

1. Was it difficult for you and your girlfriend to unplug?

Once we both agreed and committed to our little dare, it was not difficult at all. We embraced the challenge. Having someone to agree to the challenge made it easier for both of us. It is kind of like those group diets or workout groups where they keep each other accountable. It was a blast!

2. What made you decide to do this?

The decision to unplug was a twofold. First, I was inspired by an author named Timothy Ferris (Four Hour Work Week) to go on a technology diet. Then when I was bartending one night, I saw a family of four sit down to eat dinner. Mom, dad, son, daughter. The entire time of their dining experience, not one looked up from the smartphones. It was sad. I told my girlfriend about this and we decided we needed to do something about this. It was time to lead by example and our unplugged road trip would be the solution. It would be fun to invite others to follow along on our travels and see how this crazy experiment unfolds.

3. What steps were taken to unplug?

We set up guidelines to follow. The rules were to be 95% unplugged so we could text our moms and I had to respond to radio and podcast interviews via email. Based on a formula I created which accounts for eight hours of sleep this allows for a maximum of forty-eight minutes per day. We actually spent a fraction of these hours online so our percent unplugged was more like 99%.

4. What was the hardest part?

The hardest part was not saving money by shopping around for hotel prices. We would drive in, drive out, drive in, drive out until we just gave up and wanted to get the heck out of the car. Other challenges were road construction and closures that aren't as current as Google maps.

5. Were there any slip-ups?

We had no slip ups. We were so immersed in the experiment and people gravitated toward us because of it. There was no time to think about checking a phone when we had so many new friends to learn about.

6. What did you learn from the experience?

We learned that the magic of a road trip exists in seeing more art, meeting more people, and being present. Our communication between us (boyfriend and girlfriend at the time) evolved to a new level. We are now engaged to be married. Who would have thought that putting down the digital distractions could lead to a marriage proposal?

7. What would you've done differently, if anything?

We would not have done anything differently. Maybe our trip could last longer next time. We'll see if this book makes it big time and might finance longer trips.

8. Taking pictures/videos, sending texts/emails are part of a vacationers' life. Do you recommend taking a separate camera so that you aren't tempted to check Twitter or Insta or FB? As for texting or responding to emails, perhaps set aside an hour in the morning or evening to respond, if need to and it's not an emergency?

Yes, I recommend taking a separate camera. That's what we did. However, we also used our phones for cameras for a few selfies. We had no urge after a few days to check in. The freedom of not having a digital leash has its own rewards.

Setting aside precise times is a great idea. At 95% unplugged, our math formula allows for 24 minutes in the morning and 24 minutes in the evening. That was more than enough time. Many times we skipped the sessions. And, no! The minutes do not carry over; lol.

9. What would you recommend - unplugging for an hour a day until you build-up detachment, or just going cold turkey?

We recommend setting up rules as we did to be a certain percentage unplugged. It's easiest on a road trip or vacation because the majority of us are actually away from work and off from work. Those who need to stay connected for their careers will need different rules. If you think about it, if you are on vacation, you *should really* be on vacation.

In everyday life, unplugging for certain hours of the day is a great idea. How about starting with an iron clad rule that there will be no phones for any reason during meals. Families seem to understand and agree with this one the most. I come from an Italian heritage and believe me, if you weren't exercising your right to 'mangia' you were going to get the wooden spoon or spatula!