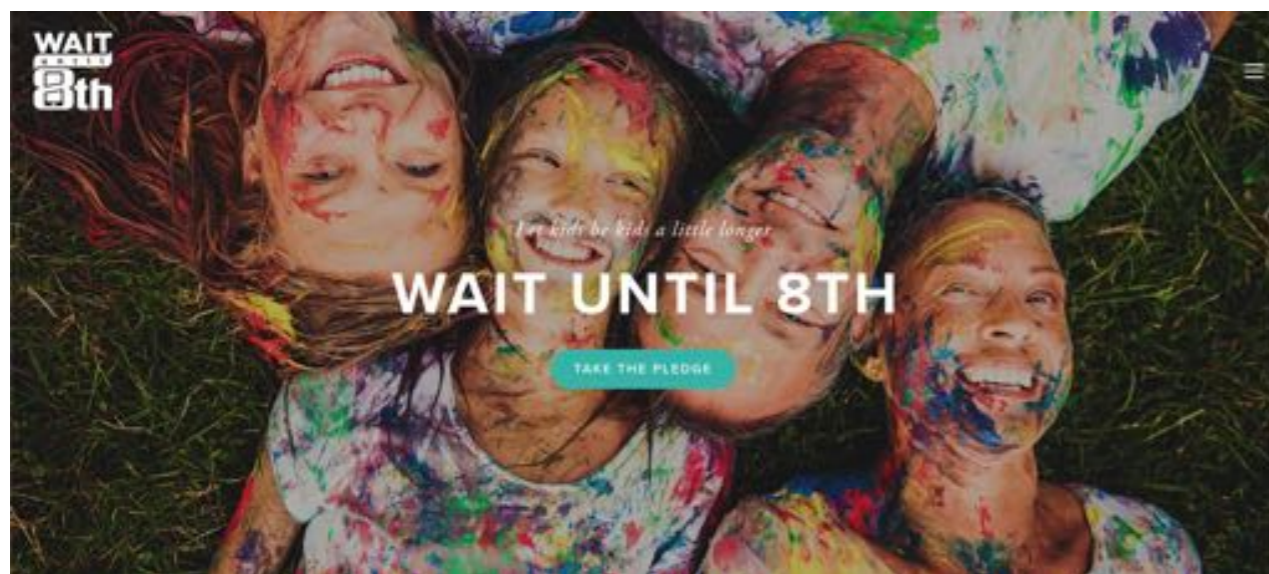




Max Stossel - Social Awakening

# Tools & Reminders For Parents

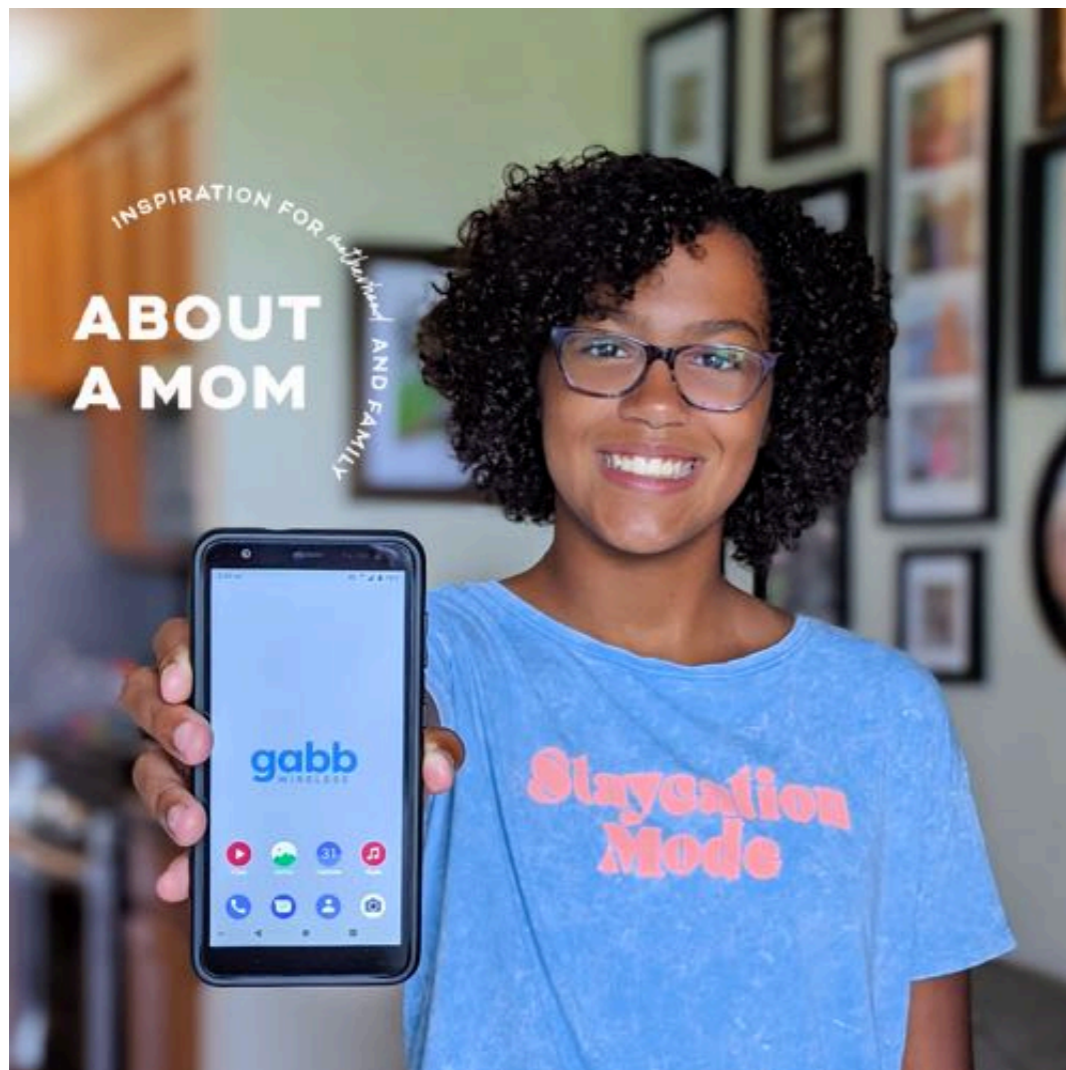
This document is meant as a follow up to the talk “Education in The Age of Distraction”



