



***Turn Off Your TV***  
**ONCE AND FOR ALL**

Stop Living Other Peoples Lives  
And Start Living Your Own Life Now

***Marcela Bennett***

# ***TURN OFF YOUR TV ONCE AND FOR ALL***

*Stop living other people's lives.  
And start living your own life now.*

*By:*

***MARCELA BENNETT***

Disclaimer:

This book is intended to provide basic guidance only. None of the information in this book is intended to be a substitute for professional diagnosis or treatment of any physical or mental condition.

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*Dedicated to all those who want to help  
themselves to succeed, whatever their definition  
of success is.*

*Now the power is in your hands...*

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*For a long time it had seem to me that life was about to begin – real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be reserved, a debt be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life.*

*Alfred D'Souza*

## **INTRODUCTION**

I wanted to write this manual as a means to help people who want to help themselves, to take one very important step towards reaching their true potential, a step closer to their goals and desires. That step is sometimes, to simply get off the couch. In a majority of cases, it is just the couch conveniently placed in front of the TV. And this is where I want to focus my energy; in getting you away from the TV. This is the most difficult and important step to get you moving now, and whenever you want to. It is up to you how far you want to go.

Getting moving or started is by no means the easiest thing to do, but it is crucial to understand that by staying on that couch we cannot get anywhere. Or at least not anywhere we may want. If we leave it to our life alone to take care of us we would drift

towards some destination, like a piece of driftwood is driven to some beach by the waves. It will be a mistake that you will never forgive yourself for, to let life choose that “beach” for you.

Many people know that destination, know that beach they want to get to, but they remain on the couch secretly hoping that life will take them there. And I am sorry to tell you that hope does not take people anywhere, only action and determination.

Many people see a celebrity and think that it was easy to get to be a celebrity. Many people see a successful businessperson and think they easily got to be successful. But those same people would not dare to get up and try to be a celebrity or achieve any other kind of success, because somehow they know it was not so easy to get there, and they are not well-disposed to do the same. And even worse, they would not even get up from the couch. On one hand they do not appreciate other people’s efforts, but if they are to do it, it becomes a big effort. What a paradox!

But do not worry, if you are reading this manual you are already a step beyond. You have one foot on the couch and one off. Now it all depends on which foot you place the most of your weight on; where you put the most of your energy. And even though it is passive, TV has the unique capability to consume your energy.

For all of you, who want to help yourself, enjoy the book!

### **How to Use This Manual for Your Utmost Advantage**

It is essential that people realize they may be trapped in some kind of vicious cycle. Once people see this fact they will find the need, then the will, and then the strength to break free from these cycles. Once we realize that something is harmful for us, we stop using it. Nobody wants to harm themselves. The same way we would protect our kids from harm for example if we see them approaching a hot stove.

In order for you to enjoy the maximum use of this manual, you must follow the chapters and their subsections sequentially. Thus, if you are one of those people who start reading a book in the middle, pick a chapter at random or start at the end, you risk not getting the benefits the manual is intended for.

Sometimes you will be faced with an exercise which may sound silly, but believe me it is not. Often the most dramatic results lay in the most insignificant things we do. So do not underestimate the power of those exercises, it is suggested you go ahead and give them a try. They are carefully planned to help you.

At the beginning you need to get a clear understanding of why the TV is not the best place to spend your free time. If you overview/skip this step you may not succeed at trimming time in front of the tube. Having a clear understanding of the whole situation is crucial; this builds the backbone of your determination. If necessary, go through the chapters more than once. Keep in mind that in order to incorporate a new behavior in your life, you have to know by heart why you are doing it. This manual is designed to help you find that out. And every sentence you read may help you come up with the explanation why you need to stop or at least trim the time you spend in front of the tube. Thus it will be easier to incorporate a new behavior in your every day life.

Once you understand and incorporate the information (not before) then you are ready to move on to the next chapters.

This book includes a series of questions for you to reflect and answer privately, thus gaining more insight on your situation. Warning: Searching in your own head and heart for answers sometimes may stir up emotions related to current or past situations in your life. Please go through the book at your own comfort and pace.

## **Why would you read what I wrote?**

I am not pretending by writing this book to be an expert on television; that is far from reality. I leave that task to others who like spending a lot of time specializing on television studies or technical matters of that sort.

Perhaps the only aspect of my life that qualifies me the most to write this book is the fact that I have been there myself. Yes, I have been on the couch watching television for hours on end. Been there, done that!

I was always an energetic person, engaged in different social activities, studying or taking several different courses, initiating things, having plans; I always knew what I wanted. I was happy with my job, my social life, and my plans for the future which included starting my own company.

Suddenly I met the right man for me and fell in love. And when I say I fell, I mean it. I committed to this gentleman so much that shortly after I moved countries, having left my family and life in exchange for my beloved American husband. Having to adapt to another country, even when it seemed easy at the time, deep inside it was not. And it had nothing to do with the new country and people, as I was received with open arms. In so

many aspects of my life I had to start from scratch, to reinvent my life all over again. Even the simple process of thinking about it was overwhelming and weighed me down. *“Your problem is that you have too much time on my hands”* my sister said. Myriads of doubts were assaulting me on what to do next, what to study. *“Just find yourself a job”* said my sister. To work, or not to work...That was the question. As you can see, this was not as deep as Hamlet’s dilemma but it was my own problem and I did not know what to do. I did not have to work to bring money home, as my husband would take care of all the important aspects of our everyday life, and I was given leisurely time and personal space to accommodate to the new life. *“Your problem is that you are living an easy life...Too easy”*; according to my no nonsense sister.

Everything seemed to be going alright, and though the change seemed to be smooth it clearly impacted me somehow, in some deep ways unknown to me then, because it left me literally on the couch.

I started watching TV, I did not know how or why, but I found myself spending more and more time in front of the tube. The matter came out of hand and escalated to ridiculous levels to the point that if I would find nothing entertaining enough I would get into autopilot mode, zapping and zapping like a zombie

from channel to channel for 40 minutes, going back and forth trying desperately to find something, no matter what, something I could spend time on. To make things worse most of the time I was not in the mood to watch TV but I watched it anyway, like some kind of self imposed punishment. The more I watched the more miserable I felt.

Finally something clicked in me. I started to unravel my tangled brain. If I was always observant of human behavior, if I always helped others to overcome their problems, why couldn't I help myself overcome my own problems? I would just have to observe myself. So I did; I witnessed my own misery and learned from it and thus my life came slowly back to normal. I gained control over it again. I was now again full of enthusiasm and projects. Now my TV is in the basement, and I do not watch a zip of it, nothing. I went cold turkey, with the exception of the sporadic "Oprah" here and there, when time permits and only if the subject matter is of interest to me, and when I am curious about some specific program I heard mentioning of.

Perhaps it was my sister's advice, always so therapeutic and direct...*"Your problem is that you have too much time to lose"*. See, everything is so relative, she is a very pragmatic "no time to lose kind of person", I am the opposite; I love *"losing time"* (as my sister says) on thinking and analyzing matters. And she was

right on with her statements to a certain point, but on the other hand, she was wrong. Because thanks to all that time I lost on behavioral observations, this book was now possible, so not all that time was wasted.

On the other hand, I welcomed her advice as sometimes we need a good strong kick from behind. So, if you will allow it, let this book be your push from behind and benefit from what I have compiled and observed in me and others while on the couch.

*TV is chewing gum for the eyes.*

*Frank Lloyd Wright*

## **CHAPTER 1: TV AT A GLANCE**

### **Introduction to the Factors That May Be Affecting Us**

The first chapters will include explanations of all the things that may be affecting you at this time, and which constitute the culprit and core of your problem.

Watching too much TV is not an isolated problem but is typically a component directly related to several different circumstances and problems.

Part of this problem may lay in the perception of how important the TV is in our lives. Part could be a distortion of our reality. Part may relate to unresolved issues. Or perhaps it's just because we love watching TV. It may also be that we are just simply tired and want to rest, lie on the couch and hang out.

Whatever factor is affecting you falls into one category; it is a trap or a vicious cycle of some sort. And you are going to need help to come out of it, unless you want to become a loser for the rest of your life.

Help yourself.

Here you will learn to identify these vicious cycles and traps.

### **Is TV Good Or Bad?**

This is a very relative question. TV could be good or bad for you, depending on the use or abuse that we give to it. The fact that we are spending prolonged time in front of the tube may constitute an obsession or may just be a red flag which indicates some potential personal problems.

Remember this principle, anything done out of moderation is not good.

Now referring to the apparatus or the TV itself as a device - of course it is OK, it is not intrinsically bad. Nothing constitutes a problem in and of itself; it is all about what we make of it. In an ideal world, television could be used for education, information

and good entertainment purposes only. But that is not reality and we cannot sit around waiting for a utopia to happen.

If you give television preponderance in your life, you will become dependent and a slave of it and this cannot be good, can it?

### **How Much Is Too Much?**

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood? Easier said than done. It is easier to say the tongue twister than to make a woodchuck chuck wood. Well the same happens with TV, it is easier to express the concern of watching too much than to stop watching. To be able to “chuck” the amount of exposure time that suits you best, it is essential to assess how much is too much.

How much is too much? Well, this is very relative. It is directly linked with your life style, expectations and occupation. Some professions may require extensive time scrutinizing TV, such as technicians in advertising or marketing who need to analyze television programming and ads. If it is not a requirement of your profession, there is no real need for it unless perhaps an

illness forces you to stay in bed for some time. Then you probably can get away with more watching time than others.

But let's say you spend 4 hours per day in front of the tube, for no reason that you can back up other than a vague, "because you like it". This is a sign that you have to do something about it. Listen to these signs. Even 2 hours per day is too much unless you are a person with very little ambition and aspire to accomplish very little. Then it is ok, it suits you, and the more you are in front of the tube the happier it will make you.

How much is too much? It is a very personal answer. After reading this manual you will be able to figure out how much is too much watching.

