

Renounce Your BlackBerry

Technology is the new choice of quitters.

By [Em & Lo](#) Published Jan 14, 2007



Illustration: Andy Martin

February, being the shortest month, is the perfect one for a circumscribed term of psychic renewal via self-denial. And if you can't imagine drinking Fresca at your Super Bowl party, consider high-tech abstinence: Give up as much e-mailing, surfing, cell-phoning, and BlackBerrying as your job will allow. And your iPod, too. When you're constantly plugged in, "your creativity, spontaneity, and joie de vivre diminish," says Jeff Davidson, author of *Breathing Space: Living & Working at a Comfortable Pace in a Sped-Up Society*. "When you find yourself in a continual mode of reacting and responding, instead of steering and directing, do you have any chance of thinking new thoughts?"

This is what led Moby to announce to his friends in a group e-mail in September that, effective immediately, he would be going offline and answering only snail mail and his landline (no answering machine, but he didn't have one anyway) until the end of the year. He promised to sit on his stoop for an hour a day and answer the door whenever he was home. "I was getting 400 e-mails a day and spending hours and hours just giving perfunctory responses," he says. His hope was that the public announcement—the e-mail appeared on Gawker within hours—would force him to stay the course, "kind of like making public vows of marriage or celibacy."

Turns out, not so much: The sum total of his fast? "Four days. I wish I'd had the fortitude to make it last." But it was a nice four days, he says. "Disconcerting at first, but then really good. Ideally, we'd all learn that life is okay without being so busy." He's thinking of a modified diet for 2007, but he won't be going cold turkey again, not even in February.