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Give the gift of going offline

by Rich Heffern

Eco Catholic

We've all been there: At the dinner table with family, grabbing a cup of coffee with a friend, when, in an instant, your companion's attention is diverted to their device of choice. "How many times has it happened to you," asks Eric Yaverbaum, "when you're in a conversation with someone and suddenly you want to ask, 'How many of us are there here? Me, you, and who else?'"

Yaverbaum and his business partner, Mark DiMassimo, are the founders of Offlining, a site devoted to getting people to unplug at least once in a while in favor of interacting with the world right in front of them. The duo uses clever ad campaigns and online pledges to encourage people to put devices and screens aside.

One of their campaigns offers this advice: This Monday, give your special someone not just chocolate, but also your BlackBerry, to show that you actually want to spend time with just them. "Valentine's Day is the quintessential day for spending time with someone," said Yaverbaum. "It seems that every holiday is a little bit of lightning rod for what we don't do anymore and what we used to do together." Read more on the Sierra Club's The Green Life site.

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