

# The Zombieapocalypse has already arrived

People these days love to fantasize about a coming Zombie apocalypse. Discussion revolves around weapon choices, strategies, who would be on your team, survival ideas, the best buildings or sites, and a bunch of other factors. A fun debate is had about the variables, ideas are shared, and even heated arguments can ensue. Generally, it's just a fun intellectual exercise.

But guess what? People are discussing an event they think could or will happen in the future when it is already here. The Zombieapocalypse is already underway.

No, I'm not on hallucinogens or inebriated. I'm talking about the walking brain dead in the form of a body that has its head down, feet are shuffling slowly, bumps into things, can't operate doors, occasionally mumbles and moans, and is a danger to those around them: the person who is so buried in their "smart" phone that they aren't aware of their surroundings.



They pause in doorways, they blow through stop signs and red lights, they groan and mumble to questions you pose not

knowing what they are agreeing with, they randomly stop walking no matter where it is, they are slow to respond, and are generally mindless.

There is very little difference between the fantasy Zombie and the modern day American in terms of their actions and because they operate vehicles while texting or yapping on their phones they can literally injure or kill you. The only difference between the two is that the American smartphone user isn't comprised of rotten flesh and trying to eat your brains – but the certainly could use one. One is undead, both are brain dead.

Because there are so many of these Zombies it has become acceptable but in actuality, it should be viewed no different than many other addictions that are damaging to families, friends, or society in general like hoarding, gambling, food, pornography, etc. While those things ruin relationships, smartphone addiction does that and can even injure or kill if paired with vehicles. So, it certainly needs to be recognized for what it is: bad for society.

Not a day goes by that a car has crossed the dividing line and is partially in my lane and I have to beep my horn to the person looking down at their phone not realizing what they are doing. Some people don't even car and just hold their phone above at eye level where they can multitask reading a text while driving. I see people pulling into parking spaces clearly on their phone and they crack into a curb, parking block, or almost hit a person walking by. They either struggle getting between the parking lines or they don't even bother trying. Who cares if someone else needs a parking spot right?



If you are in public walking around you have to navigate the random Zombie just standing in the way, often in the worst possible spot, places they would never stand in if they were actually paying attention. Sometimes you can be walking behind someone and suddenly they just come to a complete stop and you nearly or actually bump into them only to find out that they were texting or reading one. It's everywhere and it's people from 10 years of age to 80 years of age.

One sad daily scene I come across is the couple that shows up to a table at a cafe both in Zombie mode barely recognizing each other's existence beyond a periodic grunt. They wait for their food, eat their food, toss out the packaging and then leave **maybe** saying one or two things. Did they say "Hey let's meet up, grab a bite to eat and not talk to each other at all!"? Why bother? Why not just decide to meet that person you are texting instead of ignoring the one you are with?

What makes it particularly sad that I bet if one of them did decide to go be with the person they were texting, they would only start texting the person they just left! The one they were ignoring! Seems a surefire way to be in a relationship

that will eventually fail.

It wouldn't be acceptable if you went to meet someone over a coffee or sandwich and then pulled out a book or newspaper and just ignored them, so why is it OK to do with a smartphone? I see that on the regular – one person sitting there twiddling their thumbs politely waiting for the other to finish their text or scrolling through their news feed. Of course, that ends up taking 10 minutes if it happens at all.



I see mothers and fathers ignoring their kids who get louder and louder to try to get their parents' attention and of course, after saying "MOM!" or "DAD!" about 5 times the parent gets angry and chides or yells at the kid. Imagine what we are teaching our kids and what the effect will be when they grow up? You don't have to imagine – we're seeing it now. All around us people are aggro, irritable, cranky, obnoxious, and narcissistic – learned from parents and guardians who would rather pay attention to their phone.

I guess I must be the strange one because I think you should pay attention to the person with who you are talking. Or the road you are traveling. Or just do whatever it is you are doing. What a freak, right?



One of the best gifts a person can give another is attention. There is a connection that comes from having eye contact, listening to nuances in body language, the tone of voice, and a million other aspects that come from actually paying attention to another person.

In my day that is how you made friends. These days people have entire friendships based on messages with people they may not have even met! They'll want to get to "know each first before we meet" so they'll exchange messages for a few weeks. This seems like a form of madness and is starting any relationship out on the "wrong" foot. How about seeing a movie, having dinner, sitting at a cafe, etc. a few times to get to know each other.



Because of the aforementioned acceptance of this behavior by society in general, it looks as if the walking brain dead aren't going anywhere soon. If you can't get people to not drive and text risking their own lives and that of others, how are you going to get them to voluntarily do it when it's not illegal to do or their lives aren't at risk?

The past few years when you read about road accident or even fatalities in the news you will often see “For reasons still under investigation.” the driver went into the other lane, lost control, or went off the road. You rarely, if ever, hear that there was a problem with a tire blowout, an axle snapped, the steering wheel malfunctioned, a dog or deer ran out causing him or her to swerve, etc. It’s always for reasons under investigation.

I don’t want to read this type of news about anyone, especially a teenager, ever again. I’m not singling out teenagers because these days it’s people of all ages, but no one just starting out life should have it cut short because they are reading or sending a “LOL” or “BRB.” Most people go to places or visit people 10-15 minutes away and that message can wait.

Pedestrians without a phone for a distraction seem to have trouble using the “Look both ways” rule, and it it’s even worse when they cross the road. They elevate the rule to the next level – they don’t look three ways: left, right or up and just walk right into traffic.



This article is partially tongue-in-cheek, partially ranting, and partially complaining but what matters aren't just the problems of society, but also the solutions. How do we save lives, reconnect with one another, tune back into reality? Is it possible?

I think it starts with information, awareness, and recognition. Whether the information is reading statistics about the dangers of phone use and driving or a semi-satirical article like this one is irrelevant. Just spreading that awareness is pivotal. However, the information has to be acted upon and that can only be done if a person recognizes that what they are doing is wrong, illegal, and dangerous – to themselves and others. Teaching our kids and then leading by example will have monumental effects.

Don't be afraid to ask or tell someone to put their phone down or agree to have a meal or coffee without pulling them out. Learn to set aside certain parts of your day or hour for the phone – there's no way to avoid important messages, texts, and calls in this day and age, but you can spend 10 minutes an hour checking and answering them and then put the phone away for a while.

Don't be a slave to your phone, make the phone slave to you. Technology is supposed to be a tool we use, we're not supposed to be the tool – pardon the pun – used by technology. You will be pleasantly surprised how little you miss or how much more you get done or how much fun you can have when you restrict your phone use.

Choose not to be one of the walking brain dead. The whole fun of planning the Zombieapocalypse is coming up with ways to defeat them, not be one of them. Besides, you don't want to be on the receiving end of Lucy.

