**Invading my space with your conversation**

I’m really, really done with it. The rudeness of people and their cell phones. I honestly, cannot believe how some people have completely lost their ability to be respectful and attentive because of their cell phone use.

Case number 1. While at a conference last week, I had about 30 minutes to wait for lunch and I purposely searched out a comfy chair in a far, remote, corner of the conference center to sit and enjoy my book while waiting. A gentleman decides to sit down next to me and promptly dials his phone, puts it on speaker and then proceeds to hold a full voice conversation with someone on the other end. Right next to me!

I turned off my book, gathered my things (rather loudly), stood in front of him, glaring with the “I can’t (insert appropriate curse here) believe you are this rude” look. Then I took a breath and calmly said to him: “thank you sir, for ruining my quiet space, you are extremely rude. You should take that conversation outside and away from the rest of the world, because we don’t want to hear it.” Then I walked away.

Case number 2. Same conference. Amazing speaker on cyber identity theft and low and behold, a lady’s cell phone rings, in the third row and she answers it! What? She literally talks out loud to someone, on her cell phone, while our presenter is trying to talk to us, he finally said, “we’ll just wait until she’s done” and so we waited. Are you kidding me?

I could list twenty more examples in the last few months. From people walking down a public walkways with their ear buds in and talking like everyone in the room is part of the conversation, to a girl who sits in the middle of a waiting area at the airport talking full conversation (with hand gestures) to her girlfriend about her dog, to a guy who is talking to his wife on the plane after the doors had shut with the flight attendant standing and glaring at him to turn off his phone for almost two minutes, I finally nudged him with my elbow and said turnoff off your phone, we are all waiting for you!

Coming from a Psychology today article that I found on the internet, 2013 “Why are public cell phone users to annoying?” Susan Krauss Whitbourne, Ph.D. Some research out of Cornell University, suggests that we find public cell phones behavior to be annoying because it’s so intrusive into our consciousness.

There are some habitual public cell phone talkers who seem to like the attention, albeit negative attention. These individuals act more out of narcissism than lack of social awareness. To them, public cell phone behavior is a form of performance art than anything else.

Research says that when you hear a live conversation, you know what’s being said on both sides of the conversation. Unless the volume of the conversation is distracting with bursts of laughing, we can usually tune it out when needed. When you hear a cell phone conversation, you don’t know the other side of the conversation, therefore your brain tries to fill in the missing pieces. This requires more mental energy than hearing both sides, making it harder for you to tune out the conversation when it becomes distracting.

Forma and Kaplowitz conducted a naturalistic study of the actual decibel levels of conversations. They found that people speak 1.6 times louder on the cell phone then they did when they spoke face-to-face.

It’s understood that talking on the cell phone somehow isolates us from the people in our immediate vicinity. The deeper we get into conversations the more removed we get from those who are physically present. That alone makes those in your vicinity feel isolated and neglected. More importantly it makes the cell phone user come across as arrogant and rude by everyone who’s life is being interrupted by the conversation.

This is interesting. In Germany, it’s against the law to put someone on speaker phone without their consent (there exceptions to this).

I think we should make it an American law that you can’t talk on your cell phone, especially with open speaker, in public without everyone around you consenting to listening to your conversation. Please stop invading my personal space with your conversation!