

**BREAKING UP
WITH YOUR
PHONE AND
OTHER
TECHNOLOGY
HACKS**

Leslie Flowers, NBC-HWC

Director of Communications + Wellness Advisor

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

National Board-Certified Health & Well-being Coach

Duke University Center for Integrative Medicine

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Teacher

Brown University Mindfulness Center



BREAKING UP
WITH YOUR
PHONE AND
OTHER
TECHNOLOGY
HACKS

No disclosures or any financial interests.



“If you can sit quietly after difficult news, if in financial downturns you remain perfectly calm, if you can see your neighbors travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy, if you can happily eat whatever is put on your plate, and fall asleep after a day of running around without a drink or a pill...if you can always find contentment just where you are.”



“If you wanted to invent a device that would rewire our minds, if you wanted to create a society of people who were perpetually distracted, isolated and overtired, if you wanted to weaken our memories and damage our capacity for focus and deep thought, if you wanted to reduce empathy, encourage self-absorption, and redraw the lines of social etiquette, you’d likely end up with ...”



SMARTPHONES

- In 2007, computer-based phones (smartphones) were introduced. Since then, smartphones have become an indispensable part of daily life in all communities and countries.
- Over the past decade, smartphone ownership and use have been exponentially increased globally. For instance, there were about **2.1 billion** smartphone users in 2017, **2.8 billion** in 2020, and **6.84 billion** in 2024.



What's great about smart phones and internet tech?

- *What do you love about your smartphone?*



What's great about smart phones and internet tech?

- *What do you love about your smartphone?*
- Smartphones fetch a limitless range of cognitive activities for users
- Smartphones forge opportunities for individuals to engage in a range of online activities, such as participating in social network sites, playing video games, and “surfing the web”



BUT...



AND...



AND...



AND...



AND...



BEHAVIORAL ADDICTION

For *many* people, smart phones have become a problem, so much so that mental health experts have labeled our attachment to our smartphones as an addiction.

How come?

- Americans check their phones about **47 times per day**. For people between 18 and 24, the average is **82**. Collectively, this adds up to more than **9 billion** phone checks every day.
- On average, Americans spend more than **4 hours a day** on their phones. That amounts to about **28 hours a week, 112 hours a month, or 56 full days a year**.
- Nearly **80 percent** of Americans check their phones within a half hour of waking up.



Source: Catherine Price, science journalist and author *How to Break Up with Your Phone*

BEHAVIORAL ADDICTION

- **Half of us** check our phones in the middle of the night. (Among 25- to 34-year-olds, it's more than 75 percent.)
- We're using our phones so much that we're giving ourselves **repetitive strain injuries** such as "texting thumb," "text neck," and "cell phone elbow."
- **More than 80 percent** of Americans report that they keep their phones near them "almost all the time during waking hours."
- Nearly **5 out of 10 Americans** agree with this statement: "I can't imagine my life without my smartphone."



Catherine Price, science journalist and author
How to Break up with your Phone

BEHAVIORAL ADDICTION

- Nearly **1 out of every 10** American adults admits to checking their phone during sex. Yes, sex.
- Nearly **two thirds** of U.S. adults agree that periodically “unplugging” or taking a “digital detox” would be good for their mental health. Yet barely a quarter of those people have actually done so themselves.



Catherine Price, science journalist and author
How to Break up with your Phone

Catherine Price

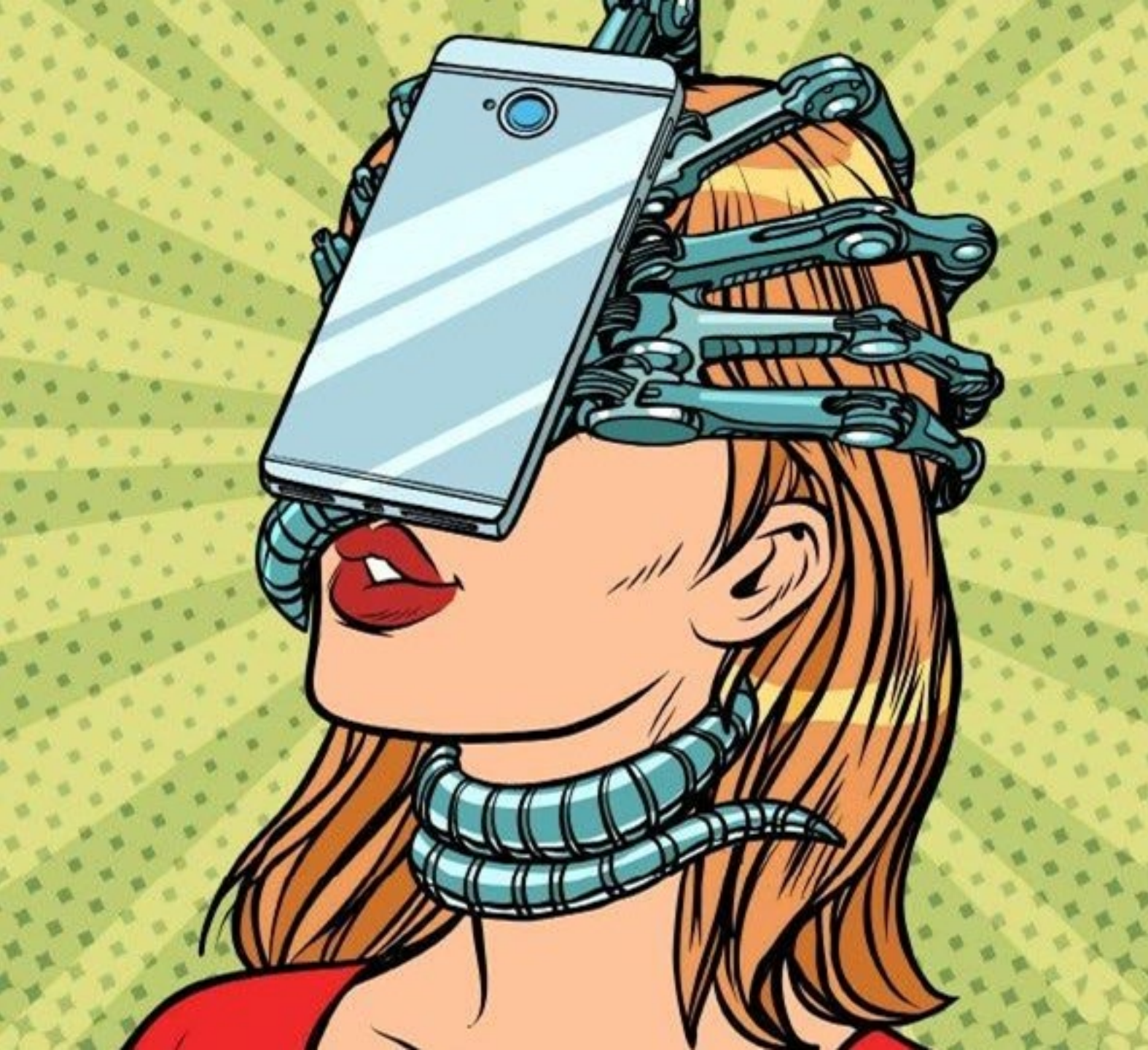
- “Part of a generation that came of age with the internet: “Old enough to remember the world before it, but young enough that I can’t imagine life without it.”



