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Phantom Phone Calls and Messages â€“ Triggered by Stress or No Big Deal? by Matt Brooks

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A strange phenomenon is occurring for millions of cell phone users â€“ the phantom phone call. Have you ever felt your phone vibrate, pull it out to answer it, and realize it wasnâ€™t ringing? Have you felt the vibration of a text or email only to find out nothing came in? A student at the University of Worchester conducted an experiment about cell phone users and stress levels, and many of those surveyed complained of phantom vibrations and fears of missing messages. The study also indicated that stress levels of cell phone users tended to increase based on the number of calls and messages they received.

Phantom phone calls and messages are (so far) an unexplained phenomenon, but seemed to be triggered by the anxiety or expectation of either receiving or missing a call or message. As we become increasingly connected to media and communication mediums, we develop and insatiable need to constantly check for updates. If these updates and notices are less frequent during the day, users may experience these phantom vibrations because of increases in stress levels or subconscious anxiety from not receiving expected messages. A surprising number of cell phone users have experienced these phantom vibration even though they may not have mentioned them to anyone else.

Cell phones and being constantly connected do raise stress levels, especially when those messages create work or require action. The real discovery in the study wasnâ€™t really about the phantom vibrations, but in the stress that probably caused them. It is harder and harder to unplug and truly relax when you are just an email or a text message away. There are a few habits users can develop to reduce stress levels and take control of their cell phone use.

1) Turn off notifications. Notifications give real-time access to Facebook updates, texts, breaking news, and email messages. If these are turned on, a cell phone user may get 20 to over a 100 notifications and vibrations a day. If you want to reduce stress levels and even save some battery life, turn notifications off and check your phone at scheduled intervals. This will make you more productive instead of having continual interruptions, and allow you to extend your battery life.

2) Schedule your updates. Even if you check your phone once an hour, itâ€™s better than on demand. Take a few moments and answer emails, text, and check messages, and then disengage from your phone. Itâ€™s possible to experience anxiety and withdrawal type symptoms, but being consistent will create a better habit in the long run.

3) Reduce â€œPushâ€• type services. Push services actually push updates to you, triggering notifications. â€œPullâ€• services are activated when you open an app, email, or message and allow you to control whe updates are received. This can also save battery life and reduce interruptions.

If you are experiencing higher stress levels and phantom phone vibrations, you can take some steps to develop better habits and to disconnect from your phone during the day. Turn off the notifications that create notifications and vibrations, and check your phone in scheduled intervals. If you go on vacation or break try turning your cell phone off for a while and really relaxing. The difference in how you relax will be refreshing.

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