You will have to come up with the right answer for your own particular case. No one can quantify how much is too much, except for you. Because everyone's life and personality is different, therefore so are their requirements and needs, which most of the time can only be perceived by the individual. And who better than you, knows your needs!?

I can show you all the problems you may be facing to resolve a situation but it is your own intrinsic responsibility to analyze your situation, and how extensive the problem is.

One little test you can do to quickly find if you (or your kids) are watching too much TV is to turn it off for a whole day. If you do not know what to do to fill up your spare time, that is clearly a warning sign. However, it is not enough to assess the real underlying problems which are causing you to watch too much.

The way you will figure it out is by reading the different sections of this book, which is designed to help you come up with the right answer for this question. The right amount of time, if any at all, which fits precisely into your life and needs.

But be careful; do not lie to yourself, when you come up with your answer. And when I say this I mean it for good or for bad, in favor or against TV. You do not want to develop an unnecessary aversion. Aversion is hate, and hate will not make any good in your life.

So consider your answer prudently, balance is the key.

And if watching zero TV puts balance in your life, so be it, accept it and try to move towards it as much as you can.

And if sitting lets say 4 hours per day in front of the tube falls into perspective with your life, so be it... But be alert! Are you an advertising or marketing technician? Do not lie to yourself!

## **TV, A Package Full Of Goodies**

We can count on TV; it is there, always ready for us, it can be intense, funny, tells us stories, keeps us entertained, and we can get news updates. And the most important of all the qualities is that it is trustworthy, more than a friend can be. It is there ready when we need it, and performs what it promises on schedule. Aren't all these desirable qualities? Aren't these the qualities we look for in any friend, relationship or partner? Apart from that, it constitutes one of the most affordable entertainment mediums, and is easily available in the comfort of our home.

Then if TV is a package full of good qualities and promises, why is it not good for us to totally embrace it and dedicate long hours of our life to it?

Well, for example we will do better investing that time on genuine human relationships, on our real life, on physical or personal development; you tell me what else. You know deep

inside what you should be investing time on, for your own good.

There are many reasons why, and we are going to dissect these reasons in this book.

TV is good entertainment. But entertainment is good only when it is not a synonym of distraction, and when it is done in moderation. (Like everything else in life).

Do you see the TV as a means of distraction?

The Webster's Dictionary definition of the word "distract" is: "To draw or divert one's attention away from something, to cause one to feel conflicting emotions". If you use it as a way of distracting your mind from what you should be doing, solving, or taking care of, then watching TV will be just a poor excuse for investing your time, and a quite harmful activity too.

And the fact that you are reading this book says that you need to take some action. Notice that some action is better than nothing, but if you manage to take a massive action, it will bring you a lot of joy and personal satisfaction.

The problem arises when we let TV interfere with reality or when we use it on purpose to block out our own reality. And it does not take a lot to get away from reality, mainly for the wandering or evasive type of minds.

### **Ways that TV Can Interfere With Our Reality**

There are several ways that TV can interfere with our reality. Below are two of them which you especially need to be aware of:

1) Television mainly interferes with your everyday reality and responsibilities.

Let me further explain with a question: How many times, do you knowingly sit down in front of the TV just to forget, avoid or postpone what you are not willing to do, but you have to?

This is how it interferes with your daily reality; you use it as a barrier to “avoid” responsibilities. You keep postponing and postponing, trying to avoid the unavoidable. This is not good for you, and especially when there are kids involved. Remember that you may not be the only one being harmed by

the constant presence of the TV. On the other hand, issues will not go away unless you deal with them properly.

2) TV also has ways of interfering between reality and your perception of it.

And this does not just happen in “wacko land”, it may happen to any normal type of person. It is very easy to get confused; after all, TV is more real, present and influential than a lot of our abstract thoughts, dreams and goals.

The majority of people feel an instant connection with the program they are watching. They can live and suffer through the story. Viewers normally develop their own perception of the actors’ or actresses’ personalities. In some cases they can feel they personally know the actors. This process happens almost naturally as we apply the same parameters we normally use to form our own perception of anyone we happen to meet in our lives, even for a brief moment. Some viewers feel some kind of closeness, as if they are their friends.

Well, snap out of it. They are not your real friends. They will not be there when you need them. Just their image will be there when the program airs. Chances are that their personalities are 90% different than what you pictured. They are there merely for

entertainment purposes, and among other reasons, for all the money they get by performing (well earned by the way).

Regardless of whether you watch TV as a way to block out your reality or your responsibilities, either of these two ways of interference can harmfully remove you from the life you could be living, the things you could be doing, the successes you could be piling up. Do you think that the actors sit down and watch TV? They make TV; it is their job, part of their lives, and thus their own story. Get up and make *your* own story. It is your turn. Get up and live the life of your dreams.

### **Getting Into the Right Mood to Watch TV**

If we could not get into the “right mood” to watch TV, we would not spend long hours on this “beloved” activity.

The moment we get on the couch and stare at the tube, our brain gets trapped and starts falling into a lethargic, receptive and accepting mood.

This happens in part because we trust; we developed a total trust towards this faithful device called TV. We are all ears and eyes for it. We are open-minded towards what we can receive,

and harbor high hopes for what we may find. And determined to find something, we build enthusiasm and expectation. But these of course are not truly great expectations; we know what we are dealing with and when we are in the mood for being entertained at a low cost, we are ready to settle for less. After all, we did not have to pay for an expensive ticket. The seats are not numbered; we do not have to get specially dressed for the occasion. If a program is not to our liking we can always change shows. It all happens in the privacy of our home, in the comfort of our pajamas. What else can we ask for?

This is the mood that we get into when in front of the tube, very receptive and relaxed. We turn into total slugs. And our brain follows us, getting sluggish and more receptive over time. This lowers even more our standards of what is entertaining and good to watch for us. Almost anything will do, particularly if we had a bad day (at work for example).

Did it ever happen to you that you get up from the couch and you are amazed at the time you spent there and even worse, how long you have been watching something that was not quite fulfilling your needs? That was not quite entertaining? And afterwards you feel empty and regret having spent all that time? But what is more amazing is that you come back to the same situation the following day.

Well, keep reading, this book is meant for you. It will help you get back on the track of your real life and wants. Good for you...Good for you!

Remember that by reading this book you have already one foot on and one away from the couch. All you need to do now is to drag the other foot off the couch. You already started to take action; the right action.

Congratulate yourself right now for reading this book!

*Use your brain, or let somebody else's brain use you.*

*Marcela Bennett*

## **CHAPTER 2: WHY WE WATCH TV**

### **Could We Have Fallen Into A Trap?**

Did you ever get up from the couch and find yourself amazed at the time you spent there, watching something that was not quite fulfilling your needs? And it was not even very entertaining for you! Then afterwards, you feel empty and regret having spent all that time?

But what is more amazing is that the following day you find yourself doing the same thing! You come back to spend a long time on the couch, a situation which you know will be regretted later.

Why? you ask yourself. Why do I do the same mistake once and again?

Don't worry; I came up with a series of answers for you to benefit from.

First of all, know that this can happen to anyone. It does not matter how bright the person is. We can all fall into this situation, but not all know how to come out of it. And in order to come out of it, you need to truly understand the situation and its intrinsic problems. Know that this is nothing other than a trap we can easily fall into. Or better to say a series of traps. And traps are difficult to come out from.

The definition of "trap" according to the Oxford Dictionary: "An arrangement to catch an unsuspecting person".

Now, what is the trap? Where is it? and what is the bait? Because, if there is a trap there is some kind of "bait".

In fact, there are several traps, not just one. And all of these combined create a snowball effect, making it more and more difficult for any individual to break free.

Let's examine the bait first. We can come back to the traps later.

## **The Bait**

The objective of any TV program is mainly to capture the maximum of people's attention possible.

Yes TV is a service, but it is mainly a profitable business which depends on a high audience volume to produce the levels of money it was meant for.

TV depends on advertising, which happens to be very expensive and thus exclusive. Why is it extremely expensive to place an ad on TV? Because, it is typically worth the investment. And it is worth the investment, because it has the ability to reach the awareness of a huge amount of people, who may turn into potential customers, leading to increased profits.

But how do they manage to get so many people looking, and staring (with a stupefied gaze) for the maximum time possible?

They study, analyze and scrutinize. What do they study? People. People's minds, your mind. Whatever traps people's attention the most. They have to find a way to permeate a product or idea into your mind with the minimum resistance possible. For this they need to catch you off guard at the maximum of your receptivity.

They invest a lot of money on marketing, statistics, and any information they can get on tendencies and preferences of the market. Extensive focus group research is performed to analyze and assess with precision what it is that makes us tick and pay attention for substantial periods of time. They need to know exactly why and when we lose interest. It is to their benefit to find out with accuracy among other things: how long our attention span lasts, what catches our eyes, how can they make us look again, either through images and or through sounds. These studies are done by demographics, by age, area of interests, by region, by ethnic group, etcetera.

The technicians take care as well of the lay out of each frame which includes among other things the precise positioning of objects and their movement, in order to make you look exactly to the area or point of the screen they desire. No matter how long you stay in front of the TV, it is designed to trap you in short time. And this happens frame by frame. Even when you do not like the content of the programs, you keep looking because it trapped your visual or hearing attention.

The visual manipulation is not applied randomly, but in 100 percent of all programming. This is not done tentatively but rather in a very “scientific” way. And the most popular

programs are probably the ones which have been very successful at applying all this knowledge and investigation.

Their success depends on your watching time; on you being physically there. They need you, for as long as you can be in that receptive mode. And they are ready to do everything possible to make you sit and stare. They need you no matter what; they need you at all cost, even against your own will. But I do not blame them; it is you who are giving them consent to use your time.

In the United States, they are masters of TV science and they apply every single piece of information yield by research. By comparison, other countries are lacking of strength in this area, and thus fail to make people watch with such intensity. If you travel abroad, you might have noticed this already. You can now realize why sometimes you find yourself watching a program even though you don't care much about its content. But you still remain watching, bored out of your mind but watching.

This also explains why, when you say for example "I will see only one or two programs", you end up watching more than you intended, including commercials. This leads to the glazed

“lobotomized” look in our face that watching too much TV is well known for.

