

What's For Dinner?

By: Julie D. Bruno, Psy.D

Last night I had the rare privilege of having dinner with my family and a few close friends. It's a privilege because my family, like many families today rarely eats together due to the demands of multiple conflicting schedules. I took pleasure in sitting next to my children, family and friends and having a conversation without telephones, tweets, FB pings or vine creations (at least for the first half) interrupting our process or being the sole focus of our attention. As a quiet observer of this pleasantry I couldn't help but lament upon how disconnected we've become under the guise of being more connected. Yes, it is true that technology today allows us to connect to each other faster, easier and in more interesting and complex ways. However, these interesting complex ways are quickly becoming the only way we connect with each other. For example, I was walking in the mall the other day and I saw a group of teenagers walking toward me. All of them were texting on their phones, three feet from each other, head down, walking through the mall without a single glance up. Is this what is considered "going out with friends" today? Are you really going out with someone, when you're communicating with someone else(s) most of the time? I remember when I use to walk through the mall with my friends. We were loud and silly, sometimes stupid and witty. We would make fun of each other and those around us, in the true fashion of teenage obnoxiousness. Older people cringed and we donned incorrigible glances back but at least we were all communicating verbally and non-verbally with each other. We validated each other's existence by being an active participant. Which brings me to my thesis, in order to truly connect with each other, we need to eliminated everything between us and just be with each other and what better place to start than at the dinner table with some good food and even better company.