## Delay Social Media

The Wait Until 8th pledge is an effective way for parents to stave off smartphone peer pressure by rallying together, classroom by classroom, to delay giving children a smartphone until at least 8th grade.

Remember they are watching you use it, have open and honest conversations about the parts you like, don't like, what you struggle with etc. This will be helpful when they do create accounts to not have it all feel so new.



## Actual “Phones”

Smartphones are actually supercomputers, there are actual phones like Gabb phone you can get for your kids that enable them to communicate and have the conveniences of these devices without opening the door to social media, porn, etc on a mobile device.

Gabb Wireless is a wireless network and phone provider that offers a first phone for kids that includes unlimited talk and text, with a camera, calendar, FM radio and so forth...but no Internet, games, social media, app store, picture messages or group texts.

Are you looking to support a child or a young person?

Is it for a particular age group?

A child or young person with SEND: Social, Emotional ...

A child or young person with SEND: Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs

A child or young person with SEND: Cognition and learning need

A child or young person with SEND: Communication and interaction need

A child or young person with SEND: Sensory and/or physical needs

An LGBTQ+ child or young person

A care-experienced child or young person

Advice for 11-14 yrs



Social, Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) 11-14 years old

# Internet Matters: A Helpful Resource

A helpful resource to search by age, for basic questions, and challenges with specific developmental issues. They also have answers for ages younger than middle school. [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)



## Phone-Free zones

Setting zones in your home like the dinner table or the bedroom where no one (parents or kids) are allowed to use the devices can be a helpful tool.

Helps facilitate conversation and children tend to be more accepting of this when parents are held to the same standard.



## Physical alarm clock

Charge your device outside the bedroom.

Get a separate alarm clock in your bedroom, and charge your phone in another room (or on the other side of the room). This way, you can wake up without getting sucked into your phone before you even get out of bed.

This allows you to wake up and think your own thoughts as well as prevents you from immediately introducing stress and anxiety into your day.

*If you have your bedroom as a device free zone, this can do WONDERS for quality of sleep. (Blue light before bed messes with our sleep)*



## Lead by example

Make an effort to use technology as a tool instead of an end in itself. When using technology, let's communicate the "why" to our children and ask them to communicate theirs.

"I'm picking up my phone to send your mom something she needs for her doctor's appointment, I'll put it down right after I send the message." "I know I'm on my computer a lot during this time, but I'm working. This screentime is different from TikTok, it's how our family puts food on the table."

It's hard to have a healthy relationship with technology, and you likely won't be able to communicate, or use it intentionally all the time. Admitting when we've fallen into the mindless rabbit hole is not only okay, but can also set a good example of sharing honestly and acknowledging the difficulty. Of course there is going to be more Screentime during COVID, and please be gentle with yourselves! It's a hard time to be a parent.

## Reduce blue light at night

Research shows that blue light (which is emitted from most screens) negatively impacts our quality of sleep.