Despite the existence of these tricks, they are not the only factors to blame for all the time you spend in front of the apparatus.

### **Traps We May Fall Into**

There are several reasons why we choose to stay on the couch watching TV and letting the hours go pass.

At first we start with small doses of TV, and we chose our programs. But then we soon start discovering the “benefits” of watching TV, and we start spending more and more of our time in front of it. In turn, it becomes a vicious cycle and we find ourselves trapped for many hours. We cannot wait till the following time they air the program again. We become faithful. We will be there the following day; the next time. Once and again. And again.

We have developed a liking to it, as if it is some sort of ritual-instant gratification. “Bring beer, sit down, have a snack handy and be ready to CLICK”. Repeat as needed. This is a great

recipe for disaster. Well, it may not be a disaster, but it is for sure far from being a recipe for success.

The more time you spend in front of the TV the more you will get trapped and the more you will like it. Did you notice that when you are in front of the TV you do not think about your problems? They seem to disappear! Magic! Gone! The truth is that your unresolved issues are still there and the TV cannot change that fact.

What is even worse is that the TV is not helping you with your issues either. Not even close. There may be one or another program that may coincidentally help, but when, now? You need to solve your issues now. Think of it this way, the more time you spend watching TV the less time you spend resolving your problems.

Do you see how TV may be OK to entertain you for a while but in the long run, it is just a trap!? Like a vicious cycle. The more you watch the more it traps you. You have to be aware of the many different ways that TV has to trap you.

Now, it is time to examine the different traps and vicious cycles we can have happened to fall into from watching TV regularly.

Or reversibly, the traps we have previously fallen into which might lead us to abuse our time in front of the tube.

## **Soap Operas**

Do I really need to explain why we may get trapped by a soap opera? I better. You see, sometimes there is more than meets the eye and this is one of those instances.

Soap operas are known for trapping mainly women because of their romantic nature. But this could happen to anyone. And they trap you so strongly because they hook you with a very enticing and engaging story that never ends.

The following series of questions may gauge the extent of how bad of a soap-opera case you may be experiencing. If soaps are not your thing, you may choose to ignore the questions, but keep in mind that they still could facilitate a better understanding of what is going on inside you. For instance, some questions apply to sitcoms too. It is always good to rule out what does not apply and thus have a better assessment of your situation.

If you are a soap opera watcher did any of this ever happen to you? :

1) Is there any chance you found yourself more than once, waiting eagerly for the following episode?

2) Do you ever find yourself thinking incessantly about some passionate, controversial or intense episode?

3) Did it ever happen to you that you cannot wait to comment on the daily episode with your friends or coworkers?

4) Do you buy any soap guide?

5) Do you feel like you cannot live your life anymore without knowing what is going to happen next to "Anastassia" or to "Rebecca" To the point that you are willing to cancel a dinner with a friend or an important appointment with a dentist or doctor, or whatever you are canceling or postponing?

6) Do you sometimes wish the time flies so you can beat the agony of "what happens next"?

7) Do you sometimes feel that this is the only thing that matters in your life? The only good or sure thing you have to look for?

I will give you 2 points per question you answered positively. If you answered yes to every question you are in big trouble, you are really trapped with the water up to your neck.

In fact if you answered yes to only one question you are in big trouble, because it means you have already been trapped. And it is difficult to get free from a trap. Welcome to the “Soap-opera club”, one of the most populated clubs in the world.

Listen, you should be getting trapped by your own life story. Why the heck are you going to feel trapped by a fiction character’s story? Don’t you have anything better to do? ...I mean it.

I am sorry to say but your life must be a little boring if you are waiting eagerly for the following day episode. And if it isn’t boring, why don’t you pay attention to your life instead?!

Start paying more attention to your life and you will get out of this trap. And if you are a romantic type by nature and love suffering and romance, you can opt for a good written novel. A book is even more faithful than television; a book can be carried with you anywhere and it is there when you need it as opposed to a specific time. And the best feature is that the story can

develop at your own reading pace and can be replayed once and again.

## **Sitcoms**

Say no more. They should be called “Seat-coms”, referring to the comedy of “Our lost life sitting in front of the TV” tragic comedy by the way.

In fact, sitcoms do not constitute by themselves a serious trap, being that the story they present has a conclusion day by day, not really enticing you to go back to your seat the following time it airs (like soaps do). We come back because we like it, it is pure distraction. And in the case of comedy-sitcoms, what can I say, it is always very therapeutic a good laugh, who does not like to feel good and a good comedy is always uplifting.

We cannot say the same about some reality programs; the conclusion takes days or months forcing you to watch again and again. You will hate to miss who is the next one to get the boot.

I would say that any kind of program that concludes the same day, such as a film, a sitcom, etc, should be preferred to those which hook you to come back one more time.

Be careful, because eventually a certain sitcom may become a very expected “event” in our lives, and thus trap us anyway. The key is to know that it is not the program itself, but what we make of it and the importance we give to it.

### **Watching TV when Sick**

To start explaining how we can get trapped during a period of sickness, let me ask you a question.

Does it happen to you that whenever you get sick you sit in front of the television the entire day?...As if the illness granted you permission to do it, free of guilt?

Well you are not alone, a majority of people like performing this activity when sick. But be conscious, that when you do this you are losing perspective on the big picture, your life. And isn't that worth your attention?

Think about this for a moment. You are sick already, which gives you some free time in the case you have a job. Wouldn't you rather catch up with a book you always postponed to read? Or call that friend that you have not heard from for a long time?

Spend some extra time with the kids? Or playing board games for example.

Turn your sickness into an advantage for you to catch up with some old and dusty project. Or whatever else you can do that your illness allows while at the same time you can move your life forward.

Let's say you are ill and are forced to stay in bed for some time. Well, you probably could get away with more watching time than others could, yes...But not the whole day.

Even those people who are prostrated for life in bed, if they have the use of their brain, it is not justifiable to watch too much television. All those precious hours, day after day, they could be building their lives, studying, even writing an essay. Nowadays technology has a lot of means to help us accomplish things, which in the past were impossible to do.

The worst is that a period of sickness spent in front of the tube, may get you trapped by more than one program you have never seen before. And once you get cured, you start watching more hours, because now you have to follow this or that program, which hooked you during your period of sickness.

## Issues Left Unresolved

Now let's examine another reason why we remain watching TV; our own internal issues. The countless issues we left unresolved constitute the most common trap and insidious vicious cycle. Any unanswered issue we leave open in our lives will haunt us until we decide to dedicate the necessary time to resolve it.

Perhaps the most remarkable capability of television is that of being a great distracter. It easily gives us the illusion that while we watch TV our problems vanish. TV is for grown-ups what peek-a-boo is for babies.

How many times do you find yourself watching TV, thus putting off dealing with a problem you have to resolve or a pending obligation?

TV is probably the most common shelter we choose to hide from our issues. This is the "peek-a-boo effect". Suddenly all the "evils" seem to be gone, but we know this is not true. By sitting in front of the tube, we temporarily relieve our brains from having to think about or solve these problems. The truth is that as we keep postponing them, the problems remain unresolved and keep piling up on our shoulders. The postponed issues become dangerous as they put more of a burden on our brain.

Eventually they appear to be heavier and bigger than they really are. We can feel it on our shoulders and this makes us more sluggish. Yes, it finally turns us into the ultimate of the anti-heroes - a couch potato.

The situation repeats once and again. We prefer to watch TV instead of thinking or taking action. Over time we carry more and more unresolved issues and problems. And nobody else than us can take care of them, but we are “busy” watching TV. Isn't it time we stop? Stop the snowball effect; it is time to give up the peek-a-boo game while our myriad of issues remains unresolved.

And let me tell you, once the situation turns into a snowball rolling down the hill, who will not feel like hiding behind the TV to forget it all? It is difficult to walk through life like this. Think, what are you trying to distract your mind from by watching TV? Deep inside, you know there is a voice that tells you what you need. What you want.

Begin de-cluttering your head of personal issues and problems, and you will improve your life immensely. And you will see that hiding behind the tube is not necessary any more.

## **How Our Brain Deals With Problems**

To picture more clearly what goes on in our minds, let me metaphorically brief you about how our brain works.

We go through life being exposed to different opportunities and events, accumulating all kinds of knowledge and problems. Every day represents a small yet important part of what we experience and live through our entire life. Every little experience is kept in our brain. Hence, we carry today all that we have lived to the present.

All the information we accumulated is nicely put into “folders”, similar to how an office employee may do filing. Further more, the human brain works sort of like a computer does. Our brain needs to de-fragment and classify the data. Organizing clutter actually is one of the most important brain functions.

Our “computer brain” is so powerful that this process occurs automatically; without us noticing it is working hard at organizing clutter. It all occurs very smoothly. Our brain classifies and files, classifies and files, on and on.

Why does this happen?

The “organizing clutter process” makes it easy to retrieve information when we need it. Otherwise it will take a long time, like when we try to find an object in a disorganized place.

But the process does not happen without us; we are the ones who decide which folder the data will go into. And when we do not deal with an issue, problem, information, etc, the brain stores it in the “Pending-To Deal With” folder.

You need to be aware of this “Pending Folder” as it contains your entire mental “to do list”. This folder appears like a pop-up ad in our computer brain, when least expected. And like it or not, this occurs very often. You can’t do anything to impede this because it is an automatic function. Bill Gates can’t help you either. The pop ups are to remind you what you need to deal with. “Pay attention to this” it says.

Those issues you have not dealt with will come up once and again; including those from the very past as well. The more issues, the more “pop-ups”, and the more obnoxious our “computer brain” becomes. With time, our machine starts experiencing overload.

If you do not deal with these pop-ups you will have a nagging sensation about issues unresolved. Once they are resolved,

then, and only then, will the brain erase them from the “Pending Folder”.

If you want to enjoy your life fully, avoid stress and walk faster towards success, you will have to start organizing the clutter accumulated in your brain. Deal with your “pop-ups” and say good bye to your issues.