Catherine Price, Science Journalist and Author

- “I realized that I had developed a physical tic where anytime I hit “Save” on the document I was working on, I automatically reached for my phone to check my email. Any time I had to wait for anything -- a friend, a doctor, an elevator -- my phone appear in my hand. I found myself glancing at my phone in the middle of conversations (phubbing -- short for phone snubbing), conveniently forgetting how annoyed I felt when other people phubbed me. I was gripped by a constant compulsion to pick up my phone, presumably so that I didn't miss something important. **But when I evaluated what I was doing, important was pretty much the last word that came to mind.**”





**HOW DO
SMART PHONES
BECOME
ADDICTIVE?**



The Dope on Dopamine

Tristan Harris

- Former Google Product Manager
- Co-founder and President
The Center for Humane Technology
- Founder, Time Well Spent
- Primary subject, “The Social
Dilemma” Netflix



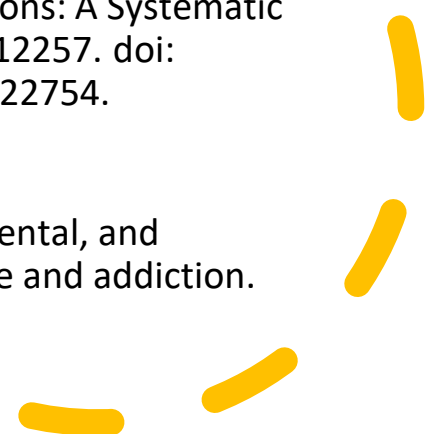


International Journal of *Environmental Research and Public Health*

Smartphone Addiction and Associated Health Outcomes in Adult Populations: A Systematic Review

•Ratan ZA, Parrish AM, Zaman SB, Alotaibi MS, Hosseinzadeh H. Smartphone Addiction and Associated Health Outcomes in Adult Populations: A Systematic Review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021 Nov 22;18(22):12257. doi: 10.3390/ijerph182212257. PMID: 34832011; PMCID: PMC8622754.

•Review of 2550 articles (27 included) to identify physical, mental, and neurological health outcomes related to smartphone overuse and addiction.



Smartphone Addiction and Associated Health Outcomes in Adult Populations: A Systematic Review



International Journal of
*Environmental Research
and Public Health*

“A number of novel problematic behaviors have emerged in the information technology era, such as gambling, internet gaming, and sexual behaviors, which may lead to compulsive engagement. Extreme instances may lead to individuals feeling unable to control these behaviors without external influence, and these behaviors may be considered non-substance or behavioral addictions. Internet addiction is one of the earliest examined forms of information technology addiction.”

Smartphone Addiction and Associated Health Outcomes in Adult Populations: A Systematic Review



International Journal of
*Environmental Research
and Public Health*

“Smartphones distinguish their use from traditional Internet use on computers or laptops because smartphones allow users to access the internet continuously regardless of time and space.”

Health Effects of Smartphone Addiction

Mental Health

- Depression and anxiety are significantly linked with smartphone addiction.
- One U.S. survey found that 46% of smartphone owners believed they could not live without their phones.

Maladaptive behavior patterns, including:

- Reassurance seeking
- Fear of missing out
- Social anxiety associated with SA
- Females more susceptible and showed higher dependence

Health Effects of Smartphone Addiction

Physical Health

- Musculoskeletal pain and insomnia are the two most common physical problems related to SA.
- Defective forwarding head posture, injure cervical spine and cause cervical pain
- Higher signs of inflammation in hand joints, e.g. De Quervain tenosynovitis (pain in the right over the thumb side of the wrist)
- Nerve injury

Health Effects of Smartphone Addiction

Neurological

- Changing our brains negatively impacts our attention span.
- The worse our focus gets, the more valuable we become.
- Social media companies make money by stealing (and then selling) your attention.
- Informational websites, e.g. newspapers, make money by distracting us; they depend on page views and click-throughs for revenue.
- “Focus isn’t profitable. Distraction is.”
Catherine Price
How to Break Up with Your Phone

Health Effects of Smartphone Addiction

Neurological

- Memory overload
- Messes with our memory—everything about smartphones overload short-term memory with information and stimuli ☐ mental fatigue and difficulty concentrating.
- This weakens are schemas—decreasing insights, ideas, and the capacity for deep thought.

Health Effects of Smartphone Addiction

Accidents

- > traffic accidents
- > falls/slips
- > bumps/collisions
- > being trapped in the subway
- > impalement
- > cuts
- > burns or electric shocks

Health Effects of Smartphone Addiction

Sleep Health

- 75% of young adults (age < 30 years) take their phones to bed (related to FOMO), which may increase the likelihood of poor sleep quality.
- Blue light emitted by smartphones can negatively affect circadian rhythms, leading to negative sleep consequences, such as going to sleep later than intended or middle of the night waking.
- A study of 2367 university students dx with SA reported 43% decreased sleeping hours. Additionally, 30% had an unhealthy lifestyle, including weight gain, reduced exercise, and the consumption of more fast food.
- Stimulation



YOUNG PEOPLE: Smartphone Addiction & Mental Health

Dr. Jean Twenge

Psychologist, Professor of Psychology, San Diego State University

Author of *iGen* (2017) and *Generations* (2023)

Researched generational differences for 30 years

“Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation” *Atlantic*,
September 2017

“It’s not an exaggeration to describe iGen (people born between 1995 and 2012, who have grown up with smartphones) as being on the brink of the worst mental health crisis in decades.”



