the ability to take good quality photos does appeal to me.

Valid reason. Just do not turn into someone who goes to concerts and spends the entire time sending and posting photos versus just being there and experiencing it.

Funny you say that. At Natasha's recent school orchestra concert, many parents were "watching" the performance using their smartphone. At first, I found it amusing. Then, ridiculous.

I prefer to LIVE my life ... versus record it. Or text or tweet it.

No kidding. But it seems everyone now communicates through text messages. Even phone calls are becoming rare.

Texts have their place as they are efficient if you are merely transmitting factual information. "Running late." "Call when you have 5 minutes." But not as a substitute for having a conversation.

Exactly. Like when Natasha and I text in the morning because I'm trying to get her up and ready for school.

That makes sense. You are using it as an intercom system in a two-story house. But, once she comes downstairs, do you continue to text?

Of course not. But it does remind me of how I roll my eyes whenever I see kids, although right next to each other, texting each other.

My step-daughters did it all the time. Is it any wonder why kids have lost the ability to communicate - verbally or in writing?

I love when we talk to students and you ask them if they plan to text their responses when they start interviewing for college or a job. They look at you like you're crazy, but they quickly get your point.

Because it is relevant to their lives.

True, but I think it's really sad that something as basic as having a conversation is becoming a lost art.

That is the downside of electronic devices - most people feel the need to be "connected" all the time. You walk into a restaurant and there are smartphones on virtually every table with people constantly checking their messages. I remember when obstetricians were the only people always on call. Maybe restaurants should have a "No Electronics" section.

Like when you suggested that I schedule an "electronic shutdown?" It was great to go to the movies, grab a bucket of popcorn and Diet Coke, and for a few hours "disconnect." Although the phone was on vibrate in case of an emergency.

We all need a break. But escaping from electronics takes planning.

Says the woman who's tethered to her Blackberry.

Which is why I call it my "Crackberry." But, I use my cell phone for outgoing calls only and do not text, so it is the best way to contact me.

You always have a logical explanation. But it seems that the more the world has become electronically "connected," the more people are becoming "disconnected" from each other.

Exactly. It is a basic algebraic equation.

Excuse me?

Assume you have a certain amount of time to spend on friends and family. If there are less people, you have more time to spend with each of them. The flip side, especially given social media and lots of "contacts" on our electronic devices, means more people - therefore less time to share with each. Plus, what you "mass share" is more superficial. Mathematically, you are choosing quantity over quality.

Only you would draw a math analogy. So, add in that most people seem to have less time than previous generations, and the problem becomes even worse.

Are the demands on our time greater? Or, do we have more ways to waste time? As much as I love to debate and



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UPCOMING APPEARANCES

July 16 - Texas Career Education Conference

For an up-to-date listing of all upcoming public appearances, as well as details on these, please go to "Future Appearances" at www.redandblackbooks.com.

would argue that we spend time on that which is not important, leaving little time for what is, I will leave that conversation for another day. But, you might want to think about that as you plan your summer vacation.

What summer vacation? Who has the money, or the time?!

Since you do not have to deal with homework and other school matters, and the girls are old enough to stay home alone during daylight, take advantage of that. Take some time to spend with friends. Turn off your phones and just enjoy each other's company.

But my closest friends don't live close enough to do that. Some live not only out of town, but out of state and even out of the country.

So, schedule a phone conversation, just like you would a business meeting, and let everyone know not to interrupt you. That includes the girls AND me.

I like that idea, for many reasons.

I thought you would. And also plan time with the girls where no electronics are allowed.

In other words, take the summer to reconnect, the old-fashioned way.

Yes, and maybe even start a new tradition ... Summer Shutdowns.