



ובחרת בחיים

project focus

Focusing on Connection • Upgrading our Lives

Let's take a moment to focus.

כ"ה אלול
9.4.18

Thank you for
joining us tonight
at this **historic**
Chicago event.

Led by our city's Rabbonim, we will explore
ways to decrease distractions and enforce
safeguards in today's tech-centered world.



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Event Schedule

8pm - Tehillim

HaRav Elya Brudny Shlit'a

Rosh Yeshiva, Mir Yeshiva

Dr. David Pelcovitz Ph.D

Acclaimed psychologist & world renowned speaker

HaRav Ephraim Wachsman Shlit'a

Rosh Yeshiva, Meor Yitzchak

10pm - Maariv

**Something to keep in mind while
you read through the pages:**

The intention of this booklet is to encourage each of its readers to set goals and take practical steps towards an even more responsible and balanced use of technology. We understand that every individual has established his or her own standard for usage and exposure to technology, and that one person's struggle is not the same as his or her neighbor's. This is why each chapter represents a different area of potential growth. It is our hope that each reader finds some or all of the chapters relevant, insightful and motivational.

A message from our Rabbonim.

לכבוד אחי ורעי הדורים בעיר שיקאגו וסביבותיה,

שמחתי באומרים לי שנתארגן אסיפת חיזוק בעירכם בעניני טכניולוגיה לעורר את לבב העם לחכיר סכנות הגדולות הכרוכות בת ברוחניות ובגשמיות, והדרכים לחשמר מהם. על כן באתי בשורות אלו לחוות את דעתי שהוא חוב קדוש לכל יהודי בין אלו אשר תורתם אומנתם ובין בעלי בתים הם ונשיהם להשתתף באסיפה זו. ולהשומעים יונעם ותבא עליהם ברכות טוב.

מתת' חיים סלומון

דעת משה' לרד"ק ז"ל וכו'
ז"ה אגמ"ה וכו' וכו' וכו'
יזק"ה (ה'א"ה)

יזק"ה חיים סלומון

אגמ"ה וכו' וכו' וכו'
אגמ"ה וכו' וכו' וכו'
אגמ"ה וכו' וכו' וכו'
אגמ"ה וכו' וכו' וכו'

Dear Fellow Chicagoans, עמ"ש

On September 4th / 25 Elul, the entire Chicago Jewish Community will B'Ezras Hashem be coming together to address the challenges of technology.

It is clear to all, that technology has become one of the defining issues of this generation. Uniting to raise awareness and to find practical solutions is a key component in ensuring the kedusha of our homes and the well-being of ourselves and our children.

It is because of our genuine care and concern for each family that we have organized this crucial event, and we strongly encourage every member of the community, men and women, to attend.

In the zechus of attending this event and the ensuing culture change in our city, may we all be zoche to a year of good health, parnassa and nachas.

Kesiva V'Chasima Tova,

Rabbi Alan Abramson

Rabbi Herschel Berger

Rabbi Reuven Brand

Rabbi Yitzchak Broyde

Rabbi Mordechai Cohen

Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen

Rabbi Zev Cohen

Rabbi Ezriel Cziment

Rabbi Eliezer Dimersky

Rabbi Pinchas Eichenstein

Rabbi Yehoshua H. Eichenstein

Rabbi Yehoshua H. Eichenstein

Rabbi Zalman Leib Eichenstein

Rabbi Mordechai Elbaum

Rabbi Zvi Engel

Rabbi Baruch Epstein

Rabbi Yitzchok Falk

Rabbi Menachem Fine

Rabbi Daniel Fox

Rabbi Moshe Francis

Rabbi Avraham Friedman

Rabbi Ephraim Friedman

Rabbi Shmuel Fuerst

Rabbi Shaanan Gelman

Rabbi Eliezer Grunberg

Rabbi Reuven Gross

Rabbi Joel Gutstein

Rabbi Shaoul Hamaoui

Rabbi Boruch Hertz

Rabbi Netanel Isaacs

Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller

Rabbi Shmuel Yeshaya Keller

Rabbi Shlomo S. Kohn

Rabbi Dovid Kupchik

Rabbi Louis Lazovsky

Rabbi Yisroel Langer

Rabbi Aaron Leibtag

Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Levin

Rabbi Shmuel Yehuda Levin

Rabbi Leonard Matanky

Rabbi Eliyahu Millen

Rabbi Binyomin A. Neuman

Rabbi Shmuel Oren

Rabbi Moshe Binyomin Perlstein

Rabbi Henech Plotnik

Rabbi Yosef Posner

Rabbi Elisha Prero

Rabbi Daniel Raccach

Rabbi Moshe Raitman

Rabbi Yosef Rajchenbach

Rabbi Moshe Revah

Rabbi Yona Reiss

Rabbi Yaakov Robinson

Rabbi Shalom Rupp

Rabbi Gershon Schaffel

Rabbi Moshe Schechter

Rabbi Moshe Scheinberg

Rabbi Moshe Schmeltzer

Rabbi Gedalia Dov Schwartz

Rabbi Yosef Schanowitz

Rabbi Aryeh Shulman

Rabbi Aaron Small

Rabbi Chaim Twerski

Rabbi Efraim Twerski

Rabbi Heshy Unger

Rabbi Moshe Yosef Unger

Rabbi Elliot Weinschneider

Rabbi Herzl Yitzhak

Rabbi Doug Zeldin

Rabbi Zvi Zimmerman

Rabbi Dovid Zucker

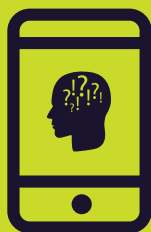
Focus on Tefilah

During an otherwise hectic day, tefilah offers the opportunity to pause; to disconnect from our surroundings and connect with Hashem. We can enjoy these precious moments to their fullest by focusing completely on Him.



Focus Tip

I will have my phone
off during davening



Distraction boosters or concentration busters?

**the mere
presence**

of smartphones

face down in front of a person
impairs their ability to perform
basic cognitive tasks.

times per day

the typical cellphone user
touches his or her phone.

2,617

**a buzzing
notification**

**made adults
concentrate less**
& perform more sloppily,
even if they didn't stop to
check their phones.

Focus Quote

**After a couple of days of not using the
technology, they tap into deeper and
less distracted modes of thinking.**

Nicholas Carr, Bestselling author of *The Shallows* and *Is Google Making Us Stupid?*



Actions Speak Louder than Your Words (of Tefilah)

The Project Focus Committee

Rav Shach's Greatest Pleasure

Rav Shach zt"l once asked a close talmid, "What do you think gives me the most pleasure in life?"