**YOUNG PEOPLE:
Smartphone
Addiction &
Mental Health**

GLOBAL Youth Mental Health Crisis

What it's ****not**** caused by:

- 2008 Global Financial Crisis
- Rising academic pressure
- School shootings in U.S.
- Political climate

YOUNG PEOPLE:
Smartphone
Addiction &
Mental Health

Youth Mental Health Crisis

#1 GLOBAL CONTRIBUTING FACTOR

- Smartphone
- 2010: iPhone 4 had the first front-facing camera
- 2012: Facebook buys Instagram.
Billions of girls in developing world spend hours each day posting curated photos of themselves

**YOUNG PEOPLE:
Smartphone
Addiction &
Mental Health**

Youth Mental Health Crisis

Sapien Labs Report

- The younger that people were when they got their first smartphone or tablet, the more likely they were to have mental health challenges as adults
- The effects were most pronounced among girls, who spend more time on social media than boys do. The harm of the devices seems to be rooted in the 24/7 access they provide to social media. Respondents who got their first smartphones or tablets in their later teens had a much stronger sense of self and ability to relate to others.

**YOUNG PEOPLE:
Smartphone
Addiction &
Mental Health**

Youth Mental Health Crisis

Sapien Labs Report

- Screen time displaces in-person interactions and hinders learning social skills, which take real-world practice.
- Social behavior is complex; it involves reading and decoding nuances in facial expression, body language, tone of voice, touch, and even olfactory cues to infer intent, establish connection, and build trust. Much of that gets lost on social media.

**YOUNG PEOPLE:
Smartphone
Addiction &
Mental Health**

Good News!

- We have the power to break this addiction!



Good News!

- We have the power to break this addiction!
- We can undo many of our smartphones' negative effects.



Good News!

- We have the power to break this addiction!
- We can undo many of our smartphones' negative effects.
- We can rebuild our attention spans



Good News!

- We have the power to break this addiction!
- We can undo many of our smartphones' negative effects.
- We can rebuild our attention spans
- We can get our focus back.



Good News!

- We have the power to break this addiction!
- We can undo many of our smartphones' negative effects.
- We can rebuild our attention spans
- We can get our focus back.
- We can reduce our stress, improve our memories, and reclaim a good night's sleep.



Good News!

- Breaking up with your phone can change your relationship with your devices *AND*



Good News!

- It can also change your life!



Good News!

- More you notice your interactions with your phone, the more aware you'll become of the world *off* your phone -- and how much of it you've been missing.



Good News!

- The more you notice your interactions with your phone, the more aware you'll become of the world *off* your phone—and how much of it you've been missing.
- Breaking up with your phone will allow you to reconnect with a part of you that knows that life does NOT happen on a screen.

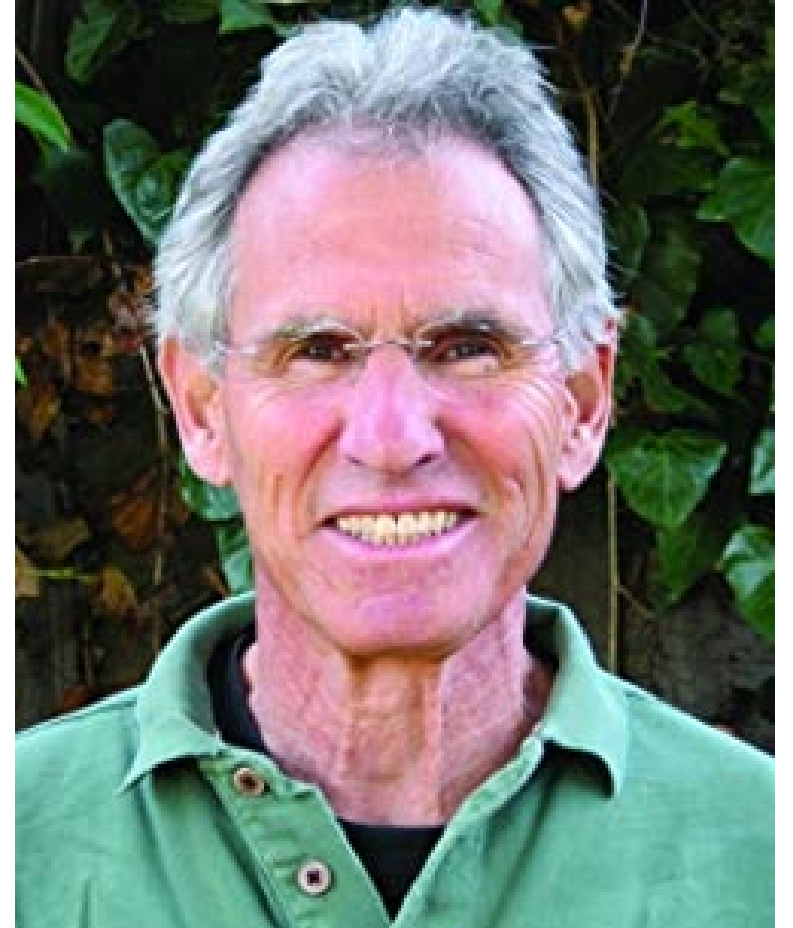


FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

MINDFUL AWARENESS

Mindfulness is
paying attention, on purpose,
in the present, and
non-judgmentally
to the unfolding of experience moment
by moment.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD

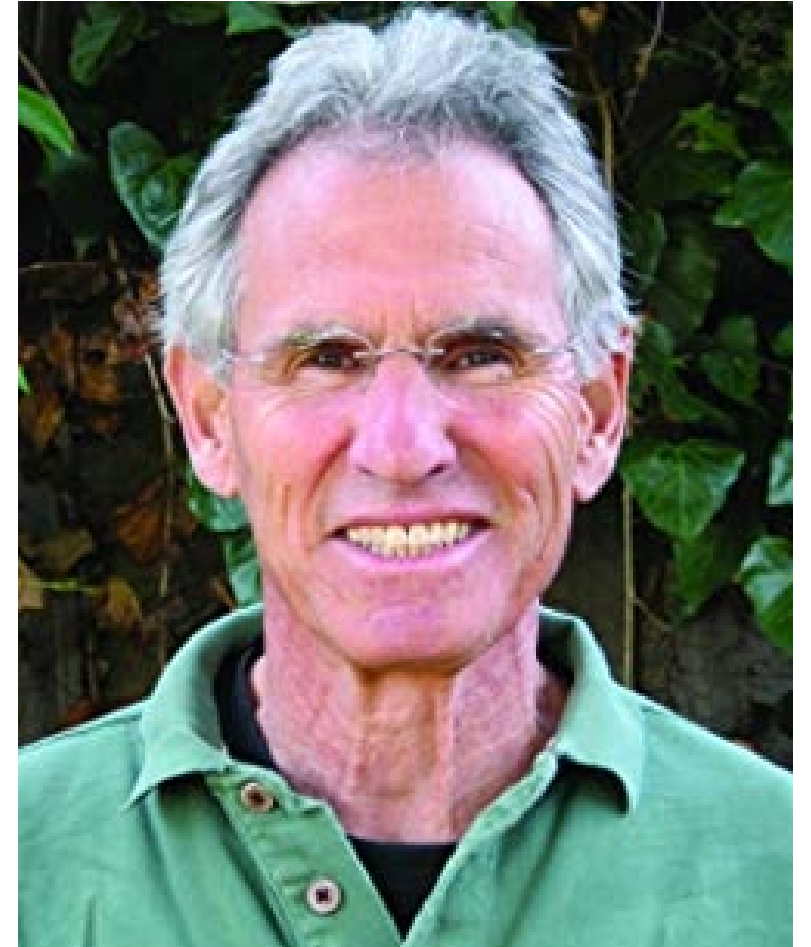


FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

MINDFUL AWARENESS

“The little moments?
They’re not so little.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD



Wheel of Health



Mindfulness exercises can be as effective as Lexapro

November 9, 2022

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction vs Escitalopram for the Treatment of Adults With Anxiety Disorders

A Randomized Clinical Trial at Georgetown University

• *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2023;80(1):13-21.
doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.3679

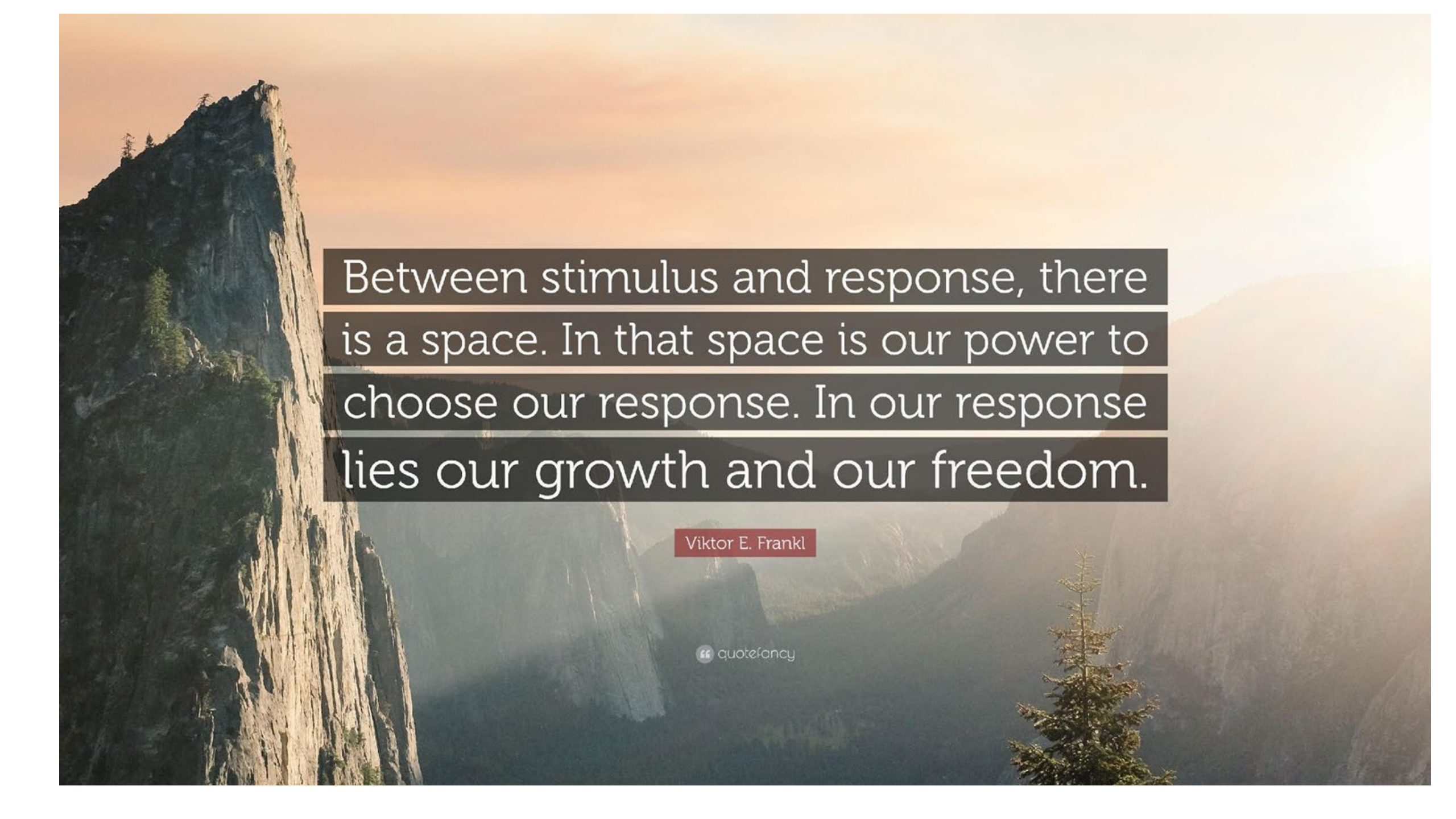
JAMA Psychiatry



MINDFUL AWARENESS

Focused
Awareness

The Pause



Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

Viktor E. Frankl

quote fancy

FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

NOTICE THE CALL (PUN INTENDED)

- “What we think of as irresistible impulses are actually invitations being sent by our minds. This is an important insight, because once you recognize this, you can ask your mind why it’s inviting you to such crappy parties. The moment you recognize that you don’t have to say yes to every invitation is the moment you gain control over your life—both on and off your phone.”



