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WoMen vs. Machine -A Few Thoughts to Offer

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Are we ready to allow technology to take over our lives? I know some of you are thinking, "oh no, don't take away my cell phone". "Don't even consider disconnecting my kid's tablet" (quoted, from so many of us). During these recent few months, COVID-19 has forced us to shelter-in-place, disconnecting from our devices and migrating back to traditional ways of communicating with the humans in our household.

On the flip side, we are participating in more virtual meetings and we are even having virtual happy/social hours with colleagues and friends. Is this the new future of socializing with others? Are we doomed to virtual lobby receptionists when we return to the workplace? Yes, we are solving social distancing concerns, but are we creating something we will regret later?

Let's start at home. I know many of us sleep with our cellphones, and are left to wonder, will that thing just stop notifying me? How did we get here? The irony is there is always going to be a crisis, so is what we are experiencing during this particular crisis that different? Thinking on this, we have created our own nightmare by allowing ourselves to be 100% available around the clock. As parents, caregivers, employees, we have made ourselves so available, we no longer vacation without having a Wi-Fi connection. We assess hotels, cruise ships and some of the most popular destinations on their ability to provide Wi-Fi service. We have Wi-Fi in our vehicles, we have Wi-Fi at most retail stores and restaurants. How did we get here?

Technology surrounds my house. I have a Google Home, Google Nest thermostats, one large speaker and two minis. I have devices that turn the lights on an off. I have cameras throughout my home, to include the outside perimeter. Now that I am working from home, I am condemned to only watching myself. How did I get so into things that monitor me? It started as great gift ideas, but it seems these are excellent ways to entertain myself instead of getting out with my family. I have techno friends

all around me that can answer any question I can think of, so I am all set. Whether it is Google, Facebook, Twitter, or Amazon, we have invested in their success to keep us connected to technology. We are going out of way to enhance Zoom Meetings, Microsoft Teams and WebEx conferences. We are connecting to our friends, family and business partners virtually.

Believe me, I love technology and all the fast information it brings. Sometimes, I have even received great advice too. As I consider time working from home, I am hesitant of going back into the office. Many companies are looking at virtual lobby systems to minimize in person contact. My access card will end up being my confirmation of arrival. If I have a visitor, they would be greeted by a machine and told to wait for me. Or, perhaps, would it be simpler to just hold another virtual meeting and just forgo the attempt to meet in person?

We need technology to make our jobs more efficient. But we are also vulnerable to the attacks of those who want to compromise our information. We want faster, smarter ways of doing things, but at what cost? Am I ready to give up on people to go fully forward with technology enablement?

I know there will be some who disagree and are pro technology all the way. I am not discounting the need to supplement our services, but I do not want to disconnect from people. I like to hug people and hopefully make their day better. I love to chat and encourage people in person. I love a conference room full of people eager to learn a new task or project. I love teaming with others in person. These are all my personal thoughts and not any reflection on any of my personal or business associations. Just ask yourself the question, are you ready for machines to win or shall we hold on a little longer?