Knowing his Rebbi's great love of Torah, he responded, "I assume it is when Rebbi unlocks a complicated sugya or a difficult Rambam."

"Incorrect. My greatest pleasure is the knowledge that I am **פה המדבר עם השכינה** (a mouth that speaks to Hashem), that I have the opportunity to daven every day, one-on-One to Hashem."

"My greatest pleasure is the knowledge that I am **פה המדבר עם השכינה, that I have the opportunity to daven every day, one-on-One to Hashem."**

It is noteworthy that most commentaries understand that the status of **פה המדבר עם השכינה** is one reserved for Moshe Rabbeinu, a rank he achieved with his high-level clarity of nevuah (prophecy). Rav Shach had a different take. He understood that it is referring to every Jew. Each one of us has this priceless opportunity to daven to Hashem.

The only questions are, do we truly appreciate this opportunity, and do we do everything in our power to avoid impairing it?

My Rabbi Insulted Me

Imagine. After years of training and preparation, and a long and tedious job application process, you get the call. "We would like to invite you to interview for a position in our company." A dream come true, but you aren't ready. So you reach out to a local businessman, a renowned expert in the field you are pursuing, for his insider tips and strategies for a successful interview. At the

At the beginning of the meeting, the alleged expert looks at you straight and says, "The main thing you need to keep in mind is to not mock or insult the boss during the interview."

beginning of the meeting, the alleged expert looks at you straight and says, "The main thing you need to keep in mind is to not mock or insult the boss during the interview."

How would you react to this piece of expertise? I presume that you would be a bit incredulous and insulted by his assumption of your complete lack of common sense.

Assuming that would be your reaction, let me pose a different question - when your Rabbi announces basically the same thing before minyan - "Rabbosai, out of respect to Hashem and to the shul, this is a reminder to please turn off your cell phones or put them on airplane mode." - why isn't your reaction the same? Is it not beneath us to hear such announcements? They assume a lack of common sense.



Actions Speak Louder than Your Words (of Tefilah)

But the announcement is made. Apparently, it is needed.

Lost Opportunities

Hashem is the ultimate Boss (נותן לחם לכל בשר), the most attentive Doctor (רופא כל בשר), the best Shadchan (זיווגים), (המלמד תורה לעמו ישראל), the greatest Teacher (הקב"ה מזווג), and the highest ranked Fertility Expert in the world (של חיה). If you need any of the above or have ANY other need, He is the address. The only address. Everything else is just hishtadlus.

If so, a bit of expert advice - "The main thing you need to keep in mind is to not mock or insult the Boss/Doctor/Shadchan/Etc. during the interview. Please turn off your phone." It's a recommendation out of pure concern for us and our families. Who knows how many brachos won't be turned on until our cell-phones are turned off during davening.

Chaim's Two Piles

There is a wealthy individual, Chaim, who lives in the New York area. He is a very generous man and petitioners line up daily at the end of davening to speak to him and request support for their personal or communal cause.

Chaim has a unique minhag, though. He gives everyone, without exception, twenty dollars. Nothing more and nothing less. It was certainly generous, but many individuals wanted more and they would leave Chaim their business cards or addresses scribbled on scraps of paper with hope that they would get a check in the mail. These cards and scraps made it into pile #1, which ultimately never led to any extra funds.

But there was also pile #2. There were some individuals that deeply touched Chaim with their stories or inspired him with their vision and he wanted to give them more

in order to ease their pain or take part in their organization or initiative. Staying true to his minhag he would only give them \$20, but he would ask them for their address. These addresses made it to the fateful pile #2, the one that he took home and sent significant sums of money to.

As he was about to say his goodbye and thank you to Chaim, Dovid heard his cell phone ring.

One day, an individual by the name of Dovid approached Chaim and shared his plight. Dovid's life sounded like a continuous chain of tzaros in every domain - health, family, parnassa, etc. - and he was in serious need of financial assistance. His story had the desired impact on Chaim's heart, and tears welled up in his eyes. Chaim gave Dovid his traditional \$20, BUT he also asked him for his address. He took the slip of paper and put it on top of pile #2. This could have been the breakthrough that Dovid had been waiting for! But it wasn't.

As he was about to say his goodbye and thank you to Chaim, Dovid heard his cell phone ring. He took his phone out of his pocket, answered it and said, "Yaakov, I can't talk to you right now, I'm in middle of the meeting, but don't worry, I took care of it. I'll call you later." He then hung up and bid farewell to Chaim.

Unfortunately, Dovid never received a check. In response to Dovid's taking the phone call, Chaim removed the address from pile #2 and transferred it to pile #1.



Actions Speak Louder than Your Words (of Tefilah)

The lesson is simple. Hashem is our Chaim. He is our source of Chaim. Our behavior in shul has a direct impact on which pile our tefillos get placed into. Let's not spoil the gift of tefilah by having our phone out during davening. (Heard from Rabbi Fischel Schachter)

What We Daven. That We Daven.

Why is it so detrimental? The following is just one of the many explanations.

"What we daven" has a very targeted goal. It is meant to accomplish whatever it is that we are davening for, with the specific words that are being said. Whether it be praise of Hashem, expressing gratitude to Hashem or making a request from Hashem.

"That we daven" has a more global message. It is proclaiming, "I understand that Hashem is the only source of everything in my life, and that is why I turn to him with my tefillos." The Maharal (Nesiv Ha'avodah) writes that one reason why we daven Shemoneh Esrei with our feet together is because we are making a statement to Hashem, "I can't even move without it being Your will."

This mindset is one of the main keys to the success of our tefillos. When our tefillos are offered within this framework of Hashem being the uncontested source of everything in our lives, He, k'vayachol is more compelled to provide us with what we are davening for. If, however, He has competition in the form of a cell-phone or any other distraction, He may leave our fate in the hands of these distractions instead of His own. That's a bit concerning, because Siri, Alexa and friends may be able to answer our questions but they will never be able to answer our prayers.

Two More Short Points

The above thought only addresses the "bein adam

la'Makom" reason why one should turn off his or her phone during davening. There are also bein la'chaveiro and bein la'atzmo reasons as well.

La'chaveiro - Most people come to shul as a safe haven to focus on davening and learning. A phone is very disturbing and distracting. We should be mindful and sensitive to others around us and not have our phones on during davening. It is a courtesy that we would provide others in a library, we should do the same in shul.

If He has competition in the form of a cell-phone or any other distraction, He may leave our fate in the hands of these distractions instead of His own.