Some have reported its helpful to wind down with no screen time for at least an hour before going to sleep.

Features like Nightshift and extensions like F.lux help reduce the amount of harmful light from our screens, but from talking to people who have tried both, the screenless wind down seems more effective.

*F.lux can be downloaded by clicking the above link, and there are two ways to turn Night Shift on and off:*

Open Control Center. Firmly press the Brightness control icon, then tap to turn Night Shift on or off.

*1. Go to Settings > Display & Brightness > Night Shift. 2 On the same screen, you can schedule a time for Night Shift to turn on automatically and adjust color temperature.*





## Include your kids in the rule-making process:

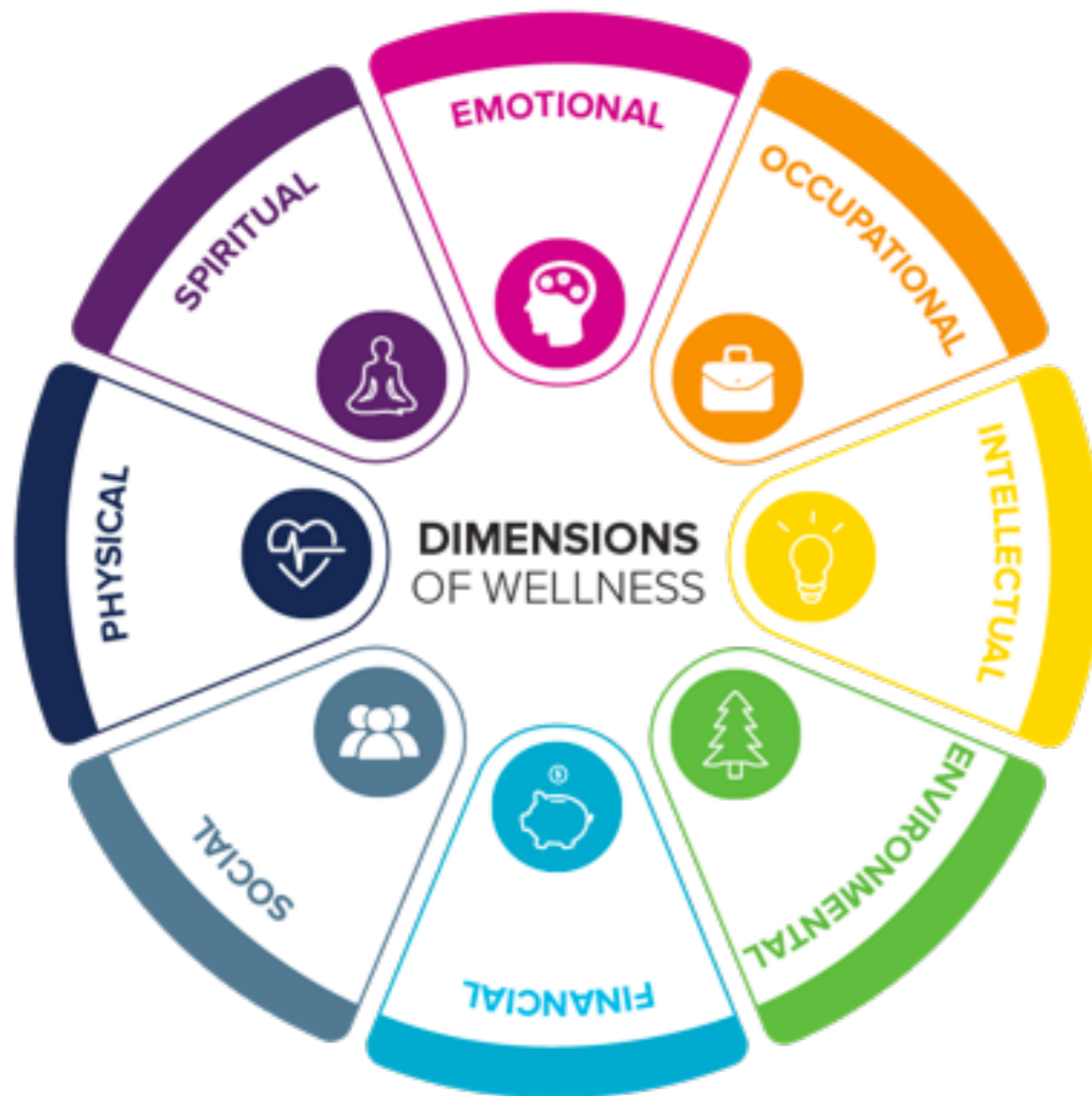
“I notice how much time you’re spending on social media and it concerns me. Can we talk about that?”

