



1984, Revisited

Stepping back in time technologically is more relaxing than you might expect.

Confession: I have a debilitating condition commonly referred to as "FOMO" or "Fear of Missing Out." The Symptoms: I am "plugged in" to technology almost 24 hours a day. A classic Virgo, my obsessive need to make lists and subsequently devour them means that my To-Do list is uncompromising. It includes everything I do or plan to do, such as emails, phone calls, voice mails, texts and even unwatched programs trapped by my DVR. And just like those forced annually into the role of "Football Widows," my spouse and children have endured years of being my "Computer Castoffs."

Tragically, I also suffer from "FOOP-MO"—or "Fear of Other People Missing Out." Though my neurotic need to respond immediately to all client email and phone calls is admirable, I admit to having one of the worst Facebook addictions on the planet.

Help! Now diagnosed, I recently faced a serious challenge: Unplug

from my ultra-wired world for 48 hours and actually live among the people! Why, you ask? Tammy Wynette explained it best way back in 1968: Either U-N-P-L-U-G or "D-I-V-O-R-C-E."

Once I shared the impending challenge on Facebook, Penny from Tennessee quickly responded: "You will die." Carolyn from Massachusetts advised,

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"Make sure you have a comfortable cushion for when you run to the corner, curl-up in the fetal position, and rock back and forth"; Mark from Missouri predicted "a lot of sweating, tremors, panic attacks, and random outbursts of profanity—but you'll make it." His dimly supportive nod and North Carolina Molly's rather bold command to "Get a life" guided my resolve to unplug and visit the dark side.

I chose to technologically revisit 1984, my senior year at the University of Missouri. In my mind, a nostalgic jaunt down Memory Lane would improve my chance of success. Both the IBM PC and Apple Macintosh had been invented by this time (I recall thinking: "I'll never have one—too expensive!") but weren't part of everyday life.

So, with supportive friend Laura at my side, at 4:22 on Saturday afternoon, my laptop and iPhone fell silent. Though spontaneity is not my strength, I immediately felt the need to change my surroundings—to break from the norm. Without the benefit of Siri to recommend a restaurant or GPS to guide me there, we chose a restaurant just down the street. Of course, within approximately seven minutes, loyal Laura began to

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passionately describe several must-see photos on her website.

This was going to be even tougher than I thought.

Once home, I was even more determined to recapture 1984. Then I remembered—we had books back then! Author Janet Evanovich is great for list-makers. The titles of her 20-volume “Stephanie Plum” books actually include the numbers in which they appear in the series. As I had only progressed to *Hot Six*, I seemed all set for an orderly, time-consuming “Plum-a-thon.”

Several chapters later, sleep beckoned. I expected to enter a *Little Shop of Horrors*-inspired dreamland wherein my neglected PC would come to life and demand to be fed; however, I slept better than I had in years.

On Sunday morning, habit kicked in and I literally ached to consult my machinery. I

held my ground and read the paper—yes, read the paper!—followed by a leisurely breakfast, evocative conversation, and an unplanned beach excursion that provided—pardon the pun—wave after wave of timeless delight. Afterward, and more relaxed than I had been in ages, I completed Stephanie Plum’s “Six” adventures before a totally wireless nap option presented itself.

Later that evening, I remained loyal to 1984 by watching live network television, complete with commercials. The two programs I chose took on new meaning. The titles, *Once Upon a Time* and *Resurrection*, quite ironically reflected the concept of revisiting a time gone by.

When Monday arrived and my technology-driven workday was off-limits, I was saved by prescription Valium and previously scheduled dental work.

I may have been unplugged from technology for those 48 hours, but I was infinitely more plugged-into life. Of the 100+ emails, messages and texts I received, only 18 truly required a response. So, in exchange for the 48 minutes it took me to get caught up, I received 48 hours of companionship, conversation, relaxation, romance and, in an unexpected turn of events, an “old” lease on life.

Yes, 1984 was pretty great for me, and it proved to be just as satisfying the second time around. Whoever said you can’t go back in time is—in a word—wrong. ❁

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