La'atzmo - Using our mashal above, imagine the expert's tip was, "Make sure to make eye contact and pay attention to the interviewer." In interviews, in conversations and certainly during davening one needs to be "present and in the moment." Research has shown that a cell phone that is simply "on" while in one's pocket makes it that he is not fully engaged in his conversations. The same is true for davening. We must connect while davening, not just communicate. This only truly happens when one's phone is off.

In Summary

When we go to shul to daven, let's leave our phones at home or in the car. At the very least, our phones should be in airplane mode. It's the only way our tefillos will be able to soar.

Focus on Others

Technology is changing the way we communicate, making it so easy to connect with friends and family anywhere in the world at any time of day. But how does it affect our in-person connections?



Focus Tip

I will refrain from looking at my device during a conversation



Thanks to social technology, we have never been more connected and yet more isolated from others than we are now.

60-70%

the amount of eye contact required for the creation of an emotional connection during a conversation

30-60%

the amount of eye contact the typical adult makes during a conversation due to phone-related distractions (i.e. checking texts or email)

Focused Quote

"[Because of technology], interactions with children, spouses and friends can be subtly tainted by never being fully "present" in day-to-day interactions.

...Research finds that even the presence on a desk of a cell phone that is switched off leads to impairment in attention, as well as a perception on the part of the person being spoken to that the conversation is less meaningful and that the interaction is marked by less empathy."

- Dr. David Pelcovitz, *Isolation Vs Inoculation: Guidelines for Parents in Meeting the Challenge of Digital Technology*



Heads Up!

Rabbi Eric Goldman

Director of Community Education, TAG Chicago
Sgan Mashgiach, Fasman Yeshiva High School.

My seven year old son came home from school recently with a list of things he had learned about in his Life Skills course throughout the year. Considering these are skills being taught to a second grade class, one would think adults have already mastered everything on this list. But one particular item happened to grab my attention - eye contact. Apparently, the students were taught that when one speaks to another person, it is important to look that person in the eye, to make eye contact.

I have a chavrusa who likes to point out that one of the most beautiful aspects of our Torah is that in addition to the myriads of halachos contained within, the Torah also teaches us how to live like a mentch and how to interact with those around us in a respectful way.

In the well known Mishna in Pirkei Avos, Shamai teaches us that we must greet everyone with a pleasant countenance. Similarly, the Mishna later in Pirkei Avos

**Making eye contact with
someone I am interacting with
means that I am acknowledging
there is a person in front of me.**

charges us to always be the first to greet another person. The gemara in Masseches Brachos relates that Raban Yochanan Ben Zackai was always the one to greet another person first, even a non-Jew in the marketplace. The gemara even extends this further and says that if someone does not respond to a greeting, it is as if he or she has stolen from the other person.

Sometimes it is the most basic lessons that we tend to overlook, the most elementary of middos that get forgotten.

Making eye contact with someone I am interacting with means that I am acknowledging there is a person in front of me. That person is not just someone I need something from or someone I do not have time for or patience to acknowledge. Rather, he or she is a person deserving of my respect and attention. Perhaps it is two friends engaged in a casual conversation, someone checking out at a grocery store with the cashier, or even a stranger we are passing by on the sidewalk. Whenever we are interacting with other people, it is simple *derech erez* to look at them, greet them, and show them proper respect. Even if the conversation lengthens, our obligation to show respect to the other person does not diminish.

Countless articles and books have been written over the past several years detailing the different ways technology and smartphones have changed our lives. Deep and analytical ideas such as how family dynamics have changed, how teenager's brains are developing deficiencies the more they are connected, and numerous others. But sometimes it is the most basic lessons that we tend to overlook, the most elementary of middos that get forgotten. Something even a second grader can teach us. To look at



Heads Up!

someone in the eyes. To pick our heads up when we walk in the street and smile at those walking by us. To greet the cashier or waiter and say hello and thank you in a way that tells them we actually mean it. To put the phone down when our spouse is sharing a story with us and look them in the eye, showing the respect and decency they deserve.

Researchers at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine have found that the more eye contact a doctor makes with a patient, the more likely the patient is to adhere to medical advice, seek treatment for future problems, and have better overall health. A study out of Cornell University found that adults were more likely to buy a box of cereal if the character on the box was drawn in such a way that their eyes appeared to be looking at the potential consumer. Studies show that even newborns with their blurry infant vision instinctively connect to their caregiver by making eye contact.

Let's not forget that there are people around us. People who deserve our attention and respect.

Personally, I have a little bit of a weird habit. Whenever I am talking to someone who takes out their phone in the middle of the conversation, I stop talking. It usually takes the other person a minute to realize that I

have stopped, but when they do, they motion that it is OK for me to keep talking and they are listening. To which I will respond that I can just wait. Somehow, I come out of the conversation being the rude one.

It's a busy world. People are running in all different directions and multitasking at a furious pace. But let's not forget that there are people around us. People who deserve our attention and respect. And if we notice within ourselves that we have forgotten this basic social skill, we can just turn to our second grade children for a quick reminder.

Focus on Family

We are the first generation of parents inundated with a stream of messaging all day, every day. Let's make sure that our children and loved ones know that they are our priority.



Focus Tip

**I will spend quality time
with my family, device free**

What families surveyed had to say about phones:

86%

of parents say there are times when everyone is at home, but are in separate rooms on their devices

88%

believe it's "generally" not OK to use a cell phone during dinner.

On your device & got interrupted by a family member?

When you're texting or answering an email, the part of your brain that is engaged is the 'to do' part, where there's also a sense of urgency to get the task accomplished - a sense of time pressure. So we're much more irritable when interrupted.



Family Food for Thought:
Is technology bringing our family closer together or is it creating distance? What do we want as a family?



The Times of Day When Your Kids Need You To Disconnect

Catherine Steiner-Adair

Clinical Psychologist,
Clinical Instructor, Harvard Medical School

It's the parenting paradox of the moment: never before has it been so easy to stay connected to our families through technology—at the same time, we find ourselves too distracted by our smartphones to interact with them in person.

The everyday choices we make about using our cell phones or working on screens when our kids are present can significantly affect every aspect of their health and development.

For my book *The Big Disconnect*, I've interviewed more than 1,000 kids from kindergarten-age through high school who described having to vie for attention with their parent's cell phone. They felt their parents were "missing in action," routinely engaged in conversations, texting, emailing, watching shows, or using apps.

The ripple effect on relationships is equally worrisome. When we drop everything to tend to our phones we're sending the following message: "It's okay for me to just check out on you—you are not that important. Our conversation, our presence together, our relationship, none of it is a priority." We're also teaching our kids to do the same thing.

