



Parent Connect



Digital World Dilemmas

March 30, 2022

Overview

1

Tech & social media are part of kids' lives

This varies by frequency, duration and purpose



Technology is designed to be compelling

2

This presents many challenges

Time management, relationships, health, developing skills, privacy...



There are tons of resources to go deeper on specific topics

3

Parents are their kids' lifeline

You know your child, and you are their primary role model



Parents can use practical strategies to help their kids

What We Covered Before

Our Focus Today

BEHOLD THE POWER



OF THE INTERNET

“Technology has infused itself at a very intimate level with how we form our identity, how we form relationships, how we make choices, and make sense of the world. ...social media and the smartphone have allowed the influence and manipulation of human biases and weaknesses. They can overwhelm our psychology in ways that we simply aren’t aware of. The prevalent business models in technology are entirely based on manipulating human weaknesses...”

- Tristan Harris

Co-Founder & President, Center for Humane Technologies
former Design Ethicist at Google

Interviewed by Vikas Shah MBE, @MrVikas
<https://thoughteconomics.com>



Designed to “Hook”

- **Variable Ratio Rewards**
- **Artificial Intelligence:** harnessing the power of big data and sophisticated algorithms
- **Persuasive Technology Lab** (Stanford)
 - Teaches students and entrepreneurs everything behavioral science knows about deep-seated human needs, motivation, attention and social interaction
 - In order to more intimately connect users with devices, games, platforms and apps.



How Does This Play Out in Your Home?

“Kids who can be reasonable about most things will fight ferociously in defense of the idea that social media doesn’t make them more jealous or anxious, or that they do fine on five and a half hours of sleep.”

Stixrud & Johnson, What do You Say?, P.217

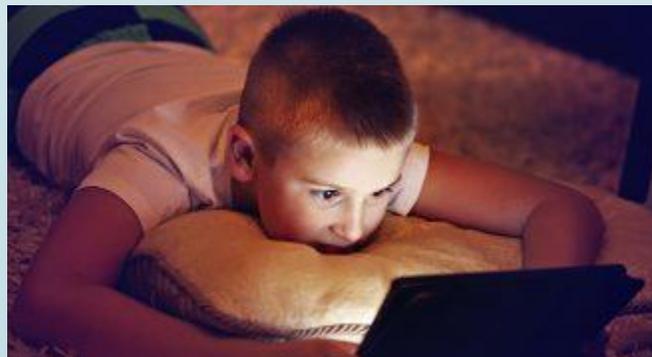
We Would Expect...

- Kids having tantrums when pulled away from screens
- People compulsively checking phones
- Parents feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and defeated.
- Parents going against their own values
- Kids giving up when something is hard or unpleasant
- People having to compete with a screen for connection and attention
- Anxiety about unedited moments



More Expectations...

- Disregard for concrete needs (Sleep, Food, Face-to-Face Human Connection, Exercise, etc.)
- Decrease in empathy
- Challenges with attention and focus
- Big feelings about technology—rules, fairness, status
- Lots of missed opportunities for face-to-face connection



Difficult Conversations

Why can't I have my phone in my room at night? But I use it for my alarm clock!

Why can't I have a phone? All my friends have one!

Why is it such a big deal if I share pictures online? It's only with friends!

Can I bring my phone in to the restaurant? I can still talk to Grandma

That's private! Why do you want to see my texts?

Can I make a YouTube channel?

