



BAN SMARTPHONES?

LEVEL: B1+

A town that decided to ban smartphones for one month. When the small town of Greenfield announced that it would ban smartphones in public places for one month, many people thought it was a joke. The local mayor and community leaders explained that the experiment was meant to reduce stress, improve communication, and bring people closer together. In a world where everyone is constantly looking at a screen, they wanted to see what would happen if people were forced to look at each other instead. At first, the reaction was mixed. Older residents were curious and even excited. They remembered life before smartphones and liked the idea of quieter streets and more real conversations. Younger people, however, were not happy at all. Many of them said that their phone was part of their life and that the ban was unfair and unrealistic. Some worried about safety, others about missing important messages or feeling bored. The rules were simple. In cafes, restaurants, parks, public transport and shops, people were asked not to use smartphones. They could still carry them for emergencies, but normal browsing, social media and games were not allowed. Signs were placed around the town, and volunteers politely reminded people of the experiment. The first week was chaotic. People kept reaching for their phones without thinking. In cafes, there was an uncomfortable silence at first. Some customers did not know what to do with their hands. On buses, people looked around nervously, as if something was missing. Teenagers complained that time was passing too slowly. Many said they felt "cut off from the world." However, after a few days, small changes began to appear. In cafes, people started talking more. Strangers made eye contact and sometimes even started conversations. Parents played with their children instead of checking messages. In parks, people noticed the sounds of birds and the wind. The town felt calmer, as if the speed of life had slowed down. Teachers at the local school also noticed a difference. Students were more focused in class and talked more during breaks. Instead of standing in groups and looking at screens, they played games, laughed, and shared stories. Some said it felt strange but also refreshing. At work, the change was also visible. Meetings became shorter and more efficient because people were not distracted by notifications. Colleagues solved problems by talking face-to-face instead of sending endless messages. Of course, some tasks took longer without quick online searches, but people learned to ask each other for help and information. Not everything was positive. Some residents felt anxious without constant access to news and social media. A few business owners worried that customers would stay for a shorter time without Wi-Fi and phones. Others said the ban felt like a step backwards and that technology was part of modern life. By the end of the month, the town organized a public discussion. People shared their experiences. Many said they had slept better, felt less stressed, and enjoyed real conversations more. Some teenagers admitted that they had discovered new hobbies such as drawing, sports, or simply walking and talking with friends.



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Older residents said the town felt more like a community again, not just a place where people live next to each other. The experiment did not mean that smartphones were the enemy. Most people agreed that technology is useful and important. But they also realized how dependent they had become and how much time they spent looking at screens instead of at people. In the end, Greenfield decided not to ban smartphones forever, but to introduce phone-free hours in public places and schools. The one-month experiment showed that life without constant digital connection is possible and, for many, even more enjoyable. The town learned an important lesson: technology should make life easier, not replace real human contact. Sometimes, turning off the screen can help people turn toward each other.