Transition times—like getting home from school, or before bed—are especially important: that's when your child needs your physical, sensory, face-to-face, textured, nuanced interaction the most. Your smartphone pulls

you out of that vital connection. We can reboot our tech habits to minimize the mini-moments of disconnect. These simple steps can make a big difference:

1. Mornings are prime time

Plan ahead so that from the time your child wakes up until she is out the door or otherwise occupied, it's screen-free time for you. This is one of the transition moments when kids need to feel you're calm and fully present to them. They pick up on the edgy "don't bother me now" tone of voice if they interrupt you writing an email, compared to the friendlier response they're more likely to get if you're making breakfast or packing their lunches. You may decide to get up a little earlier to check your email and tend to your first-things online tasks before you wake up your children.

When we drop everything to tend to our phones we're sending the following message: "It's okay for me to just check out on you—you are not that important."

2. Driving is no time for phones or screens

You have so little time together with your kids, let this be uninterrupted time to chat or just to share some rare quiet moments, uninterrupted by someone's conversation filling the space. This can be creative, calming, and synthesizing time for children. Kids forced to listen to adults' calls often feel stressed by what they hear—and what they don't hear but imagine.

The Times of Day When Your Kids Need You Disconnected

3. Perk up for pickup

Stash your smartphone when you pick kids up. Children like and need to be greeted by someone who is happy to see them. Nothing says “everything else is more important than you” than having a parent or caregiver pull up for pickup but hardly look up from a call or texting. Make eye contact with your children. Connect with them. You can’t be fully present if you’re texting or talking to someone else, and you’re less likely to have conversations that give you the emotional weather report of their day. It’s important to hear about their day, and they fare better when they can share it with you.

**“Sometimes I just want to say,
Really Dad, do you have to text on
the ski lift? Is there any time that
family comes first?”**

4. When your children come home from school...

...stay unplugged. Have a snack and talk, hang out a bit. Create the time and space for a calming, refreshing transition.

5. When you come home, be home

Finish your calls or texting before you walk in the door. Prepare for your own transition home by letting

colleagues know you won't be available at certain times. Don't walk in the door with the expectation that you'll say a two-second "hi!" and then disappear to "just check" what's happening at work.

6. Meals matter

No screens or phones at the table is one of the simplest starts for putting kids and family first, and showing your children that when you say they are important, you mean it. Have a box or basket where everyone can drop their devices (silenced) for the duration of the meal.

7. Make bedtime quiet, cozy, unplugged

Nothing spoils the magic of a bedtime book more than a parent checking a text or even just the buzz of the phone in their pocket. Parents need tech-free breathers, too. And no screens in the bedroom for anyone!

8. Use tech to disconnect

Put up an away message indicating when you'll be back in touch at all these times, and whenever possible while attending after school games, on vacation, or any time that's family time.

"I know my dad works really hard, and I really appreciate all that he does for us, but sometimes I just want to say, Really Dad, do you have to text on the ski lift? Is there any time that family comes first?" (Jessie, 15)

Focus on Our Future

Technology is one of the trickiest challenges parents face in raising children today. It is also one of the most important because technology's ubiquitous presence in our lives is only increasing! While we can't predict the future of technology, we can make educated parenting decisions based on how screen time is affecting our children today.

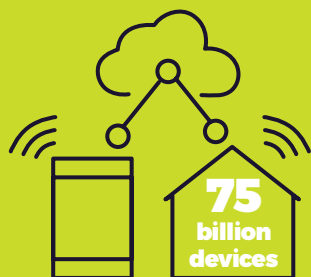


Focus Tip

I understand that giving a child a phone is a serious decision

Who is a wise person?
One who thinks
about the future.

איזהו חכם? הרואה את הנולד



(including household appliances, gadgets and other electronic items) are going to be connected to the internet by 2020, according to an Internet of Things prediction.

Who's preparing our children to deal with this challenge?

"In our study of technology and yeshiva students, we found that parents are far and away the largest single source of information and guidance regarding the Internet and technology, yet only a small percentage of students report their parents speaking to them directly, or providing any guidelines, about technology and its use."

- Dr. Yitzchak Schechter, *Breathing Life into the Golem of Technology*

"As writer Allison Slater Tate identifies in her 2014 Washington Post article 'We are the first generation of parents in the age of iEverything,' we 'had the last of the truly low-tech childhoods, and now are among the first of the truly high-tech parents,' and it is our obligation to learn how to be parents of this new generation."

- Dr. Eli Shapiro, *The Need to Teach our Children Digital Citizenship*

"Parents, not schools or community leaders, must assume the primary responsibility for helping children manage technology use intelligently."

- Dr. David Pelcovitz, *Isolation versus Inoculation: Guidelines for Parents in Meeting the Challenge of Digital Technology*



Stop Being Afraid to Exert Authority

An excerpt from Isolation vs Inoculation:
Guidelines for Parents in Meeting the
Challenge of Digital Technology

by Dr. David Pelcovitz

Over the last decade, studies have consistently shown that the most effective parenting style in helping children deal with digital technology is an authoritative approach. Put simply, parents must assume the role of setting firm limits regarding their child's use of technology. This does not suggest that a parent should employ an excessively strict authoritarian style that fails to pay attention to the child's point of view, but is rather an observation that a permissive parenting style is counter-productive, and parents must assume an assertive role. As Chazal tell us, the key to wise parenting is to find the balance between שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת – "The left hand pushing away while the right hand brings closer."

Recent generations have seen a drastic diminution in the level of parents' comfort in employing a responsible balance between love and limits. This topic was addressed in an important book by psychologist Jean Twenge and her colleague, W. Keith Campbell. They document how parental comfort with the limit-setting component of parenting has steadily dwindled over the course of the last two generations. Parents increasingly fear upsetting their child, and avoid imposing limitations, even when the parent recognizes the benefits to the child of such limitations. Too frequently, children prevail in demanding

the freedom and latitude enjoyed by friends, whom they perceive as being allowed to do whatever they please. Nowhere is this parental avoidance of responsibility more acute than in regard to children's access to technology.

We are taught in Mishlei **יסר בנך כי יש תקוה ואל המיתו אל תשא נפשך** "Discipline your child because there is hope, let your soul not be swayed by his protest." A Midrash on this verse adds an insight that sounds alien to Western ears: "The more one disciplines one's child, the more the child will love his parent." When the imposition of rules results in an upset, crying child, it is only natural for parents to doubt themselves and be tempted to accede to the child's demands. Wise parents will recognize, however, that beneath the protests, a part of the child may well be welcoming the imposed structure and limits.

Nowhere is this parental avoidance of responsibility more acute than in regard to children's access to technology.