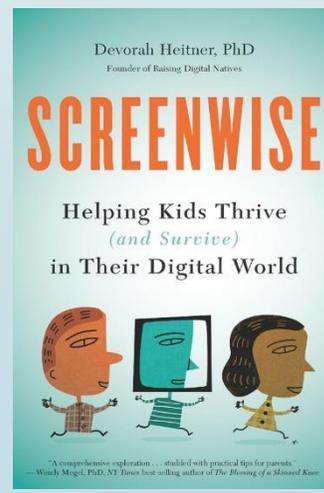
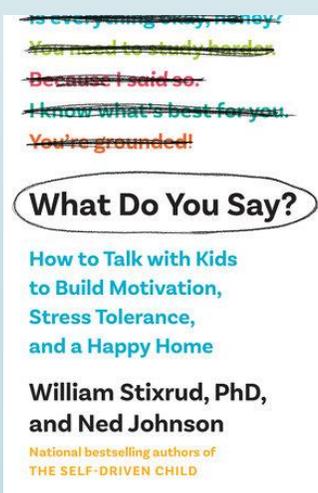
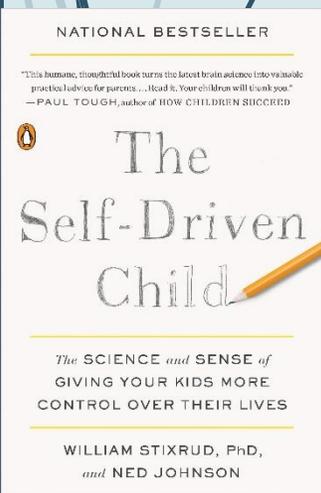
I just want to stay on my computer all day- that's where all my friends are anyway.

I want to get TikTok, can you approve the app request?

Why do I have to have time limits? No one else does

A Lot of Helpful Information

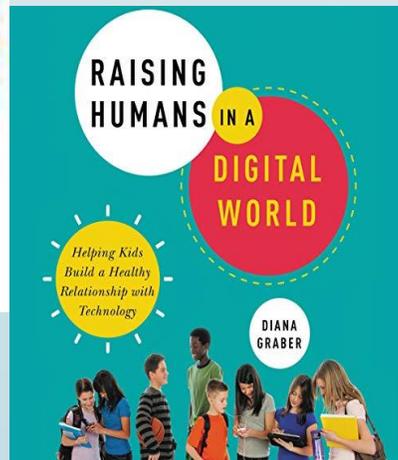
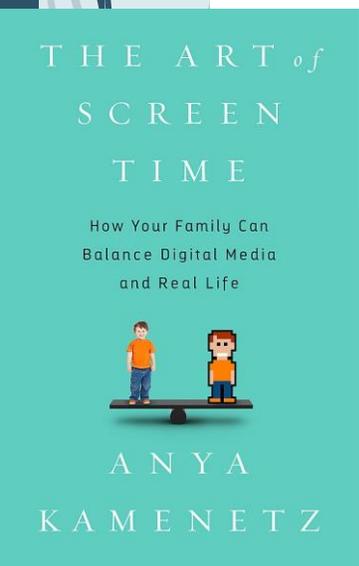
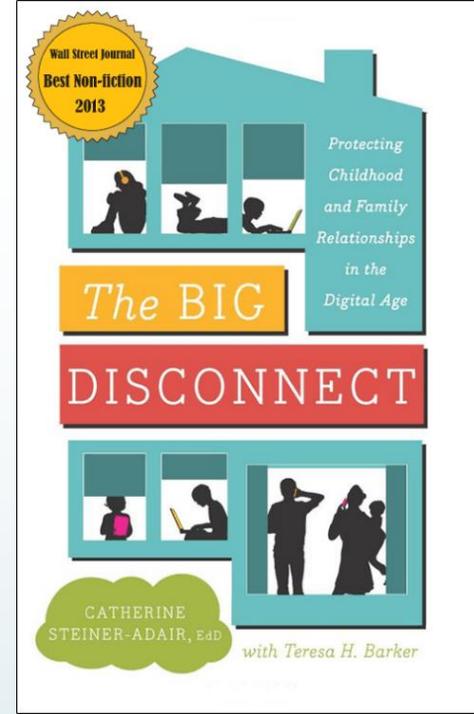
THE
SOCIAL
INSTITUTE



More Resources



**common
sense
media**



How to Help?

Kids who can be reasonable about most things will fight ferociously in defense of the idea that social media doesn't make them more jealous or anxious, or that they do fine on five and a half hours of sleep. And yet the principles of communicating effectively with kids actually haven't changed since the 1980s (or the 1880s).

Listening carefully and respectfully, understanding, offering advice, not trying to ram our perspective down kids' throats, working problems out respectfully: these apply to every parenting challenge in every generation. We just need to remember to apply them to the new frontier."

