

Turn Off TV and Turn on Your Life **by Jimmy Newkirk**

Have you ever been really turned-off before? I mean, so turned-off you actually took action to do something about it? This week, getting turned-off is actually a suggestion, and getting into action is the goal.

The idea behind National TV turn-off week (April 24-30) is simple really – turning off the TV can improve your health and your life.

Ask yourself a few questions. Be honest – you don't have to tell anyone.

- What's the role of TV in your life?
- Do you control it or does it control you?
- What would you do without TV?
- Do those things sound like fun? (If not, repeat questions one and two.)

Think about how much time you actually have the TV on. Could you really go without TV for a day? How about for a week?

If you're like the average American, who watches an average of over four hours of TV each day, you may also want to consider what you did during your TV time. Did you eat? Was it a healthy food choice or was it "comfort food?" Did you really learn anything that you're going to use? What – or who – did you ignore while you were watching? Did your kids or that special someone attempt to capture your attention?

Parents, be warned: six out of 10 kids in North Carolina watch up to two hours of TV daily – one out of five watches up to four hours every day. Compare that to the amount of time they spend playing outside. For that matter, the average American child will spend more time in front of the television than in school this year.

As I think about it, I really don't remember what I watched last week. I know I didn't really learn anything. I certainly don't feel any better because I watched. Somebody famous compared TV to "chewing gum for the eyes." That makes sense to me. When I watched, I was doing something, but I didn't really accomplish anything, and after about the first three minutes, there really wasn't any reason to continue.

On the other hand, I do remember the long walk I took. I remember the book I read and the conversation I had with my friend.

I plan to give the TV a week off. Instead, I'm going to take a walk, just to think. There's a book I want to read, and a friend I need to catch up with. Maybe we can go for a walk together.

I also want to be a better role model for my kids. No more tuning them out.

This week, how about finding someone special, a friend, a neighbor or family member and choose an activity that gets you up and moving. Take control of your remote and your life. You, and your family, deserve it.