Catherine Price, *How to Break Up with Your Phone*

FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

NOTICE EMOTIONS

Recognize core emotions:

- Anger
- Sadness
- Fear
- Loneliness
- Boredom

Catherine Price, *How to Break Up with Your Phone*



FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

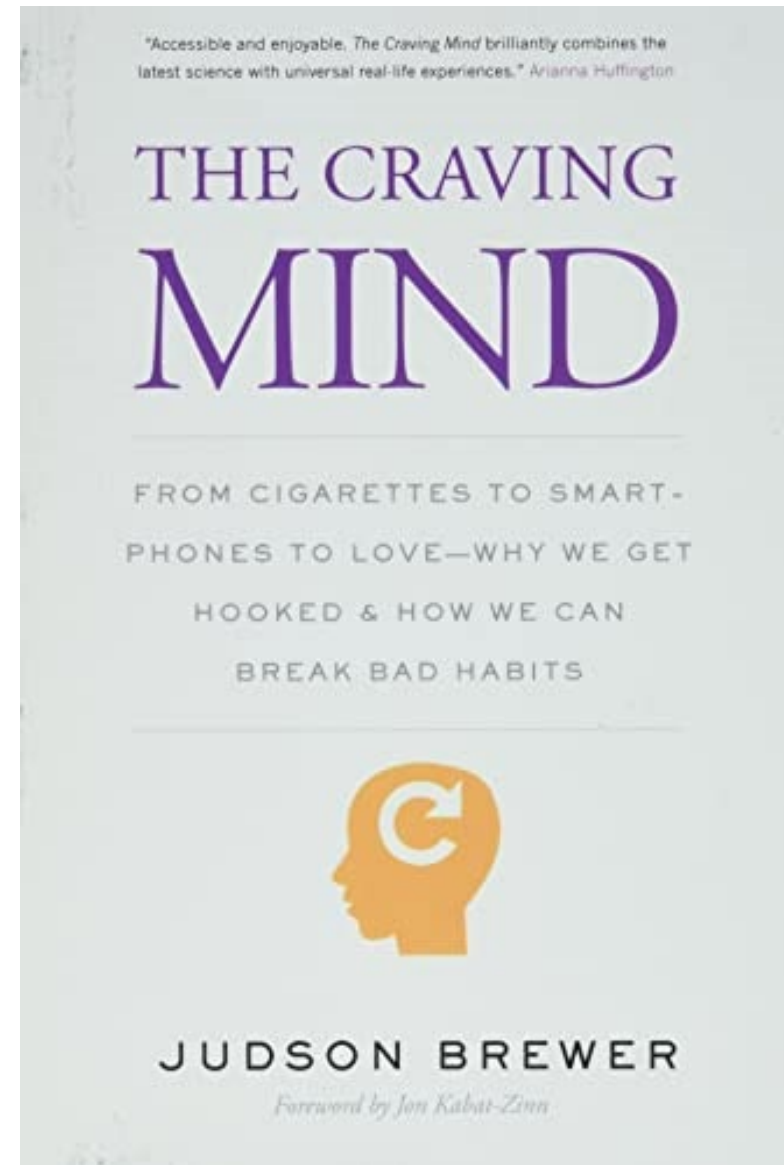
NOTICE EMOTIONS

Most addictions stem from a desire to feel better and/or to make a bad feeling go away. If you try to cut back on your phone use without first figuring out what you're trying to achieve or avoid, you're dooming yourself to failure. Either you're going to relapse, or you're going to find another, potentially more destructive habit that achieves the same effect.

We're not trying to put a judgement on any of these triggers. We're just trying to become aware of them so that we can begin to identify patterns.

Judson Brewer, MD, PhD

Psychiatrist and Director of Research and Innovation at the Mindfulness Center at Brown University



FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

RIDE THE WAVE

When tempted to use your phone for distraction, don't fight it or judge it or criticize.

Simply notice and observe the craving.

Stay present at the urge unfolds.

Pause.

Take a breath.

Don't give in AND don't try to make it go away.



FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

ASK QUESTIONS

What does the craving feel like in your brain and in your body?

Why are you having this urge right now?

What reward are you hoping to receive?

What would happen if you did nothing at all?

What do I really need?



FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

ASK QUESTIONS

What do you love about your smartphone?

What don't you love about your smartphone?

What changes do you notice in yourself—positive or negative—when you spend a lot of time on your phone?



FOUNDATIONAL STEPS

ASK QUESTIONS

“The closer we pay attention to the options we’re given, the more we’ll notice when they don’t actually align with our true needs.”

