



LETS BE GAME CHANGERS

ESSENA ONEILL

how to fight the social media epidemic and really live

This is a guide I'm writing for myself (aimed 100% at my own life) to literally teach myself how to live in the real world. This could be relevant to your life if you too are caught up in this screen addiction and the mainstream way in which we use technology – or maybe you can't relate to this at all. If that's you, you'll likely have one utterly hilarious read, given the below is SO SIMPLE and the BASICS of living. So this is kind of 'HOW TO LIVE – FOR DUMMIES'. But I mean, I seriously didn't do this before. And according to the educational system of Australia, I'm 'highly advanced'. This is the part where I confess how a straight-A student can still become a self-absorbed, screen zombie and overall distractions addict. Drama and gossip were my drugs and social approval was my life's motivator. I was obsessed with pictures and the lives I saw on screens. I ended up making a career out of it, and somehow ended up spending the vast majority of my days complaining, judging, comparing, whining and perfecting an online persona. How fun.

Okay that's maybe an exaggeration, but looking back, man was I one artificial mess! And yeah, I was smiling in pictures (I have this superpower where I can smile for a camera and act happy around other people whilst completely hide my inner misery. I know, it's truly mindboggling how one can do this [sarcasm, please don't send me an email about how relatable my superpower is – it's called modern life]). And yes, people (over half a million of them) told me how great I was – but nope, I didn't feel it at all. Turns out having people on the internet giving you praise and attention isn't the key to enjoying life. Another shocker.

Basically, I wasn't living a life of integrity or purpose. The stuff I was doing was largely geared towards self-promotion which profited on how many people followed me, which then allowed companies to advertise to these people – through me. I just find the whole system of that... icky. It's not for me. But hey, that's just me personally. I think the main reason I got so caught up in this fake 2D world (or 2D view of myself) was due to just fuelling my mind with artificial ideas of living and nonstop surrounding myself with pretty distractions that gave me instant gratification. But guys, it's totally okay! I actually became aware of all of this about a month ago and slowly but surely I'm making changes.

Okay. If you saw the news (or are an avid follower) you would know I made one big change

calling out all the BS in my life, i.e. quitting social media, as I just got so over the culture and industry I was in. But, as expected, all the equally relevant little life changes I have made didn't make headlines. That stuff is here. This document is what is literally transforming my life. The words I'm writing aren't revolutionary, they are super basic, but the fact I was hardly doing anything like this before is very concerning. If something deserves three million views, it isn't me having an emotional rant about how effed up my screen addiction was (ha ha? Nope not funny yet). It's what's below.

And yes, your observations are correct – I literally wrote this in a word doc. But hey, I wanted to share with you what I'm doing ASAP. Pretty, professional, nice-to-view formats and colours are going to happen here, eventually. It'll take some time though. This is the extremely rough and personal first draft. Again, I wrote it up for myself to stick to and follow. So if you can't stand to read plain documents and desperately need pretty shiny designs, I guess wait a few weeks... But it's coming so please quiet down you precious people.

Obvious disclaimer: I'm totally no expert at life. I mean, I don't know how I could make this more obvious? I DON'T DO REAL LIFE WELL AT ALL. I SUCCEEDED AT ONLINE LIFE ONLY. TURNS OUT THEY ARE NOT THE SAME. I was an expert at screen addiction and creating what seemed an unbreakable social media obsession. They are my leading qualifications. So I guess I can relate to the other millions of people spending hours and hours each day looking at flashing lights and pictures, and not the real world. Phone addictions, social media addictions, comparing, complaining and feeling sorry for ourselves overall addictions – this is for us. GO US! We can do this!

Theme song starts playing Dancing in The Dark, Bruce Springsteen feat. baby Monica Geller (I'm a massive FRIENDS fan).

daily rituals

Recently a friend of mine said I should think of this like a super cool super fun ritual instead of just a boring old routine. I kind of really loved the sound of it. I know there's not too much difference between the two R letter words, but hey it makes me feel all nice thinking that I have cool daily rituals to follow. If we could all agree on one thing, it's that humans need safety and balance for basic sanity. So apparently getting the basics down helps overall life appreciation x293,837,464,745. That's what the experts say. The below is essentially what every expert at life always tells us, but none of us think we have time for. We end up watching 10 hours of TV a week instead, or scrolling on Instagram all night. I don't think it's the universal problem of how many hours are in a day... I think it might be how we use our time. Again, just saying.

Side note: If someone showed this to me three months ago, I would have rolled my eyes and thought 'so lame'. But looking at the artificial way I've lived my life for the past few years, I can't think of anything lamer than that.

