



## Phubbling: It's Impact on Human Relationship

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Have you ever heard about this word before? To be honest, I just learned about this word lately. So, what does Phubbing really mean? **Phubbing** is a term coined as a part of a campaign by Macquarie Dictionary to describe the habit of snubbing someone in favor of a mobile phone.<sup>1</sup> From the word itself, it is a combination of the words **phone** and **snubbing**. People put so much attention on their phone rather than interacting with human being.

We couldn't deny that cell phones have changed and developed so rapidly in a relatively short span of time and it seems that almost anything you can imagine is possible in the future. Mobile gadgets have gotten smaller, thinner, more powerful and very beneficial. You can find them everywhere and make significant improvement in the lives of everyone. There is no doubt that mobile devices have been a part of people's daily lives. If you don't agree with it, think about the first thing you touch in the morning? It's your mobile phone. According to World Internet Users Statistics, as of June 30, 2016, there is around 3, 611, 375, 813 (49.2%) internet users worldwide and Asia is the leading country for internet subscribers.<sup>2</sup> It has been showed that smart phone ownership and internet usage will continue to climb for the succeeding years.

Mobile technology in the form of phones, tablets and notebooks is making our life better than before. Answers to almost all our questions can be answered in just a blink of an eye. Google can provide it for you. You can have everything with your phone which can do more than just make a phone call. From online shopping, accurately locate places through GPS, play games, take photos and videos, read e-books and various entertainment during spare time, health diagnosis and treatment are only few of the amazing benefits of mobile technology. Communication keeps us closer to our friends and families through social media. Social media fundamentally exist in order to enhance interpersonal relationships. We can keep in touch with those who we need to reach whether work-related or

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personal in nature. As Zakaria said “Using something like Skype brings people closer when they can’t always physically see each other. Texting someone through facebook or any other texting platform allow us to be in contact with anyone anywhere in the world, at any point in time”.<sup>3</sup>

Driven mostly by positive benefits, people tend to become preoccupied with their phones and just ignore the real world without being aware of their action. As we all know, mobile application development has been steadily growing and some people have become addicted and the worst is, some can have a fear of being without a mobile device which is called nomophobia. The term is an abbreviation for “**no-mobile-phone phobia**.”<sup>4</sup> People feel weird and anxious without their mobile phone. This is one of the downside of mobile technology.

Another thing that the people are concerned about nowadays is how phubbing affects human relationships. People from different age group show how phones become a part of them. Mobile networking sites as well as games doesn’t choose age. You might be surprised during a family meal, your son or daughter might look around and catch pokemons nearby. Little did you know that



they have been addicted to the new game called pokemon go. You and your partner celebrate your anniversary but after the two of you order, your partner whips out his cell phone and take a photo of your food and start sharing it on Instagram and never stop from scrolling his phone. Zakaria has also mentioned a good example of phubbing: “You always see a bunch of friends groups hanging out together when each of them is caught up in there digital devices, they constantly want to check what everyone’s tweeting, what they are doing, instead of talking to the friends they set with, or holding conversation and engaging with each other”.<sup>3</sup>



So how can you handle phubbing when it pops up in your life? Whether you’re the victim or the perpetrator, according to Teen vogue on how to deal phubbing and phone addiction, here’s some guide to gracefully deal with this new, thorny issue of social etiquette: <sup>5</sup>



## If You're Being Phubbed

### Step 1 : Wait.

This is a basic but effective strategy. Simply make a point of waiting patiently until they're making eye contact to speak. If they say, "Go on, I'm listening!" but they're still preoccupied by their phone, politely reply "Oh, that's OK; I'll wait." Most people will quickly get the point and put their phone down to continue the conversation.

### Step 2 : Lead by example.

Oftentimes when someone else is ignoring you to be on their phone, the temptation is to take out your own phone and do the same. This won't solve the problem, and may even end with them accusing you of phubbing. Instead, be the bigger person and give them an example of how you'd like to interact by saying, "Let me put my phone away so we can talk. This thing can be so distracting!" After you put your phone away and smile at them expectantly, they should follow suit.

### Step 3 : Be direct.

The first two strategies are best for casual acquaintances, but for a close friend, a family member, or your partner, it's probably better to just be direct. You don't have to stage an intervention, but the next time you catch them phubbing you, say gently but firmly: "I'd really prefer if we could put our phones away when we're spending time together." If they protest that their Snapchat addiction isn't a big deal, then you can explain to them how it feels to be ignored and how it's affecting your relationship.

### Step 4 : Set rules.

If you're dealing with a repeat offender and the first three steps didn't help, it's time to implement specific rules. To avoid making them feel unfairly attacked, the rules should apply to both of you. For example, no phones out during meals, dates, and quality time together. If they're the kind of person who feels the need to document every outing for social media, maybe encourage them to limit it to just one or two photos before putting the phone away.

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## If You're the Phubber

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### Step 1 : Remove the temptation.

Out of sight, out of mind. Keep your phone tucked away during meals, dates, and



meetings. If you're expecting an important text or email, explain that to the other person but don't use it as an excuse to constantly be on your phone. If you keep finding yourself scrolling through Instagram in a fugue state, it might be time for a minor vacation from your phone. There's nothing like giving yourself an entire day — or weekend — away from your phone to break bad habits.

### Step 2 : Acknowledge the distraction.

If you must use your phone, don't try to be sneaky with under-the-table usage. Just excuse yourself like you would when taking a phone call: "Excuse me, I just need to text Jenny back," or, "Hang on, I just want to Google that real quick." Once your mission is accomplished, put the phone away. This has the dual result of making the other person feel acknowledged rather than ignored, and forcing you to be aware of what you're doing.

### Step 3 : Be present.

Social media can wait. Go ahead and take a picture but upload it to Instagram later. (There is seriously nothing more boring than waiting for someone to decide on just the right filter.) Do one Snapchat, rather than recording the entire evening. Make a memory, not a Facebook status. Spend time with the people you're with, not your online followers.

### Step 4 : Have your phone remind you.

What better to remind you to put your phone down than your phone itself? A simple message such as "be present" can be used as a password, wallpaper, or phone case to help mitigate mindless phone checks. There's even an application called Moment which tracks your phone usage and helps you to set limits.

The bottom line: if you've been feeling distanced from your friends and loved ones recently, take an honest look at your daily phone habits. Phubbing might seem innocuous but it can take a serious toll on our relationships. So remember to put the phone down and look around you more often. You might be surprised by what you're missing out on.





We also have to know the reason why a person is preoccupied with his phone. Know the real situation before reacting and to be cautious on how to respond when phubbing occurs. We are in a fantastic era of mobile technology but it's up to each user to use cell phones especially social sites wisely to enhance professional and social life as well as interpersonal relationships. There is always nothing wrong when we use our phone for a purpose but we should know our limits and exercise caution. In fact, too much is always bad. So, no matter how technology develops, the way we handle its fast change lies in our hands.

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