Stixrud & Johnson, *What do You Say?*, P.217-218

The most important digital literacy skills are social, emotional, and behavioral skills



Helping Our Kids



- Same way we help with any challenge
 - Manage our own reactions and emotions
 - Use curiosity and compassion
 - Connect, communicate, support, guide, mentor
 - Seek support and guidance from community partners and experts
- Parenting styles
 - Authoritarian
 - Authoritative
 - Permissive

		Expectations/Control	
		Low	High
Warmth/ Responsiveness	Low	uninvolved	authoritarian
	High	permissive	authoritative

Guiding Principles

- Prioritize relationship
 - Rules without relationship can result in rebellion
- Basics of stress reduction
 - Sleep, nutrition, exercise
 - Relaxation, calming strategies
 - Reasonable, non-harsh self talk
- Compassion for the “hook”
 - Plan for the expected results



Mentoring and Parenting

Mentoring involves purposefully communicating about social media issues, identifying specific problems, and co-creating solutions. (Devorah Heitner, Ph.D.)

- ▶ They may be tech savvy, but parents are wise
 - ▶ Have been through difficult social situations
 - ▶ Things last forever on internet
 - ▶ Know the value of privacy
- ▶ No app to raise our kids in digital age for us
- ▶ Be curious about what their challenges are
- ▶ Self Reflection (as the parent): Be curious about impact of technology on you and where your own challenges lie



Modeling and Mentoring

- Role model
 - Shared dilemma of the dopamine loops, the distraction, the pull
 - Modeling focus and turning away from tech demonstrates that it is possible
- Mentoring
 - Goal is to develop their skills
 - Learning is expected
 - See for yourself
 - Parental authority is intact



Managing Our Own Reactions

- ▶ Not easy to model and mentor
 - ▶ Hard to disappoint our kids
 - ▶ Hard to see them struggle, to hear the same request and arguments over and over
 - ▶ We need time to think through and be precise about “why?” and sometimes it’s hard to have those answers
 - ▶ Time pressure
 - ▶ We have big feelings, too
- ▶ Fill your bucket, find support

Preparing for the First Phone

- Excitement and worry
- You know your child and your family
 - Your guiding principles, values
 - Always an ongoing conversation
- Smart phone or Flip phone?
- Holiday or regular day?
- Lots of resources to help

WAIT
u n t i l
8th

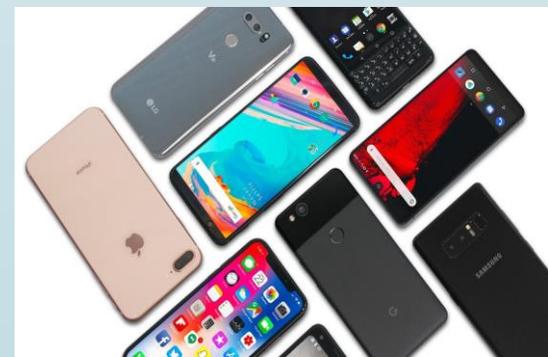


First Phone Considerations

Concrete Expectation Considerations, Co-Create a Contract

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Hours of use, designated unplugged time?
- Texting rules (group chats? pictures? permission to share?)
- Digital training wheels (share texts)
- Types of use (Surfing the Web? Netflix? Social media?)
- Social Media (Insta/Finsta? Snapchat? Twitter? TikTok?)
- Privacy expectations
- Use with peers (“playdates?” sleepovers?)
- Sexting & Pornography
- Expectations for Balance/Non-Technology Expectations
- Consequences if expectations not met



Digital Citizenship

Responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, the Internet, and digital devices to engage with society.

