

April 2021: Unplugged

Written by: Meg Amundsen

If you grew up in the 90's, as I did, you might remember watching MTV unplugged. On MTV unplugged musicians performed acoustic versions of their songs. In the month of April, we are encouraging you to unplug and find the acoustic version of your life.

In the year of the pandemic, we have all been more plugged in than ever before. There are a lot of benefits to technology and we have all found new ways to connect with others through technology during these times. I will be the first to admit that I have spent too much time scrolling on my phone, and have allowed my kids more time on screens that I really want to during this season of life. When I spend too much time on screens I notice a negative change in my mood and I see the same in my kids when they spend too much time on screens.

Enjoy Nature:

As the weather changes to spring weather, it is the perfect time to get back outside and enjoy nature. Spending time in nature is one of the best ways to unplug. We can use our five senses to ground ourselves. Taking a walk outside we can notice the feeling of our feet on the ground. We can take our shoes off and step into the grass and notice how that feels. We can observe the warmth of the sunshine or the wind on our skin. We can listen to the sounds of the birds, the rain, or the kids playing outside again. We can notice the smell of the flowers, fresh cut grass, and the rain. We can notice the leaves on the trees, the birds, all the colors, and the sky. We can have an "awe" moment as we notice the beauty of nature.

Practice being fully present and active listening:

Another important part of being unplugged is being fully present with another person. Being fully present is one of the best gifts that you can give another person. Practice actively listening to the person that you are talking with. Notice the distractions that pop up in your mind and try to bring your attention back to fully listening to the person that you are with.

Practice one-mindfulness:

Our culture tends to encourage multitasking, but our brains and bodies actually crave doing one thing at a time. Practice only doing one thing at a time. Notice how often you catch yourself trying to multitask. Notice the physical sensations that you feel in your body when you are doing an activity one-mindfully. When you are taking a shower notice the feel of the water on your skin, the sounds of water, and smell of the soap. When you are doing an activity with your kids notice their smiles and the ways that they want to connect with you. When you are cleaning, keep bringing your attention back to the activity that you are doing rather than the do list in your head.

Read a book, journal, or listen to music:

Reading allows us to get lost in another world, and gets our creative juices flowing. Music has a tendency to go right to the soul, and can take us to another place in time. When we take time to journal we may write down something that we did not even know we were feeling.