A number of years ago, I saw an adolescent regarding difficulties related to high levels of conflict between him and his parents. His home was dominated by frequent arguments with his parents who, he felt, were placing stricter limits on him than those placed by the parents of any of his peers. Now a young parent himself, he recently told me that when he thinks back to his years of resisting his parent's rules, he is very grateful that they never yielded to his cries of protest. He now realizes that their limit setting was necessary and came from their fulfilling their responsibility to protect him



Stop Being Afraid to Exert Authority

from himself. What he previously saw as arbitrary and cruel, he now sees as loving and not taking the easy way out. What I found of particular interest, however, was his assertion that he remembers that even during the worst periods of conflict, he was secretly happy that his parents stood firm. He was frightened at the time about the temptations he was being exposed to and, although he could barely acknowledge it to himself, let alone his parents, he needed the controls that he was unable to provide for himself.

Debbie Fox, a prominent therapist in Los Angeles, conducted a study on the use of digital technology by a group of adolescents enrolled in local yeshiva high schools. Among her fascinating findings were the teens' responses to the question: When you are a parent and have teenage children of your own, how will you handle their use of digital technology differently than your parents did with you? More than half of the adolescents responded that they would be more restrictive with their children than their parents were with them.

From a practical standpoint, parents need to recognize two important points:

1. Children report a lower level of parental supervision of their internet use than their parents report; in other words, parents typically think that they are providing clear boundaries and rules, while their children report that this is not the reality of their day-to-day lives. This problem is easily fixed. This discrepancy will inevitably disappear when parents provide clarity regarding rules, set limits regarding consequences for breaking the rules and regularly engage their children in dialogue about their expectations.

2. Setting limits works. In their national survey,

the Kaiser Family Foundation reports that children provided with clear rules and consequences spend less time with media and are

When he thinks back to his years of resisting his parent's rules, he is very grateful that they never yielded to his cries of protest.

more likely to use media in a responsible manner. In fact, children with any media rules at all consume nearly three hours less media per day than those with no rules.

Conclusion

When trains were a new technology 150 years ago, some journalists and intellectuals worried about the destruction that the railroads would bring to society. One news article at the time warned that trains would “blight crops with their smoke, terrorize livestock... and people could asphyxiate” if they traveled on them.

Thankfully, society learned how to integrate the new reality of the locomotive into their daily life. One of the greatest challenges of our time is far more complex – learning how to manage the technology revolution, a transformational force that brings the outside world – both the good and the bad – into our children's daily experience. It is hoped that the recommendations shared in this article will help families find their way in reaching the optimal balance between isolation and inoculation.

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Focus on Kedusha

There's a whole world out there, and a connected device brings all of it right to our fingertips. We must protect ourselves and our family from unintentional exposure by filtering out the negative and implementing necessary safeguards.



Focus Tip

**I will install a filter on
every device I own**



70% of teens **hide their online activity** from their parents

93% of boys | **62%** of girls who have access to unfiltered devices **have been exposed to inappropriate imagery online**
under 18 years old

7/10 teens **want parents to set filters** to protect them online

"The destruction caused by the pervasive misuse of technology is far more widespread than most of us would like to acknowledge. Yet as long as we will pretend that it doesn't exist, and that smartphones are simply an updated version of a cordless phone – an item that can be misused in extreme cases but is inherently safe for all to use – it is impossible to come up with real solutions."

– Rabbi Avraham Y. Heschel, Hamodia, Facing Facts

Focus Quotes

"An entire generation now has access to an addictive, numbing chemical called dopamine, through cellphones and social media, while they are going through the high stress of adolescence."

– Simon Sinek, Instructor at Columbia University, world renowned speaker and author



An Open Letter to My Dear Friends, Community Leaders and Office Managers

Reprinted from Hamodia

I am a respected person in your community. I know you look up to me; you see me as a typical ehrlicher Yid... but I must tell you that I am human and have been going through hard times battling the world of the internet.

I am sure many will identify with my hardships.

I hope my suggestions will be taken seriously.

I was always aware of the dangers of modern technology, and in fact I try to keep far away from the internet. However, there are times that "I have to use the internet". I am careful only to use a filtered internet, yes, filtered to a high standard. Still...

Well, the good news is that I am not addicted to the internet; however, I still wish I could turn back the clock to pre-internet days.

I am a curious type. I like to check if the filter really works. I may type a word to check on it.

I would check to see what information is available on Wikipedia — are its sources so innocent? Sometimes I am tempted to check a forum to look up what others have to say about a subject.

I have ended up who-knows-where, with a polluted mind (to say the least).

I can tell you that even without going on any clearly forbidden sites, there is just much too much exposure on

the internet. And sometimes I even have a truly good excuse... to do shopping... which can lead me to see and browse ("by mistake") the different items that are being advertised on the home page (eBay included). I wish it would stop there. My mind is not as innocent as it was. I have been affected.

I appeal to you from the depths of my heart: We are a holy nation! One cannot imagine the simchah in Shamayim over those who keep loyal to preserving the kedushah of Klal Yisrael — to be mekadesh shem Shamayim b'seser, in a place where no one but Hashem knows. When I am strong, I compare myself to Yosef Hatzaddik who showed loyalty to Hashem in a place where no one else knew.

**I can tell you that even without going on
any clearly forbidden sites, there is just
much too much exposure on the internet.**

If you have not been exposed — good for you. Be proud of yourself and I hope you keep it up. Your eyes will be zocheh to see Moshiach.

If you have been exposed, don't give up. Tell yourself this is not who you really are. You are a pure neshamah connected to Hashem. If you feel that you have fallen too low and are wondering how you will ever get out of it, if you have tried and committed and yet fallen again, keep fighting. Get help if needed. Persevere.

Feeling guilty is the beginning of starting anew. Don't dwell on your past; don't let past thoughts bring you down. Tell these thoughts that they have come to the wrong address; you are not interested in what this cruel monster has to offer. Your neshamah wants to connect to Hashem, regardless of its past.

Finally, may I appeal to all those who allow others to use their



An Open Letter to My Dear Friends, Community Leaders and Office Managers

filtered internet: Know that your computer can never be good enough for a frum Yid. Please at least make it easier for those of us who want to stay clean.

If you are a person who has authority in an office, you should take the necessary steps to make sure that the office computers only have access to what is absolutely needed. If you don't need images, news or shopping, then remove them. There is too much out there that can spoil us, even with good filters.

Please, please, care for those who want to be good, who don't want to be tempted in a moment of weakness. Don't be naïve, don't think that we are malachim. Yes, in general we have yiras Shamayim. But, I am embarrassed to say, I am not immune to the satan hamashchis. And I know I am not alone in this.