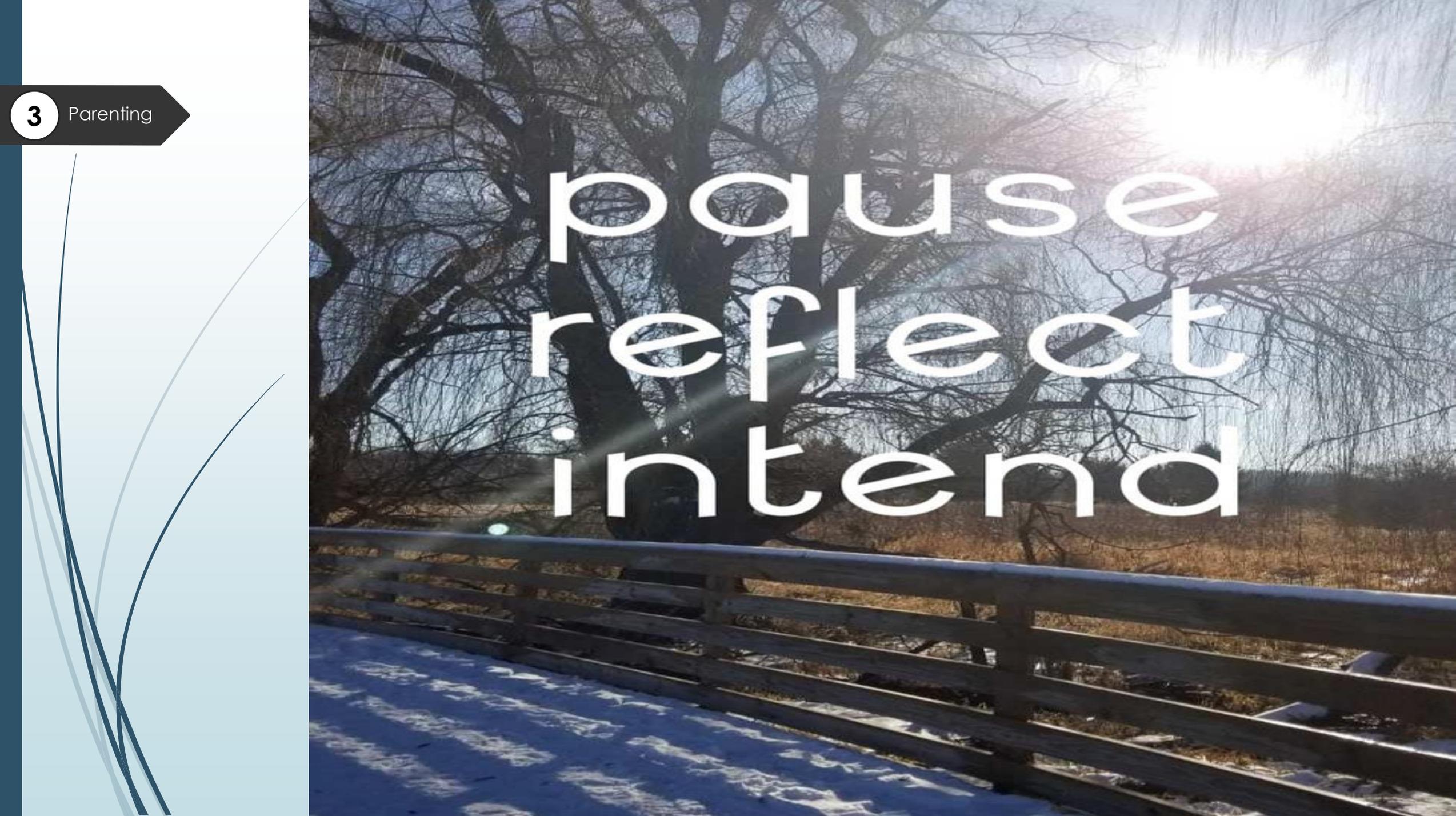
[Commonsense.org](https://www.commonsense.org)

- ▶ Media Balance
- ▶ Privacy & Security
- ▶ Digital Footprint & Identify
- ▶ Relationships & Communication
- ▶ Cyberbullying, Digital Drama & Hate Speech
- ▶ News & Media Literacy



Family
Online Safety
Institute





pause
reflect
intend

Communication

- ▶ Empathy
 - ▶ Validation—provide what they are seeking online
 - ▶ Eye contact, dedicated time
 - ▶ Seek to understand, curiosity, & compassion



Hey.

**I see you.
I appreciate you.
I'm grateful for you.**

Communication Strategies



- Start with a pause, reflection and intention
- Try agreement
 - You've got a point...I think that, too
 - Both this, and that
- I notice...and I wonder...
- WIG: What I got...
- I have a different perspective, would you be willing to talk?
- As of right now...for right now
- How can I help? What do you need?
- What are your concerns? What's the hardest part?

