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| **Social Media Black Out. Why it’s a Good Idea.****For better or worse, social media has become a big part of the lives of millions of users. If you find yourself negatively affected by too much social media time, here are some benefits from taking a break.**The original purpose of sites like Facebook and Twitter was to allow folks to connect easily and without censorship. Today, bots and trolls are being used to influence conversations by spreading misinformation, making it hard to decipher what online interactions are genuine. You can respond by giving your Twitter finger a rest and turning your attention elsewhere.**The pause that refreshes.** Social media can consume a disproportionate amount of your energy. When your phone’s battery runs low, you take time out to recharge it. Your brain deserves the same consideration. If you find yourself consumed by your social media interactions, think about how that affects the people that surround you. A time-out from the computer might help you better connect with your friends and loved ones. When you conserve your energy, you can be your best self.**Protect your blood pressure.** If you hold strong personal or political views, you may find yourself immersed in intense arguments with social media denizens (and bots). Unfortunately, there are people online that delight in upsetting, insulting, or threatening anyone who expresses an opposing viewpoint. You can’t win those arguments, but you can suffer from them ─ emotionally and physically. Spending hours on end in contentious interactions could raise your blood pressure, exhaust your critical thinking, and disrupt your sleep. A social media blackout might just safeguard your health.**Fake news can be costly.** The internet is flooded with made-up stories and conspiracy theories masquerading as news. This can cost you in various ways, from selling you bogus products to enlisting you in phony organizations. The risks can be profound, especially if fake news induces you to spend your money unwisely. A social media blackout might reduce your exposure to, and damage from, fake information.**That time can be utilized more productively.** If you pull yourself away from the computer for a while, you can give some thought to whether you’d be better off performing other tasks. For example, you can take steps to help yourself financially or mentally, whether that involves starting a side-gig, completing your degree, or investing more time in a hobby or pursuit. You could also exchange hours of sedentary tweeting for healthful activities that help you lose weight or strengthen your aerobic capacity. Spending time on social media is a decision – you can decide to use your time more productively.**Free up some time for financial planning.** Some of the time you lavish on social media can be applied to planning your financial future. It takes time to consider how you want to budget, save, and invest your money both in the short and long terms. I invite you to contact me and schedule a review of your financial plans.

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