5.00–5.30am Wake Up – soft alarm if needed

- o Guided 15-minute meditation
- o Stretch whole body in bed for 2-3 minutes (whilst thinking of five things I'm grateful for)
- o Drink large glass of lemon water
- o Journal for 5-10 minutes (random, wild, dreamy thoughts)

6.00am Cleanse

- o Brush teeth
- o Wash face and moisturise
- o Brush hair out and deodorant
- o Make tea or another glass of water
- o Light incense
- o Light white candle near bed

6.10am Read

- o 30 mins reading current book
- o Make bed
- o Get dressed to workout

6.50am Exercise

- o Quick 20 minute walk/jog (no music, silence and nature)

7.10am Get Ready

- o Quick shower rinse (2 mins)
- o Dressed

7.20am Breakfast

- o Usually a large smoothie (dates/bananas/ice and water, at least a litre, gotta have energy)

7.30am Eating Updates Hour – catch up on the world and feel inspired!

- o TED Talks
- o Check Anti-Media/Good News Network
- o Podcasts

8.30am Ready To Start My Day! Yay! What an awesome morning!

monday to friday

I've made my work schedule from 8.30–4pm with an hour lunch break at 12.30pm. This girl's got goals and no time wasting!

8.30-10.30

- o Writing designated time slot for first book. Woop woop.

10.30-12.30

- o Video of the day, film/edit/upload
- o Work on relevant project (7-day guide/vegan comebacks)

12.30-1.30

- o Lunch break! So make one yummy meal (usually another huge smoothie or left overs from last night's dinner)
- o Eat slowly and sit outside in nature (if raining, still be present and look outside whilst enjoying the precious food)
- o If more spare time, enjoy reading/viewing something of substance/creative writing/drawing

1.30-3.30

- o Updating/working on the website
- o Checking work emails – T-Shirts, Recommendations etc
- o Working on weekly newsletter

3.30-4.00

- o Replying to one Dear Essena email (Post it anonymously onto site – new thang)

afternoon rituals

4.00- 5.00 Quality Friend Time

- o Tea and Daily Chat with sister/friend/family member
- o This time is to get out of a work headspace, relax, connect and listen to others

5.00-6.00

- o Quick shower and change into comfy home clothes
- o Cook dinner – with family member or myself or with some funky tunes!

6.00-8.00

- o Enjoy dinner
- o Family time/card games
- o If to watch 30 mins of a TV show – this would be the time
- o Reading/writing/drawing in family social room

8.00 Down Time

- o Big glass of water
- o Brush teeth, wash face, moisturise
- o Light candles and incense
- o Journal for 5-10 mins
- o Five things I'm grateful for

8.30

- o Lights out and sleep, what a wonderful day!

other essentials

1. Giving to others – Asking sincere questions about others, listening attentively. Putting serious time and thought into the real relationships in my life. Nurturing those, giving to those people. Minimising talk of myself.

2. Being present – Stopping every moment I can to smell the air. Listen to the sounds around me. Staying focused on the task at hand, not letting past regret or future anxieties ever take over the present moment. Taking five deep breaths every moment I would usually just check my social media, or look at a phone – five deep breathe reminds me: 'Hey girl, you're breathing and alive right now, and you want to spend every free second you get looking at a screen?'

3. Mediating each day as soon as I wake up – no distracting, negative thoughts = empowered mediative being. This is slowly changing my life. I'm like the world's worst over-thinker OF EVERYTHING. Meditating has become my drug. Well okay, actually screens were my drug, and this is my. Mediating is hard for me; it feels so unnatural to lie down and have no thoughts. I was always one of those people who said, 'I have no time.' Meditating gives me so much more quality time. I just use a guided 15-minute mediation; you can find them all over the Internet.

4. No makeup. This is for me because I want to fully like and value my natural appearance. Everywhere I look in mainstream media, there's perfect skin, big eyes, perfect cheekbones, perfect tans, perfect soft hair. It's called marketing and social approval. If you love applying makeup and think of it as an enhancer that doesn't dictate your self-esteem, gosh of course use it, it's your life! For me, I couldn't wait to take it off at night, I would rarely leave the house without it and I always made sure to wear it in all my previous videos and photos. I saw women with makeup on TV/social media/during music videos/on the news, and I thought I had to wear it to be enough. I'm so over thinking I need to change my appearance to be of value. This is how I was born and I don't want to feel weird without it. So I'm going makeup free for a long, long time, and it feels super empowering and incredible. Again, just my life situation. Plus my acne is getting so much better; I love touching my face and not smudging all my clothes. I save so much time and money and anxiety... It's like, 'Yeah this is what I look like, this is what women look like, I don't want you in my life if you think less of me like this.' Beauty is internal, and I think I need a big makeup cleanse to fully believe in myself.

