

We live in a fast-paced society, where answers are wanted now. This may indeed have an impact on human connection. In the age of information patience is minimal. The lack of patience in our generation may be why teenagers would rather talk to artificial intelligence about dating instead of their own parents. Even in my own personal life, it seems technology has taken me away from human connection.

Sherry Turkle discusses the new way of being "alone together." We are able to be together in a physical sense, but we are really in our own bubbles. I can relate quite a bit to this idea of "alone together." I gather with friends and everyone is on their cell phones. We are in each other's company and there is conversation. But lately I have noticed conversation topics are usually whatever is trending on social media.

To me this seems limiting. Not only are we in our own media bubbles but all of our shared interests are in an imaginary hub and this is what I have to pick from to discuss. It also doesn't help when there's some silence in conversation. Instead of some awkward clearing of the throat or funny light comment to ease back into conversation, everyone retreats back to their phones, until of course another topic is brought up. Not a random thought from our brains but more than likely the imaginary hub. This does not feel human.

"Human relationships are rich; they're messy and demanding. We have learned the habit of cleaning them up with technology," says Turkle. I agree. We are cleaning up with technology. For example, dating. Dating should be the relationships that are the messiest, the most exciting--feelings of going into the unknown and dealing with vulnerabilities. It is the epitome of what it is to be human and to connect to another. But even this has been "cleaned up" by technology. We use dating apps and social media; we edit ourselves like we are marketing ourselves. Where are the risks? There are none. We are playing it safe. Every quality you feel is a selling point is up there.

I remember when a close friend of mine went through a difficult break up. We were constantly going out to get her mind off of it. It was actually quite fun. We met lots of people and enjoyed some adventure and experienced new things. Unfortunately, for her she still felt empty; she was longing for companionship.

A few months after the breakup she told me how she hooked up with this guy. Asked for details on how they met, she told me Tinder. I was shocked to find out that they found each other because they swiped right, approving of each other's pictures. Although she was on a high from being with someone, it died quickly and she was on to the next, constantly swiping. It was a literal addiction. I don't think she felt connected to any of them, but was searching for a quick fix for her broken heart.

She eventually got into a new relationship. He was not found on Tinder but was a friend from high school she reconnected with during her single period. This person she shared all her Tinder stories with--silly moments that were not marketable on social

media. She no longer had an interest in Tinder; it seemed just being with him made her happier and more fulfilled than an entire summer of Tinder swipes.

There are a few wonderful, very human things that are destroyed because of technology's interference with dating. First, we are reducing a human being with his or her own unique experience to a product with a few special features. This identity that is created isn't exactly you, but an edited version and one that is now expected of you. It makes me want to shout, "I am not a product and I will not always look like my wonderful profile picture taken on a good hair day with wonderful lighting. My life is continuously changing, as am I, so please if you're interested come find me and watch me evolve because there aren't enough social media updates in the world that can capture my entirety."

This stands true for everyone: our self-worth should not be summed up in our internet profiles.

Another thing destroyed by technology is discovery. One of the most exciting feelings for human beings is discovery--that light bulb feeling. That feeling in my opinion is essential; it keeps our curiosity going, it makes us want to go further into another person and to get lost in each other and hopefully become one. To some I'm sure this seems frightening, especially to those who hide behind technology when it comes to socializing and connecting. It may make us feel vulnerable, but vulnerability is the essence of what makes us human. Technology seems to take a lot of that away.

Human connections should not be looked at as a hassle. It shouldn't cause people to feel anxious about making conversation. And it most certainly should not be shortchanged by small texts.

--Kashafa Khan