S.O.Y.

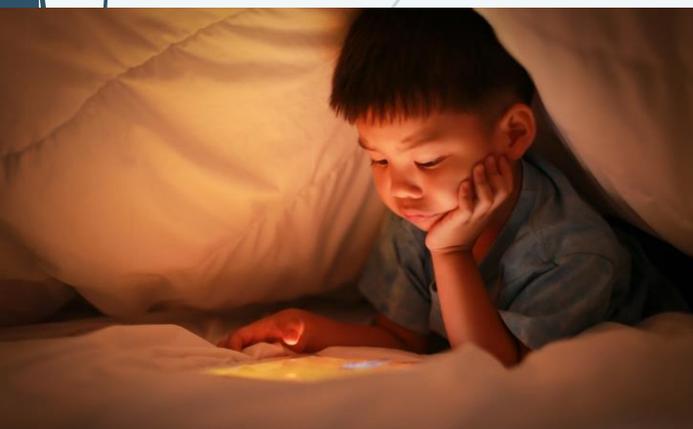
- Dilemma: Phones / SM are distracting while doing homework
- One solution: situation modification (change your physical surroundings)
- SOY
 - **Some** people find it easier to do homework if their phone is in another room
 - **Other** people find that putting the phone in a drawer or face down (notifications turned off) across the room helps
 - **You might / What about you?** What would you like to try?
- <https://screentimeneetwork.org/resource/hack-your-space-putting-distance-between-you-and-your-vices>



L.O.V.E.



- **Dilemma:** It's hard to get to bed, hard to make time for sleep



- **Lots of questions:** *I want to understand, What gets in the way of going to bed, do you notice any patterns in your sleep schedule, what helps you to get sleep, what gets in your way, how big of a problem do you feel this is?*
- **Optimism:** *I believe in you, I know this is possible, I trust you to keep trying, I love your ideas, we can figure it out, we have as long as it takes*
- **Validation:** *I see your point, It is really hard to wind down, you have a lot on your mind, I can see the efforts you're making*
- **Engagement:** *I want to hear your perspective, Tell me more about what's helpful or not helpful for you, which guided meditation did you like best, is there any way I can help, what do you need?*



C.A.R.E.

- Dilemma: Pressure to be available, always “on”
 - **Curiosity:** *Questions rather than criticism*—what’s it like for you, are there “rules” for digital friendship, how are you feeling about the pressure?
 - **An Open Mind:** *Non-judgment and exploring*—tell me more about what it means to be available, to be unavailable, how do you see yourself as a friend, does it depend on your response time?
 - **Respect:** *Your experiences are important*—how do you decide what to do, what’s worked in the past, what has been a mistake?
 - **Empathy:** *Putting myself in your shoes*—It’s a lot of pressure, relationships are tricky, I never had to cope with this level of access / intrusion from my friends, you’re dealing with a lot

- <https://screentimeneetwork.org/resource/dear-parents-digital-well-being-resource-teens-parents>



Take the Long View

- Kids may resist rules and say “you don’t understand!”...but they do need help, they are aware of the downsides of gaming, texting, and social media
- These are real challenges—friendships, time management, navigating identity online and IRL, turning towards discomfort...not easy
 - Explore the dilemmas
 - We become who we are by living, learning, revising



PARENTS- You Are the Lifeline!



Considerations & Tips to Promote Connection & Mental Wellness

- Prioritize face to face interactions for you and your kids
- Co-create a list of things that your child can do without a screen.
- Create consistent non-screen family time (e.g., meals, game night, short car rides, etc.)
- Build in non-screen, alone time. This is important for people of all ages
- Consider having screen-free zones in your home
- Prioritize basic needs (e.g., sleep, nutrition, exercise, etc.)
- Encourage wellness activities (e.g. being outside, movement, mindfulness)
- Use technology to promote health and wellness (e.g., Calm, Headspace, watch funny videos, share memes, etc.)
- Ensure that your kids will not have to compete with a screen for your attention
- Strive for BALANCE

Questions, Discussion