5. At least 2 litres of water each day – 500mls when wake up, 500mls during downtime. The rest throughout the day. Confession, I'm so lazy with water – I really do need clear times of the day dedicated to drinking water... yep I'm just that cool.

6. 30 minutes of enjoyable exercise Monday – Friday. This is what I feel like in the moment. It could just be a slow 30-minute jog, or if I'm feeling a brisk walk, a guided yoga practice, or maybe a follow along exercise session (lunges, squats, crunches etc). Whatever! Just has to be something to move my body!

Monday to Friday I give myself 30 minutes of quality exercise time in nature, I leave it for the weekends to go for longer runs, hikes, mountain climbs, ocean swims and other forms of physical activity that take more time and travel.

But during the week, I make sure not to listen to music for at least half the workout. I'm an addict with music as well. It's another form of distraction for me; it got so bad in LA where I literally listened to music in my ear every chance I got – as soon as I woke up, blaring through all workouts, when I was in a car, even just out and about. It got so bad that even when I was with people, I would still have an earphone in sometimes. It was a serious problem and I thought it was normal. I was just NEVER present. So now, when I workout, I make at least the first half 100% music free. So I have to focus on my body, my breathing, nature and the sounds – real life with no distractions. It's hard when you're not used to it.

Fun fact: Believe it or not, it is still harder for me to run for me without music than it was to fully quit my career on social media.

7. No social media - If you don't know already, I personally took myself off it. I guess I can never have it for personal use anymore, and even when I used it for personal use, it made me so freaking depressed and full of anxiety. Obviously technology is a tool, and I have no doubt we as a society will eventually evolve past using it for self-promotion and artificial endeavours. But yeah, chances are you don't have a career on social media, so I would encourage you to take a break

for a week or so to see if you have an addiction or not.

8. Only 30 mins (if that) of TV a day. Maximum one movie a week. Entertainment for pure enjoyment in very small doses, not as a distractor or time waster.

I get so easily addicted to just 'screening'. It seriously took over my whole life. I grew up finding so much comfort in just watching TV shows after school, like I couldn't wait to just come home and watch TV or play on my Nintendo DS. I think it felt easier to watch funny and light-hearted entertainment than to focus on my real world goals. If I were in a bad mood, bored, tired or just feeling lazy, I'd look at a screen. Watch a movie, TV show on repeat, or play a video game. Then, when I got a little older, social media became a thing (MSN, MySpace from 11, then Facebook at 13, then Instagram at 15). I would spend hours on MSN messenger each day—everyone I knew did it. Then I got addicted to Facebook. Facebook was all everyone would talk about at school; what everyone was posting, their photos, how funny/lame/pretty/desperate everyone was. It was the most interesting and relevant thing in my life, and obviously at the time I didn't think that, but social media was what I talked about most and took up a lot of what my friends and I did together. We would take photos, plan photos, and talk about everyone else photos and statuses. It was this massive obsession I developed during my youth that basically fed off drama, gossip, social approval and just lovely self-absorbed judgement. Yeah, fun. Not to mention how much time I spent just looking at a screen, on top of the social aspects of it.

I would spend so many afternoons studying whilst watching some preteen drama/perfect people talking TV show, whilst just scrolling and staring at my phone for hours. Or I would watch stupidly hilarious YouTube videos, and find constant entertainment again for hours at a time. Another hobby of mine was to obsessively stalk 'perfect people' online and watch their vlogs/perfect pictures. I spent a considerable time doing this. And how could I not? A way to view perfect, society-deems-beautiful people all day long? Watch them? Stalk them? Feel like you know them? No wonder I developed such an unhealthy view of self, because all I was viewing was edited artificial life as a teen.

I eventually just got so absorbed into this 2D world that I found enjoyment in excessively documenting, filming and photographing my life... with very little substance. It seriously just made me so self absorbed, depressed, anxious and just bleh. So not having ANY social media (just focusing on feeding my passions – writing and the site) has made me realise how much more time I have... and not to mention how much better I personally feel not scrolling through everyone else's highlights. I don't have thoughts like, 'Oh, I wish I looked like her, had her thighs, I wish I could travel like them, or have that cute boyfriend, that perfect job...' I don't have these thoughts or anxieties because I'm simply not viewing perfect edits anymore. IT'S LIBERATING.

So this is the very first AND EXTREMELY rough draft that I'm using for myself, starting next week. I will be continually adding to this document and eventually making it a really lovely to view guide for us all to download, share, use for free. Always.

essena o neill xxx

LET'S GET BACK TO QUALITY LIVING AND GIVE THIS LIFE OUR ALL.
WWW.LETSBEGAMECHANGERS.COM