

Discussion Questions for *The Tech Exit*

Introduction

- What are you hoping to learn from reading this book?
- Do you feel stuck in a screen time trap? What do you wish was different for your family when it comes to technology?
- Do you think delaying smartphones and social media until adulthood and minimizing other screens is possible for your children and family? Why or why not? What would convince you that it is possible? What obstacles or challenges would you have to overcome?

Chapter One

- Are screen time limits a strategy you have tried to employ with your children? If so, how is it working? What challenges or frustrations do you have?
- What habits do you see forming in your child related to screens? What do you wish was different?
- What reasons from this chapter are most compelling to you as to why screen time limits aren't effective? What differences do you notice between screens and other "real world" treats that can be given to children in moderation?

Chapter Two

- What has your experience been like with parental controls, if you've used them? Do you feel like you are effectively in control of your children's online experience? What frustrations do you have? Have your children found workarounds? What do you wish was different?
- Did anything in this chapter surprise you about the limits of parental controls or the dangers of a child's experience online today? What was most shocking?
- What are your greatest concerns or fears about your child's safety online?

Chapter Three

- Do you think your family could try out a screen detox? What barriers/challenges would keep you from trying one? What seems most difficult about doing a detox?
- What steps would you need to take in your home and family to set you up for success in doing a detox?
- If you did a detox, what would be your main goal or hope to get out of it?
- What are some positive activities or alternatives you can replace the screens with during a detox?
- If you can't do a full 30-day detox, what could you do? 7 days? A day? An hour? An outing?
- Take a moment to identify a family or two you think might be willing to try a detox with you and ask them about it. Share the chapter of this book with them and make a plan to try a detox at the same time.

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Chapter Four

- Who are some other families you think could be like-minded to agree to delay smartphones and social media with you? What are ways you could gather parents together to talk about this? Think about starting a book club or reading group to read through this book together with other parents and use these discussion questions to help you!
- How could you bring up this topic of exiting screen technologies with other families in your neighborhood or in your school? What are some points about why to opt out that you'd want to communicate? What reasons do you think would help convince other families to join you?
- How could you find common positive goods with your neighbors or families from school or church that you all want to give your children and how could you focus on giving your children those goods together? How could focusing on positive real-world activities and experiences with other families in your communities help result in limiting screens?
- Where in your community can you work to create counter pressures to screens during childhood? Your school? Your block? Your church? What are some ways you could take initiative to help your child build a social life off of screens?

Chapter Five

- What objections do you think your kids would raise (or have already raised) to a Tech Exit lifestyle of opting out of smartphones and social media? How could you respond to them? How can you work with them to find workarounds or make concessions where you can, without compromising on the non-negotiables?
- What are ways you could educate your children on the harms of technology so they buy into your guidelines and so they are prepared to use technology wisely as an adult? What are some topics of conversation you think you should have with them? What are resources you can use (documentaries, podcasts, articles, etc)? (See the Appendix for some suggestions).
- What screen related dangers are you concerned about your kids encountering outside of the home? How can you prepare them for facing dangers when you are not there?
- What are the items on your own smartphone that distract you most? What are some ways you can be a better role model for your kids concerning tech usage? What steps can you take to make your phone less distracting and to put more distance between yourself and your phone when you're with your family? How can you practice greater tech transparency with your kids?

Chapter Six

- What alternatives or workarounds would your family need to adopt to make a Tech Exit feasible?
- What genuine communication needs or needs for certain tools (GPS or a sports team app) does your child or teen have? How can those needs be met in ways other than a smartphone? Have you considered any non-smartphone alternatives? (See Appendix for options.)

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Chapter Six, cont.

- What are creative ways you could work around your child “needing” certain apps?
- How could you take small steps to eliminate or reduce screen technologies in your child’s life? Or to eliminate some of the most addictive apps to start and build from there?

Chapter Seven

- How can you establish digital accountability in your home between parent and child? What are some in-person accountability structures you can adopt, like public use or phone spot checks?
- How can you help your child learn to use the internet as a tool, in productive and purposeful ways, with supervision?
- What are some family screen practices you can establish to help make screen entertainment something the family does only together and sparingly?
- What are some “real world” activities your kids like to do that they could use for entertainment instead of screens?

Chapter Eight

- How can you help your child get attachment, touch, and movement every day?
- How can you help your child take on more real-world responsibilities and opportunities to serve others? What services or responsibilities can they take on for the household? Are there other external service opportunities you can help them engage in, especially older teens?
- What are some tools you could give your child instead of screens that would help them develop real life skills and responsibility?
- What are some real-life pursuits and activities you can fill your child’s time and energy with instead of screens?

Chapter Nine

- How could you speak with your child’s school about going phone-free from bell-to-bell if they haven’t already? Are there other parents or parent groups in your area that you could work with to advocate for this policy at your school? Could you organize with other parents to speak on this issue at local PTA Meetings? Or call or write to your School Board member or Superintendent on this issue? Or even just have a conversation with your principal? (Groups like the Phone-Free Schools Movement, Fairplay’s Screentime Action Network, MAMA, and Smartphone Free Childhood often have local groups or ambassadors you could find and connect with.)

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Chapter Nine, cont.

- Often parents have concerns about children not having access to phones during the school day. How could you speak to other parents in the school to convince them of the need for a phone ban and respond to concerns they may have about such a policy?
- Could you advocate to your school or school district for allowing exemptions from mandatory educational screens, so parents can opt out? Could you ask the school to move away from screen-based learning and reliance on screens in class for instruction or for homework?
- How could you work with the principal to encourage other creative ideas to disincentivize screens, like offering more extracurriculars for kids to participate in?
- How could you help your local community, schools and parents, come together to discuss these topics of protecting children from phones and screens, and work together for solutions?

Chapter Ten

- What are some ways you could engage in political advocacy to influence public policy on tech issues? At the local or state level? To your federal members of Congress?
- Which of the policy ideas in this chapter resonated with you the most? Or do you think is most necessary? Which are you most passionate about advocating for?
- How can you join with other parents to make your voice heard by politicians? What is one advocacy step you could take? Could you call your representative? Talk to your local city council member? Write a letter to your state senator?
- How does changing laws change the culture? Why is this important?

Conclusion

- What is the purpose of childhood? How are screens undermining it?
- What are the goods in life you want to help your child embrace instead of screens? What do you want to be saying “yes” to as you say a positive “no” to screens?
- What is one thing you are going to do as a result of reading this book? One change you are going to make or practice you are going to adopt?
- What most impacted you from this book?

