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## A Screw Loose



by Liz Holzemer

### Tuned Out

They're everywhere you look these days—those Star Trekkie phones attached to earlobes. I remember the first time I saw one. I was enjoying lunch out with my son and daughter when I noticed a couple across from us. I thought it odd that the wife was intensely examining her lovely Waldorf salad while the husband was animatedly engaged in what appeared to be lip-syncing. It was apparent he wasn't making eye contact like most do when conversing. Then I realized he wasn't speaking to his wife (no wonder the poor woman was fixated on her plate of leafy greens!), but rather to thin air via the futuristic-looking-blue-blinking wonder attached to his ear.

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It was disturbing enough to witness a man disengaged from his own mate, but more unsettling was his wanton disregard for what he was doing to his own health. As a brain tumor survivor, the last thing I want to do is transmit cancer causing carcinogens to my own grey matter. Excuse me for digressing.

Are we so self-important we have to be connected at all costs? We all know the answer. I give you several more examples to illustrate my point:

Last week at my son's pediatric appointment, I sadly watched a father and his pre-tween daughter not take advantage of relationship building time. What could have been a perfect opportunity for father and daughter to embrace bonding time and nurture a relationship was sadly forsaken as they tuned out each other. While the daughter rapidly TXT MSG (sorry—text messaged!) at 100 CAM—(characters a minute—I still remember feeling competent at 45-60 WPM in my 7th grade typing class) the dad caught up on business calls despite the NO CELL PHONES ON PLEASE message posted front and center in the office. No wonder so many girls grow up with relationship issues. If it's not absent fathers; its absent fathers hung up on electronic devices.

While running errands over the weekend, I watched a young couple take their infant son on a walk. It looked like a perfect suburban family moment, but was shattered when once again, I noticed both mother and father were plugged into their own matching iPods literally strolling to their own iTunes. Talk about setting a bad learning example during the formative years of life. I made a U-turn out of curiosity to see if junior was also plugged into his own iPod. Mark my words, it won't be long before strollers are electronically equipped with Leap Frog laptops and baby Blackberries.

As I finished my errands, I had to make a pit stop—this writer needed to escape; she needed a Starbucks moment. I walked into a realm of plugged in, albeit tuned out patrons. A sea of laptops, iPods, and Sidekicks greeted me. A stack of New York Times and Denver Posts remained freshly stacked.

Don't people converse anymore? Debate issues? Make eye contact? Engage in each other?

Don't get me wrong, I own a cell phone and recently

\*Mommy  
Hullabaloo

\*Dirty Laundry

\*The Morrison Boys

\*Side Dish

\*Comments From  
The Carpool

\*The Foggiest Idea

\*Home Away  
From Home

\*Small Town Soup

\*Mommy - Daddy  
Dance

\*From The Frontline

\*Life At 40

\*Livin' In My Head

\*Stgh, Moan &  
Garfbtke

\*Don't Get Me Started

\*Dad Libs

\*Lady Of The House

\*Blissfully Numb

\*Mommy Chronicles

\*Domestic Engineering



learned how to operate my Nano iPod after much difficulty, but given a choice, I'd much prefer to engage in my children's lives without battery powered accoutrements; notice the ladybugs and caterpillars during a walk along the greenbelt to our local park; express my concern to a friend without cords dangling from my lobes.

Tuned out? No thanks, I choose to tune in.

Liz Holzemer is the founder of [Meningioma Mommas.org](http://Meningioma Mommas.org) , an online support group she founded after surviving a baseball-sized meningioma brain tumor. She is a freelance writer, [LizHolzemer.com](http://LizHolzemer.com) and is currently looking for a permanent home and cushy advance for her book; I Have a What in My Head?! Liz is a 2004 Woman's Day "Women Who Inspire Us" recipient. She lives in Colorado with her husband and their two miracle children. Liz also maintains her sense of humor on a daily basis and can be reached at [lizholzemer@comcast.net](mailto:lizholzemer@comcast.net) if you have a plum writing assignment to offer her.



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