**Please, please, care for those who
want to be good, who don't want to be
tempted in a moment of weakness.**

I am not writing these lines so that you should look down on another Yid. We are ehrlich and we are continuing to do teshuvah. But we want to avoid nisyonos.

You need to be aware of the dangers when allowing me to use your computer.

Office managers, please put maximum security on your

PCs. Either have your internet access white-listed or make sure that we, the users of your computer, are aware that you can and will track the sites we have visited (private and non-private, good and bad). This is a proven way to deter us from clicking on non-kosher sites.

Even before taking these steps, simple precautions can be taken. Place the screen so that it is visible to others. Only allow use of your computers during office hours, at times when there are other people around. Don't trust anyone; when no one is around, the satan is the first to enter and make himself at home.

Adding some of these safeguards might cost money. View it as a business expense; it is an investment to preserve kedushas Yisrael. According to halachah, one needs to spend all one's money in order not to transgress a mitzvas lo sa'aseh. Please spend these dollars and keep tabs on those who use your computers in your office.

Thank you!

May Hashem repay you for your understanding and bless you with much brachah and hatzlachah.

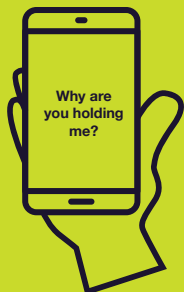
Focus on Yourself

Smartphones can be a powerful productivity booster or a draining distraction. Brave, honest self-reflection can help each of us gain clarity on whether a phone is a help or a hindrance.



Focus Tip

I will carefully assess what kind of phone that I need



"I need my phone for work."
True. But to what extent?

60%

among millenials
admitted to using their
phone for personal uses
during the workday.

75%

U.S. smartphone users
reported that they never turn
their phones off.

66%

of smartphone users
check their phones as soon as
they wake up.

Is this really 'me time'?

Smartphones have allowed us to fill every empty or boring moment with something else. Which sounds great, until you realize that you're substituting one type of emptiness for another.

I for one miss the void.

I miss talking to myself.

I miss—gasp—thinking about something while I stand in line, instead of scrolling through Instagram.

- Jen Sanfilippo, Medium



Shattering the Shackles

Reprinted from Hamodia

Much as every one of us faces his own challenges in life, and has their specific mission to fulfill, each generation has its own challenges that it must overcome.

In an exclusive message for Hamodia readers that appears in Inyan magazine, Harav Moshe Wolfson, shlita, Rav of Emunas Yisrael and Mashgiach Ruchani of Yeshiva Torah Vodaas, notes that each generation has its own Mitzrayim, — and also its own Yetzias Mitzrayim. The challenge of our generation lies in the use — and potential misuse — of technological devices.

The Mashgiach acknowledges that there are some individuals who feel that they need these devices for their parnassah.

“If they use them with the eitzos of the Rabbanim, and only for what they need according to the heteirim of the Rabbanim, it won’t be mazik them, they will have a shemirah. But if someone goes beyond these guidelines, he loses his shemirah,” he stresses.

One of the key guidelines of leading Rabbanim is that in addition to ensuring that a proper filter is installed, Smartphones and similar devices should be used only on an as-needed basis.

This in turn leads to considerable soul-searching and introspection, as one tries to figure out the true reality of one’s relationship with these devices. The fact that, in so many cases, owners are hopelessly addicted to these

devices makes such self-analysis a rather daunting task.

Many are convinced that owning these devices is vital for them to be able to do their jobs. Yet, studies have indicated that in many — though not all — cases, Smartphones hinder productivity. While some degree of multi-tasking is a must-have skill in the contemporary workplace, it turns out that in many situations, not only is instantaneous communication not helpful, it is extremely distracting.

[...] It has now been revealed that social media, a medium that so many use as a primary source for news and information, is astonishingly unreliable when it comes to getting its facts right. A new study found that false information on the popular social media network Twitter travels six times faster than the truth, and

The fact that, in so many cases, owners are hopelessly addicted to these devices makes such self-analysis a rather daunting task.

reaches far more people.

According to the Associated Press, researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology looked at more than 126,000 stories, tweeted millions of times between 2006 and the end of 2016. They found that “fake news” sped through Twitter “farther, faster, deeper and more broadly than the truth in all categories of information,” according to the study in the journal Science.

Sadly, this affliction has permeated our community as well. On an hourly basis, social media “groups” feed our community a steady diet of rumors and innuendo — and this information then spreads like wildfire. From incorrect reports about the



Shattering the Shackles

petirah of a renowned Rebbe (which almost certainly caused some people to temporarily stop davening for him) to slanderous accusations that besmirch innocent individuals, falsehoods reign supreme — leaving in their wake a trail of shattered hearts and unfairly destroyed reputations.

[In] an Op-Ed by Ms. Katie Reid, the director of digital media at The Boys' Latin School of Maryland, intriguingly titled "I Traded My Smartphone for a Flip Phone; Here's Why," she describes how she would turn to her Smartphone "first thing in the morning, last thing before bed, frequently throughout the work day and any time I was standing in line somewhere or riding as a passenger in the car or driving the car, but at a stoplight..."

She then asked the same question of herself: "Do I really want my closest friend to be a phone?"

Then, when her daughter was born, she realized that she didn't want her daughter's closest friend to be a phone.

She then asked the same question of herself: "Do I really want my closest friend to be a phone?"

An ever-increasing number of individuals have either replaced their Smartphones entirely with old-fashioned flip phones — finding that desktop and laptop computers are eminently suitable for checking emails and performing

a host of other connectivity-related tasks — or have drastically limited their dependence on handheld devices. In numerous kehillos, it has become the norm that those with a legitimate need for a Smartphone use a second phone, a flip-phone for talking. In addition to the crucial effect it has on the chinuch of our youth, it paves the way for extended “breaks” from Smartphone use.

There are times when all phone usage should be strictly avoided — such as during davening, learning, or for instance at a chuppah, or, R”l, a levayah. Ideally, family meal times and gatherings such as a simchah should also be phone-free periods.

Yes, it is far easier — and more realistic — for someone to wean themselves off Smartphone dependency when these devices are being used only for business purposes, and a regular cell phone is used for conversations.

Let us draw the strength and inspiration to break our self-inflicted shackles, and, as much as possible, free ourselves from our enslavement to handheld devices.

Focus on Sensitivity

Technology helps us spread endless joy: cute pictures for Bobby & Zaidy; recipes to siblings; funny pictures shared with friends. Research has shown that people tend to lower their inhibitions when they are communicating through screens. Let's just make sure whatever we're sending with our devices we'd also feel comfortable sharing in person.



