



By The Numbers

By Wayne and Tamara

I need some clarification on something my husband has told the world, but first, a little background. We've been married four years, and he has cheated on me twice. They were separate affairs, each lasting less than a year. The first one we moved past by recommitting to each other. Well, at least I did. I was getting back to my old self, and we were going out on weekends canoeing, swimming, hiking, and bicycling. Shortly afterward I discovered the second affair. That one really threw me for a loop because he led me to believe things were getting much better. Then yesterday I saw him on a website I thought was a site for uploading pictures of family and friends. I learned it is a social networking site. On the website he lists his relationship status as "it's complicated." When I asked him what that means, he said I read too much into things. To me it sounds like "I am married but still available." That doesn't sit well with me. Now he is talking about us moving out of state away from my family. Does "it's complicated" mean to him what it says to me?

Daphne
Daphne, the British psychologist Peter Wason conducted a revealing experiment. He gave university students three numbers—2,4,6—and asked them to tell him what rule they followed. Before they suggested a rule, the students were allowed to guess sets of numbers and ask if they followed the rule. A student who suggested 8,10,12 would be told those numbers follow the rule. If the student then offered 14,16,18 or 1,3,5, again they would learn those numbers follow the rule. At that point the student would guess the rule is each number is two larger than the previous number. But that is not the rule. If we tell you that 1,300,996 follows the rule, can you guess what it is? You're right. The rule says each number must be larger than the one before it. What the experiment demonstrates is that human beings suffer from confirmation bias. We try to confirm our beliefs rather than trying to disconfirm them. That's what you are doing with your husband. You think when he is nice to you he is recommitting to you. It appears more likely he is trying to keep you from calling a lawyer, telling his parents, or stopping his behavior. When he takes you out for the evening, he may be celebrating what he just got away with. Now he hopes to take you away from your support system, your family. Take a page from his book and do something without telling him. Contact the only person likely to solve your problem: a good divorce lawyer.

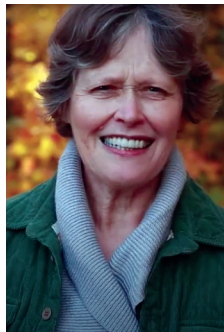
Wayne & Tamara

Benched

For four months I sporadically dated a woman I know from church. I fell in love with her. When I told her how I felt, she said she wasn't ready yet. She felt I lacked self-confidence and that made me less attractive. But she became interested again when she learned I was going to meet someone else at church. She asked if I would come by her house later that week. We had a great time, and the night ended with a passionate kiss or two. Maybe three or four, I lost count. She says God has put three great men in her life, and I am one of them. She feels I am a different person now, and she is awaiting clarity on what to do next. However, when I asked her out for this weekend, she said she is going to the lake for the weekend with one of the other two men. Should I continue the relationship or move on?

Greg
Greg, you're not a starter on her team. You're second- or third-string. If you want playing time in the romance league, find another woman.

Wayne & Tamara



Celebrating Valentine's Day

by Lorraine Roulston
'Protecting Our Ecosystem'

February 14th is traditionally celebrated with chocolates, red roses, fancy greeting cards, and dining out. Many school classrooms become decorated with hearts, retailers may set out wrapped candy hearts, several restaurants offer a Valentine's Day special menu, and most communities host social events.

For all of us who celebrate Valentine's in the traditional way, we can help protect our ecosystem with the following suggestions:

Fair Trade chocolate is a good choice — especially if found in packaging that doesn't include plastic wrapping. Unfortunately, boxed chocolates have black plastic forms that are not recyclable. I wish that these forms were made of edible wafers, paper muffin cups, or boxboard squares. Instead of candy in a fancy plastic wrap, search for honey, pickled beets, red pepper jelly, raspberry/strawberry jam, or maple syrup in glass jars. These might be considered as the best Valentine's Day gift ever.

Check out the recipes for serving a delicious creamed beet soup. Pomegranates — a festive red jewel-like fruit offers a surprise gift for Valentine's Day. The 'seed' covers, known as arils, are juicy, edible sacs containing a small crunchy seed. Both the aril's sweet, red pulp and inner seed are enjoyable to eat as well as being packed with nutrients. The red rind can be composted. Pomegranates offer an abundance of health benefits that include potassium, that is necessary for healthy nerve function and heart rate regulation, as well as providing vitamin C. They are rich in antioxidants and a good source of fibre. This fruit may help improve kidney and heart health.

Take your own reusable small bags or other containers to bulk stores to select candy or nuts. If you are having a Valentine's Day treat at a fast food place, take your own reusable mug. Select a potted plant over chemically preserved roses that are imported from Columbia, or flower bouquets with plastic wrap. Select gifts and decorations from local retailers or thrift stores. Take a container that can be reused, to serve as your doggy bag for leftovers when dining at a restaurant.

Avoid balloons if decorating your home or community event. Choose printed cards on FSC or recycled paper. Avoid sparkles which can't be recycled. For inspiring artistic souls that enjoy creating their own homemade gift cards with cartoon images of vegetables, the Compost Council of Canada suggests the following.: My ARTICHOKE every time you are away. BEAN Mine. My Heart BEETS for you. LET-TUCE be Friends. I CARROT a Lot for You. You look RADISH-ING! PEAS be Mine. You TURNIP the World for Me. I Love You from my head to my TO-MA-TOES. Like other seasonal events involving gift sharing, spread the love to make a Valentine's Day donation to the food bank. Fredica Syren, presenter of The Zero Waste Family blog, states, "Zero waste isn't about perfection. It's about progress, compassion, and staying accountable while still staying sane."



Is this really the best the City can do?

