

But I just got the hang of my old cell phone ...

My name is Amy and I'm addicted to my cell phone.

Now, I've said it. It's out there. Let the healing begin.

Like many of my friends, when I got my first cell phone, it felt like I had somehow made it big. The idea that I could call anyone I wanted whenever I wanted seemed almost too good to be true. Perhaps it was.

A few phone bills down the road, my attitude about my phone quickly turned from awe to caution. Yet I persevered and slowly learned that with a little self control I could have my phone and eat, too.

As time passed, I began delving deeper into telecommunications technology and learned

more and more about the various features of my phone. I was eventually able to set up some voice mail, store phone numbers and even change my ring tones. I even figured out what a text message is and how to use it. It was truly a type of technological honeymoon.

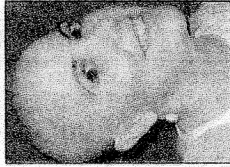
Then my life changed. Slowly, my battery began to betray me and my phone went from friend to foe. At first I was in denial. How could this happen? I had religiously recharged through proper plugging every night. I had made a mental long-term commitment to this relationship and thought I had done all I needed to do to make it work. And then, almost overnight, it

was over. The charge just wasn't there.

In my despair, it occurred to me that this problem may be bigger than me. After asking around, it seems I'm not the only person who

found themselves finally able to master one phone, only to be forced into finding a new one. The turning seemed suspicious. Could this be some type of cruel and diabolical technology conspiracy

PERSPECTIVE



The Good News

Amy Meyer

designed to keep some of us from keeping in touch?

Reluctantly, and grudgingly, I started shopping for a new cell phone.

The first thing I noticed in the newest cell phone models is that evidently my fingers are substantially larger than the

average person's digits. The number pads on these new tiny little phones are so small I have a hard time believing I'll ever dial the right number again. I haven't felt this oversized since I tried to sit comfortably at a Hawkeye home football game in Kinnick Stadium.

The second thing that confused my decision-making process is that some phones had

cameras. Why? I just got my first digital camera for Christmas and am still trying to figure that out, too. Why would I combine one confusing piece of technology with another? This makes about as much sense to me as trying to learn Japanese and juggling at once.

Isn't there a cell phone company for those of us who don't want to do it all? It seems that manufacturers make everything from cat food to multivitamins for specific populations, so why not cell phones? Give me big numbers, traditional ring tones, and no fancy symbols on my screen. Keep the colorful displays and Web access and give me a battery that lasts a week or

two. Some say my confusion is directly related to my age. Perhaps it's true that people born after 1970 have some kind of internal technology know-how. In fact, it seems like the younger the person, the faster they seem to adjust to new types of technology. And I'm happy for them.

But for me, perhaps my only option now is to ask someone much younger and cooler than I am to explain my new phone.

Amy Meyer is a local columnist who often writes for Monday's edition. While she struggles to stay rested while undergoing treatment for breast cancer, her column may appear less frequently, but she appreciates hearing from her readers whenever they have suggestions or comments. Contact her at: amymeyer@machlink.com