

discussion group  
questions

growing  
up.  
social

raising relational kids  
in a screen-driven world

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# discussion group questions

## **introduction: taking back your home**

1. Is technology bringing your family closer together or driving it farther apart?
2. What do you hope to learn from reading this book?
3. What concerns regarding screen time do you have for your child?
4. Talk about the difference between good intentions and action.

## **chapter one: screen time: too much, too soon?**

1. How did you spend your free time as a child?

2. How old are your children, and how much screen time do they have on an average day? What are they doing/watching on screens?
  
3. What do you think about your child having a television in his or her room?
  
4. What are some activities you have successfully substituted for screen time?
  
5. How do you respond to this statistic: “The average American child age eight to eighteen spends more than seven hours a day looking at a video game, computer, cellphone, or television”?
  
6. Do you currently have media guidelines for your home? If so, what are they? If not, would you like to establish guidelines as you read this book?

7. Have you met someone like Michael, the senior in high school who played video games alone during his graduation party? How does Michael's example serve as a warning?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. How do you teach the difference between appropriate and inappropriate content to your children? Give an example of when you had to do this recently.

## **chapter two: the A+ method for relational kids**

1. Do you agree that children in previous generations were more respectful of parents and adults? What role do you think technology has played in any changes?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. On page 29, it says, "Technology trains (children) to find what they need at the speed of light. The art of patience is lost." Have you found this to be true with your kid(s)? If so, give an example when your child was impatient.

3. Of the five A+ skills (affection, appreciation, anger management, apology, and attention), which ones stand out as skills your child most needs to improve?
  
4. Talk about family mealtimes. How many times do you eat together as a family in a typical week? Is there a lot of conversation? Who is the most talkative? Do you take phone calls during meals? Is the television on? Is the meal rushed or unhurried?
  
5. Does your child have an email account, and if so, do you have stated email guidelines? For parents of younger children, at what age do you think it is beneficial for your child to have an email address?

### **chapter three: the A+ skill of affection**

1. How does your child express affection toward you? How do you express affection toward your child?
  
2. Does your phone or computer compete with your child for your affection? How?

3. Has your child showed you and other family members less affection after receiving a digital device such as a tablet, phone, or video game?
  
4. Share a success story of when you were able to put aside your electronics and be “all there” for your child (or vice versa, when your child set aside his/her device to be with you).
  
5. What are your thoughts on screen time during playdates with friends?
  
6. What exposure does your child have to social media? How do you think social media can be helpful or harmful as your child seeks to be liked by others?
  
7. Does your child play/watch any violent video games? If so, how has that affected his/her empathy for others?

8. How does your child rate when it comes to eye contact? Does your child readily give you eye contact? Does he or she look other adults or friends in the eye?
  
9. How does eye contact show affection for another person?
  
10. What is one thing you can do to better show your child affection?

#### **chapter four: the A+ skill of appreciation**

1. Do you feel your child appreciates what you do for him or her as a parent?
  
2. Do you need to prompt your child to say thank you, or does he or she express thanks on his/her own?
  
3. Give an example of a time when you taught your child a lesson about gratitude.

4. How does it make you feel when your child receives a gift but seems ungrateful for it?
  
5. What is your response when your child says, “But everyone else has one!”?
  
6. What might be the value of making children wait for what they want instead of granting their wishes immediately?
  
7. Has your child said thank you in a way that touched your heart?  
Share that memory with the group.
  
8. Look at the *10 Screen-Free Ways to Cultivate a Thankful Heart in Your Child* on page 58. What is one way you would like to try with your family?
  
9. How has showing gratitude helped you as an adult to get along better with others?

## chapter five: the A+ skill of anger management

1. Does your child have trouble managing his/her anger?
2. When your child gets angry, do you try to distract him or her with something else?
3. If your child dealt with anger in the same way you do, would you be pleased? If not, what is one thing you can do to improve your own anger management with your kid(s)?
4. Brainstorm scenarios to role-play with your children to help them practice anger management. Possible scenarios might be: What would you do if a child took away a toy you were playing with? What would you do if another kid insulted you by calling you names?
5. Think about the last time you were angry with your child or vice versa. What happened? What did you do right? What could you do differently next time?