### **Because We Like It**

It is a fact that the TV is full of goodies. And this fact itself is sufficiently strong to trap us, and turn us into its devotees and followers.

We come back home from work and the TV is always there waiting for us, ready for when we want to turn it on. No need to take special courses to operate it. TV can also be commanded from the distance (wherever our couch is). It fills our lives with company, noise and entertainment. Unlike other types of entertainment, this one is easily affordable and appeals to the whole family. It accommodates whichever the mood we are in at the moment, from sad to funny. It tells us the news. It keeps us in fashion.

Why wouldn't we like it? So far so good, right?! But look what happens when you start letting it lead and dictate your life.

It is a great leader and easy to follow. It frivolously points us towards whatever is "in" or "out". It dictates what we want at the time, including material objects, feelings, attitudes and programs. And by pointing these things to us it creates new needs in our lives. We now have to watch the programs that are "in" at the moment. We now have to buy that article that we saw on TV, we have to watch the latest news, we now have to see the following episode of...And thus, it not only starts leading our lives but interfering with it.

And all started because we like it, and because we like it so much we let it invade our lives. Does this make sense to you?

### **Feeling Lonely**

Are you one of those people who when you get up or soon after, you automatically turn on the TV, without even thinking of watching a particular program?

Do you like it just for the noise?

If so, this may be a sign that you need company. And even when you don't have the intention to look you leave it on, for hours. This fact of feeling alone may make you turn it on just to hear the background noise. And as it is on, eventually you end up sitting and watching some TV...for some hours!

And the following day the story repeats. Do you now see the vicious pattern here?

### **Deceiving Factors of Watching TV:**

#### **Makes us feel busy**

TV creates the illusion of fulfillment in our lives. It makes us feel busy, like we are doing something important. When we are just watching and sitting (which actually are actions too), we are also thinking about something too, but the topic was proposed by the tube, not by ourselves. Yet is that something a topic we need or want to think about right now? We are busy thinking, but is this "busy important" or just busy "fill up my time"? And by feeling "busy", we release ourselves from the responsibility of being busy in reality.

Boredom plays a big role here. It is probably boredom that brought you to the tube to start with. People who are seriously trapped by the TV might not have noticed that as they built their lives around TV, little by little dropping every other interest. In time they were left with nothing other than television. Even when they find themselves bored out of their mind watching TV, they keep doing it because they don't have a world outside of TV. Sad but true, people like these are not really living but vegetating, and do not account for much of a contribution to society. If you identify with some of these tendencies, watch it. Correct your habits now, because you can find yourself in the same situation. No matter how much you watch TV, you can too easily gravitate towards watching more. Take the right decision.

Remember, success starts by taking the right decisions. And the right decisions happen only when we are informed. You are raising your awareness now. You know that watching TV is not a fulfilling, enlightening or important activity. You now have the power to take the right decision.

The power is in your hands... Turn off the TV!

### **It replaces company**

A lot of people use television as a means of replacing friends they do not have. Sometimes is like the egg and the chicken,

what came first? The friends or the TV? Let's examine the three main possible situations.

Some people have friends, but instead of socializing prefer to sit in front of the TV. And even when they have a visit, they not only keep the TV on but, they pay more attention to the apparatus than to the visitor, as if avoiding a conversation. And god forbid that the conversation gets into deep or intimate territory, such as sharing experiencing or feelings.

Others do not feel the need to have friends or any social life because they already "have" the "company" that the television provides.

Those who cannot have friends easily end up replacing this need with watching TV instead. If you fall in this category, I say keep trying, do not give up on possible friendships. Go out and get more involved in social events.

Whatever it is that is happening to you, you will benefit from understanding that balance is the key. It is ok to watch TV but not so much of it that you would ignore or leave your friends.

Many analyses show that people who are lonely are more prone to watch television. They have the need to fill up the gap or the

silence that exist by not having other people at home to engage in a conversation, to distract their minds or interact with them, or just to make some noise. This also happens frequently to people whose kids have grown up and left eh home.

Go get yourself some friends, go to a club, take a class, and find ways to meet new people. Engage in some fulfilling activity!

### **Makes us feel like we are learning**

TV is meant to give us enough of something but not much of anything. This translates into, “it provides entertainment with just enough content to keep us glued to the screen”. For those who want to find substantial programs, the TV keeps them happy by airing some interesting programs with a reasonable amount of content, not much, just enough to keep them happy and coming back.

There only is what they offer on TV; not necessarily what you may want. The subject we may want to learn about may not be featured. Then we start watching some program we did not really want to see, which is ok if what we want is to entertain ourselves.

I cannot deny the fact that some programs are educational, some are informative and some are a source for inspiration. Others may also trigger some useful spark in your head, but these programs are exceptions.

Many programs do make us feel like we are learning, this may very well be so, and something may be sinking in our brains, but what? I bet it is all scattered, some decoration, some sports, some of this, some of that. Not much on anything right? Was all that exposure worth it?

How many repair projects have you been exposed to on TV? Did those programs help you with any specific repairs you needed to do? Or, tell me how many pies have you learned to make on cooking shows, and how many have you in fact baked?

If you want to learn something, you need to focus on one thing at a time, step by step, and concentrate on that one thing. Scattered efforts rarely yield good results. For example you may want to learn how to cook. Well, not only watch a TV program; take some good courses to give you a solid base and practice what you learned. Merely watching a TV program will not help.

So it comes down to what you make of it. If you want to learn, you need to concentrate your efforts on that specific subject. If you do not, then you are losing your time, and let's face it, you are just being entertained. It may be entertaining to watch a cooking program, but stop eating with your eyes. After all, isn't one pie on your plate better than ten on the screen?

*It seems to me that people have vast potential. Most people can do extraordinary things if they have the confidence or take the risks. Yet most people don't. They sit in front of the telly and treat life as if it goes on forever.*

*Philip Adams*

## **CHAPTER 3: IT'S ALL ABOUT PERCEPTION**

### **The Perception of How Relevant TV Is On Our Lives**

For a lot of people TV is their life. They made their lives around it and thus it becomes the focus of their attention, time and thoughts. Television is so embedded in some peoples' lives that it becomes their favorite and almost only topic of conversation.

How are they going to relate to others if they did not watch yesterday's episode of certain sitcom, soap opera, or even sports? What are they going to talk about, if they did not follow that reality show this week? They feel diminished.

How many times do you sit in front of the TV because you are afraid to miss a program?

How many times do you not want to miss a program because otherwise you cannot comment about it with your friends, or so you can converse with your co-workers the following day about it? When you hear others chatting about a program you haven't seen, do you feel left out of the conversation and wish you had seen it?

Do you feel less than others if you do not have any opinions on certain programs, because you have not seen it?

It is sad to see people with a lot of potential be compelled to do things that they do not want or would not even care about, just because others care about it, or just to be or feel part of a "group".

Talk about what interests you, regardless of what others talk about. You can always participate in their conversations by being engaged and hear what they have to say. Then it will be your turn. If they do not care about your proposed subjects, why would you care so much to be a part of their group anyway? Live your life.

### **Learn To Seize Value of Our Lives**

If you want to enjoy your life fully and become successful at something, you better not build your life around the television.

We can perceive TV as being essential for entertaining, learning and getting news, but reality is compelling and tells us another story. If you insist on giving more importance to television than to your real life; you will keep on missing opportunities to live, grow and develop your true potential.

Whatever you are getting from watching TV cannot compare with the rewards that life has to offer. But in order to get those rewards you have to get up from the couch and get them. And those rewards are priceless. That is where the real fun begins. That is where your own reality program starts. Do not switch off your own program, called "Your Life". Watching TV is like watching a dream, someone else's dream.

When you turn off the TV is when your true life starts. Are you afraid of it? Scary, isn't it?!

Forget about reality TV, you cannot get more real than life itself. It is more scary, more funny, more challenging, and unexpected. You name it. First quality entertainment! Life is kind of like an amusement park, you just have to get up and play. But life is not for sissies.

Are you ready to face your own life?

## **The Only Factor that Can Get you off the Couch**

Not wanting to face responsibility. Isn't this probably the reason number one why we watch TV, so we can distract our minds from the pending to deal with issues?

For those who are thinking that I will get you off your couch, I have news for you, I can't. If you do not get yourself off the couch nobody can. Accept the responsibility, for once and all. Accepting responsibility is the number one step necessary to get going in this life towards whatever we want to achieve.

For most of us the main problem is that we hope that somebody else will tell us the secret key to get our butt off the couch. Please let me be the one. The secret is "responsibility". Responsibility for the actions you take and for the ones that you don't.

What are you postponing in your life?

Many times I heard the excuse, "I do not have enough energy to do what I want". Then you better remain on the couch right? ...

Wrong! While this may be the case if you are ill and debilitated, normally it is not a substantial fact that you can use as an excuse

or defense for being on the couch for long. In fact, it operates against you because energy gets renewed with motion. The moment you get up and begin moving, your batteries start recharging as well.

## **We Are Not Naturally Lazy**

Let me explain something very important, we are by nature not lazy. Have you ever tried to take a picture of an animal or a kid? It is impossible, they move all the time. They have plenty of energy. They naturally feel the need to move their body, the need for action.

In fact the reason why we stay still is because we learned to be in control. Ever since we started going to school we were taught to stay still. “Do not move” “Pay attention to the teacher” “Remain at your desk until the class is over”. What a torture! Do you remember waiting for the bell? Then came the office jobs, and we remain at the desk for hours. Oh yes, we are trained to ignore the impulse for motion.

Our bodies naturally need to move. Therefore when we choose to be lazy we unconsciously feel bad; being lazy or the byproduct of it cannot feel good. We do feel guilty for not performing any activity.

Did you notice that animals do not rest until they finish their tasks, like for example catching their prey, or taking care of their offspring?

It does not feel good when we laze around; to truly feel like deserving of a break, we need to first accomplish something, whatever that is. Then and only then we can feel good. Free of guilt.

Whenever we watch TV for a long time, and even when we do not realize it, our being is calling for some physical activity. Pay attention to these signals.