Talking to your kids about your reasoning and theirs, and making decisions with them, as opposed to for them, can help them trust your guidance.

Work to understand the underlying needs and associated triggers driving them to digital distraction, and brainstorm solutions that may or may not involve screens. Parenting in a pandemic is HARD most parents have been more flexible during COVID.

Working with them is not the same as caving to their every whim :)

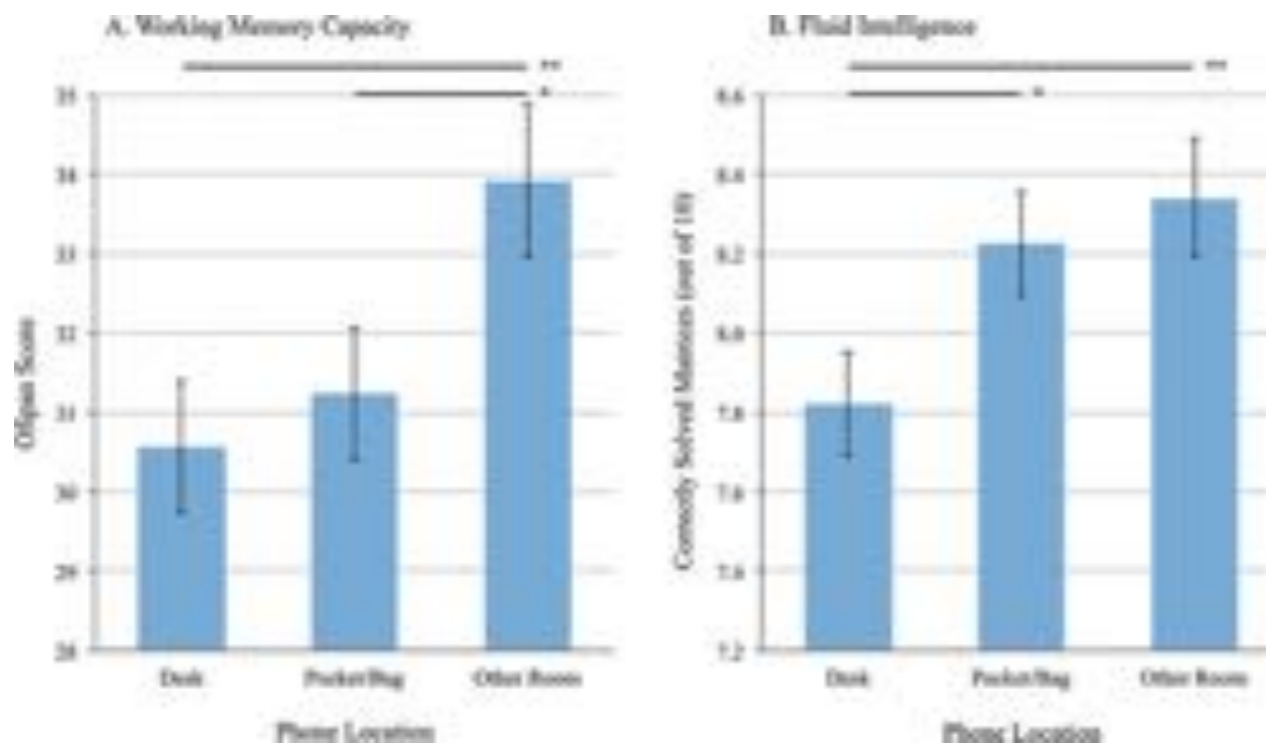




## Think Big Picture: Beyond Screens

It's very difficult as a parent or educator to stay up to date on all the new apps and games that become popular. It can be helpful to think about what the role is of each in your child's life. What do you use this for? How is it impacting your relationships? Your health? How do you feel when you're using it? Are there some parts that feel good and some parts that feel bad? Is there anything that makes you uncomfortable about this? Remember being a safe space for our kids to be able to talk about anything is one of the most helpful things we can do, and that means not guilt or shaming when they've made mistakes or seen inappropriate content.