A Candid Conversation
By Theresa Grant
Real Estate Columnist

After trying very hard to go with the flow for well over a year now, I feel I must say something about these seemingly random parking spots appearing out of nowhere in live lanes of traffic all over downtown Oshawa.

Is this really the best the City can do? I commute daily and one day I was coming into Oshawa on King St. I was in the curb lane so that I could turn right onto Centre St. I went through the lights at McMillan and came to a stop. There, with no notice, was a parked car. Of course, my first thought was, what in the world are you doing parked in a live lane of traffic? Unbeknownst to me the City had put not one but three or four parking spots right there in the curb lane. They put in the parking spots, but they did not have any signage that would indicate the lane was coming to an end. After about a week there was some signage put up but really, to reduce the lanes right in the heart of the downtown. It just seems to me that there has been little to no planning for parking in our downtown core. The parking is the worst I've seen in any of the local municipalities, and something needs to change.

They have made Athol Street a nightmare with cement barriers for bicycles along with metal rods that stick out of the ground forcing you to park a certain way but not leaving nearly enough room for cars to pass each other safely in opposite directions because it's so narrow. Having the Tribute Centre there in the middle of this is just adding to the traffic nightmare the City has created in our downtown. On Bruce Street behind the Tribute Centre is a danger zone on event days with cars parked right up to Drew Street. If you are travelling along Drew heading toward King Street you cannot see if there are cars coming at all because the cars are so overparked, they completely block your view.

Another very frustrating parking issue in our downtown area is the fact that people now seem to use the left-hand turn lane on Simcoe approaching Bond as a parking lot. I cannot tell you how many times I have pulled into the left-hand turn lane behind someone just to have them stop, put on their four ways and go into the Money Mart. Why is this being allowed to happen? I have also seen cars just flat out parked with no driver in sight. This is not an occasional thing; it is all the time. Why aren't there fines being handed out for this type of infraction? It's almost like the downtown core of Oshawa is an anything goes area. People just stop and park anywhere they want. I am tired of having to wait in one long line of traffic on King to get up to Centre because there is one random car parked in what used to be a live lane of traffic up to Centre Street. This City needs to do better. They are aware of the growth and it's time they started planning for it properly.



When Technology Becomes a Babysitter The Impact of Digital Technology on Children

By Camryn Bland
Youth Columnist

Technology is woven into nearly every aspect of modern life, from daily texting to virtual ELearn classes to social media. While technology itself is not always negative, one of its most damaging uses is seen with its constant use by young children. Over the past few years, children have begun using electronic devices at much younger ages, which has reached a troubling point. Many children grow up addicted and immersed in screens, forming digital dependencies before they can walk. Living in a digital world from such a young age can make technology feel impossible to step away from, creating an unbreakable bond.

These children, who are practically raised by technology, are often referred to as "iPad Kids." These are the children who cry when their devices get taken away, or throw a tantrum the moment they feel bored. Although these behaviors may be upsetting to see, they have become commonplace in our society. They are something so normalized, yet so new. These reactions are not simply bad behavior, however habits enforced by years of learning and a system set up for addiction. It is important to understand where this dependence comes from without placing blame on individual parents. Many parents turn to technology as a tool for education, entertainment, or daily survival in a chaotic household. It's used to fill the busy moments and occupy kids while attention is placed elsewhere. Tablets and phones are readily available for caregivers to use, so it feels expected to use them to their full potential. In most cases, the use of technology in parenting isn't a choice of neglect, but of care. It's an easy solution when parents are working long hours or managing countless household responsibilities. It's a result of parents doing their best, and of attempting to use the resources most prominent in our daily lives.

A reliance on technology affects children in significant ways as they grow older. Prominent screen time is often linked to a shortened attention span, difficulty with information processing, problem solving, and weaker social skills. Instead of learning to share at lunch time, strengthening communication on the play ground, or utilising creativity when doing crafts, children scroll and text, missing out on countless life lessons. This leads to countless consequences, such as a struggle with face-to-face interactions, emotional regulation, and independent thinking. Additionally, it can be difficult for parents to monitor all the content their children consume. It's easy for a child to be exposed to inappropriate or overwhelming material online, even with parental restrictions. Social media and the internet can be unpredictable, and content is impossible to control, making it difficult to trust young children with technology on their own.

The progression of these issues is evident when I compare my childhood with that of my step-sister. Although I am only six years older than she is, her childhood reflects very different themes and aspects of technology. At the age of ten, I was talking to my friends, playing sports, and enjoying life care-free. To contrast, my step-sister, who is ten, spends most of her time glued to digital devices, whether that be an iPad, television, or borrowed cellphone. She is already attached to social media, spending her mornings scrolling on Youtube Shorts or TikTok, despite her lack of a personal cellphone. Her attention span is very short, and she is constantly bouncing from one activity to the next, unable to focus on one option. I may use the same devices now, however, the importance is the ages exposed. I had a childhood without this prominence of technology which was able to help me set boundaries with the digital world, which my step-sister may not have. As children grow older, the "iPad kid" behavior often transitions into what may now be called a "screen-ager." Now teenagers, these individuals know nothing but technology, and are unable to disconnect as the years go by. Constant phone use, social media scrolling, and digital entertainment have become normalized, blending seamlessly into society.

In 2026, technology is unavoidable, and the expectation of completely eliminating screens is unrealistic, at practically any age. However, this only highlights the importance of limits, especially with younger children. The use of technology can not continue to be an instinct for simplicity, but a conscious action paired with balance, offline activities, and healthy technology use. This is the only way to ensure future generations do not continue a legacy of digital addiction and electronic parenting. This is the only way to break the cycle of an "iPad Kid."