

5 Reasons Why Meditation Beats an iPhone by Rahul Brown

People buy iPhones to be universally connected and have a ton of cool functions and features at their fingertips. But as the wise monk Rev. Heng Sure once said, everything we create in silicon already exists in carbon. I'd add that the silicon technology is a poor facsimile at best.

So how exactly do you tap into the wonderful carbon technology you carry around with you all the time? Meditation is a phenomenal tool to do just that. Here are five areas where meditation beats an iPhone.

1. Connectivity

The truth is that you can't really connect to anyone else unless you're in touch with yourself. The iPhone allows and encourages you to be marginally present when physically absent, and marginally absent when physically present.

Meditation gets you back in touch with yourself and helps you be present. Period. Sometimes meditators are so present, they're even present when absent! And that makes their ability to connect way beyond what the iPhone allows.

2. Social Networking

Let's face it: Twitter is often mostly random bits of irrelevant thought that you cursorily follow from people you don't always know. That Facebook's user base exceeds the population of most countries and that 50% of its users visit every day suggests that there is something addictive and Faustian about unbridled usage, as 800+ million people compete to appear to be having the most fun while collecting ever more 'friends'.

Behind their popularity is the myth that quantity makes up for quality.

How many of your Facebook friends could you call in a jam at 3am? How many tweets will you ponder longer than a 160 character attention-span?

The truth is that quality is what counts, and meditation eases the disease of a random mind to add increased quality and relevance to 'mental tweets'. Random thoughts get slowly recycled into the mental soil, fertilizing the thoughts worth nurturing as attention stabilizes and intensifies. The growing relief felt from all the chaos sloshing around in your head starts building sympathy for other people's struggles. You yourself start becoming a person willing to dash to the rescue at 3am, or just helping to make people around you a little bit happier, and that starts earning you deeper friends willing to respond in kind.

Suddenly you're having real fun wherever you are, with no time left to tweet about it, snap pictures for facebook, or passively stalk other people's lives. Birds of a feather flock

together, so you're soon surrounded by like-minded people, paving the path for serendipitous connections that give you goosebumps in ways that connecting to your 2nd-grade-best-friend or unrequited-secret-lover-from-prom on Fbook never can.

3. Features and Functionality

Is the iPhone's 5-megapixel camera not enough for you? How about the 324-megapixel equivalent of the human eye? Not enough storage on your iPhone for those kinds of pictures? Nobody knows a good way to calculate the storage of the human brain, but credible guesses say it can hold 1 to 1000 terabytes of information. Can't remember that much, you say? Meditation improves memory, reverses memory loss, and delays or prevents Alzheimer's and dementia. How about GPS? Meditation really grounds you and helps you figure out where you're at and where you're headed. What about apps and games? Meditation starts unlocking the games you play best and opening you up to more productive applications.

4. Environment

When planned obsolescence catches up to you, your iPhone gets closer to becoming e-waste, full of toxic chemicals that California consider to be hazardous waste. Be sure to recycle it when you're done playing, and remind the others to do so too.

Meanwhile, meditation doesn't add to your footprint on the planet, but might just soften it. There isn't much research on this, but a lot of anecdotal evidence that shows that you'll start feeling the need for fewer material things. And that's great for the planet!

5. Cost

After all your fancy data plans and minutes, you can spend \$5 or more a day on your iPhone. Meditation is free, barring what you pay to learn or attend a course (and there are some, like Vipassana, where your costs are already covered, and you only pay-it-forward if you want). And if you're serious about practicing, meditation starts paying you, as all of that focus makes you more productive, creative, insightful, and energetic. I'd call that a fantastic investment in any economic climate. :)

In short, meditation is an unparalleled technology that surpasses the iPhone by leaps and bounds. In fairness, any technology simply amplifies the will you place behind it, and its possible to use things like iPhone, Twitter, and Facebook while minimizing their downsides just like its possible to misuse meditation.

Yet figuring out the dazzling potential of our innate carbon technology is infinitely more fascinating than toying with silicon technology, and that will keep me returning to my cushion for years to come.