

## Technology vs. the Human Touch

Are we de-evolving as a society? When I am teaching a class on workplace violence or other related topics, I pose one question, not as a rhetorical one, but as a reality check.

If you just pause for a few seconds—that is all I will have time for—as a recent report has suggested that the average American will not wait for more than four seconds for a video to download. Think about when you walk through a mall, airport or even driving. What is the prevailing distraction that we all see, that we are all guilty of?

*Technology.* More to the point, cell phones.

Cell phones could be considered one of the biggest distractions facing us; they will soon surpass drunk driving as the primary cause of vehicle accidents.

The second question I ask my students is when was the last time you wrote a hand-written letter to someone? It is safe to assume that we are moving from the personal interaction to *technology-touched* communications. Individuals are expecting immediate gratification in communication, the instantaneously responsive contact. We misread text messages and emails because they are typically emotionless.

Technology does not nullify critical thinking. We are becoming more dependent on today's technological advances. We should be asking ourselves what would be the repercussion if all of this was taken away at a moment's notice? Are we prepared for a world without technology?

The interpersonal skills are falling way to the ever advancing technology. We are not only losing the simple ability to communicate effectively in person, but also the primal instinct that made us the hunters and gatherers of just 150 years ago, as well as the instinct to survive in this world. There is an obvious gap between the Baby Boomers and the Millennial generation, or as they are known to some, as Cyber Babies, who will validate or argue this comparison.

Violence is slowly becoming an everyday occurrence in society and our individual lives. If you need any examples, look no further than *YouTube* to see the glorification of it. Individual desensitization to violence is in a rapid acceleration mode; so when a critical incident actually occurs to an individual, it is the "deer-caught-in-the-headlights" syndrome.

Typically, the average American does not have the propensity to commit violence, and, in turn, the inability to react to it accordingly. There is a clear surge in workplace violence that can be attributed to many reasons including: *Violence as an acceptable form of communication; economic downturn; resizing of company or lack of loyalty; domestic violence, unrelated mental illness;* and a host of others.

Out of all these contributors we should look at the first one. Violence as an acceptable form of communication is a part of the de-evolution theory: technology vs. the human touch. Some

generations will blame the video games, the music and social behaviors, which have valid points but in reality it's a combination of all factors that have been represented.

So, I pose the question again, how much is technology influencing your behavior, changing your communication methods, changing your patience level, or perhaps your interpersonal skills.

Our next societal evolution cycle should be one of reestablishing our critical thinking in regard to our survival thinking and our personal awareness. This is just another level of training that has to be effectively applied in order to assure retention.

One of the first points made during my class is that what I am teaching shouldn't be thought of as just lessons for the workplace. As we all have seen in the news recently, these serious incidents happen not only in the workplace, but in schools, malls, theaters, and the streets of just about every city in America.

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