Focus Tip

I will think twice before forwarding an email, text or picture

15,220,700

the amount of texts sent every minute of every day worldwide, not including app-to-app messaging



**Before you
hit 'send'**

**Take a moment
to think:**

**How would I feel if this
post was about me?**

Focus Quote

"The loshon hora post and subsequent viral storm hit at our son's Bar Mitzvah.

The negative comments came pouring in. What was supposed to be one of life's happiest moments was a nightmare.

Now whenever I meet people, it's 'Aren't you the one who...?' My life has been reduced to one unfortunate moment in time.

Hundreds of people forwarded the post.

What were they thinking?"

— Anonymous, from *The Domino Effect*, a Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation publication

The Nuclear Weaponization Of Lashon Hara

Reprinted with permission from The Domino Effect, a Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation publication

Imagine a product design studio commissioned to design a tool that would increase lashon hora into the world in an unprecedented way. What would the design specs look like?

- 1 - The product would need to be accessible to every person
- 2 - Reach people with lightning speed
- 3 - Facilitate the spread of lashon hora to masses of people
- 4 - Send pictures and videos
- 5 - Convince people the information is true just by the sheer number of transmissions
- 6 - Remove any guilt or personal responsibility

WhatsApp groups, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook may not have been designed to be the greatest lashon hora delivery systems in the history of mankind, but they fit the specs perfectly. With these tools, anyone can effortlessly reach out to groups of people to share embarrassing videos and posts that destroy reputations at lightning speed.

The anonymity of social media makes matters worse. In *Virtually You: The Dangerous Powers of the E-Personality*, author Dr. Elias Aboujaoude cites a study revealing that online users convince themselves that their online behavior is “not me,” and therefore, they do not feel responsible for the consequences of their posts. Thus, a

person who would feel constrained to say loshon hora out loud feels far less inhibited about posting and sharing it.

The author points out, the more often a post appears, the greater its veneer of truthfulness and accuracy.

"I've seen it everywhere," for most people means "it must be true." The combination of all these elements of social media makes it history's most destructive disseminator of loshon hora. It is a nuclear warhead that destroys everything within a tremendous radius.

Online users convince themselves that their online behavior is "not me," and therefore, they do not feel responsible for the consequences of their posts.

For Klal Yisrael, the stakes are impossible to fathom. Hashem's brachah and our success as Jews depend on our Torah, tefilah and sholom, but loshon hora disables them. In a time filled with chaos and confusion, this is our lifeline: Hashem says "I can save you from all harm, provided you conceal yourself from a loshon hora." (Iyov, 5:21)

But every day we are smashing the wall of protection Hashem offers us with tens of thousands of thoughtless posts that dart loshon hora from person to person and group to group.

By waking up to the impact of social media and putting strategies in place, we can access Hashem's incredible promises of protection and open up our world to receive Hashem's goodness.

Focus on Community

"But Mommy - all my friends have one!" is the exhausting, age-old battle cry championed by children everywhere. But what if our community could rally together to craft a universal response?



Focus Tip

I'll team up with other parents to postpone the age that children are given cell phones

Have today's parents given up on the fight?

77%

of parents
report 'no conflict' with their children
regarding technology usage.

1 out
of **4**

parents
use 11 or more hours of
screen media daily

PRESSURE POINTS:

Forbes listed smartphones as an item people buy because of peer pressure.

In a study, teens cited "friends" as the strongest influence over their purchases.

A Lopsided Fight ?

"When to allow children a smartphone has become among the most pivotal of parental decisions in this decade. It pits parents and teachers against some of the largest and most advanced companies in the world."

- Betsy Morris, "Parents' Dilemma: When to Give Children Smartphones"



We Are All in This Together

The Project Focus Committee

Every generation has its defining challenge. Throughout the centuries, these challenges were faced by individuals, families and entire communities. But rarely, if ever, has a challenge swept through the world so swiftly and efficiently that the entire culture in which we live has been completely altered.

Technology has accomplished just that. Our perspective on what is acceptable behavior has been changed. Our thoughts on what is appropriate and what is not have been transformed. Our strategies for raising our children and what we subject them to have been reshaped. This is not limited to any particular community or sect of Judaism. It is affecting everyone, everywhere.

One of the great Roshei Yeshiva of the late 20th century in America once said “Shalom Aleichem” to one of the students walking past him in the hallway. The student failed to respond, instead choosing to continue the conversation he was having with his friend. Immediately, the Rosh Yeshiva called all the bachurim into the Beis Medresh for an emergency mussar shmooze. When asked why he felt this was necessary if it was just one bachur who acted in this manner, the Rosh Yeshiva explained that if this is how one person was able to act, he was nervous that there was a culture growing in the yeshiva in which it was acceptable to act like this. That is certainly something that needed to be addressed.

Throughout the world, there is a culture in which

many things have become fully acceptable that previously would have been unimaginable. Behaviors that we wouldn't have dreamed of doing just a decade ago have become commonplace. Ignoring someone standing right in front of us to check our phone. Handing a teenager an unfiltered device that has full access to everything on the internet. Driving a car while looking down, putting ourselves and the families in the cars around us at risk. Ignoring our children when they come home from school or our spouses when they are

Countless parents have told me that even though they were completely against giving their children smartphones, they acquiesced because they felt they had no other option.

sharing their day with us.

One of the most common dilemmas I have heard over the past three years from parents is how to manage when their child is begging them for a phone because all their friends have one and they feel they are being left out. If left up to the parents, there would be no discussion. But seeing an adolescent being left out is a very tricky situation, one that pulls the parents into entertaining options they never thought they would have to. Countless parents have told me that even though they were completely against giving their children devices, they acquiesced because they felt they had no other option.

But there is a solution. One that will be very simple to say but so much harder to do. It all starts with accepting one simple truth - we are all in this together. Together we must accept responsibility



We Are All in This Together

to help affect a culture change throughout our city. We must unite together, become unified even if not uniform. If no one takes out their phone in shul, then everyone else who comes in, regardless of how they are dressed, will know and understand that they should not as well. If parents put their phones away when at the pizza store with their children, then other families will follow suit. If husbands and wives can give each other their undivided attention, then our children will grow up to do the same. If it becomes automatic that every phone in the city has a filter, then all who don't have one will feel the positive peer pressure to get one. If parents of a group of friends can unite and decide that they will all refrain from getting their children smart devices, then there would be no need for any of the other children to get one.

