

The plug-in drug



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THE PLUG-IN DRUG The negative influences of TV on our life and behaviour
3th year” Our cultures are being reduced little by little to nothing. These technologies have no passport and no visa, but they are affecting us and shaping us.” Joseph Ki-Zerbo, a historian from Burkina Fasco, West Africa
Modern technology, the mass media in general and television, computers and the new mobile phones, MP 4 players in particular have influenced people??™s lives since they appeared.

Though I am not against progress and I can see and even profit from the new technology I believe that, unfortunately, without a controlled, balanced, limited use, this influence can sometimes be negative, especially for children, destroying their lives and expectations. The new generation has been raised in a technological advanced world and there has been definite controversy over many of these innovations that this new culture has brought. I am a little bit part of this new generation, but my sister, she is 33 she bought only this year her laptop. The innovating technology is a permanent part of our lives, and, though one might argue for their positive role and influence in our lives, which I would not deny entirely, in this paper I would like to underline some of the dangers their overuse may represent, demonstrate that sometimes they influence our decisions and opinions more than they should. In politics for example, at the elections on the 22th of November, people voted for the referendum, but they had no idea about it, they didn??™t understand much of it. I believe, that the outcome of that election (referendum & presidential) and the outcome of this election (presidential) are due to influence of media on grown people.

So if the media can have a bad influence on fully capable people how can it not on children, who don't have the mental capacity to make the difference between right and wrong yet. Everyone has at least one television set in their home. Watching television is a very comfortable and cheap way of spending our spare time, without having to put our mind at work, like in reading, in order to understand the meaning of a great book, or a study-case, or playing intellect games. Television offers a great variety of choices even 60 channels, with news programs, travel, cuisine, films, entertainment or music and sports channels. Parents and children can watch television all day long forgetting everything about their real life and duties.

Though one may say that television can influence peoples lives in different ways, by keeping them informed about the politics or the economy, by offering them new scientific or historical information, helping them complete their education, and also by making them feel relaxed and happy after a hard day at school or at work I would like to draw the attention on some negative influences. First, watching too much television is bad for your eyes but mostly for your mind and spirit. We watch television to escape from the realities of our lives and we often forget that what we see on the TV screen is nothing else but fantasy. We dedicate a lot of time to watching images and characters that dont exist, because movies, cartoons, and also the news are the expression of some artists or the reporters point of view, and it often has no connection with reality, especially in Romanian politics (the B1 channel exists only to cherish president Traian Basescu). Another negative aspect is that people lose faith in themselves and start thinking that those images they see on television are better than their lives will ever be, so they

ignoring their family or friends. They lose interest in their jobs and even get fired because of the influence television has on them.

Children and teenagers are the easiest victims of this false reality, because they can't make a clear cut between reality and fantasy. They watch films or news about their favourite stars and they think that cool clothes and make-up or outrageous behaviour are the most important things in life, for example: TV show: Gossip Girl, or Hanna Montana. Girls often fall victims to popular television models and they decide to starve in order to look just like the so-called beautiful stars. When I grew up we had only one TV in the whole house and only one channel with a two-hour programme until I was six years old, so I only used to watch the ten-minuteTM cartoons. Instead of television I listened to my mother and Grandma telling me stories or read a book. I was against TV in my home, in Cluj, because I thought, that if I had a TV in my room I would become addicted. But at the moment, because of the political crises that Romania is facing, I had to take my TV from the lobby into my room. Fortunately I am not addicted to it, I only watch political programs and news.

Then, on television people can watch violent programmes or films that influence their behaviour, making them more aggressive or more frightened. Unfortunately, in our country they can even be watched all day long, as the five o'clock news on PROTV channel, or even many cartoons.. Very few television programmes focus and emphasize on anti-violence themes.

People need to stop allowing children to be exposed to the violent distortion of reality that TV projects. Children should be out playing sports or just

playing around in the backyard. By turning off TV we can increase productive family time. We should begin to re-teach them good manners and good morals simply by our example.

Probably our lead politicians watched too much TV because even they have a big problem with good manners (Geoana gave a book on good manners to Basescu). Unfortunately nowadays we have replaced the parent with TV, and even spending ??? quality time??? with family in some families sometimes only means watching a TV programme together instead of talking, or other stuff, I can only eat at home if I watch a movie, otherwise I??™ m board. Nowadays, children just sit in front of the TV or computers and live through the computer game. Also, television, the internet and cell phones present many advertisements conceived to make people like and want a product without even trying it. Again, children are the most vulnerable. You can see nowadays reports on what children what from Santa??!. awful. Television has proven to be one of the most effective drugs in human history.

We can learn to live without it and we can learn to enjoy our families more. We must separate ourselves from that great monster. We must do as my family did and limit or even eliminate the need for television. I used to watch too much television when I was in the 10th and 11th grade. Then, in the 12th grade I had no television where I stayed, and I have not had a TV ??“ set in my room until now, but only because I have to know about politics, I study a International relations, lot of politics, it would be shameful if I wouldn??™ t know about what is happening in Romania. Unfortunately I have a colleague who doesn??™ t understand the Romanian politics, we are in the 3th year we

are at the end of the university, and I believe that she attended this University unfortunately without a real meaning.

If you would like to see the good changes watching less TV can make in your life and the numerous benefits that abstinence provides then join me. Turn off your TV-set or even better: throw it away! Just joking, if you paid for it in this economy , don't throw anything away!