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Disconnecting to reconnect

Unplugging from the grid may sound like a nightmare over March Break, but it may bring your family closer

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Last Updated: March 10, 2011 12:00am



This March Break, try taking some time to disconnect and plan the greatest March break getaway of all.

Put down your BlackBerry, walk away from the laptop, and nobody will get tweeted. It's time to recharge your batteries, and put the spring back into Spring Break with your family.

Some say this end-of-winter break is rooted in the hedonistic celebrations of the ancient Greeks, welcoming the season of fertility. America in the 1960s is perhaps another key point in its evolution, as college students made their way to Florida for week-long beach parties. Since then, March Break has morphed into a diverse array of commercial opportunities to spend your time and money, choosing amongst camps, workshops, family vacations, and now, stay-cations.

If Halloween could evolve from celebrating the dead to celebrating candy and the Snooki bump, we could surely evolve March Break to embrace more family time.

In a world where Facebook and Twitter are many kids' confidantes, a five-day respite offers families the opportunity to bond with each other in a way foreign to social media.

Margit Herburger is a Toronto area family and individual therapist. As she notes, "Kids measure life's worth according to Facebook statuses, amount of friends on the page, what gets texted to whom and how to disappear in YouTube for distraction.

"I'm not bashing any of these, but our body has more than just a head. If we keep teaching our kids to stay in the head all the time, we will have mental breakdowns, social anxiety and depression outbreaks in these kids."

Everybody worries about ways to keep kids busy, but they are already busy for most of the school year, and of course, so are you. Find ways to strengthen the family connection and increase your children's much needed sense of belonging.

By spending time with your children, and closing technological lines of communication, you open more vital lines of communication within your family. This increases the chance that your children won't turn to outside sources for advice, and they will be less inclined towards bad influences.

Individuals who grow up with strong family connections are more likely to foster those and pass them down to following generations.

Even if you do not have time off during the week to spend with your kids, you can still find ways to incorporate family time into the March Break schedule.

Herburger suggests, "Every family should challenge themselves to a day of no technological devices allowed and see if they remember what to do with their intelligence, their playfulness and their creativity."

So, plan to abandon the technology as much as possible. No texting, no e-mailing, no Facebooking, and the biggy, no TV - or at least, less of it. (After all, family movie night is always a cozy memory.)

And here are some other things you can plan":

Remember experiencing blackouts as a child and the warm excitement of being "forced" to sit with your family at night by candlelight? You munched on snacks, played games, and just enjoyed each other? Why not try a blackout night again?

More things you can do: Make a family tree, redecorate your little one's bedroom, volunteer to feed another family at a shelter. Have an at-home spa day, get active together outside, camp out in your living room. Play board games, make family photo scrapbooks, or bake.

Talk.

March Break is the time to reboot - turn everything off. Social media updates won't create lasting memories. Simple moments with family will.