

Episode 40-Mental Checkout With Technology



Episode Transcript

With your Hosts
Mary Preston & Keysa Amaro

Keysa: Welcome to The Real Life Wellness Podcast with Mary Preston and Keysa Amaro. Where we talk about different ways to integrate healthier habits into your life.

Welcome back, friends! I'm Keysa Amaro, certified Health Coach and I work with moms to help them get control of their food cravings so they can maintain a healthy weight without deprivation or complicated meal plans.

Mary: And I'm Mary Preston, and I'm a licensed psychotherapist and a life coach and I am the founder of the Goodbye Burnout for Healthcare Professionals Program. I help healthcare professionals reverse their burnout using my 3-phase goodbye burnout process. If that sounds like you, you should jump into the Saying Goodbye to Burnout Free Facebook Group, where we share information, provide each other with support, and work together to heal the healthcare profession.

If you have questions about any of our programs, the podcast, or anything about health and wellness, come join us in The Real Life Wellness Podcast with Mary and Keysa facebook group Alright. On to our topic of the day, which is...using technology as buffering

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Keysa: In this episode, we will talk about how we use technology to distract ourselves from our negative emotions... and our lives

When I was writing notes for this episode, I realized that there is so much information about technology and how it affects our lives in positive and negative ways that I feel we could have a five hour long episode on technology. But since we are trying to keep our episodes to around 30 minutes, during this episode we will be focusing on how we use technology to avoid our feelings and how to break the cycle of buffering with technology. So please know that this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to how technology affects our lives and our ability to process emotions.

Let me ask you, why do you get on your phone, on Facebook, Instagram, or Netflix? You most likely think "to stay connected with friends, to see the latest trends, to post pictures of your life." And these are all legit and awesome reasons to use technology and social media. I love that I can live halfway around the world and I can stay in contact with my friends and family. I can share pictures with them, comment on their pictures and status, I can message them, and I have the world at my fingertips. I can look up anything on the google-sphere and I will get my answer. How to make grain-free tortillas? It's there. How to get to the nearest Whole Foods? I can get directions in less than a minute. This is really something amazing, and there are great and wonderful uses for technology and social media.

Now, you are probably waiting for the "but". And don't worry, here it is. I want you to really pay attention to each time you reach for your phone, check your email, facebook or Instagram. Are you avoiding something? Looking for gratification? Are you bored? Need some entertainment?

When we get on our phones or binge-watch Netflix when we are trying to avoid something, looking for gratification, or are bored, we are using technology to avoid our feelings, and our real life. Mary and I refer to this as buffering. We have discussed buffering in previous episodes, but what we are talking about is avoiding our feelings by doing something that ultimately has a negative consequence. For instance, eating a tub of ice cream when you are feeling lonely. There is nothing wrong with eating ice cream, but when it is in excess and is habitual, then there is a negative consequence to that action, which would be weight gain, bloating, energy crash, restless sleep, or fatigue. It also doesn't allow us to face our emotions and to process them. When we eat ice cream because we are lonely, it will relieve us temporarily of loneliness, but after the binge, then we will just continue being lonely and wanting to avoid it versus feeling lonely and letting it pass.

There are many different types of buffers, but today we are going to be focusing on technology as a buffer.

When I first started becoming aware of technology as a way to avoid my feeling and buffer, I started to just observe when I would get on my phone or computer. I noticed that I would check social media when I was procrastinating or avoiding something like writing a paper or blog post. If I would get stuck and not be able to think of anything to write about or come up with an

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answer I was looking for, I would head on over to social media because that would take me out of the frustration and cognitive thinking that was required and I would see cute pictures of my niece, or friends on a really cool mountain ridge. This was great, but the only problem is that it did not give me the answer to the questions I was looking for, or get me to write a blog post. The cursor was right where I had left it, and I still had to use my brain and creativity to finish the article or to do some research. All this did was make the task take longer than it needed to.

Another time I find myself on social media or Netflix is when I am bored. And I know that it seems logical that if you are bored, just get on your computer or phone and entertain yourself. Right? Well, what's wrong with just being bored? Why can't I just pop on my phone while I am waiting in line at the bank? And I get it. I too use my phone when waiting in a long line. It helps pass the time by. But what I want to warn you about is getting sucked into the social media void. It's so easy to get sucked in and the next time you look up, an hour has passed by. And what have you gained from that hour? How much of what you saw do you truly remember? What's wrong with waiting in line and people watching and being present with what is? I know that there have been many times when I watched ridiculous stuff on TV because I was bored and I thought that I would get some sort of pleasure from it. But then the day has passed away and I have accomplished nothing.

The biggest thing you want to notice is that if your technology use is causing negative consequences. Are you not getting any sleep at night because you are binge-watching your show, or you got sucked into the social media void, and are tired and unmotivated at work? This is a negative consequence. Are you stalking your ex online and are not facing your true feelings about the relationship or working on getting past it? This is causing a negative consequence and is buffering.

So, take a look and see if your technology use is ultimately causing a negative consequence in your life. If you are not sure, the best way to find out is to go without social media or technology for a period of time. Now, you may be thinking that I am crazy for suggesting this, but this is the true test to see if you are avoiding your feelings and buffering with technology. It doesn't have to be a long period of time, a day or two or even an evening.

If you are using technology to buffer and avoid your feelings and real life, I have 5 tips to help you recognize and stop the buffering.

1. **Observe your current habits:** How much are you using your phone, computer, or watching TV. Most smartphones now have a monitoring system that will tell you how long you have been on the phone and what you were doing while on it. Use this to see how much you are on your phone and what you are using it for. Also, monitor how much you are on your computer (outside of work) and how much TV you watch. Awareness is the first step to reducing technology as a buffer.
2. **Notice why you are on your phone, computer or TV:** The next time you get on your phone, computer, or TV, ask yourself why you are on it. Notice why you are

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choosing to get on your device. Is it because you are bored, need some entertainment, are avoiding a feeling, or maybe it's because you really want to share a pic of you and your two best gals parcoring.

3. **What would happen if I got off my phone?:** This is a great question to ask. This will make you stop the habit and make you think of what would happen if you got off of your device. Would you feel depressed? Would you feel sad? Bored? Angry? Uncomfortable? This will give you some insight as to why you are buffering with technology.
4. **Allow yourself to experience your emotions:** Use the answer you got in the last tip and choose to experience that emotion. Maybe if you got off your phone you would feel uncomfortable. So you would practice allowing yourself to feel uncomfortable. Remember an emotion is just a vibration in the body. So, where does uncomfortable show itself in your body? Where do you feel it? Now, allow it to be there and it will pass.
5. **Be kind to yourself:** It is so important in the process of change to be kind to yourself! If you don't like the way you are using technology, there is no sense in beating yourself up over it. It won't get you anywhere except mad and angry. And these emotions are not useful when working on changing a huge habit.

Bonus Tip:

6. **Be willing to feel uncomfortable:** Remember we buffer so we WON'T feel uncomfortable! So, in order to stop buffering and feel your feelings, you need to be willing to feel uncomfortable. I think that going into a process of change and reducing buffering, that it's best to know that you are going to feel uncomfortable and it will be hard. Knowing this, you can prepare yourself and plan ahead for the discomfort.

Outro

Alrighty friends, that's all we have got for you today. Thanks for being awesome as always and listening in.

Tune into our next episode where we talk about ... using food planning as a distractors in our lives.

If you'd like to know more about us, and if you have any questions or comments, head on over to our dedicated Facebook group! You can also contact Mary at her [website at www.maryalycepreston.com](http://www.maryalycepreston.com) or Keysa at her website at www.keysaamaro.com!

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