## Study & focus with your phone outside the room



“Although these devices have immense potential to improve welfare, their persistent presence may come at a cognitive cost. In this research, we test the “brain drain” hypothesis that the mere presence of one’s own smartphone may occupy limited-capacity cognitive resources, thereby leaving fewer resources available for other tasks and undercutting cognitive performance. Results from two experiments indicate that even when people are successful at maintaining sustained attention—as when avoiding the temptation to check their phones—the mere presence of these devices reduces available cognitive capacity. Moreover, these cognitive costs are highest for those highest in smartphone dependence.” - [Ward et al. 2017](#)

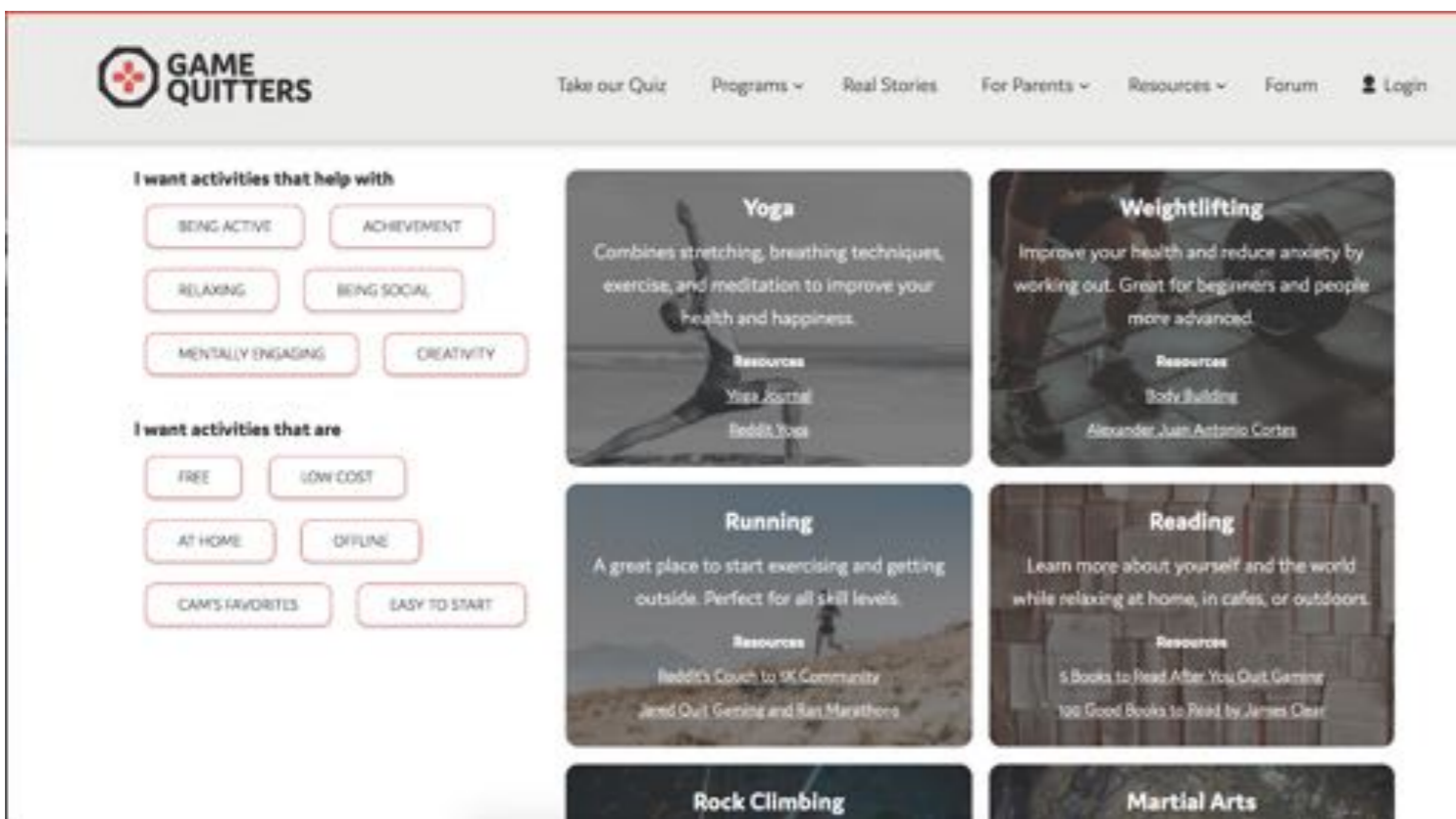


## Ask the right questions

Instead of asking “Do you like that game/app?”

Ask: “How does that game/app make you feel?”