6. Does your child have a problem with frequent outbursts of anger?  
What do you think is the “why” behind your child’s anger?
  
7. Evaluate the video games your child is playing. Are there any that promote aggressive behavior?
  
8. Has your child ever been involved with cyberbullying?
  
9. Is there something you need to apologize about to your child? (You may refer to the *Helpful Dialogues for You and Your Angry Child* on page 78 as a starting point.)

## **chapter six: the A+ skill of apology**

1. Have you modeled how to apologize to your child (either by apologizing to your child or having your child present when you are apologizing to someone else)? What happened?
  
2. Does your child readily accept responsibility for wrongdoing, or does he/she tend to blame someone or something else?

3. Give an example of one clear rule and consequence if that rule is broken in your home.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Have you ever watched one of your child's friendships weaken or break because someone wouldn't apologize? Have you ever had a similar experience?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. In preparation for teaching your child the five languages of apology, practice role-playing with each other. Say:
  - "I am sorry."
  
  
  
  
  
  - "I was wrong."
  
  
  
  
  
  - "What can I do to make it right?"
  
  
  
  
  
  - "I'll try not to do it again."
  
  
  
  
  
  - "Will you please forgive me?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Agree or disagree with this statement: "I don't want to apologize to my children because they will lose respect for me." Explain your opinion.

7. Look over the *Things Not to Say When Apologizing to Your Kids* on page 92. Which of these phrases have you used in your parenting?

## **chapter seven: the A+ skill of attention**

1. How has screen time affected your child's ability to pay attention?

2. Does your child have any difficulty paying attention in school, church, or other settings where listening is required?

3. Is your child able to sit still?

4. Have you observed your child switching back and forth between tasks instead of completing the task at hand? Give an example.

5. Talk about your child's reading habits. What's something you can do to increase your child's reading time, vocabulary, or comprehension?



over that he is shy, it gives him an excuse for not developing social skills. A child can say, 'Oh, I'm just shy,' giving him a pass to skip politeness and conversation. For some children, being shy becomes very convenient."

2. If your child is playing a video game and you come home from work, does he/she pause to greet you?
  
3. How have you helped your child overcome anxieties about meeting new people?
  
4. Look over the practice scenarios on page 115. Which would you like to practice with your child?
  
5. What words of encouragement can you give a child struggling with shyness?
  
6. Has your child experienced rejection or bullying? Did you talk about it afterward?

7. Is your child a healthy weight? What's one thing you can do to promote proper nutrition and exercise?

## **chapter nine: screen time and the brain**

1. What are you thinking when you see your child's eyes glued to the screen?
2. If your child grows up with screens throughout preschool and elementary school, how is the brain affected?
3. How does increased screen time threaten the development of skills like reading, writing, and sustained concentration?
4. What are benefits of screen time for the brain? How do those benefits measure up to the downsides?
5. If your child follows the norm, he/she will average 3,400 text messages a month as a teenager. How do you think texting will affect your child's brain in the future?

6. Do you think your child's screen time is leading to an overdose of pleasure?
  
7. Are you concerned that your child may become addicted to screens in the future? If so, what steps will you take to ensure his/her safety?
  
8. If your child's brain is plastic and being molded daily, is your child's screen time beneficial or detrimental to brain development?
  
9. Neurosurgeon Ben Carson said, "Don't let anyone turn you into a slave. You're a slave if you let the media tell you that sports and entertainment are more important than developing your brain." What is one positive thing you can do to develop your child's brain?

## **chapter ten: screen time and the love languages**

1. Physical Touch: Do you make physical contact each day with your child through hugs, high fives, sitting next to each other, wrestling, etc.?

