

Restaurants getting people to put phones away

By Katy Hall, *Huffington Post*

Most Americans say phones don't belong at the table during meals, though the vast majority of millennials admit to checking their phones during dinner.

Concern over the practice has sparked some restaurants to encourage customers to put away their phones – with mixed results, depending on the tactic.

Each Wednesday night at Sneaky's Chicken in Sioux City, Iowa, servers ask guests if they'd like to put their phones in a special box during the meal. If they do, they get a 10 percent discount on their dinner. Christy Wright, who co-owns Sneaky's with her parents and sister, said the policy took shape after her family members took a look at their own smartphone habits.

"We noticed that within our own family we were way too connected to our phones and thought maybe we could get others to join us [in disconnecting] for just a bit," Wright told the *Huffington Post*.

Research has shown that having your smartphone within reach probably won't make you a better dinner companion. Even if you're not checking your email or Instagramming your brunch, the mere presence of a smartphone can reduce empathy and diminish a conversation between two people, according to a study published earlier this year in the journal *Environment and Behavior*.

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