This allows us to separate the focus from how much time we’re spending on something vs. how it impacts us on a human level



**GAME QUITTERS** | Take our Quiz | Programs ▾ | Real Stories | For Parents ▾ | Resources ▾ | Forum | Login

**I want activities that help with**

- BEING ACTIVE
- ACHIEVEMENT
- RELAXING
- BEING SOCIAL
- MENTALLY ENGAGING
- CREATIVITY

**I want activities that are**

- FREE
- LOW COST
- AT HOME
- OFFLINE
- CAM'S FAVORITES
- EASY TO START

**Yoga**  
Combines stretching, breathing techniques, exercise, and meditation to improve your health and happiness.  
*Resources*  
Yoga Journal  
Reddit Yoga

**Weightlifting**  
Improve your health and reduce anxiety by working out. Great for beginners and people more advanced.  
*Resources*  
Body Building  
Alexander, Juan Antonio Cortes

**Running**  
A great place to start exercising and getting outside. Perfect for all skill levels.  
*Resources*  
Reddit's Couch to 5K Community  
Jared Oul, Gerine and Ben Marathons

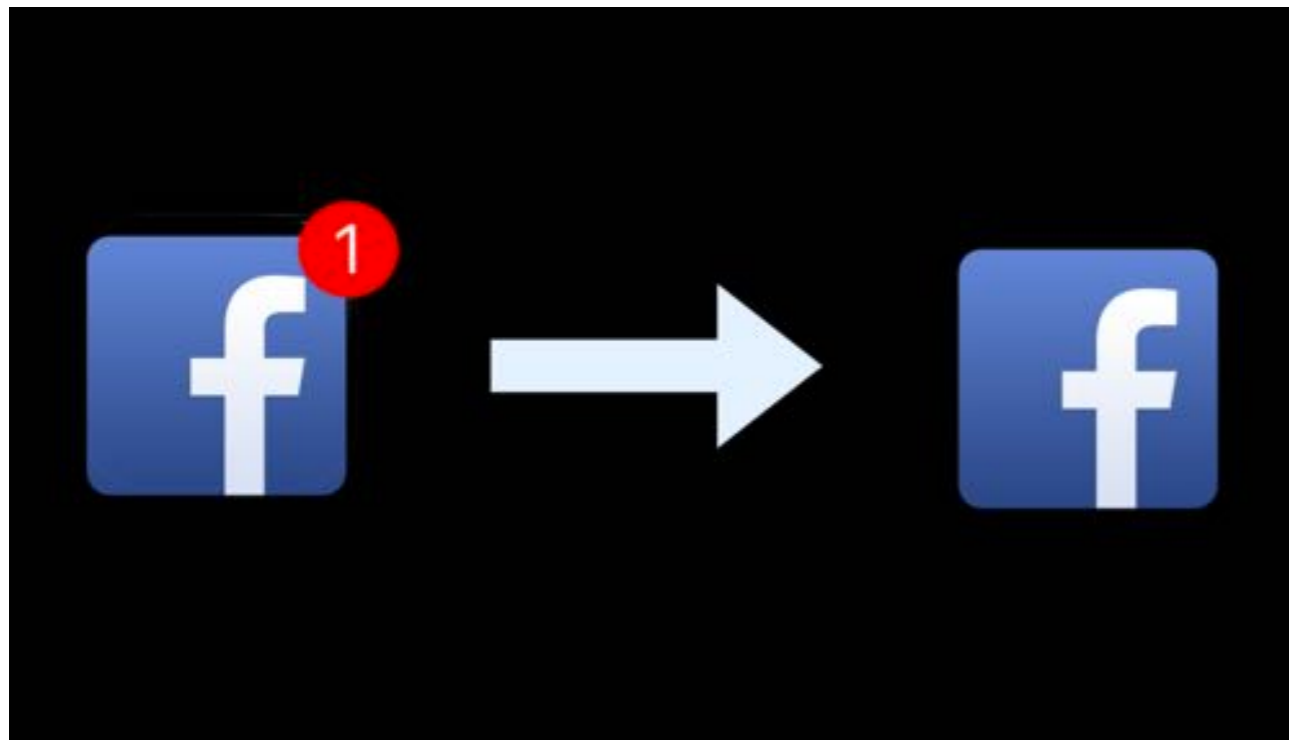
**Reading**  
Learn more about yourself and the world while relaxing at home, in cafes, or outdoors.  
*Resources*  
5 Books to Read After You Quit Gaming  
100 Good Books to Read by James Clear

**Rock Climbing** | **Martial Arts**

## Hobby ideas

Game Quitters Has a Hobby Tool which is a great resource for anyone looking for an answer to “What else am I supposed to do with my time right now?!”

You can select activities based on your preferences, like “At Home” “Free” “Offline” “Easy to Start” “Creative” “Low Cost” etc.



## Turn off all notifications except from people.

Notifications appear in RED dots because red is a trigger color that instantly draws our attention. But most notifications are generated by machines, not actual people. They keep our phones vibrating to lure us back into apps we don't really need to be in.

Visit Settings > Notifications and turn off all notifications, banners, and badges, except from apps where real people want your attention; e.g. messaging apps like WhatsApp, FB Messenger, Signal, Telegram, WeChat etc.