2. Words of Affirmation: When was the last time you praised your child for something specifically? What did you say?
  
3. Quality Time: How can you make time in your day for quality time for your child and still get your work done?
  
4. Gifts: Is your child preoccupied with material things? Does he/she nag you about getting an electronic device like a tablet or video game?
  
5. Acts of Service: What are a few caring acts of service you do regularly for your child?
  
6. What do you think is your child's primary love language, or his top two?
  
7. How can you speak in that love language to your child today?

## **chapter eleven: screen time and security**

1. Have you had any experiences with cyberbullying online or know someone who has?
2. Talk about your plan to address pornography with your child at the appropriate age. What do you think is important to say? How can you best monitor your child's devices?
3. Have you taught your child the value of privacy and not to disclose personal facts online? How can you communicate the importance of this in a way your child understands?
4. Does your child's screen time promote learning and positive values?
5. Do you use an Internet filter, or do you plan to in the future?
6. When might be a good age for your child to get a cellphone? Describe why.

7. Have you gone over the “Screen-Safe Family Pledge” (found on page 164) with your children who are old enough to understand?

## **chapter twelve: screen time and parental authority**

1. Do you need to “take your house back” from kids who are calling the shots and pushing your limits?
2. Do you have trouble keeping up with your child’s computer use because you don’t understand the programs he is using?
3. If you want your child to reduce his/her screen time, are you comfortable making those changes or are you anxious about resistance from your child?
4. Is it more important to you that your child likes you or that your child respects you?
5. Are there digital-free zones in your home (i.e., a screen-free room) or digital-free times in your schedule (i.e., devices go off for a certain time)? If so, how has that benefited your family?

6. If you have given your child too many privileges or too little supervision of screen time, what are you going to do about it now?
  
7. For grandparents: What are your frustrations about screen time and your grandchildren? What are standards you would like to have at your house when the children are visiting?

### **chapter thirteen: screen time and the single parent**

1. What are some of the unique challenges you face as a single parent?
  
2. Does your child struggle with any of the following: obesity, irregular sleep, behavioral problems, poor academics, or violence? If yes to any, do you think screen time is a contributing factor?
  
3. What time does your child go to bed? Is this an early enough bedtime to make room for some quiet time for you at the end of the day?

4. Do you co-parent with an ex-spouse? Are there different screen-time rules when your child is with you and when your child is with the other parent? If so, how can you work together to provide more consistent guidelines?
  
5. Would you like to try a type of media fast like the dad featured on page 187? What do you think would work for you and your kids?
  
6. In seeking to fill your child's love tank each day, what obstacles get in the way?
  
7. Do you have a caring community of people who support you as a parent?
  
8. What are some constructive ways you can seek support from others if you don't have that right now?

## **chapter fourteen: screen time and you**

1. Do you agree with this statement: "I believe the most damaging effect of the digital world is the parent's own dependence on digital media because it will become their child's dependence"?

2. Does your child know that spending time with him/her is more important to you than catching up on social media or answering emails?
  
3. Describe your digital use on a typical day. Would you be pleased if your child grew up to be just like you in terms of screen use?
  
4. Aside from your hours at work, are you comfortable disconnecting with technology and making yourself unavailable by phone or email during certain times?
  
5. If you were stranded without any digital connectivity for a week, would you be relieved, indifferent, or totally stressed?
  
6. When do you turn your phone off?
  
7. What are some positive things you have done to limit your personal screen time and enjoy more time with your family?

8. What kind of “digital Sabbath” experience would you like to create for your family?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Are you ready to say goodbye to the digital babysitter? How can you be more proactive as a parent and less dependent on video games and televisions shows to occupy your child?

**conclusion: a tale of two homes**

1. Describe your typical family car ride. Does anyone use earbuds? Are movies allowed? Is there conversation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How has your thinking about screen time changed since reading this book?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What has stood out as important and relevant for your family?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What screen-time changes have you implemented or do you plan to implement?

