

## 15 Minutes of Fame

Ain't technology great? Now we can share our happy, exciting and even most embarrassing moments with the whole world with the tap of a key. Laptops, smart phones, emails, texting, photos, videos, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Skype: the possibilities are endless.

We can even share things with the whole world which we'd rather not share. I know, that statement doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense, but I'm talking about those things we do and say which are meant for one person's eyes only but for whatever reason, more than their eyes get a good look into your mind or at your body and you get your proverbial 15 minutes of fame - or, more appropriately, 15 minutes of shame.

Yeah, I think we've all "Been there, done that." That text you wish you hadn't sent. The photo you wish untaken. The series of emails which tell a story you want kept secret. The anonymity and speed which modern communication affords is bringing out the worst in us. Hidden behind a computer screen or smart phone display, we can be different people and say and do things we won't say and do in public. We have the means of instantaneous action and foolhardiness – and it's biting us in the butt. We are documenting moments of regret.

When these moments catch up to us, it's a sobering slap in the face. *Why did I do that? What was I thinking? Who all knows/has seen this? That's not the real me.* So who was it? Yes, it was me acting out on my pain and loneliness, seeking a change, longing to feel something, *anything* differently from what I'm going through.

So what do we do when it happens besides vowing, "Never again!" A good place to start is to apply the H.A.L.T. principle. H.A.L.T. stands for Hungry, Angry, Lonely, and Tired. If you're any one of these when you're tempted to send that email/text/Tweet/photo/video, DON'T. It will **never** resolve the issue of your hunger, anger, loneliness or weariness. While this principle is taught in addiction recovery groups and parenting classes, it's very appropriate for this sort of situation.

The next step is to show some respect for yourself. Teenage girls are taught to respect themselves by not caving in to boys who pressure them for sex. Boys are taught to respect girls by observing appropriate physical boundaries. So why is it we become adults and toss this advice out the window? Is it because we're so mature and wise that we can do what we want no matter how juvenile it is and think we can get away with it? Does being a "consenting" adult make outrageous behavior okay? Of course it's not okay. Of course you reap what you sow. Let's stop sowing disrespect for ourselves and others. If we don't want it seen or repeated, don't advertise it. It's too easy to get caught up in the fantasy which a screen and online presence enable. We must be especially vigilant to guard our words and actions because all too soon the fantasy fades and we're left with very real consequences.

The final step is to get to the bottom of what's bothering you. Lonely? Get off the computer. Arrange a dinner party, cookout, or girl's night out. Go find people who are lonely. No, I'm not saying go bar hopping. I'm saying go visit people in nursing homes. Volunteer your time for a

cause. Become active in groups centered on your hobbies. Take up a new hobby. Not only will you make new friends but you just might find a potentially special someone who shares your interests in other areas besides the hobby.

And hopefully by then you will have learned technology is great for staying connected in healthy, positive ways. It's not meant for overexposure. It's meant for saying *I care, I love you, You mean a lot to me*. Laptops, smart phones, emails, texting, photos, videos, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Skype: the possibilities are endless.