## Greyscale

Colorful icons give our brains shiny rewards every time we unlock. Set your phone to grayscale to remove those positive reinforcements. It helps many people check their phone less, as well as creates a moment of Mindfulness. “Ugh this thing is grey... why did I pick it up again? Did I mean to?” Common for this effect to wear off after a few weeks.

Go to Settings > General > Accessibility > Accessibility Shortcut (bottom) > Color Filters. This allows you to quickly triple-tap the home button to toggle grayscale on and off, so you keep color when you need it.



## Screen Time & Digital Wellbeing

Apple's Screen Time and Android's digital wellbeing features will help you and your family set limits on certain apps.

[How to set up Screen Time](#)

[How to set up Digital Wellbeing \(No family option as of April 2019\)](#)





IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND SCHOOLS:

**5.9 million children covered.**

**629 thousand severe self-harm situations detected.**

**2.6 million severe bullying situations detected.**



## OurPact & Circle

At the end of each talk I ask parents “Is there anything you’re doing that’s working really well for you?” Bark, OurPact and Circle are products that come up frequently. If Screeentime or Digital Wellbeing are not meeting your needs. In my experience, these are the parental control tools that seem to be rising to the top as tools for monitoring/blocking specific apps and setting limits.

Note: Others have complained that if you don’t sign up for the premium membership OurPact scrambles the order of apps on your child’s phone. And that Circle may slow down your wifi.

## Go cold turkey

This one is tough, but effective! It's the easiest way to cut back and improve your mental health, as these apps can easily gobble up so much of our time and wellbeing. This does not mean stop messaging and sharing pictures & videos with your friends! It just means moving those conversations to less toxic digital environments.

Delete Tik Tok → Make a dance or funny video and send it to people you love directly

Delete Snapchat → Use Text & WhatsApp

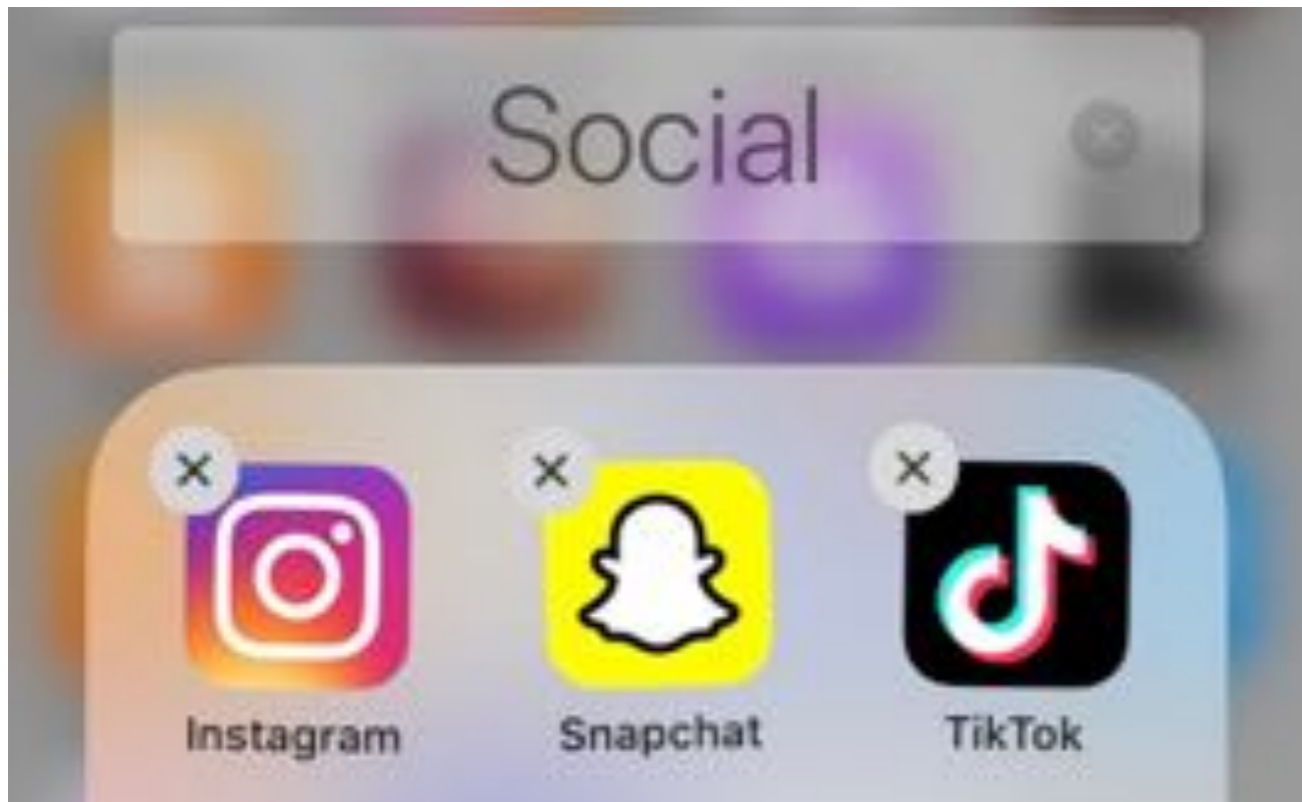
Delete Instagram → Or at least prune Instagram of "Joy Thieves" {unfollow everyone who doesn't make you feel good about yourself}