### **The Dynamics of Energy - Another Trap**

Let's look at the basics of energy. Energy remains where it is needed. Therefore, the more we move the more energy we need, generate and accumulate. Our body operates the same way like a car battery. Moving, operating, and exercising recharges our batteries.

If we do not use it, we lose it.

The more we stay still the more nervous our body gets. This is how the body communicates the need to move. We may feel this signal, but the more we remain on the couch on a regular basis, the bigger the effort it takes to get up and perform even a simple mundane action. The muscles get soft, and the battery runs on low.

Then we remain on the couch, in the same place. Do you see the cycle here? We get trapped in this cycle. And let's not forget that living a sedentary life can put more weight on us.

If you think this may be happening to you, you need to get out of the chair now, move, recharge your batteries, tone up, and return to the game of life.

### **Age Factor - TV for Kids or Older People**

Some people think they are too old to start something, and they remain watching TV. Well, know that the age factor is not a good excuse. How long have you been saying that you are too old; more than a decade? Five or even two years it is a long time; you could have employed them on something more constructive than watching television!

In the past, people would live only up to 40 or 45. They had to work every day of their lives; they were never too old to work. Do you think that the Sistine Chapel would have been painted if Michelangelo (1475-1564) would have been saying all along the excuse that he was too old? Do you know that when he died, at 89 years old, he was literally painting; he fell to his death from the high scaffolding while working the famous fresco. That was a life worth living.

Now could you tell me what would be Michelangelo Buonarotti's legacy if he would have had a TV set and sat there the whole day long? Those beautiful walls and ceilings would not exist. There would be no "Last Judgment".

What about Grandma Moses? She was born in 1860 and died in 1961. She lived through the time of the Civil War, and the First and Second World Wars. She began painting when she was seventy, even though she had arthritis pain. At age 69 she was discovered by a collector and got to exhibit her works at the Galerie Sainte Etienne in New York. President Truman gave her an award for Accomplishment in Art when she was 89. She was 101 when she died (1961), remaining active until her last days. Grandma Moses never said: "I am too old".

Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston in 1706. His life was full of excitement and accomplishments. He went from being an apprentice printer to a businessman, from an inventor to a politician and to a statesman. He also found time to experiment with electricity. He also traveled the world representing United States. He did sign the Declaration of Independence. Became President of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania. And one year before he died in 1790, at the age of 83, he wrote an anti-slavery treatise. Do you think for a moment that he was like one of those people who think they are too old to start something?

It is never too late to start, so stop using your age as an excuse. Of course you will not be able for example to start ballet dancing. But you are still full of possibilities.

Now let's go to the other side of the spectrum. The kids. Ah, the kids and the TV. Where should I start?

Probably even worse than the image of an older person sitting in front of the TV losing time, is to think about kids. A majority of people think because they are kids, they can sit in front of the TV and for as long as they can, they are just kids, it is ok...

Is it ok? At an age when they need to learn good values? Kids are very vulnerable. They, unlike grown ups, cannot

deliberately discern and choose what is good for them or not. We grown ups can decide to stay in front of the TV, and get dumber, or not. Kids do not know, their brain is on a learning mission which involves absorbing any information is on their path. This is why it is so important to take care of what kind of information they are receiving. And the truth is, not even grown ups can gage or perceive the reaches of TV programming and commercials, videos or movies. Not even producers know exactly up to which extent an image or a story can influence the viewers.

Television is an accessible tool which has the power of exercising total control over you, if you let it. It starts by attracting your attention, it makes you sit still and remain silent. Then, according to your exposure to it, it possesses the natural and intrinsic ability to influence you. And it can influence your brain in a permanent way, through images, sounds, stories, emotions conveyed, ideas, words, modalities, beliefs, and patterns of conduct. It is a very believable medium; we can see, feel, experience and hence we can believe. These stimuli influence your entire way of being, the things you can identify with, your own identity. And ultimately what you do with who you are and with your time. So be very careful. Watch what you watch and what you expose your kids to, too.

If the kid wants to watch TV because he or she got already trapped by some program and you want to cut his/her time of exposure, it is recommended that you have a better and interesting alternative to offer. Otherwise, it will sound like punishment, and kids are not to blame for having gotten trapped by a tool which, after all, grown ups invented.

We have all heard of TV being used as a baby sitter. Unfortunately, many parents place the kids in front of the TV, so the TV can take care of them. But how can we do this to a kid, to our own offspring? Why and how do we dare to sit them in front of the TV for hours? Just so we can have some free time? No one with good use of their brains can say that this is a praiseworthy activity for a kid to pursue! Why on earth people have kids if they are planning to get rid of them by sitting them on a couch, so they do not “bother”? Are these the parents’ big plans for their kids? And even if they sit with their kids to watch television, is this quality time? Perhaps this is all the quality time they spend together? I want to believe they do not know what they are doing...Don’t get me started, let’s leave it there... Hopefully this is not your case.

## **Realizing How Important Our Time Is**

Ever since TV broadcasting started in 1939, Americans increasingly exposed themselves to longer times in front of the cathode-ray tube. According to the A.C. Nielsen Co, the average American watches now over 4 hours of TV each day. The first commercials started airing in 1941. The average numbers of commercials seen per year is 30,000. In a 65 year life a person is exposed to around 2 million commercials.

Are you postponing any important activity and prefer to sit and watch a program instead? Ask yourself the following:

During your day do you spend time chatting with your friends, or thinking, or obsessing about any program?

How many times do you arrange an appointment or outing around a favorite TV program?

How many times did you stand up a friend because at the last minute you got engaged in some show?

Does it make sense to you that TV takes priority and absorbs so much time and energy in your life?

What are you postponing to do?

What are you leaving behind?

Who are you living behind?

Are you relegating family in favor of TV?

Are you postponing quality time with your kids?

Are you postponing writing a business plan?

What else are you postponing? ...Are you postponing your life?

After all, how many times do we start watching a program or film, which is not interesting to us, and we still keep watching, with the hopes it will improve? And by experience we know it will not. Or even worse, how many times we find ourselves clicking the remote, and zapping for a long time without finding anything? I know people who can do this for a solid half an hour. These are signs for us to stop watching. They mean there is nothing there for us. Pay attention to the signs. Stop right there, there is nothing for you! Move on.

We cannot afford to lose all that time in front of the tube, because time does not come back. Once it is gone, it is gone forever. Friends may be gone to. Kids may grow and fly away faster than you think. Opportunity will not wait for you. Time is ticking right now and passing you by. As you are reading this line, you are doing something for you, something constructive. And you are reading this book to help release yourself from the TV and have some more time for your own life. This is great! Congratulate yourself for your efforts.

*TV is the triumph of machine over people.*

*Fred Allen*

## **CHAPTER 4: ABOUT THE APPARATUS ITSELF**

### **Television, Ray Emissions and Health**

The following section is provided courtesy of the Food and Drug Administration, and explains about issues we may need to be aware of, including ray emissions.

### **Putting Television Radiation in Perspective**

Man cannot escape exposure to some radiation. We are surrounded by natural radioactivity in the earth and by cosmic rays from outer space. This is called background radiation and cannot be controlled. We are also exposed to manmade radiation, which can and must be controlled.

Much of the manmade radiation people are exposed to comes from electronic products. These include diagnostic X-ray

machines, television sets, microwave ovens, radar devices, and lasers. In some cases, as with diagnostic X-rays, radiation emitted from these devices is intentional and serves a useful purpose. In others, as with TV sets, radiation emitted is not intentional and is not essential to the use of the product.

### **Do TV Sets Give Off X-rays?**

X-rays may be produced when electrons, accelerated by high voltage, strike an obstacle while traveling in a vacuum, as in a TV containing a cathode ray tube (CRT). Since many of the components in television sets operate at thousands of volts, there is the potential for X-ray generation. These components may produce X-rays capable of escaping from the television receiver or CRT. This unintentional emission of X-radiation can pose a potential hazard and must be controlled.

### **Is the TV Radiation a Hazard?**

Scientists have not identified specific health effects resulting from exposure to extremely low doses of low-level radiation over prolonged periods of time. However, the current assumption is that there is no threshold of exposure below

which X-radiation may not adversely affect human health. It is advisable, therefore, that X-radiation from TV sets, as well as other commonly used electronic products, be kept as low as reasonably achievable. It was for this purpose that Congress enacted the Radiation Control for Health and Safety Act of 1968.

It should be emphasized that most TV sets have not been found to give off any measurable level of radiation, and there is no evidence that radiation from TV sets has resulted in human injury.

### **Setting a Radiation Safety Standard**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has the responsibility for carrying out an electronic product radiation control program mandated by the Electronic Product Radiation Control provisions of the Food Drug and Cosmetic Act. Through its Center for Devices and Radiological Health, FDA sets and enforces standards of performance for electronic products to assure that radiation emissions do not pose a hazard to public health.

A Federal standard limiting X-ray emissions from TV receivers to 0.5 milliroentgen per hour (mR/hr) was issued on December 25, 1969. The standard is applicable to all TV sets manufactured

after January 15, 1970. The overall effect of the standard is to require that TV receivers must not emit X-radiation above the 0.5 mR/hr level when tested under adverse operating conditions. Test conditions do not represent normal use and ensure that when used under normal conditions, TV sets do not pose a radiation hazard.

### **Assuring That TV Sets Meet the Radiation Standard**

Manufacturers of television receivers and computer monitors contain CRTs must certify that their products meets performance standard under Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1020.10. All TV manufacturers must submit written radiation safety reports to FDA outlining how they assure that each set coming off the assembly line complies with the Federal X-ray radiation limit. These reports contain a description of the manufacturer's quality control and testing program and the television radiation safety design.

Manufacturers also must maintain records of test data and prepare an annual report to the FDA summarizing these records. The FDA has the authority to ask for radiation safety data including results of X-ray leakage from selected sets to determine compliance with the standard.

Television receivers imported into the United States, which do not meet the standard are not allowed into the country and are destroyed if not exported in 90 days. Importers, however, may petition the FDA for permission to correct the violations.