Tristan Harris

Former Google Product Manager

Co-founder and President, The Center for Humane Technology

Primary subject, “The Social Dilemma” Netflix



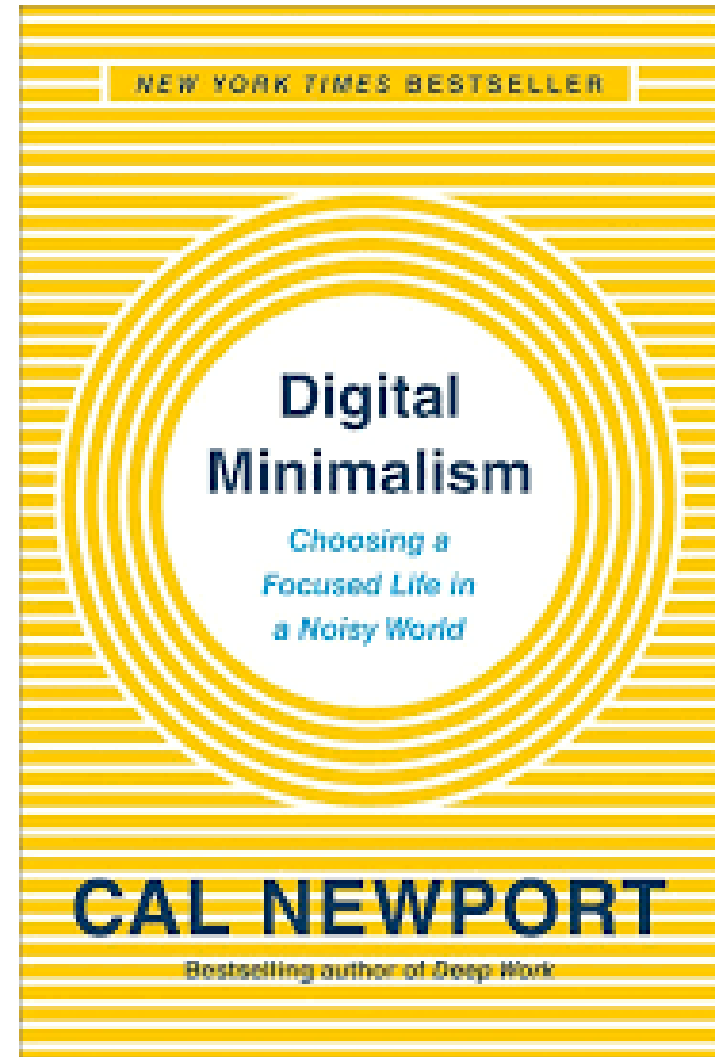
Digital Minimalism

A philosophy of technology use in which you focus your time on a small number of carefully selected and optimized activities that strongly support things you value, and then happily miss out on everything else.

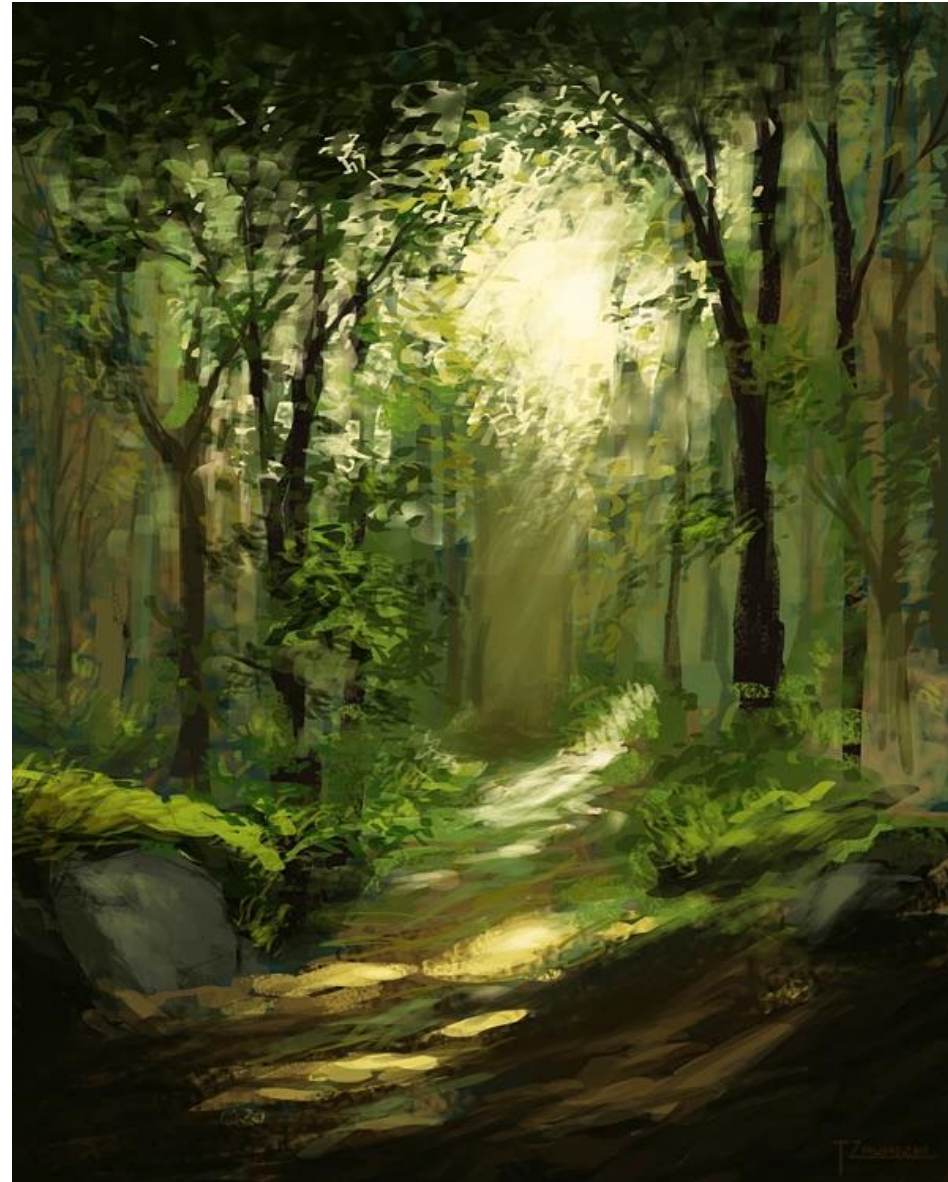
By working backward from their deep values to their technology choices, digital minimalists transform these innovations from a source of distraction into tools to support a life well lived. By doing so, they break the spell that has made so many people feel like they're losing control to their screens.