If it's not social media for you, what is that one app/game that sucks you in the most but leaves you with regret? Delete that one!

*NOTE: This is **FAR** more effective for teenagers to do in groups. High likelihood of an unsatisfying outcome if they try and do this by themselves. It's also helpful to frame it as a challenge.*

*"Try deleting it for a week and see how it feels."*

*"Do you really want to go your whole life without knowing what it feels like not having social media on your phone?"*





## It's never been easier to run from ourselves

Learning to sit with feelings, boredom, and the challenges that come with daily life is going to be a major challenge for the next generation.

SEL, Mindfulness and Communication, have become essential skills to navigate this digital world.



TOOLS FOR ACTION

HOME ABOUT TEAM RESEARCH COMMON PUSHBACKS POLICIES NEEDS POSTERS PRESS CONTACT

## Policies & Consequences

We've collected cell phone policies from schools around the country to help you create the right policy for your school.

POLICIES

CONSEQUENCES

POLICY ROLL OUT

FREE POSTERS

# Away For The Day

This is a great resource that helps schools implement policies where smartphones are put away for the school day. We have an opportunity to use those 7 hours to teach the next generation focus, patience, in person social/communication skills and how to be without their devices

[www.awayfortheday.org](http://www.awayfortheday.org)

# Administrative Recommendations

1. Check and return phones at the door (with exceptions).
2. Audit yourselves, is what you've implemented achieving what it was meant to?
3. Pay attention to what we're losing as we're gaining. Move slow and test before making sweeping implementations.
4. Approach tech in schools with a skeptical eye. Measure success not just in use, but in human results. Start from the assumption that new tech or ed tech won't improve the learning experience and work backwards from there. [www.everyschool.org](http://www.everyschool.org)
5. Integrate SEL, Mindfulness, Communication skills, and Time Management skills into your curricula. These are important new skills to combat the digital world the next generation lives in.

**TRANSFORMATIVE:** Robotics, coding, computational thinking, computer animation, website design, graphic design, advanced photo, video, or music editing, spreadsheet creation, digital citizenship, any tech that helps students with special needs.

**SUPPORTIVE:** Online resources such as images or articles not available to students in print, supplementary videos such as documentaries or TED Talks, limited use of virtual reality, keyboarding, moderate but purposeful posts by teachers used to update parents on student work via sharing platforms.

**RESTRICTIVE:** E-texts in place of print, prioritizing typing over handwriting (except in final work), using software or applications that have already been mastered by the student (such as taking pictures with a tablet), points-based learning games, overcomplicated tech use by teachers.

**DISRUPTIVE:** Tech rewards, tech choice during free time, tech for tech's sake, unrestricted access to cell phones during school hours, needless screen-based homework assignments, any platform that exposes students to age-inappropriate content or bullying, too much tech.\*

## SCREEN TIME LIMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

\*Tech use is not imperative for academic success, and The EdTech Triangle does not endorse a minimum amount of tech use per grade. Moreover, all types of screen-based EdTech (even Transformative) can isolate students from their teachers or peers. As such, and in order for students to develop skills in collaboration, empathy, and critical thinking, screen time limits should be followed.



Pre-K	0 mins	6th	0-40 mins/day
K	0-20 mins 2x/week	7th	0-50 mins/day
1st	0-20 mins/day	8th	0-50 mins/day
2nd	0-20 mins/day	9th	0-60 mins/day
3rd	0-30 mins/day	10th	0-60 mins/day
4th	0-30 mins/day	11th	0-70 mins/day
5th	0-40 mins/day	12th	0-70 mins/day



## Contact: Max Stossel

*Please reach out if you are interested in ongoing programs, or piloting new resources to help students, parents, & educators have healthier relationships with technology.*

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**Title:** CEO, [Social Awakening](https://www.socialawakening.org) Education Advisor,

Center for Humane Technology

To book Max at your school/community visit:  
[www.socialawakening.org](http://www.socialawakening.org)