The gemara in Maseches Shabbos relates Abayei's proclamation that whenever he saw someone making

If it becomes automatic that every phone in the city has a filter, then all who don't have one will feel the positive peer pressure to get one.

a siyum, he would make a yuntif for all of those in the Beis Medresh. A friend of mine once told me a beautiful explanation as to why Abayei felt it was necessary to include all of those around in the celebrations. There are some aspects of life in which we cannot presume to

think we are isolated. Whether it is in how we are affecting those around us or how we ourselves are affected, we are a part of the environment in which we live. When one person fails, we all fail. And when one succeeds, we all succeed. Abayei recognized this reality. And so even though it was one individual who had completed a mesechta, he understood that all contributed in some way in creating the environment in which it was possible for that one person to accomplish such a feat.

To stem the tide and begin to push back against this sweeping change, the Rabbonim of the Chicagoland area have

When one person fails, we all fail. And when one succeeds, we all succeed.

united *k'ish echad b'lev echad* to organize this citywide event. They have brought us here to address the challenges of technology and discuss how we can create a healthier and more kedusha filled environment in our city. We are in this together, and only together can we change the culture and ensure the type of environment we all envision for our families and our future.

Focus on Children

Children learn best by example. Parents have the opportunity to teach their children how to have a healthy relationship with technology by modeling proper behavior with their own technology use.



Focus Tip

I will model proper device usage

What parents and children had to say in recent studies:



1 out of 3 children

reported feeling
ignored when parents
used a device in their
presence



52% of parents

agree with their children that
they spend too much time on
their phones

"Our kids are sponges, and we really need to remember they learn from their environments," said Cary P. Gross, a professor at Yale. Children "pick up character traits and behaviors from those they watch and hear."



Turn Off That Smartphone, Mom and Dad!

Reprinted from Psychology Today

by Dona Matthews, PhD

Young children are closely attuned to their parents' attention. They depend on that attention for their survival, of course, but also for their social and emotional development. Several recent research studies show the damage parents can do when they're physically present, but distracted and less responsive because they're attending to their smartphones.

Study #1. Moms on cellphones have children who are more negative and less resilient.

In one study, published in *Developmental Science*, infants and toddlers from seven months to two years old were assessed for temperament, social engagement, exploration, and post-disruption reunion and recovery. The researchers reported that children expressed more distress, and were less likely to explore their environment, when their mothers were using their cell phones.

The young children whose mothers reported greater habitual use of mobile devices outside the lab showed more negativity, and less emotional recovery, when their mothers did turn off their phones. The researchers concluded, "Like other forms of maternal withdrawal and unresponsiveness, mobile-device use can have a negative impact on infant social-emotional functioning and parent-child interactions."

Study #2. Children feel unimportant, and have to compete with smartphones for parents' attention.

In a large international study of six thousand eight-to thirteen-year-old children, 32% reported feeling “unimportant” when their parents use their cellphones during meals, conversations, or other family times. The children reported competing with technology for their parents’ attention. Over half of the children in the study said their parents spend too much time on their phones.

Study #3. Distracted parental attention harms children’s social/emotional development.

Yet another major study, this one with rats, also showed the ways distracted parental attention harms babies’ development, especially their ability to process pleasure and engage in social activity. The pups raised by distracted mothers were otherwise given what they needed to thrive. They achieved normal weight, and they spent the same amount of time with their mothers as the babies raised in the normal environment. The researchers observed, however, that adolescent offspring who had been raised by distracted mothers ate less sugar solution and spent less time playing and chasing their peers, than rats raised by undistracted mothers.

Several recent studies show the damage parents can do when they’re physically present, but distracted and less responsive because they are attending to their smartphones.

What differed was the type of attention they received from their mothers. The distracted mothers tended to be less predictable, less reliable, and less attentive. The researchers concluded that



Turn Off That Smartphone, Mom and Dad!

fragmented and chaotic maternal care disrupts brain development, which can lead to emotional disorders later in life: “We need predictability and consistency for the emotional system to develop.” The same researchers are now applying their findings with rats in studies of humans.

Study #4. Cellphone use interferes with healthy parenting.

A pediatrician and her colleagues became sufficiently concerned about parents using cellphones and ignoring their children that they set up a study to assess the prevalence of this behavior at fast food restaurants. Many parents pulled out a device immediately on sitting down. Most used it during the meal, often appearing more absorbed in their smartphones than the kids.

“We are behaving in ways that certainly tell children they don’t matter, they’re not interesting to us, they’re not as compelling as anybody, anything, any ping that may interrupt our time with them.”

These researchers found that kids whose parents were absorbed in their devices were more likely to act silly or be noisy. Many parents on cell phones were irritable and impatient, which only led to worse behavior. They observed that cellphone use interferes with healthy parenting: children “learn by watching us how to have a

conversation, how to read other people's facial expressions. And if that's not happening, children are missing out on important development milestones."

Study #5. Kids Feel Sad, Mad, Angry, and Lonely When Parents Use Cellphones.

Yet another researcher interviewed a thousand children between the ages of four and eighteen, asking them about their parents' use of mobile devices. She reported that many of the children described themselves as "sad, mad, angry, and lonely" when their parents were on their devices. Several young children reported damaging or hiding their parents' cellphones.

This was an interview study, so the researcher couldn't determine exactly how the digital disconnections might affect a child in the long term. But she learned enough to conclude that parents should think twice before picking up a mobile device when they're with their kids. She said, "We are behaving in ways that certainly tell children they don't matter, they're not interesting to us, they're not as compelling as anybody, anything, any ping that may interrupt our time with them."

Kids thrive when they receive consistent, dependable, focused, loving attention.

Using a smartphone when you're with a child is a form of psychological withdrawal and non-responsiveness. We're not talking about staying off your phone 100% of the time, more like 90%. It's okay to answer an urgent text or make a quick call, especially if it includes your child. But, really! As much as possible, when you're with your child, be with them. Put away that phone and other electronic devices. Enjoy the brief moment you have to help your child grow into the delightful adult you hope they will become.

Focus on Education



Focus Tip

I will continue to educate myself and my family about the challenges of technology

**Technology
keeps growing and
changing – and so can we.**

**Just like acclimating to a new
device, learning how to counteract
the downsides of new technological
developments takes time, but with
the right determination and
effort, b'eizrash Hashem we'll
keep pace.**

Welcome to the device detox zone!



No matter how much you want to stay focused on the here and now, it can be a real challenge to ignore incoming messages and notifications when you hear (or feel) them reach your phone.

Meet the cell phone “sleeping bag”, the case that temporarily blocks incoming signals including phone calls, texts and internet notifications.

All you have to do is place your phone in the bag to enjoy a respite from the distractions of your device.

Don't worry, you'll be able to access all missed voicemails, texts and notifications once you remove your phone from the case.

Enjoy your focus break!

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Thank you for joining us in this historic community-wide gathering, which marks the beginning of a technology culture change in the city of Chicago.



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