Cal Newport, *Digital Minimalism*

Associate Professor of Computer Science, Georgetown University

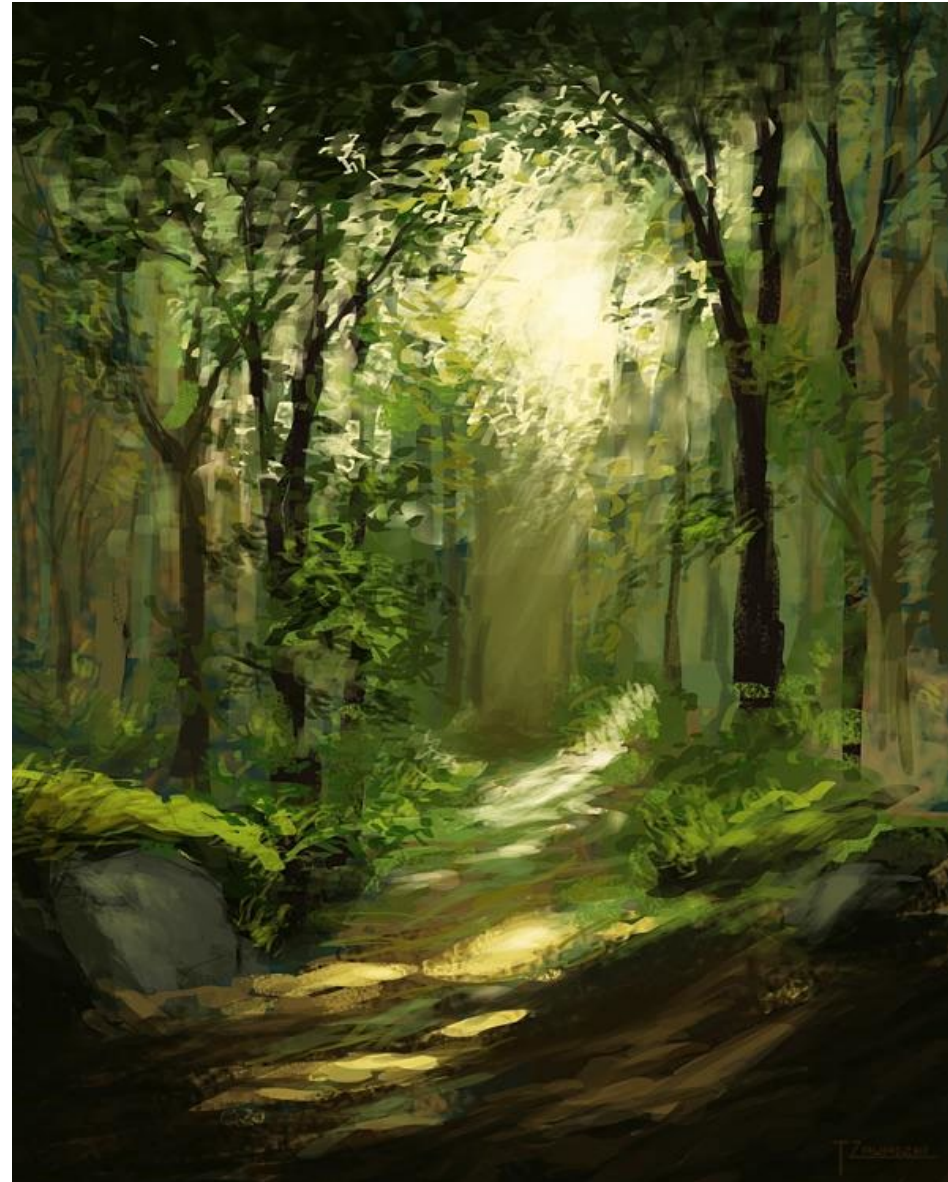


TOP 10 HACKS FOR BREAKING UP WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE AND REDUCING TECH DISTRACTIONS

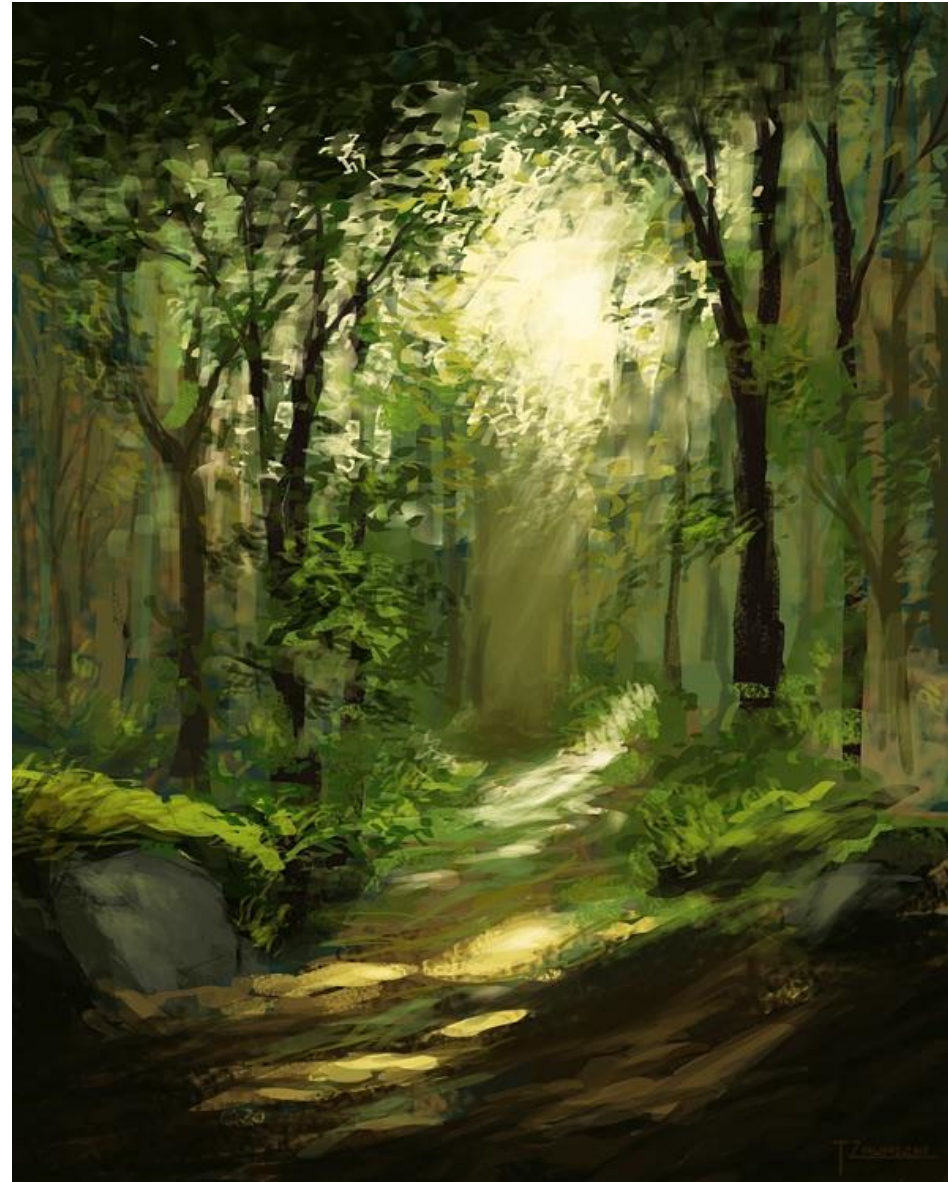


#1. GET REAL

Download a tracking app: Moment for iPhone and (OFFTIME) for Android

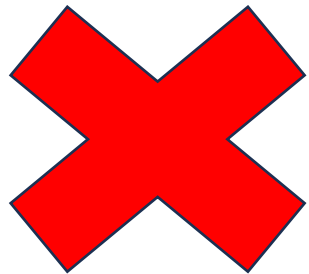


#2. Delete social media apps from your phone



#3. Change Where You Charge It

The Bedroom



“Of course, we’re checking our phones first thing in the morning and right before bed and at night (and in the middle of the night!). We’re in arm’s reach of our phones.”