### **How Safe Are TV Sets Today?**

X-radiation emissions from properly operated television sets and computer monitors containing CRTs are well controlled and do not present a public health hazard. The FDA standard, and today's technology, such as electronic hold-down safety circuits and regulated power supplies, have effectively eliminated the risk of X-radiation from these products. FDA has not found TVs that violate the standard under normal (home) use conditions.

It is important to note also that flat panel TVs incorporating Liquid Crystal Displays (LCD) or Plasma displays are not capable of emitting X-radiation. As such these products are not subject to the FDA standard and do not pose a public health hazard.

Various studies show that there is also a strong probability an American person falls asleep in front of the set, at least 3 nights a week and that in an average US home a television is operating over 7 hours per day. This does not mean people watch 7 solid hours but that the TV is on. So if you are not watching it why

expose you and your family to any unnecessary possible rays?  
Even when we are not watching, the apparatus is emitting rays.

## **Computers at a Glance**

Although this book is about television, it is worth mentioning another good tool which when used properly constitutes a great resource in everyday life and when overused becomes a malady.

With the advent of better technology, speed and pricing, computers are increasingly multi-functional and represent a problem nowadays, especially but not solely with younger people. But not only kids use the computer to play games, grown ups spend incredible amount of time too.

Not all people who look “busy” are busy; looks may be deceiving. For example, it has been found that a majority of people who travel with their laptops spend a great part of their in-flight time on games, watching films or videos on the computer screen. Other common use for computers users is performing “research” not on informational subjects but on trivia.

Although the computer is more interactive, it is a phenomenon that has sometimes similar consequences to watching too much TV. This phenomenon has reached the point that the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary recently added the term "mouse potato" into our vocabulary as a new valid English term.

### **About The Placement of the TV in Your Home**

In this "modern" world, no home is complete without a TV set. Even more, if we "have to" live with it, then, its placing becomes crucial to our harmonic living. Careful planning for the correct placing of the television should be taken seriously. There are two main factors which should influence this decision. One is the emission of rays as we talked about before (with the exception of LCDs or Plasma TVs, which do not emit rays). The second one is according to the influence the television may bestow on your life. This means day after day, as it is living in our home permanently.

The place where your television set is sitting, will influence the time you feel like spending in front of the tube and also the actions you will not be performing. We tend to pick and do activities that are the most handy and easy. If you make the TV

an easily located “target”, it will feel like a natural choice to reach over and turn it on.

Let’s see, where do you have your TV apparatus placed?

Is it in the middle of your living room?

Is it in front of your dining room table?

Is it in your bedroom?

These are probably the three worst locations to place the set. Why? I am sure you heard the saying “Out of sight, out of mind”, which in this case is really appropriate. The more visible you locate the apparatus the more tempting will be to turn it on.

If it is in the middle of your living room, then you are trimming social time with your friends or interaction with your family.

If it is in front of your dining room table, then you are trimming on quality time with your family.

Is it in your bedroom? If you are single, you should be looking for some other form of entertainment. And if you are in a couple, I do not need to tell you what you are trimming of!

Is it in several rooms???? If this is the case you are in deep trouble

Due to the seductive nature of TV, the best strategy for reducing watching time is to hide it somehow, somewhere. It is crucial you place the TV in an inconspicuous area of your home. And if it is not possible, because you do not have much space or alternatives, try to hide it somehow or cover it. Ideally you will have a proper cabinet for it with doors which you can close after use.

If you have a recreation or “Family” room, that may be fine, but try not to make it the TV the center point, otherwise will be the only activity performed there and will hence be the “TV” room.

If you happen to own a home theater, that is ok, because you will go to that room only for one purpose; away from that room, you can go on with your life (assuming you have no other apparatus in any other room).

Nowadays LCD panels give more flexibility for location. If you have a conventional TV and do not have many choice locations, you can always cover it with a nice cloth.

The key is: Out of sight, out of mind!

*Your now is a consequence of your past. Your future is a consequence of your now.*

*Marcela Bennett*

## **CHAPTER 5: A SHORT STORY**

I thought Roger's brief story will be needed before we talk about the solutions in chapter 6. Who knows, it may inspire you to find your own solutions, because happy endings are possible.

### **Roger's Little Break Through.** By Marcela Bennett

The rear blinds were casting a dim striped pattern light; one could count the many lines formed by the sun's rays on the white paint chipping from the ceiling. Some pink, some yellow, fast turning color shades. Stillness was taking over the streets and the birds were rushing their last chirps. And Sandy, the 9 year old shabby Siamese was chewing his last pieces of food on the carpet.

“Hey Sandy!” shouted Roger. “Well, I’ll pick it up later” he thought.

The telephone started to ring, it was probably Amy his girlfriend, but he could not bother, he was not in the mood anyway. Roger was sitting on his favorite brown cushiony chair again. His right hand caressed the arm for a while; the leather turned shinier and smoother with the years and it was getting better.

“This feels good” he exclaimed, but nobody was there to share his sensation.

Then he slowly lowered his hand till he could feel the lever and swiftly stroked it in position; just right there. How to get it right came with practice.

“Yes, this is more like it,” he thought. Feet propped, socks half off, with his favorite mug chilling his palm.

The same old cold and unfriendly feeling of the office was almost vanished now. The discussion on that ridiculous and futile project two hours ago finally stopped replaying in his head. He was regaining control, and was now free to do as he pleased. He released his breath and click.

But his favorite program was over.

“That damn stupid meeting” murmured Roger with a sigh.

He started zapping. For sometime he held an expectant look in his eyes, his facial features and complexion seemed to change with the erratic blinking of the reflected light. He was determined. If he could only find something worth spending a couple of hours on, then he could go to sleep. But he started getting weary and tired. He rubbed his forehead with his free hand, and that felt good. Then he released the remote which bounced on the couch and sled both open hands steadily down to his neck, and paused.

“Another beer will do me”, he said to himself nodding. But he was not totally convinced.

He reached over for the nearly empty glass, and froze with disgust to the sight of a moth floating on the amber liquid. It might have come through the thin sliver of window open in the kitchen. And perhaps Sammy slapped it down to death.

“It is dead”, he observed. “I wonder how long it managed to live, three days, one week? Did it find a mate and procreate?”

Well at least it didn't have to deal with a stupid boss like I did for the past eight years." The discussion he had earlier at work flashed back to his head together with other disputes of long ago. Well, no, they were settled but they were not over.

"It's not over, till it's over." He thought. "I'd better be dead like the moth"

"Nah", he said shaking his head.

He then looked down to the "poor thing" again which was now flapping. He went and swiftly opened the closest window wide, and with a motion of the glass threw the beer up in the air to release the moth.

"Fly little thing...Fly while you can." He reflected with sad compassion.

His eyes followed the flimsy movements of the moth till it landed on the bright and warm street post lamp. He contemplated the possibility of the moth being grateful to him. For a brief moment he felt good about himself, perhaps for the first time he was doing the right thing. These thoughts were somehow liberating. He, the eternal loser would have some redeeming qualities.

“Nah”, he dismissed that thought. “Tomorrow I will be the same loser, working with the same bunch of idiots, on some silly useless task”

“Why can’t I be like the moth? It for sure knows instinctively where to go. It did not hesitate on going towards the street lamp. If I would only know where to go, I would change my job I guess. Maybe, like the moth. I should soak myself in another glass of beer first...Hmm, yes beer and I will see if I find something to watch this time.”

As he came across to this deep understanding of his needs, Roger hurried to the refrigerator and back.

“Sandy get out of my chair!” he exclaimed while pushing the cat away with indignation.

Roger sat on his comfortable chair, caressed the leather briefly, propped his feet up again, and with the remote in his hand, he regained the control of his life again.

“This feels good” ...he said.

*I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.*

*Groucho Marx*

## **CHAPTER 6: THE SOLUTIONS**

### **Introduction to the Solutions**

Consider yourself lucky to be reading this book, you are not alone, others do not have any sort of help. You have help in your hands; do not let it slip through your fingers.

In fact, by having read this far, you are well on your way to break free from the tube and regaining lost time. Time you can use to build on your unique self success.

You are just some steps away from your goal, do not give up. With all you have read, you have gained a better understanding of why television is not good. And it has nothing to do with the TV itself, but more with what you do with it. Or better to say, what you do not do while watching TV.

Now that you know more, you may want better for you. You are now ready to reduce the amount of exposure. I know it may be tough, it may feel like a friend is parting. Some separation anxiety may take over you, but you are not going to let it win, right?

After all we have learned about TV, wouldn't you agree that TV is like bad company? Like a very dominating friend? And you wouldn't tolerate an overbearing friend for long; would you? The problem is that this "friend" does not come visit you, which will make it easy to avoid by simply not opening the door. But rather this "friend" lives inside your own home!

So yes, you will have to learn how to live with it under the same roof and interact with it at your own will. No more television leading or invading your life and telling you what to watch and when. You are the one in charge now.

So charge on with the solutions because there are several you can get hold of.

I know you can do it, go ahead!

## **Exercise 1:**

### **An Eye Opening Questionnaire on What You Have Been Doing Up To Now**

It is recommended to be in a comfortable and quiet place to do this exercise. Just ask the questions to yourself keeping in mind that the more sincere you are, the greater the benefit you will obtain. We humans tend to lie to ourselves, mainly when our feelings are involved. It is like a self “protection” system, which is actually counter productive and causes a lot of harm.

Read one question at a time and try not to move onto the next one until you are done with it. One question at a time, unless you could not come up with an answer or the question does not apply to your situation.

You will need to get enough paper to write on and a pen. I advise you to write down whatever answer comes to your mind. Do not worry about mistakes, loose words or sentences that are incomplete. Do not get obsessed in trying to workout an answer. Take it easy and light. The last thing you need is to get one obsession out of your head and replace it with another one. Remember, balance is the key.

