Going unplugged essay sample

Back to the Stone Age. That is what went through my mind as I prepared to begin the Unplugged Challenge and disconnect from the internet for five days. Several questions crossed my mind before I began. How will I stay connected with people? What if I miss an email naming me the Publishers Clearing House ' Grand Prize Winner?' Could I live for nearly a week without the search capability of Google or the hilarious videos of YouTube? It seemed to me that living without the internet was akin to losing an arm. Would I be able to survive without it? The first morning of the challenge I awoke to a blaring alarm clock. Really, 6am already?! I dragged myself out of bed and grabbed my phone to check the news and weather, like I normally do. Wait, NO!! I quickly reminded myself of the challenge and put down my phone before the browser could open. Wow, I thought, only fifteen minutes into the challenge and I have nearly had a failure. The rest of the first day was a bitter struggle of human willpower vs. technology.

Every ten or fifteen minutes I found myself instinctively grabbing my phone and dialing up Facebook or Google. Each and every time I had to consciously remind myself of the challenge. Back away, I told myself, put the phone down, and everything will be alright. Though everything turned out alright, by the end of day one I felt quite frustrated and disconnected. I just wanted to post a Facebook update or send an email to a friend. With four more days of disconnect ahead, I began to question whether or not I would make it. The morning of day two found me with a newfound resolve and determination. I scolded myself for my poor attitude on day one, and began to formulate a new plan for success. I turned off the Wi-Fi on my phone, and put a yellow sticky note on the front saying " No Internet, No Excuses!" I put a similar

note on my laptop at home, though the temptation to logon from there was not as great. Throughout the day I remained strong, and, though there were temptations, I found the urges to logon less frequent and easier to control.

By the end of day two I felt like I had good control and would get through this. Hmm…maybe I could survive nearly a week without the internet. The evening of day three I decided to go out to dinner with a few friends. Once we got to the restaurant, we sat down, ordered a few drinks, and got to talking about our day. I told my friends about the Unplugged Challenge and my technological independence. They were supportive, but within five minutes everyone but me had their heads buried in their phones and hardly said a word. Really, I thought, why should I try to have a conversation with these people when they prefer to respond quicker to a ' poke' on Facebook!? I looked around at each person at the table, they looked like drones; mindless drones focused on nothing more than their virtual worlds. Around the restaurant I noticed that about every-other table had someone more focused on their virtual world, rather than on the real world sitting right across from them. Has our society gotten to the point where virtual interactions supersede human interactions?

From the " relationships" I observed around the restaurant, it appeared so. I stopped my contemptuous judging and quietly wondered if my own life had looked much the same when I was " plugged-in." Before I left, I told my friends there were a few more days in the challenge and they proceeded to give me " encouraging" comments that sounded more like condolences rather than support. " Oh we are so sorry to hear that," said one friend, "

Yeah, you must be devastated," said another. " Hey," I told them, " I do not need the internet to continue being me!" Days four and five provided further evidence for my growing sentiment that life without the internet was survivable. On the afternoon of day four I found myself struggling to define a couple words from the book I was reading. Rather than grab my phone and go to Google, I dusted off the dictionary and quickly found the definitions.

The next night, my grandmother and I were searching for a specific Peruvian restaurant in Denver. Rather than panic and check on the internet, I grabbed to the phone book and found the restaurant we were looking for. Although these pieces of information could be easily found on the internet, it did not bother me to have to look through the phone book or dictionary. If anything, it gave me a boost of confidence to continue to search for answers in different ways. It was finally starting to dawn on me; even without the awesome power of the internet, life could go on. I have come to the conclusion we as a society have become dependent on the internet and many times find our lives dissatisfied or incomplete without it.

Going nearly a week without the internet really opened my eyes to my own internet dependency. Before the challenge I thought my life would be miserable without the internet; I did not think I could survive. After completing the challenge I am determined that although the World-Wide-Web may have its conveniences, have a choice in just how, and why, I use my time online. My survival is not dependent on the internet, and just because it is there, does not mean I must use it as my primary fact-checker or source of entertainment. Choice. In my opinion, that is what this entire

challenge boils down to. From now on I am going to choose to limit my internet time to email and school work. I am going to choose to spend more time with my friends and family, and not online. I believe we all have a choice, either we learn to control the time we spend on the internet, or it will control us.