#3. Change Where You Charge It

The Bedroom



Alarm clock!

Remember these??

#4. Set Boundaries

No-Phone Zones

Examples: Dining table,
bed, movies, car, walks



#4. Set Boundaries

Wake-Up Times:

Determine time when phones are not accessible and when they are.

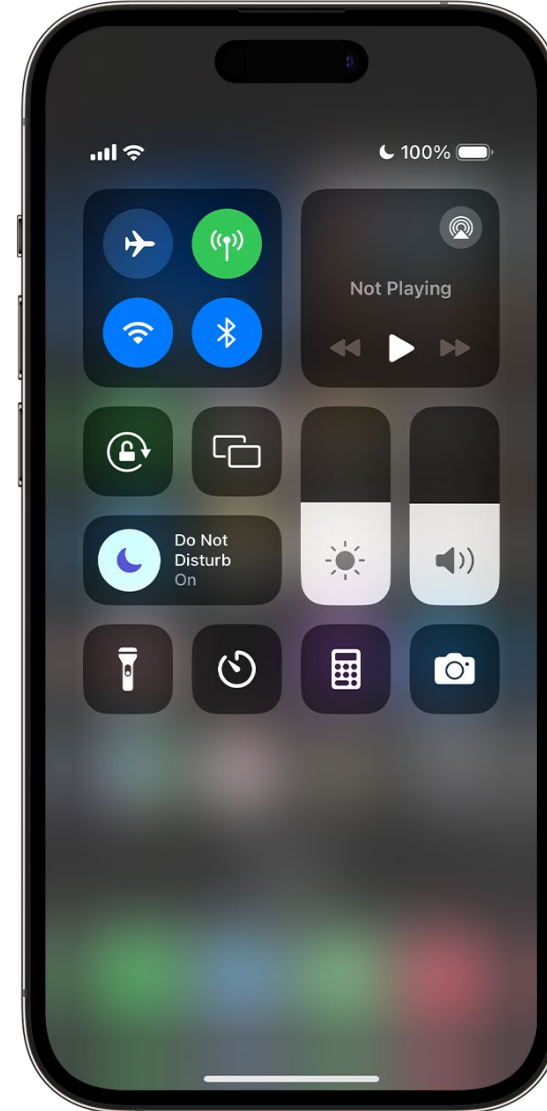


Examples: After breakfast, stop one hour before bed, not on Sunday mornings

#4. Set Boundaries

Emergencies

Phone: Do not disturb
except for emergency
contacts



#4. Set Boundaries

Emergencies

Second Phone



#5. Stop Phubbing

Phone Snubbing



#6. Practice Pausing: **Stop, Breathe, and Be**

Stop what you're doing, take a slow, deep breath, and tune in to the details of what you're experiencing in this moment.



#6. Practice Pausing: Stop, Breathe, and Be

Stop what you're doing, take a slow, deep breath, and tune in to the details of what you're experiencing in this moment.



WHAT FOR?

WHY NOW?

WHAT ELSE?

#7. Technology Sabbath

- A day
- A weekend



24 / 6

THE POWER OF
UNPLUGGING
ONE DAY A WEEK

*Detox/Withdrawal Symptoms:
Irritable, impatient, malaise (phones
often distract us from our emotions.)*

#8. Clean up the rest of your digital life

- Unsubscribe from emails you don't want
- Clean up and out your phone apps
- Create a commerce only email account



- Social Media: unfollow people you don't care about
- Driving: Disable phone when reach a certain speed (Google "drive mode" and your phone model/carrier)

#9. Identify what you want to do with your time and your LIFE

- What brings you joy?
- Who brings you joy?
- I've always loved to:
- I've always wanted to:
- When I was a kid, I was fascinated by:



- If I had more time, I would like to:
- Some activities that I know put me into flow are:
- People I would like to spend more time with include:

#10. DO IT!!!



-
- What brings you joy?
 - Who brings you joy?
 - I've always loved to:
 - I've always wanted to:
 - When I was a kid, I was fascinated by:

- If I had more time, I would like to:
- Some activities that I know put me into flow are:
- People I would like to spend more time with include:

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean-
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed,
how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?



from *New and Selected Poems*, 1992
Beacon Press, Boston, MA
Copyright 1992 by Mary Oliver

CITATIONS

6.84 billion smartphones

<https://whatsthebigdata.com/smartphone-stats/>

Catherine Price story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7knxu3utKA>

Center for Humane Technology Tristan Harris

<https://www.humanetech.com/>

Ratan ZA, Parrish AM, Zaman SB, Alotaibi MS, Hosseinzadeh H. Smartphone Addiction and Associated Health Outcomes in Adult Populations: A Systematic Review. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2021 Nov 22;18(22):12257. doi: 10.3390/ijerph182212257. PMID: 34832011; PMCID: PMC8622754.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRdMUhBPRjY>

Meditation Apps:

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/best-meditation-apps-for-iphone-ipad-and-android_us_58d9a5b2e4b0f805b3231621

Mindful.org

Great resources and articles

YouTube: free guided meditations – search for what you need. Recommended search terms: “Guided mindfulness meditation”; “Mindfulness meditation;” “Guided meditation for relaxation”

4-7-8 Relaxation Response Breathing Technique

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRPh_GaiL8s&t=38s

Now and Zen: How mindfulness can change your brain and improve your health

<https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/assets/Harvard%20Now%20and%20Zen%20Reading%20Materials.pdf>

Mindfulness exercises can be as effective as anxiety drugs, study shows

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2023/01/23/mindfulness-meditation-anxiety-medication/>