What you want to get from this exercise is an honest personal overview of your own situation. And do not worry; you do not have to tell your answers to anyone, except yourself. Sorry, there is no other way around it. You have to get in contact with your internal situation. It may cause you a little bit of upheaval. But hey, no suffering no gain, right? You are not going to chicken out now, are you? So, go on and start reading (skip the questions that do not apply):

1. How do you feel while you are watching TV? Do you feel at ease with the decision? Does any “guilt bell” ring in your head while watching TV? How often?
2. Which programs do you watch currently? List them all down in no particular order. Soap operas, sitcoms, reality TV shows, any other entertainment programs, any informative program, news program, sports programs, serials, any program about facts, events, theories or forecasts, educational programs, news commentaries, programs on political, economic, scientific, cultural and social matters, special events, religious programs, cartoons, videos, films - whatever else that comes to your mind.
3. Do you watch commercials or other advertisements?

4. Do you rent or watch films or other video rentals? How many per week?
5. Do you often turn on the TV just to hear the noise?
6. Do you often feel like you are too busy, like you do not have enough time to do things, yet you spend long hours in front of the television?
7. Do you watch majority of educational programs, history, documentaries, cooking, decoration program, etc.? List them.
8. Do you watch TV because you feel physically “tired” all the time?
9. Apart from watching TV, do you spend often spend time chatting or thinking about it?
10. Do you watch TV because you feel too old to start something new or just simply too old?
11. Do you have the sense that you are leaving things undone? Do you think is there a chance you could be

avoiding responsibilities? What is exactly that which you are avoiding?

12. Do you ever choose to sit in front of the TV while being absolutely conscious that you are living things undone or unresolved?

13. Do you recall any time you have arranged an appointment or outing around a favorite program?

14. Do you sometimes feel bored? Does it happen before, during or after watching TV? Or during all those stages?

15. Is there any possibility you are trying to avoid dealing with a specific problem while you sit in front of the TV?

16. Is there any possibility you hide behind the TV because there are some personal issues you are afraid of resolving?

17. Is there any possibility you hide behind the TV because there are some new activities or actions that you do not want to do or start, because it triggers somehow some fear?

18. How many times have you stood up a friend because at the last minute you got engaged into some show? How did you feel about it? Are you at peace with that decision?
19. Does it make sense to you that “it” takes priority in your life? If you answer yes, then articulate the proper reason why.
20. Are you relegating any member of your family or friends because a program takes precedence? Write down the name of the person/s. Identify the program/s.
21. Are you postponing gathering with friends or family in favor of TV? Why? Is this enough reason? Would I proudly tell this reason to anyone else than myself?
22. Is there any chance you are postponing quality time with your kids when you sit in front of “it”?
23. When you watch “it”, are you postponing watering the plants, taking care of your dog, or cleaning/organizing your home?
24. Are you postponing or starting your own business, or any other project, or hobby? What is it?

25. Is there anything else you can think of in your life that you may be postponing over all those hours you sit in front of the tube, in your life?

## **Exercise 2:**

### **A Sobering Time Calculation**

We have seen already that the average American watches over 4 hours of television per day. Now let's find out exactly how many hours do you watch?

Ask yourself the following questions. Answer them realistically to assess the time you spend on the TV on a regular basis... If you do not know exactly, please come up with an average amount and try to make it a round figure.

1) How long do you spend in front of the TV on average per week? Think day by day and the programs you watch, count movies too.

2) How much time do you spend talking about programs with friends, co-workers or relatives per week?

3) How long on average do you spend per week reading, worrying and talking about actors or actresses and their lives? (Count magazines, conversations, etc)

Now fill in the blanks below with your weekly estimated hours:

<u>Our Example</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Your Hours</u>
1) 28 hrs	Watching TV	_____
2) 2.5 hrs	Talking about TV	_____
3) 1 hrs	Time for following lives of actors / actresses	_____
Total 31.5 hrs		Your Total _____

From here, take the hours you dedicate per week to television and divide them by seven, which gives the average per day:

\_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 7 = \_\_\_\_\_ (total average time per day)

Example; 31.5 hrs. ÷ 7 days = 4.5 hrs per day

Now take the “average time you spend per day” and multiply it by 365 days.

\_\_\_\_\_ x 365 = \_\_\_\_\_hrs you spend per year

Example; 4.5 hrs per day x 365 = 1642 hrs

Please follow me closely here. There are 24 hours in a day, but approximately a third of that time we are sleeping. And when we sleep we cannot watch TV, or perform any activity like learning or eating, etc, right? So in order to come up with a more realistic figure, we are going to use only the amount of hours we are awake. This will probably be around 16 to 18 hrs per day. I invite you to do the calculations with the average amount of hours you are awake per day. The finality of this exercise is to show you a piece of your reality, and how TV is affecting your life.

So let's say for example that you sleep an average of 8 hours per day. This gives us 16 hours that we have available to perform different activities. Therefore:

Example; 24 hrs - 8 hrs of sleep = 16 active hrs

Write down your times:

$$24 \text{ hrs} - \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ hrs of sleep} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ active hrs}$$

Now, take the amount of “hours we watch per year” which you previously calculated and divide it by the hours of activity time. In the example I am using it is 16, you of course plug in your own amount.

This will give you the total amount of days you spend per year in front of the TV.

$$\text{Example; } 1642 \text{ hrs} \div 16 \text{ hrs} = 102 \text{ days per year}$$

(102 days per year are equivalent to almost 3 ½ months per year that the average American watches TV; more than 1 quarter of the year).

What is your total?

Hours we watch per year  $\div$  active hours = days per year  
dedicated to TV

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \div \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{Total days per year}$$

Now let's go a little further. Multiply your total number of days per year by the amount of years you have been watching TV.

I will arbitrarily use a period of thirty years for the average American in the following example. Divide the total number of days by 365 to obtain an approximate number of years spent in front of the television:

102 days x 30 yrs. = 3,060 days (8.38 years dedicated to TV)

\_\_\_\_\_days x \_\_\_yrs. = \_\_\_\_\_days (**\_\_\_\_\_ years dedicated to TV**)

What is your grand total in years...? It is scary, isn't it!?

Could this be a clear indication that you are not busy enough? You might have too much time on your hands, but why lose it like this?

Think, what do you want to accomplish one year from now? If you go on like this, what effects will this have on your future and how does it affect your goals?

Wouldn't you rather be playing with your kids, writing a letter, planning a party, drawing, gardening, playing tennis, exercising at the gym or reading those books that you have been postponing for some time?

Wouldn't you rather be doing something more useful? Your hours are precious; respect your time in order to respect yourself.

Do you now realize that you may be lying to yourself when you think you don't have time for this or that? You certainly could trim some of those days per year you watch TV and dedicate them to something else.

With this realization, you have no right to say "I don't have time to do this". What are you going to do? You can proceed to the following exercise for further help.

### Exercise 3:

## Assessing Where You Stand & Which Approach to Take

In order to make things a little more visual and to help you assess where you are standing and to see clearly where you want to go, let's have a look at Ron Kaufman's Spectrum of Television Addiction chart:

### The Kaufman Spectrum of Television Addiction

<b>Viewing Frequency</b>	No TV Watching	Sporadic TV Watching (watch one or two particular shows each week)	Moderate TV Watching (watch at least one program per day)	Heavy TV Watching (more than 4 hours per day)
<b>Television Habits</b>	TV set remains off	Programs are watched in their entirety, then TV set is turned off.	Will research programs before watching. Balance between watching entire programs and channel surfing.	Watch TV out of habit, not interest. Heavy channel changing.
<b>Social Habits</b>	Involved with many non-TV activities. Have many hobbies and interests. Read a lot.	Watch TV out of interest and curiosity. Many non-TV interests and hobbies. Enjoy reading.	Watching TV high on list of favorite activities. Will plan social activities around TV schedule.	Frequent feelings of boredom. Will opt out of social events to watch television. Poor diet, exercise and reading habits.
	<b>Phase 0</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>

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First of all, be realistic about assessing which Phase you fall into (I am sure it is not Phase 0, otherwise you would not be reading this book - if so you are probably a weirdo). Then identify which Phase you would ideally want to be in. It is as easy as that. Now you have a clearer vision of your situation.

What is not so easy is to start walking towards your ideal placement in the chart. But relax, you are not alone; keep reading and remember that you can get wherever you want if you apply yourself to it. Think about all you have to gain, and move forward.

If after all you have read, you still want to keep on watching TV for as long as you are doing it, go ahead, and “entertain” yourself like that. But remember, it is not recommended at all. If you want to snap out of it and jump into the reality of your life, start by deciding how you are going to approach this problem.

There are three basic approaches you can employ to cure this “malady”; the secret is to find out realistically what you feel you can tolerate.

1) You can try to go cold turkey. But, keep in mind that if you fall, you will fall hard, and you may get so disappointed with

yourself that this may affect other aspects of your life. If you manage to succeed, nothing will be able to stop you on your way up in your life. It will show your courage and determination. Job more than well done!

2) If you can't go cold turkey, you may decide to shoot for trimming just enough time off your TV exposure to make room for some more exciting activities. But keep in mind that this approach may not be very fulfilling after all.

3) The third approach will be to try to shoot for balance; it is a key that opens the door to happiness and contentment. You will have to find time to do everything you want, and you can accommodate TV, but very sparingly. It can no longer be high on your list of activities. Keep in mind that balance has to be maintained all the time, if not you will come out of balance once again. Don't worry, you can always recover it. And if the scale leans towards 100% TV-free, the better, in this case you want to be "off balance".

Now that you have read the three options, decide which one is the right approach for you. Circle the number in pencil. Below you are provided with a set of solutions:

### **If you circled number “1”:**

This means you are going cold turkey; you may strongly want to consider the following:

- The most effective step you can take is to hide the TV or relegate it to an area of your home where you never go. You could place it in the garage for example. Think of an area in your home you never go to. And if it is not possible, because you do not have much space or alternatives, at least cover it. The saying “out of sight, out of mind” really works wonders in this case.

