New research from Joseph Grenny, author of the New York Times bestseller Crucial Conversations, shows 89% report damaged relationships as a result of the insensitive or inappropriate use of technology. And yet, most suffer silently.

According to the study of 2,025 people, 9 out of 10 report that at least once a week, their friends or family stop paying attention to them in favor of something happening on their digital devices. And 1 in 4 say Electronic Displays of Insensitivity (EDIs) have caused a serious rift with a friend or family member.

So what do we do when confronted with such blatant EDIs? According to the survey, most of us do nothing. Specifically, 1 in 3 people admit to coping with EDIs by simply ignoring them.

However, what happens when repeat offenders are your spouse, child, best friend, or coworker? Even with close relationships, people still struggle to speak up. In fact, nearly 2 out of 3 have no idea how to effectively reduce the impact of others’ inappropriate use of technology. Those who say nothing give their silent approval of insensitive and bad behavior.

The research confirms that without a set of skills for quickly and candidly confronting EDIs, the prevalence and severity of insensitivity will continue to grow. However, the survey identified a few who were skilled at speaking up. This vocal minority found ways to reduce the negative impact of EDIs on their relationships.

An innovator in corporate training and leadership development, VitalSmarts combines three decades of original research with 50 years of the best social science thinking to help leaders and organizations change human behavior and achieve new levels of performance. VitalSmarts has identified four high-leverage skill sets that, when used in combination, create healthy corporate cultures. These skills are taught in the Company’s award-winning training programs and New York Times bestselling books of the same titles: Crucial Conversations, Crucial Accountability, Influencer, and Change Anything. VitalSmarts has consulted with more than 300 of the Fortune 500 companies and trained more than one million people worldwide.

**TIPS & SCRIPTS TO CONFRONT AN EDI**

1. **Take the high road.** Some EDIs are urgent or necessary so assume the best intentions. Empathetically say something like, “That sounds important. I can come back later if you need to respond to that call or text.”

2. **Spell it out.** Specificity leads to results. Rather than making vague requests, set specific boundaries. Say: “We need your full attention in this meeting, so please turn off your cell phone.”

3. **Illuminate the impact.** Describe the consequences of an EDI rather than blast your judgments about another’s moral compass. Say: “Your screen light is disturbing my experience of the performance. Would you please turn it off? Thank you.”

4. **Take heart.** Don’t measure your influence by whether or not people immediately comply. Your intervention registers as disapproval and helps in the slow establishing of new norms.

5. **Let it go.** If you’ve employed every tactic and the offender fails to comply, let it go. Unless the situation will continue for an extended period of time or your safety is at risk, you’re better off just moving on.

**KEY RESULTS**

- **87%** say EDIs are worse today than they were just a year ago
- **90%** agree people should not answer text messages or check social media profiles in public
- And yet, **93%** regularly witness someone committing an EDI while driving a car
- **67%** witness EDIs at the dinner table
- **52%** witness EDIs during a customer service interaction
- **35%** witness EDIs while at church
- **25%** witness EDIs while in school

**ABOUT THE RESEARCH.** The study collected responses via an online survey of 2,025 individuals in February 2014. Margin of error is approximately 3%.

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