- You can consider to get rid of it completely, give the TV away or sell it. If this is the case, be aware that you may want to have it to watch special programs like the Olympic Games or the Super Bowl or subjects you may eventually be interested in. You can always resolve to watch these programs at some restaurant, bar or at a friend’s home, but there is only so much you can “visit” your friends, right?

- You want to find some activities to fill up the time you are freeing. The fact that you are taking option number “1”, says that there is a high chance you already know what you want to

do, and this may be the main reason why you are going cold turkey.

**If you circled number "2" or "3":**

Depending on how aggressive you want to be, you may want to consider some or all of the following solutions:

- Take charge and start by at least reducing the time you expose yourself to the tube. Resolve today to cut some time out. It is a step to freedom. Identify at least one program you can cut from your list.
  
- Try to stop watching at least one of those insidious programs like a soap opera or reality TV show which force you to repeatedly come back to the couch. You will do yourself a big favor and provide yourself with a lot of freedom and extra time. Remember; do not come later with excuses like you do not have time to do this or that.
  
- Try to stop watching all of those insidious programs.

- You will have to find something more fulfilling and substantial to replace the time you are freeing. We will take care of this in exercise number 6.

#### **Exercise 4**

#### **Practical Advice on How to Come Out Of These Traps**

Now it is time to think about the changes that you are going to make.

This is about your plans and visions for your future life, which starts right here. Think of this book as the turning point which separates what your life was, from what it will be. You have already calculated the time you used to spend watching television, you have decided to reduce the time of exposure to suit your needs and you have compiled a comprehensive list of your behavior about television.

From now on you are taking action. You are no longer just learning or thinking of your problem. You are now deciding on which changes you will make regarding television.

This section will give you orientation on the possible solutions you may apply if you want to reach your goal. For this exercise you will need to bring out the paper where you wrote the answers to Exercise Number 1. With it in hand, check the answers you gave and look for the corresponding number and comment in this list for guidance.

1. If you hear any guilt bell, it's because your conscious is trying to tell you something. It is time to take action!
2. Check your list of programs for the ones you are ready to cut out. Think, could you cut them all? Will you cut them all? When? Remember, avoid subordinating your life to a certain program, this will not help your self esteem.
3. Could you at least consider cutting down on commercials? If you answer yes, you can have a magazine or a book handy to read during ads. You can take the opportunity to do some exercising for example. Or get yourself one of those digital video recorders that allow you to record the program to watch when you please.
4. Are you ready to trim the quantity of videos and or films you watch per week?

5. This may be a sign that you can't stand feeling lonely. Why don't you try tuning in to a radio station of your liking and listen to some music, or get an audio book read to you. The best advice may be to get yourself company of some sort, visit people, call friends, join a club, and get more active socially.
6. You may need to get into perspective with your life, assess what is important and what is not. You may want to re-read "The Perception of How Relevant TV is in Our Life" in Chapter 3. You may want to take initiative to do something more substantial than what you have been doing up to now.
7. Which programs are you ready to cut from this list? Or how many hours are you ready to cut down? Remember that they may make you feel like you are learning, but in reality is this exactly what you wanted to learn? Is there a chance you can buy a book and learn faster? Or can you get your hands on a repair or decoration project and finish it faster than watching the same program day after day? Would you consider taking a course?
8. Refer to The Dynamics of Energy in Chapter 3. You may benefit from getting up and doing some exercise, take it easy

at the beginning and then increase the time. Think about the benefits, you will recharge your “batteries”, gain muscle tone, and also lose weight (if you need it).

9. Is there any chance you do this because you want to have something to talk with your co-workers or friends about the following day? If this is the case, you may consider starting to impose your own topics of conversation to something that interests you. If they do not pay attention to you, or do not care for what you care about, then you may want to reconsider your friendship or the amount of time you spend with them.
  
10. Unless there is a deadline, you are never too old. Consider that this may just be an excuse that you have probably been using for some time. Cheer up, you are still on time, because it is not about where you want to get, it is about the journey. Find some activity of your liking. Take at least one step towards a more exiting life; you deserve better.
  
11. If you answered yes to any of the questions from Number 11 to 24, then you need to start taking responsibility for yourself and the important people in your life. Only misery, boredom and vicious cycles await you if you do not care. In turn, there is a lot of reward in responsibility. Face your life, and enjoy

it. Start by thinking about taking care of the things and people left behind, postponed, left undone, etc. You will feel better, so much better.

Whatever your answers are to the questions, remember that the only way you will succeed at watching less TV is to find alternative activities to fill up this gap of time.

### **Exercise 5:**

#### **Finding a Substitute for TV**

Even if you understand all that I explained to you before, and agree that you can dedicate your time to do something more satisfying, you will go back to the TV if you do not find a good substitute for it.

Therefore, take time to think of activities or hobbies you would enjoy doing (other than watching television). It is imperative that you find a replacement.

Take a piece of paper and write down all the activities that you like doing that come to mind. Take your time as you want to

give good thought to this. A hint, think not only of the activities you like nowadays but also focus on the things you enjoyed when you were a kid. This may come to your mind in a hazy manner, but in the end we do not change much since childhood. Activities of the past may still make us happy today. What were your interests in the past? They may make you happy now.

You also want to think about your goals, and which activities you can perform in order to achieve them. Then place them in order of importance or priority for you.

Once you have your list ready, keep it handy and close to the remote or the TV, because next time you go to watch TV you will use the list to check which of those activities you feel like doing. Without this “Things I like doing” list, probably nothing will come to your mind.

Now, you have your thoughts down on paper. Next time you think of going to the TV, pull out that list and pick something you may do instead.

## Exercise 6:

### Say Good Bye

This exercise is not for everyone. Some people may find it completely silly, but others love it and find it very effective and necessary. So, if you want to give it a try here it is (find a moment of quite and solitude):

Get comfortable in front of the TV which should be off (do not turn it on for no reason), and say in your own words, your “good byes”. Talk to it as if you are talking to a friend, be nice and at the same time be sincere. Start by talking about the good moments you had together, recall them and thank it for them. Then explain the reason why you want to put some distance between the two of you and tell it about your plans for the future. Say everything you want to say, this is your chance. Then say good bye, and get up and walk away from it.

In extreme cases you may bury the TV in your backyard and hold a “funeral” - however we do **not** recommend this approach!

## Exercise 7

### Dated Promise Reminder

Do not read any further unless you are committed to succeed. The exercise consists of three parts. Find some quiet time. Once you sit down, you want to be able to do the exercise until completion, or the effect of it will vanish. Do not cheat and skip any part, because you would be cheating to yourself. It will take about 15 minutes.

Let's start:

Get paper and pen. Then think about your decision of trimming TV time and write down a promise to yourself. Take the time and put on paper all the activities you are planning to do. You want to focus on your ideal goals. Do not stress about the fact that you may not be able to comply with everything you wrote. Don't worry, in time you will see some or all of these things manifesting.

Now get the sticker that is provided and fill in the blanks with your main goal or activity of your choice. Once it is written, get the remote control and paste the sticker on the back of it.

When you place the sticker on the back of the remote, be careful not to paste over the door of battery compartment as you will not be able to open it in future. Believe me, I have seen this happen before!

Please note that the sticker is only provided with the printed version of this book.

If you got the e-mail version and you want to do your own sticker, you can write something of this sort on it:

*“The time that I spend watching TV will never come back. I could be \_\_\_\_\_ instead. Dated: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_”*

Note: it is very important to date it so that you can check on your progress in future.

Keep in mind that the sticker may be seen by others, so you may not want to write exactly the action you want to take because you may feel embarrassed (for example exercising to lose weight, learning to cope with anxiety, etc.). You can get around it by filling the blank with something like:

*“Any time I lose watching TV is time I could be investing on my unique self success” or “working on my success” or*

“enjoying my life”, or any other general comment that inspires you. You can always remind yourself what this means by checking the paper (refer to Exercise 5) where you wrote the promise which you have now placed close and handy to the TV set.

## **Closing Reflections**

This book is a powerful tool, designed to help people realize what they can achieve if they do not watch too much TV. It is meant to give a helping hand to those who want to improve their quality of life.

If still after reading this motivational book, moving forward for you remains difficult, do not feel inadequate or alone in your suffering. Remember Roger’s story? There are millions of people in comparable situations; for a brief period they manage to see the light at the end of the tunnel, only to come back to the same place shortly thereafter. They remain stuck. What happened with that enlightenment?

Sometimes, not even a motivational speaker can make us take action. Why briefly after hearing motivational speakers we are not motivated any more? While they remain talking to us

everything is great, we seem to understand and we grab the concept. We are feeling motivated, we reach new heights, our spirit soars, we are inspired. But a short time later... poof! All those feelings vanish without us even noticing how or when.

Well don't worry; you are not alone in this one. This "enigma" puzzled me for a long time, until I found out the answers. How could I understand and be moved by all those words of advice and yet not know what to do afterwards?! How could I listen to motivator after motivator and not be achieving any results?

An army of motivators can talk to you and your brain says: "yes, yes, that's great - now what?!" I realized that motivation has to come from within. It has to come from you, from your own inner voice.

Others can make you jump up to the sky, but when you fall to earth, you fall into the same place you were before. "We are still in Kansas Toto". It is not fair, but that's the way it is for most people.

I am not saying that motivational words are not good or worth hearing. It is the other way around. Long live the motivational speakers! See, it is not about them, ultimately it is about us.

Where does our energy go when they are gone? Where has our enthusiasm gone?

I believe in building from the inside out. Otherwise those inspirational words and advice simply will not work. You will remain frozen; be careful as this may last a lifetime. I believe that before taking action we need to first develop a sense of who we are and what we want. This is not something that everyone knows. A majority of people have no clue of who they are, and thus don't know what they really want and need. And tell you what, it is no easy task; it takes time. But, isn't it worth the time and the effort?

Know yourself first, then, set yourself towards accomplishing your own unique self success. Motivation comes from within; develop and understand your inner self or you will remain stuck on your couch for life.

**It's never too late to "start" living your life. Get off  
your couch and live a little.**

**Now the power is in your hands...**

**Turn off your TV!**